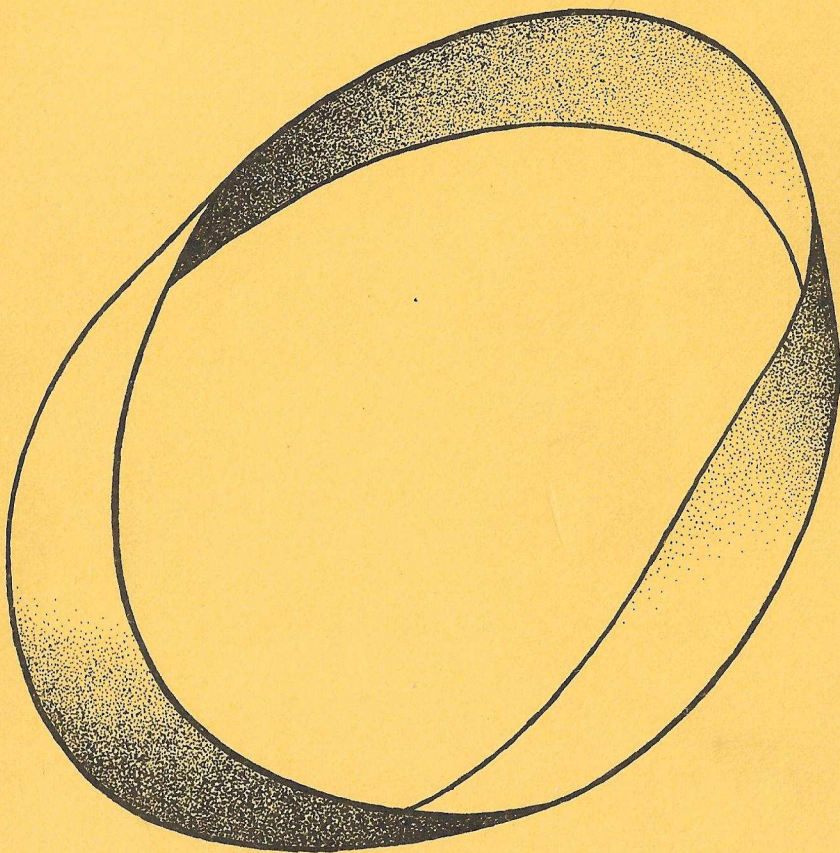


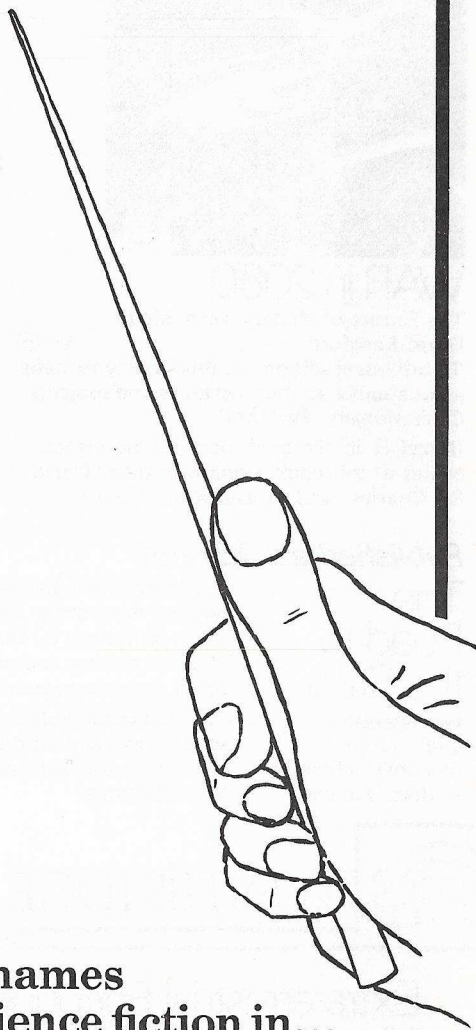
YORCON

APRIL 13-16th 1979



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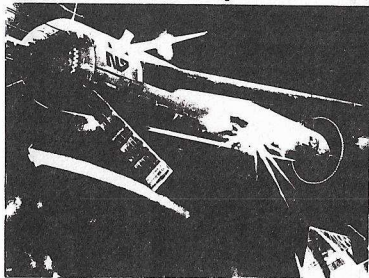
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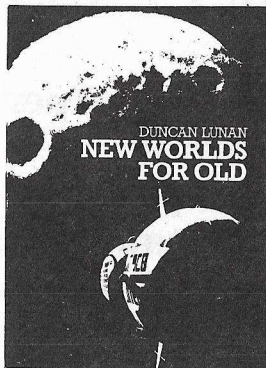
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YORCON

30th British Easter SF Convention

Held at the Dragonara Hotel, Leeds: 13th-16th April 1979

Guest of Honour: Richard Cowper. Fan Guests of Honour: Pat & Graham Charnock

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A Chairman Speaks



So you got here at last. And by the time most of you read this (after the con) it will all be over. As I have remarked in at least one progress report, it takes a long time to set up a convention. It is now almost eighteen months since we began to plan for Yorcon.

November 1977 - the Victoria Public House (scene of Leeds group meetings before the West Riding Hotel offered better beer and the opportunity to obtain it). Dave Pringle is away on the usual half-hour quest for a round. Don West looks over, with an insinuating leer,

"Have you ever thought about running an Eastercon?"
(It turned out that he had, of course, already been planning the thing with Alan Dorey).

November 1977 - Eight days later: - the Dragonara Hotel - the Leeds group wait nervously to meet John Hepworth. He enters looking fit and surprisingly young; at least that is an improvement on the dull functionaries we are used to. It appears he has just recovered from a hang-gliding accident, which we all ponder as a suitable qualification for hosting a science fiction convention. He lists other useful experiences such as surviving several visits by Swedish football fans, who on finding alcohol at one tenth of home prices, saw more of the bottom of glasses than their beloved Leeds United, so that by some atavistic process they reverted to being berserks until paralysis intervened. Nevertheless John believes his biggest trump-card was having met SF fans before, at Star Trek cons. Ah well, it's early days yet.

Since then so much has happened: Argentina have won the World Cup and begun to annex the football league; jogging has caused coronaries in the stockbroker belt at a far greater rate than vintage port; Sid Vicious has come and gone; the Shah has at last been flushed and Rob Jackson married.

On the committee a similar frenetic pace has been maintained. Dave Pringle went to London and became a rake, working Jekyll-like with respectable S.F. Foundation by day. People have at last penetrated his Malcolm Edwards disguise though, so we expect news at any time of Mr. Hyde. Nevertheless, since Borgo Press are scheduled to produce his Ballard study later this year he must be inspired by his hectic life.

Alan Dorey has developed from being a Black Hole hack to the Nova-award winning editor of *Gross Encounters*, and incoming chairman of the BSFA. Any reports that when in his cups he murmurs, "Today the BSFA, tomorrow the World!" will have to be confirmed by those rash enough to set out to buy him enough drink.

D. West has left the committee, and returned again. We were all rather relieved at the latter event since he has never been known to back a loser (anyone wishing to verify this statement should challenge him to the ancient Bingley sport of High Stakes Dominoes) and it solved one of the big convention questions - is D. West with us or against us and how do you tell the difference?

Other members have been less thrown about the Winds of Time (good book title that!), although one, Charlotte Bowden, has left. It could be said she had gaffiated if she had ever got into It All in the first place. Paul and Jan continue to recuperate from the horrors of the Cheltenham SF Group. Ian Williams continues to do whatever an Ian Williams does, and I'm not sure he's very good at it. He is at present despatching mobile library vans all over Tyneside; all reputed to carry a manuscript of his novel, to make sure that someone, somewhere, reads it. Kate Jeary is looking exceptionally pleased now someone has given her a hole to dig, and a chance to find something at the bottom of it - once it thaws out and if the river doesn't flood again. Archaeology may be a rather esoteric pursuit, but it has made her a star of the television screen - the new Sir Mortimer Wheeler. The beautiful Carol Gregory has been devoting her talents to the BBC, following round K-9 with brush and shovel. I remain much the same apart from my contact with the Wasting Sickness (applications to see my scar must be made early). I hope it has been a good eighteen months for you, and that you think we have not wasted our time.

Have a fine convention.

**Mike
Dickinson**





RICHARD COWPER

*

Guest of Honour

First of all, what are we going to call him? He writes as Richard Cowper, his real name is John Murry and his friends and family call him Colin. He answers to all three, but during a stopwatch test at the 1978 Milford Conference, the following scores for reaction-time were recorded: "Richard" 0.35 secs., "John" 0.34 secs., and "Colin" 0.36 secs. On the whole, "Richard" is to be preferred, but you should beware of trying to shorten it. He sometimes gleefully tells a story about something that happened to him at the very first Milford, when one of the writers there lurched up to him full of booze and cameraderie, and said, slapping him on the back, "D'you mind if I call you Dick?" He didn't mind at all, but it rated 7.45 secs.

It's easy to get to know Richard/John/Colin. He doesn't bite strangers, but it does feel a bit odd calling someone by a pseudonym. When some of us put this to him he readily suggested an alternative: "Oi, you!" (1.00 sec.) But if you'll take a tip from me, the friendliest greeting of all is "Can I Get You A Gin And Tonic?" (0.01 secs.)

So let's call him Richard, and not start slapping him on the back.

Apart from the handful of us who have met Richard at various Milfords, he is a stranger to almost everyone at this convention. It is, you see, his very first convention. He's not just the Guest of Honour, he's a neofan too! Most of the Guests of Honour we welcome to Science Fiction cons are old hands at the game, having been fans themselves at some time...or at least having been fairly regular visitors. But Richard Cowper comes to us from outside, but not, as you will discover if you talk to him, as an outsider.

His entry into science fiction itself was from outside. Richard's father was John Middleton Murry, the distinguished critic, editor and essayist, whose first wife was Katherine Mansfield, and who was a close friend to, and latterly a notorious enemy of, D.H. Lawrence. Richard tells the story of his childhood and early adulthood in his two volume autobiography, One Hand Clapping and Shadow on the Grass (published by Victor Gollancz, and written - here we go again! - under the name Colin Middleton Murry). They are fascinating and moving books, their only literary equivalent being Edmund Gosse's Father and Son, a book which is an established classic, and yet one, in my view which does not have a half of the pain, honesty and sheer entertainment value of the Murry memoirs.

(The story is brought up to date in an article called "Backwards Across the Frontier", published in Foundation 9, in which Richard describes how Colin Middleton Murry, scion and novelist, became Richard Cowper, science fiction author.)

Today he lives in one of the most idyllically beautiful places I have ever seen; a centuries-old thatched house commanding a tranquil, unspoiled view across the River Dart in Devonshire. Those lucky enough to be invited down there suffer withdrawal symptoms for weeks afterwards, remembering golden weekends when the booze and laughter seemed never to stop, and rowing-boats unaccountably went round and round in circles. They also remember thirty acre lawns that have to be mowed, and trees that are felled with bare hands. Yes, he goes in for this sort of thing; don't let the wiry frame deceive you. It's all welly boots and sore joints down there in Devon, I tell you. Up at dawn to pick the strawberries and milk the cows, then a pleasant morning with the rotovator in the hillside pasture, lunch taken on the hoof, with the afternoon free to thatch the roof and bottle the home-brewed ale, and a nice relaxing log-chopping session to set you up for dinner and an early night. (I lie, of course: it's Ruth, John/Richard's smashing wife, who does all this, while the decadent, urban guests laze on the lawn and watch the tide go in and out.)

Richard sees the scenery with a less romantic eye. Muttering about having to pay for it all, he retires to his study to write science fiction.

Describing Richard's work for one of the Progress Reports for this con, David Pringle made a very perceptive comment. "He does not have roots in the magazines, perhaps," wrote Pringle, "but he is undoubtedly one of the last representatives of the Wellsian tradition of the English intellectual scientific romance - a tradition which includes the works of writers like J.D.Beresford, Olaf Stapledon, Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, C.S.Lewis, William Golding and Naomi Mitchison and was once quite separate from 'science fiction' in the American sense."

It will give you some measure of the man if I tell you what he said when I asked him his opinion of this remark. "Ye Gods!" he cried, smiting a hand to his forehead, "I've just been told I'm a dinosaur!", and he giggled delightedly for at least a minute.

Whether Richard is a dinosaur or not, Pringle was right. Personally, though, I would not apply the word 'intellectual' to his work, except in the broadest sense. In a field where there is perhaps just too much cerebral cleverness, Richard Cowper is almost alone in writing instinctively, organically. His work is felt. He seems to observe James Blish's dictum that there is more "sense of wonder" in the birth of a child than there is in the creation of a galaxy. In other words, he is not primarily an ideas-man in the way we have been brought up to expect science fiction writers to be. His stories and novels are about people with lives of their own, who get caught up in odd or catastrophic events, often movingly, sometimes funnily. You do not, while reading Cowper, marvel at the wideness of the screen for wideness' sake, nor gasp at innovative concepts for innovation's sake; you live instead with real people, and laugh and cry with them, and when the book is put away they return to haunt you with their predicament. His is not a bold, muscly, over-adjectival style, but a quiet, resonant and witty enjoyment of the English language. And lest this praise of mine seem to obsessed with the literary, and turns a blind eye towards the science in his science fiction, go and have a look at The Twilight of Briareus - a central novel in the Cowper canon - which contains, unobtrusively, one of the best researched essays on genetics you will come across in modern sf.

Richard Cowper came to science fiction as a matured novelist. Before Breakthrough in 1964 (his first sf novel as such, and the first under the Cowper by-line) he had written six general novels. Two of these, the first two, were never published. The other four - The Golden Valley, Recollections of a Ghost, A Path to the Sea and Private View - were published in the '50s and early '60s under the name of Colin Murry. If you could read them now (regrettably, they are all out of print) you would find yourself on familiar territory. Murry and Cowper are not just the same person, they are the same writer, underlining the idiotic way in which sf is labelled as if it were something apart from the rest of literature. These early books have a feeling to them which, with the advantage of hindsight, we can recognise as quintessential Cowper; at least two of them have sf "themes" peripheral to the main story. I think all that has changed in recent years has been a matter of emphasis, so we can slot his work into the sf genre without too many mental gymnastics.

However, it is Richard himself who is Guest of Honour at this convention, not his books. Take this rare opportunity to meet him, enjoy his company...but whatever you do, don't call him Dick.

CHRISTOPHER PRIEST

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF "RICHARD COWPER"

Under the name Richard Cowper, John Middleton Murry, Jr. has published the following science fiction novels and stories:-

- 1) Breakthrough Dobson, 1967. (Novel)
- 2) Phoenix Dobson, 1968 (Novel)
- 3) Domino Dobson, 1971. (Novel)
- 4) Kuldesak Gollancz, 1972. (Novel)
- 5) Clone Gollancz, 1972. (Novel)
- 6) Time Out of Mind Gollancz, 1973. (Novel)
- 7) The Twilight of Briareus Gollancz, 1974. (Novel)
- 8) Worlds Apart Gollancz, 1975 (Novel)
- 9) "The Custodians" - Fantasy & Science Fiction, Oct. 1975.
- 10) "Piper at the Gates of Dawn" - Fantasy & Science Fiction, March 1976.
- 11) "Paradise Beach" - Fantasy & Science Fiction, May 1976.
- 12) "The Hertford Manuscript" - Fantasy & Science Fiction, October 1976.
- 13) The Custodians Gollancz, 1976 (Collection of above four stories).
- 14) "Drink Me, Francesca" - Fantasy & Science Fiction, April 1978.
- 15) The Road To Corlay Gollancz, 1978 (Novel)
- 16) "Out Where the Big Ships Go" - Fantasy & Science Fiction. May 1979
- 17) Profundis Gollancz, 1979. (Novel)

He has also written two volumes of autobiography as "Colin Middleton Murry":

One Hand Clapping Gollancz, 1975

Shadows on the Grass Gollancz, 1977

Gollancz

SF

Just Published

Coming Shortly

SF

SF

SF

**ARTHUR C.
CLARKE**

**GREGORY
BENFORD**

SF

SF

SF

THE FOUNTAINS OF
PARADISE

THE STARS
IN SHROUD

SF

SF

**RICHARD
COWPER***
PROFUNDIS

**ALGIS
BUDRYS**
BLOOD & BURNING

SF

SF

**RICHARD
COWPER***
CLONE (Reissue)

**THOMAS M.
DISCH**
ON WINGS OF SONG

SF

SF

SF

**FRANK
HERBERT**
THE GREAT
DUNE TRILOGY

**ELIZABETH A.
LYNN**
A DIFFERENT LIGHT

SF

SF

SF

SF

**URSULA
LE GUIN**
PLANET OF EXILE

**FREDERIK
POHL**
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SF

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THE VERY SLOW
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SILVERBERG**
THE SONGS OF
SUMMER AND
OTHER STORIES

SF

SF

SF

SF

*Also available by Richard Cowper
WORLDS APART • THE CUSTODIANS AND OTHER STORIES
THE TWILIGHT OF BRIAREUS • THE ROAD TO CORLAY

SF

SF

SF

SF

SF

SF

SF

SF

SF

SF

SF

SF

Pat & Graham Charnock

*

fan guests of honour

PAT'S BIT

I've got a bit of a problem at this convention - I don't know what's expected of me. Conventions have never worried me before - apart from the financial angle. I usually spend the month beforehand wondering whether we can afford it, and then having decided we can just about afford to go if we eat sandwiches for lunch instead of a proper meal, I go and blow the sandwich money on a new dress.

Getting there can be quite a problem too. In the old days, the dilemma was whether to con a lift from a fellow fan (preferably one whose driving you trusted on the motorway - nothing personal, Chris, I wasn't really scared) and start your con real early in the morning, or take it easy and go by train in Newcastle or Birmingham or wherever, and the con starts as you spot your fellow fans arriving in the station. But now Graham's got a driving licence and a van that belongs to the bookshop he runs, and I've got other worries. You see, I don't really like being driven by anyone, and when I start thinking that Gray could collect £18,000 if I got killed in an accident, I don't feel safe anymore. And there's the problem of navigation. As you might expect, I'm very good at it, but Gray doesn't seem to agree, and when I tell him to turn right, he's quite likely to point out that we've just passed the right turn, he was going too fast to do anything about it, and Leeds is over to the left, so would I kindly shut up and stop bothering him, please? Leeds being several hundred miles away from London, we will be arguing about navigation for a long time. So if you say hello to me at Yorcon, and I seem a bit paranoid, you might reflect that I may have got there in one piece, but I've still got to go home again.



I'm also just about getting used to the idea that the membership secretary of Season '79 should spend all her time on the registration desk, so if I'm not in the bar, or the fanroom, you'll find me busy peddaling badges and membership cards. I sometime bemoan my lack of fanac, because I haven't been able to pub my ish, but I'm doing a lot more fanac now than I've ever done in the past. I'm also taking money for it, which I've never done before, although none of it ever gets into my bank account. I get a strange masochistic kick out of working for Season. I'm very well aware that it's ruining my social life, playing havoc with the do-it-yourself that needs doing on the Charnox mortgage, and ruining my career prospects because I can't put in any overtime, but that's all outweighed by getting an envelope with an Alaskan stamp on it, or a letter from the Virgin Islands.

And if it seems like I've flipped my lid when I start screaming "Hughes! Hughes! A vote for Hughes is a vote for Hughes!" just remember that I'm one of Terry Hughes' nominators in the TAFF race. If you don't already know about TAFF, it's the Transatlantic Fan Fund, set up by fans to enable fans to cross the Atlantic and attend conventions. Terry Hughes is an American fanzine editor who has a great love for British fans and fanzines, and it would be really great if we could get him over for Season. So put your money where my mouth is, and vote Hughes for TAFF.

So that's what I'll be doing at Yorcon. Maybe it's not what you expect of a Fan Guest of Honour, but no-one told me what they wanted! I'm perfectly willing to drink your drinks - mine's a pernod with ice - and maybe I'll go to the banquet and try and behave myself, but you won't find me in the Con Hall making speeches - No! I won't! I refuse! Help, help!

GRAHAM'S BIT

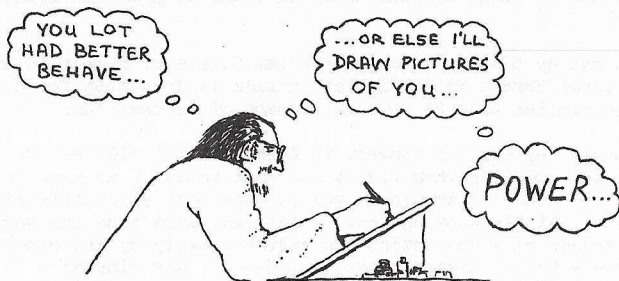


There are possibly two things I have done so far in my adult life which are sources of pride with me. (I never could understand how pride - self-esteem - became a vice, it seems such a reasonable emotion, but if it is I'm hardly likely to be damned for two trivial lapses, surely?) Both instances involved a long-term overcoming of long-established short-comings -- which might give you some idea both of how stern my own measures of self-esteem are, and of how garbled my vocabulary can become when I put myself on the spot.

So - was I proud when Tit-bits accepted my first story? No. It was, after all, in the wake of earlier sales by my contemporaries Graham Hall and Chris Priest.

Was I proud when I sold to Damon Knight's Orbit? No. And with justification - I later discovered that devious strings had been pulled by Charles Platt - it turned out to be almost the last nail in the coffin of my literary ideals and one of the reasons why I now seek and largely find solace in the bumbling but generally bullshitless world of fandom. Was I proud when Critics acclaimed the first few issues of my fanzine Phile, as a focal-point fanzine? No. My acclaimants were idiots; in those days there were no D.West's or Greg Pickersgills lurking with their hot-shot criticism; to a degree fandom was too small and fragile and self-protective for its own good (This was a Fannish Bad Thing). Was I proud when I appeared on my first convention panel in Oxford in 1968? No. After sitting quaking and terrified and neglected for half an hour my big moment came. Roj Gilbert (for it was he) rose from the assembly: "I'd like to ask Graham Charnock a question." I grabbed the microphone from fellow-non-entity Dave Garnett (for it used to be he) exhilarated at my chance to communicate. "Why don't you ever smile?" asked Roj. Three hours later I thought of the correct spontaneous witty response.

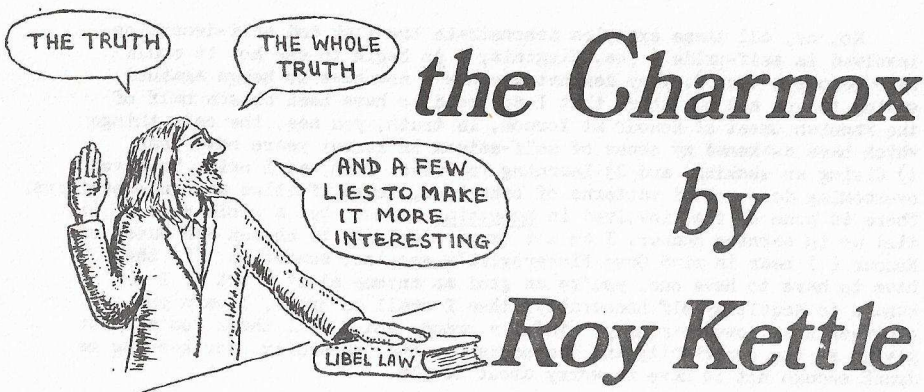
No, no, all these examples demonstrate the risk and self-deception involved in self-pride (Yes, Virginia, I do begin to see how it could have become a vice). They demonstrate how I now have to hedge against saying to you all out there that I am proud to have been chosen half of the Fannish Guest of Honour at Yorcon. In truth, you see, the only things which have awakened my sense of self-esteem in recent years have been 1) Giving up smoking, and 2) Learning To Drive. Both, as I said, involved overcoming deep-rooted patterns of behaviour, fears, foibles and gut-reactions. There is none of that involved in accepting honour, but a whole mess of it tied up in earning honour. I am not proud simply to be chosen Fan Guest of Honour (I bear in mind Greg Pickersgill's succinct summation: "If they have to have to have one, you're as good as anyone else") but if I manage to acquit myself honourably, then I shall be proud, I warn you, overweeningly, overbearingly, sinfully proud. And I will thank you all for giving me the opportunity and the occasion. And, hopefully, for keeping me drunk enough not to have to worry about it. Ta.



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Pat and Graham Charnock are fairly thin although they eat ten pounds of potatoes a week. Graham has a hairier back than Pat and more guitars, whereas Pat has no navel and can often be found with a fish folded between her breasts.

It was not my plan to describe the Fan Guests of Honour in such detail, but as the famed Yorcon artist D. West intends to draw them for the programme book, my description will be your only means of recognition.

Graham was the earlier convert to fandom. Ironically he was first involved in the mid-60's when D. West was also active (as much as that can ever be said of him). Both Graham and D. were busily ignoring each other's work even then, little knowing that in fifteen years time one would be half a guest of honour at a convention run half-heartedly by the other. At the time Graham - a failed advertising executive (his slogans - "Stick an egg in yer gob" and "drink milk frequently" - did not impress) - was publishing a fanzine called Phile. This was a seminal magazine in fandom, having the dual distinction of inspiring Greg Pickersgill to greater efforts (as seminal things usually do) and publishing people like Charles Platt, Christopher Priest, Graham Hall and Dicky Howett. Phile was the best fanzine of its day, the others ranging from appalling downwards.

In the years that followed, and before he trapped Pat in his evil marital web (thus changing his life, voice and socks in one go) he did many things. He played lead noise in the Burlingtons, a band frequently booked for knees-ups at the local mortuary. He left fandom for a while. He did some editorial work for New Worlds and - coincidentally - had published in that very same magazine a number of so-called excellent short stories (about a failed advertising executive in space (yawn)) which when later put together as a novel Crim was rejected by everyone it was sent to. (Actually, with all the bitter irony of reality, a novel - Beetle Robots From The Void - written and plotted many years ago by a little bit of dirt under one of the fingernails of Grahams Charnock and Hall now stands more chance of being published than Crim.) He sold stories to Orbit, New Writings In SF, and Still Yet Again Even More Dangerous Visions etc. He began work in the Baker Street bookshop selling books about canals and is now manager and has other people selling books about canals for him. He published one issue of Scratch, a fanzine whose aim was to "provide the best in impersonal unbiased right wing political coverage".

Graham was just bubbling under in fandom at the time, seduced back, like D.West, by the superb new fanzines of the early 70's such as Fouler and - er - well, such as Fouler. Then one day, while out buying his Beano, he bumped into Pat Charnock (of course, her name wasn't Charnock then, it was Hunt, but I didn't want you to get confused). Neither of them were doing anything and it was a nice day so they got married. Well, all right, the truth is that they both worked in the same Court in Willesden and they proposed to each other with their eyes as they silently ushered smelly drunks to their dooms. In fact, the real truth is that Graham was in Court charged with indecent actions in a public place and Pat, already looking to her future employemnt as a social work team leader, had pity on him but married him anyway. They settled down to live in Charles Platt's Notting Hill mansion with their cat Tigger and its offspring (the most cretinous of which I am now responsible for) until Charles villainously ejected them when he ran out of kittens to rip apart. They now live elsewhere.

Pat took to fandom which was good as fandom took to Pat. Inspired by conventions, fanzines, hard liquor and hard men she decided to pub her ish. ('To pub an ish' is an approved fannish term used by such luminaries as Peter Roberts and everyone else.) This was the first issue of Wrinkled Shrew, ostensibly edited by both Charnocks but in reality Graham only lubricated the duplicator. Pat achieved success with Shrew, publishing people like Charles Platt, Christopher Priest, Graham Hall and Dicky Howett. Until the huge seventh issue - when it didn't die but I hope only stopped for breath - it was the most consistently successful general fanzine of the seventies. It was always placed well in the world famous Checkpoint fan poll, and also achieved success in the single issue category with articles from its pages and by its regular authors. Pat herself is a good, though infrequent writer. But then, so is her hubby. All the time Pat was slaving away producing issues of Shrew, Graham was cleverly publishing $\frac{1}{2}$ page issues of Vibrator ("written by a drunkard for drunkards") a personalzine which stuck it up in fandom. In the 1976/7 Checkpoint fan poll Pat's Shrew came first and Vibrator sixth, with Graham coming second as best fan writer as well.

The Charnocks have done a lot in and for fandom apart from publishing good fanzines. The Burlingtons have played at two conventions despite the fact that Rog Peyton was in a dancing mood. Pat organised the fancy dress at Seacon 75 while Graham was in charge of publications, and for the World Convention, Seacon 79, Pat has the arduous and unenviable (but entirely voluntary!) task of Secretary while Graham is in charge of publications. At many conventions the Charnocks have produced special fun items ranging from The Peter Roberts Book Of Records ("The longest scarf in fandom belongs to Greg Pickersgill - see also Smelliest Scarf, Most Boring Scarf, Cheapest Scarf, Most Discussed Scarf, Most Disgusting Scarf. This is also the Fannish Record Of Least Consequence Held By Any Fan") to the cassette The Astral Leauge's Golden Greats (a recording everyone should have). (Graham also played on and wrote some of the songs for the moderately appalling New Worlds Fair by Michael Moorcock and the Deep Fix (a recording no-one should have)). Pat is also a professor of Astral Harmony with many degrees (Ba Ma FRI Cat Stud MSB Order of the Golden Garter FRiC Proctor Inst Fem Stud) but will only admit to it when intoxicated. Both have written for other people's fanzines and drunk other people's beer, cider, wine and spirits, Neither have been to Armenia.

Well, that's the Charnocks. They're two of the best and most talented people in fandom (despite any impression I may have given to the contrary) and either one would have made a good and deserving Fan Guest Of Honour. Together they make two good guests of honour - almost too good.

1978-The Year In SF

*

David Pringle

1978 was the Year of Women, which is to say it was a good year for female SF writers, who seemed to dominate the field as never before. By far and away the biggest-selling novel of the year was The White Dragon by Anne McCaffrey (Del Rey and Sidgwick & Jackson). It has been through five printings and has sold over 65,000 copies in the American hardcover edition alone. It's a sequel to Dragonflight (1968) and Dragonquest (1971) and is about the further adventures of the "Dragonriders" of the planet Pern. McCaffrey also published the first novel of an entirely new series in 1978. This was Dinosaur Planet (Futura and Del Rey). McCaffrey's lush blending of the motifs of heroic fantasy and interplanetary SF obviously appeals to many readers although discerning critics usually take little interest in her works. Suffice it to say that The White Dragon has failed to gain a 1979 Nebula nomination although it will undoubtedly be a contender for the Hugo.

However, two female writers do loom large among the Nebula nominees. These are Vonda McIntyre, with her second novel Dreamsnake (Houghton-Mifflin and Gollancz), and C.J.Cherryh, with her fourth novel The Faded Sun: Kesrith (Galaxy, February-May and DAW books) and her short story "Cassandra" (F&SF, October). The prolific Ms Cherryh published two further novels in 1978 - Well of Shiuan and The Faded Sun: Shon'jir (both from DAW). The writer who surprises one by her absence from the Nebula nominations is James Tiptree Jr. (alias Alice Sheldon). Tiptree has built up a considerable reputation with her short stories over the past ten years, and 1978 saw the publication of her first novel, Up the Walls of the World (Berkley/Putnam and Gollancz), as well as a new short story collection, Star Songs of an Old Primate (Del Rey). Up the Walls... received mixed reviews (although some of them were raves): it is a powerful, if over-written, treatment of telepathic contact between aliens and a group of human misfits. No doubt it will, along with Anne McCaffrey's The White Dragon, be a contender for the 1979 Hugo.

Other notable 1978 books by females include Survivor by Octavia Butler (Doubleday and Sidgwick & Jackson); Whatever Happened to Emily Goode After the Great Exhibition by Ralyn Moore (Donning); Somerset Dreams and Other Fictions by Kate Wilhelm (Harper & Row); Journey by Marta Randall (Pocket Books); The Two of Them by Joanna Russ (Berkley/Putnam); Stormqueen! by Marion Zimmer Bradley (DAW); Godsfire by Cynthia Fellos (Pocket Books); Mother Lines by Suzy McKee Charnas (Berkley/Putnam); A Different Light by Elizabeth A.Lynn (Berkley); The Outcasts of Heaven Belt by Joan D. Vinge (Analog, February-April, and Signet Books); and False Dawn and Cautionary Tales by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (both Doubleday). It looks as though almost every female SF writer, apart from Ursula Le Guin, produced a new book in 1978. Then one discovers to one's surprise that Ursula Le Guin did publish a new novel last year. It's called "The Eye of the Heron" and it comprises the larger part of Virginia Kidd's anthology Millennial Women (Delacorte). It's not major Le Guin, but nevertheless a solid piece of work, and it will no doubt appear as a separate book before long.

In a year so dominated by women, what did the male writers achieve? Frankly, not a great deal. There were comparatively few books from the "Old Masters" of the field. However, Clifford D. Simak (at the age of 74!) produced not one but two new novels: the entertaining Mastadonia (Del Rey; in Britain as Catface, Sidgwick & Jackson), and adventure into heroic fantasy, The Fellowship of the Talisman (Del Rey). L. Sprague de Camp's The Great Fetish (Doubleday), a comic planetary romance, proved a disappointment, while Brian Aldiss's Enemies of the System (F&SF, June, Cape and Harper & Row), a novella-length satire, was also below par for its author. Hal Clement's Through the Eye of a Needle (Del Rey) was a sequel to his 30-year old novel Needle (but the field has moved on apace since 1949 and it shows). Poul Anderson published an overblown new novel, The Avatar, as well as a fat collection of shorter works, The Earth Book of Stormgate (both Berkley/Putnam). Gordon R Dickson produced The Far Call (Dial Press and Dell; Sidgwick & Jackson, Futura), which seems to be an attempt to blend SF with social melodrama of the Allen Drury type. Robert Sheckley published his first new novel for some years, The Alchemical Marriage of Alastair Crompton (Michael Joseph), as well as a new collection, The Robot Who Looked Like Me (Sphere): both are guaranteed entertainment though lightweight. Also entertaining but lacking in ambition were Bob Shaw's two 1978 offerings, Ship of Strangers and Vertigo (Gollancz and Ace). Harlan Ellison's new story-collection, Strange Wine (Harper & Row), was something of a bestseller in the USA. Algis Budrys produced a solid collection, Blood and Burning (Berkley and Gollancz), and Theodore Sturgeon came up with a volume of old but previously uncollected stories, Visions and Venturers (Dell and Gollancz). Perhaps the best collection of them all, however, was the posthumous volume Still I Persist in Wondering (Dell) by Edgar Pangborn. Other well-established writers who published new books in 1978 include Barry Malzberg with Chorale (Doubleday); Harry Harrison with The Stainless Steel Rat Wants You (Joseph); Roger Zelazny with The Courts of Chaos - the fifth and final "Amber" novel; and, of course, Richard Cowper with his stylish The Road to Corlay (Gollancz and Pocket Books). Finally there was Michael Moorcock's Gloriana (Alison & Busby and Fontana), which although it is an alternate universe fantasia rather than SF, has my vote as the best novel of the year. It is comic (but fundamentally serious in purpose), full of inventive detail and written in a prose of marvellous richness. Who knows, it may establish Moorcock as the Shakespeare of the SF and fantasy fields.

Moorcock apart, new and newish writers (the generation of the 1970's) put on a better showing in 1978 than did the established men. Gardner Dozois has gained a Nebula nomination for his first novel Strangers (Berkley/Putnam), as has the late Tom Reamy for his first (and last) novel Blind Voices (Berkley/Putnam). John Varley is almost certain to win a Nebula for the title novella of his superb collection The Persistence of Vision (Dial Press; in Britain as In the Hall of the Martian Kings, Sidgwick & Jackson and Futura), a book which garnered an extraordinary number of rave reviews. George Alec Effinger produced a sly and wacky new collection Dirty Tricks (Doubleday), although his novel Death in Florence (Doubleday) was a dreadful disappointment. Other books by recent writers which drew some attention in 1978 include Jack L. Chalker's Dancers in the Afterglow (Del Rey); Brian Stableford's The City of the Sun (DAW); Ian Watson's Miracle Visitors (Gollancz and Ace); Mick Farren's The Feelies (Big O); James P. Hogan's The Genesis Machine and The Gentle Giants of Ganymede (both Del Rey); Frederick Turner's A Double Shadow (Berkley/Putnam); Joe Haldeman's story collection Infinite Dreams (St. Martin's); Charles Sheffield's Sight of Proteus (Ace); and Garry Kilworth's The Night of Kadar (Faber).

To conclude: a glance at the SF magazine in 1978. Fantasy and Science Fiction continued to lead the field in quality if not in sales, with notable stories by Tom Reamy, Kit Reed, John Varley, Christopher Priest, Avram Davidson, Gregory Benford, Hilbert Schenck, Michael Bishop, C.J. Cherryh and others. Perhaps the most distinguished F & SF contributor of the year, however, was Thomas M. Disch, whose beautiful novelette "The Man Who Had No Idea" (October) is worthy of a Hugo nomination. Almost as good was his humorous and inventive "Concepts" (December). In 1978 Analog lost its editor of seven years standing, Ben Bova, and gained a new editor in Stanley Schmidt (who took over with the December issue). The magazine ran serials by Joan Vinge and by Spider and Jeanne Robinson (Stardance II), as well as shorter fiction by Vonda McIntyre, George R.R. Martin, Orson Scott Card, Algis Budrys, Gregory Benford, Jack Williamson, Harlan Ellison, Frederik Pohl, Poul Anderson and many others. On the whole it was a good year for Analog, and perhaps one should single out for special mention Randall Garrett's hilarious parody of "Doc Smith", "Backstage Lensman" (June). Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine appeared as a bimonthly throughout 1978, although it has since gone monthly. It has now established itself as the top-selling SF magazine although it is markedly more juvenile in its orientation than any of the others. The emphasis is mainly on new, unknown writers, but the magazine also ran fiction in 1978 by John Varley, Isaac Asimov, L. Sprague de Camp, Brian Aldiss, George Alec Effinger, Larry Niven, John Brunner, Jack Williamson and other "name" authors. 1978 also saw the first issue of a sister publication, Asimov's SF Adventure Magazine, which attempts (with mixed success) to recapture the flavour of the old Planet Stories. Another bimonthly magazine of recent vintage which appears to be going from strength to strength is Galileo. Each issue contains an attractive spread of articles, illustrations and reviews (giving Galileo more of the feel of a fanzine than any other professional magazine), as well as fiction. The leading magazine casualty of the year was Galaxy, which produced just eight issues although it is ostensibly a monthly. The editor, John J. Pierce, resigned after only a year's tenure, and has since been replaced by Hank Stine. Galaxy's main (in fact, its only) strength was in serials: Zelazny's The Courts of Chaos, Cherryh's The Faded Sun; Kesrith, Benford's The Stars in Shroud and the beginning of Pohl's Jem ran there, although readers often had long waits between episodes. The sister magazines Amazing and Fantastic continued their rather chequered careers throughout 1978 (four issues of each title appeared) although by the beginning of 1979 Ted White had resigned his editorship and the future of the two magazines appeared in doubt. But if certain older titles were ailing the magazine field as a whole retained its vigour with the appearance of two completely new titles - Omni, published by the Penthouse organisation, and Destinies, published by Ace Books. Omni is a glossy popular science magazine with a sizeable SF content. Ben Bova has been appointed as fiction editor (despite which most SF fans were cynical about the venture). Destinies, by contrast, is a quarterly paperback volume edited by James Baen; despite its unusual format, it fits more obviously into the tradition of SF magazines.

Although the number of SF anthologies has decreased considerably since the hey-day of the early 1970s, a few volumes of new material did appear in 1978, most notably New Dimensions 8 edited by Robert Silverberg (Harper & Row); Andromeda 3 edited by Peter Weston (Futura); Orbit 20 edited by Damon Knight (Harper & Row); Pulsar edited by George Hay (Penguin); and Anticipations edited by Christopher Priest (Faber and Scribner's). The

last-named was perhaps the most distinguished of these, with notable contributions from Brian Aldiss, Robert Sheckley, Thomas M Disch, J.G. Ballard and Ian Watson. Ballard's "One Afternoon at Utah Beach" was, incidentally, his first new story to appear in an SF publication for several years, although he did publish three other stories during 1978 in non-SF magazines. The best of these was a small gem in Bananas 10 (spring) called "Having a Wonderful Time".

1978 was by no means the most memorable year of the past (booming) decade - 1979 promises to be better. But there were a number of works which should endure. Despite its being the Year of the Women, I'll put my head on the line and state that my personal preference for the Hugo are as follows: Novel - Gloriana by Michael Moorcock; Novella - "The Persistence of Vision" by John Varley; novelette - "The Man Who Had No Idea" by Thomas M. Disch; short story - "Having a Wonderful Time" by J.G. Ballard. Will anyone support me?



The Great Sci-Fi Films Of 1978 * John Brosnan



Looking back at the sf fanzines of the 1950s when the last big sf movie boom was underway one notices the fans spent a lot of time complaining about the lack of real sf movies and failure of such films as The Thing and War of the Worlds to live up to the material they were based upon. Now I've done a great deal of similar complaining about the new crop of 'sf' films recently and I'm beginning to realize it's all a bit futile. After all I love such old films as The Thing and War of the Worlds despite their absurdities but if I'd been a practising sf fan back in the 1950s no doubt I too would have been railing against them. Therefore it's likely that many of the films of today that set my teeth on edge will one day be regarded as marvellous old classics and be appreciated for qualities that I'm unable to see at the moment. So I am going to borrow a device suggested by Christopher Priest and divide the films of 1978 into sf and sci-fi. Sf films are those that fulfill my personal requirements as to what a real sf film should be (don't ask me what they are - they change regularly) and sci-fi films are what most film makers produce when they think they are making sf films. Needless to say, 1978 was a great year for sci-fi films.

About the only thing all these sci-fi films of the last years had in common, apart from looniness, was a strong leaning towards religion in theme and tone. For instance in early 1978 we had two movies that dealt with a young, working class American male who undergoes a profound religious experience and becomes obsessed with trying to get others to accept the reality of his encounter, losing both his wife and job in the process. Significantly the same actress, Terri Garr, played the wife in both movies. The titles are, of course, Oh! God and Close Encounters of the Third Kind and the only major difference between them was that in the latter film God was represented by several million dollars worth of special effects whereas in the former He was played by George Burns.

The first third of Superman-The Movie seemed to be leading up to the Second Coming what with Glenn Ford as Pa Kent, glowing with rural piety, claiming that he knew young Suvey had been 'put on the Earth for a purpose' and Marlon Brando's disembodied face appearing in the clouds and booming down commands like Jehovah, but once Superman arrived in the Metropolis the film turned into an enjoyable romp that was fairly faithful to the comic strip.

Damnation Alley had a strong flavour of the Old Testament in both its title and the nuclear apocalypse that occurs shortly after the credit titles but from then on it's downhill. The only sense of wonder generated by the film is in wondering just where the hell George Peppard found the materials to build these two giant landmaster vehicles. Presumably he made them out of old soup cans.

Not much of a biblical flavour in It Lives Again but there is some in the suggestion that the hideous mutant babies are some sort of punishment for mankind's moral lapses as opposed to being purely a product of natural selection. Not as good as the first film, It's Alive!, but Larry Cohen, who wrote and directed both, is an idiosyncratic enough talent to lift it out of the simple exploitation category (pity his bizarre movie Demon about a homicidal alien who thinks he's God is unlikely to get a release in this country).

I don't know if there's any religious theme in the Japanese animated film Message From Space because I couldn't force myself to sit through it. Unfortunately I did see the movie version of Battlestar Galactica and I sincerely wish I hadn't...it's the kind of Wagon Train in space for morons and concerns the survivors of 12 human inhabited worlds trying, after being attacked by evil aliens, to reach the 13th colony on a mythical planet called Earth. Perhaps by the time they get here the place will be just a memory - either that or, like the Vietnamese boat people, they'll find that no one will be overjoyed by their arrival. No religious theme that I could detect but the Zodiac plays an important part - the various worlds are called Gemini, Taurus, Pisces etc despite the fact they are obviously situated light years from Earth. Presumably the writers of this space-going atrocity believe that the star pattern seen from Earth will appear the same anywhere in the galaxy...

My favourite sci-fi movie of 1978 was The Fury but I'm probably biased because it was directed by Brian De Palma and starred Amy Irving. De Palma is such a master of visual sensuality that he could make a 12 hour film of Birmingham seem erotic but when he's got material like Ms Irving to work with the result is truly bollock boggling. The story isn't much - it's really just a fairy tale about an evil man who wants to possess two young people who have magical powers (same plot as Disney's Escape to Witch Mountain) - but it's marvellous to look at and great fun. Try as I might I can't find any religious element in it though the villain, Childress (John Cassavetes) is obviously on the devil's pay- roll and when Amy Irving, in the film's explosively gory climax, tells him she's sending him to hell, you get the distinct impression she's not speaking metaphorically.

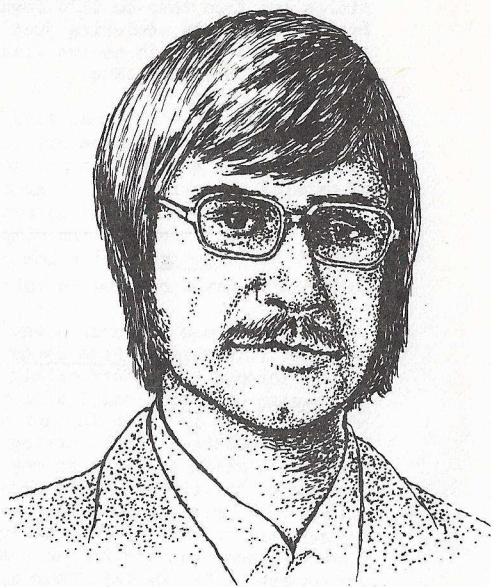
So 1978 wasn't a great year for even sci-fi films but I will probably remember with some fondness Superman and The Fury in years to come...I will remember some parts of Close Encounters (very small parts) with fondness but I doubt if the passage of several decades and the accompanying softening of the brain will make films like Damnation Alley and Battlestar Galactica assume a nostalgic glow in my mind.

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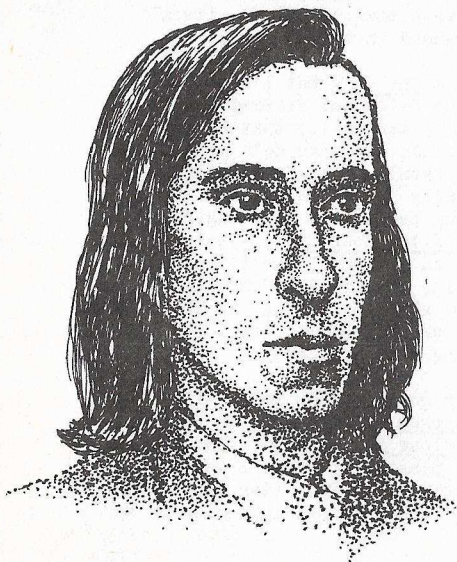
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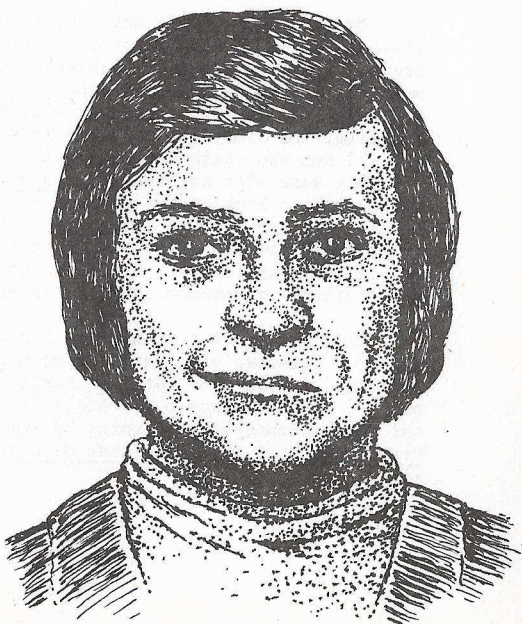
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4

Mike Dickinson

1

A teacher by profession, Mike Dickinson's involvement with SF fandom began at the 1976 Mancon. With Lee Montgomerie he produced Bar Trek, a mixture of serious and not-so-serious SF comment. Humour and hard criticism were subsequently more sharply divided between the personalzine Adsum and the Serious and Constructive SIRIUS (co-produced with Alan Dorey). Owner of a huge collection of books and magazines, his extensive knowledge of SF has been displayed in reviews for Foundation and for the BSFA's Vector. Formerly bearded like Castro, Mr. Dickinson has now reduced his whiskers to gamekeeper level.

David Pringle

2

David Pringle has been writing SF criticism since the early days of Peter Weston's Speculation. A contributor to many malifications around the world (including encyclopaedias, bibliographies, reference works and academic journals) he is recognised as one of the leading British critics of Science Fiction. With James Goddard he edited J.G.Ballard: The First 20 Years , and his own extended critique of Ballard's work will be published shortly. Trained as a librarian, he is now Research Fellow (and reviews editor for Foundation) at the SF Foundation, with a special interest in extending the educational uses of SF in schools and colleges.

Alan Dorey

3

Popularly supposed to possess hollow legs, Alan Dorey retains a lean and hungry look despite the voracity with which he consumes huge amounts of food and drink. This can only be due to the energy burned up in his super-active involvement with a multitude of concerns. In the last couple of years he has produced five large issues of Black Hole (for Leeds University SF Society), co-edited Sirius with Mike Dickinson, published five issues of his own Gross Encounters (winner of the 1978 Nova Award for Best Fanzine), organised two SF film festivals, contributed letters and articles to many fanzines, appeared on several convention panels, handled most of the routine detail of registrations for Yorcon, published a bulletin for his own University Geography Department, and studied for his degree. The Chairman-elect of the BSFA, he has no intention of slowing down.

Ian Williams

4

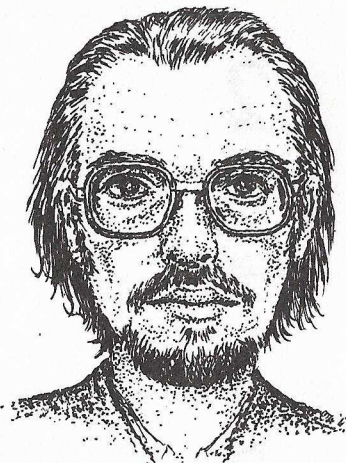
Founder member of the Newcastle based group, the Gannets, and one of the organisers of the 1974 Tynecon, librarian Ian Williams has been active as a fanzine editor and writer throughout the seventies. Among other titles, he has edited Maya, Goblin's Grotto and latterly Siddhartha. A full length novel (writte with Rob Jackson) is currently with his agent. Organiser of this year's Fan Hospitality Room, he is also working on an anthology of fan writing for publication in the near future.



5



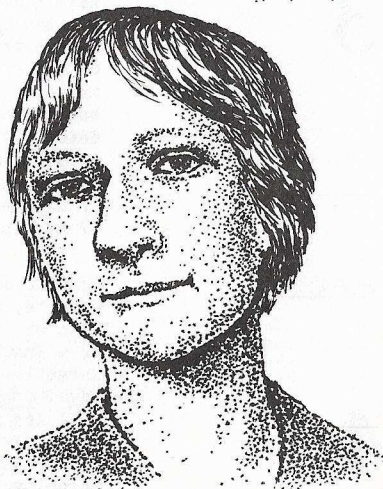
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Carol Gregory

5

An early member of the Leeds University SF Society (founded by John & Eve Harvey), Carol Gregory was responsible for turning Black Hole into a litho production and generally raising the quality of appearance and presentation. Contributor of much material to the BSFA's Vector (including several covers) her work has also appeared professionally. Co-editor of Ghas, her keen interest in films led to her present employment with the BBC as an editor.

Kate Jeary

6

A student of archaeology, Kate Jeary has turned to more modern interests, involving herself firstly with the Leeds University SF group (for which she acted as their Librarian) and subsequently with the less formally constituted Leeds Group. A contributor to Black Hole, she has worked on registrations desks at conventions during intervals away from excavating Roman remains at York.

D.West

7

Since first contact with fandom in the early sixties, D.West has contributed articles and artwork to many fanzines, published his own Daisnaid, sold three SF stories, written some serious criticism for Foundation, run through a variety of jobs (ranging from bank clerk to canteen manager on a building site) and reached semi-respectability via a wife and four children. He currently works as a publisher's reader.

Paul & Jan Matthews

8/9

After an early involvement with the Cheltenham SF group, Paul and Jan Matthews moved north to Leeds where they soon discovered the University SF group., and through them, the Leeds Group. With an interest in the visual side of SF, Paul has contributed artwork to various fanzines and been responsible for the production side of the Progress Reports. Together, Paul and Jan will be running the Art Show.



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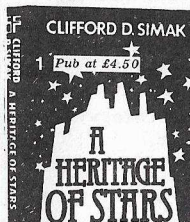
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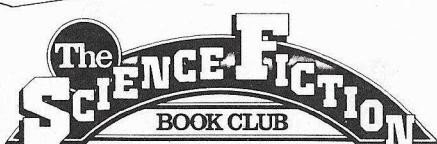
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Creative Writing

D. West

Some have it easy, some have it hard... or do they?

There's an apocryphal story about a well-known SF and fantasy author:

"Mike's been feeling very tired recently."

"Oh?"

"Yes, he keeps falling asleep at the typewriter."

"That's bad."

"Well, it wouldn't matter so much except that these days when he wakes up he finds he still hasn't finished the novel."

The ability to write saleable prose more or less in your sleep is undoubtedly an asset in some ways, but it can be a mixed blessing. Like the problems of the very rich, the difficulties of such a situation may seem almost desirable in themselves, but a closer involvement will eventually reveal the drawbacks.

Science Fiction is one of the easiest forms of genre writing to produce - badly. Significantly enough, it's a field in which many writers have started very young, at ages when all their knowledge and insight was inevitably second-hand. But then, you don't need to know much about character if you can replace characterisation with stereotypes; you don't need to know much about writing or construction if you can always rely on the deus ex machina of some pseudo-scientific marvel to drag the plot out of a tricky corner.

The only thing that's easier to write than bad SF is bad Fantasy - here even the most casual attention to realistic detail and scientific plausibility can be cast aside. Most Fantasy fiction is simply gory (or twee) Historical Costume Drama without the historical authenticity.

This kind of writing is not so much creative as derivative, imitative and repetitive. In a word, it's fake.

Unfortunately, it's also widespread. Alfred Bester once remarked that American writers seemed to fear that doubts would be cast on their masculinity unless they emphasised their essentially non-artistic characters - listing their employment credits as lumberjacks, cowboys, deensea divers, etc etc. In the SF field a similar anxiety to avoid the stigma of effete aestheticism seem to manifest itself as a determined philistinism: SF writers aren't artists by God - they're businessmen manufacturing and selling a product in the good old American Way.

(This attitude is not exclusively American. It was at a British convention that our very own Peter Weston once reminded a panel discussion that the discussion was about science fiction and not literature.)

The danger here is that bad writing will drive out good - that new writers will tend to shape their work to suit the lowest common denominator of taste. Every beginning writer has a desperate urge to sell, but the money itself (at this stage) is much less important than the triumph of acceptance. Writers are unscrupulous monomaniacs: they'll do whatever seems necessary to get the right result. Later, the cash may assume more importance....and later still, they may begin to wonder if they've paid too high a price for the dubious delights of successful hackdom.

By that time it may be too late. Old habits are hard to change, particularly when the change involves taking risks - risks of losing money or status. Some writers - Silverberg, Pohl, Moorcock and others have managed to break with their pasts and move on to work which at least attempts to transcend the limits of formula potboilers. But how many more are there - successful in their way, yet stunted in their growth - who stay locked in the comfortable circular reasoning of the assertion that good writing makes money, and therefore any writing which makes money is good?

There is another danger: rejecting the crass commercialism of the worst kinds of machine-written SF. the aspiring author may head into the opposing (but equally arid) territory of Art for Art's sake. And when he finds that no one reads him except those with similar aspirations to succeed as Artists, he can blame the lack of attention on prejudiced publishers and ignorant and tasteless readers.

It's a good line of defence - it enables any moderately intelligent dilettante to feel the noble glow of literary martyrdom. Yes, despite the temptations of filthy cash he will not violate his artistic integrity, prostitute his talents, etc etc. Eunuchs always do come on strong for chastity.

Some people find commercial writing easy. Others think it looks easy and take great pains to master the format, turning themselves into copyists. Yet others back off altogether and look for excuses, making a virtue out of their own lack of ability of staying power. The most fortunate of all are those who try it, find the going tougher than expected, and realise that since writing of any sort is hard work, the effort might just as well go towards producing something good.

Talking about writing, James Gunn observed that the first misconception any beginner should get rid of is the belief that writing is a form of self-expression. It's not. It's a form of communication. It's also a form of salesmanship, and the first principle of salesmanship is not "Give the Public what it wants" but "Make the Public want what it's given".

In other words: write what and how you like, but make sure your readers get something which will hold their attention.

This article has tended to take for granted that there is a readily visible difference between Good and Bad SF. So there is - but every individual draws his own dividing line. The argument is endless - and all to the good. Consensus standards lead to the copying of old models rather than the creation of new prototypes. There's only one real crime in writing: accepting second-best.

The concept of a competition which deliberately invites the entrant to construct a short-story round a selection of SF cliches (spaceships, BEMs, etc) might seem at odds with the desire to go beyond the self-imposed limits of commercial SF. Not so. If "Creative Writing" is worth anything at all it is because there is no separation between Art and Craft. The illustrations provided feature a selection of the common properties of SF. The point to be made and emphasised here is the very lack of novelty. There is still scope for the unrestrained imaginative extrapolation that is one of SF's most attractive features, but the illustrations themselves can't carry the story. Their basic content is too familiar to any SF reader. The writer cannot hide behind sense-of-wondergimmickry. Unless he comes up with some good writing and some ideas that go beyond the obvious his failure will be unconcealable. Our competition deliberately uses a formula (build your story around any three from eight standard SF illustrations) to make plain the fact that a formula is not enough. There must be good writing as well.

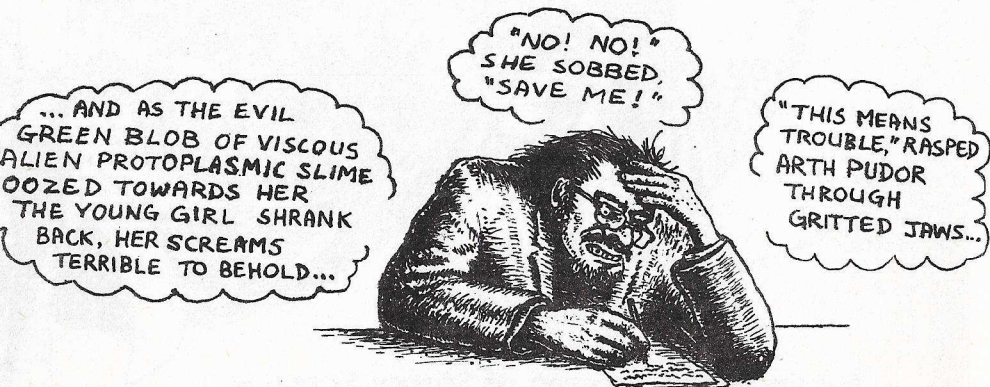
The whole business is something of a tightrope act. The first requirement of any piece of writing is that it should be readable. The second (less obvious) requirement is that the reader shouldn't wonder afterwards why he bothered to waste his time with such meaningless vap. The intending SF writer should ask himself whether he's going out for the cash, or whether he's got something more to give. Too many established authors ducked this question long ago: they decided they'd just take the money and run. The heroes are those who keep fighting.

So - if you're starting now, why not begin as you mean to go on? Learn the mechanical skills, yes, but until you really try to do your best you'll stay a mechanic and not a writer. Compromise on quality and the struggle is so much waste and wasteful effort.

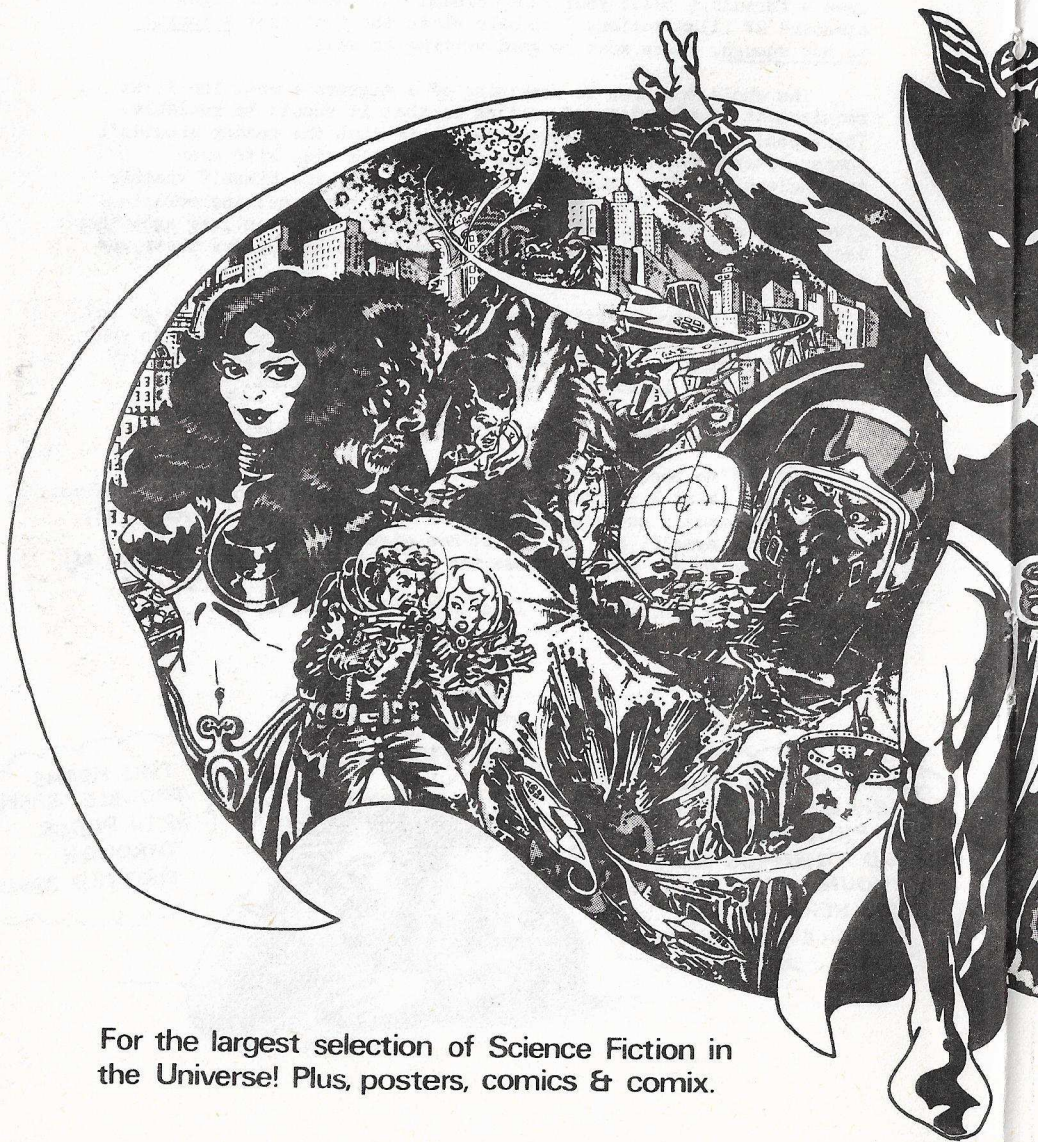
And suppose you try - and try harder - and still fail?

Well, I've been learning the guitar for about fifteen years. Sometimes I think I sound almost musical for five or six bars at a time. That's not exactly success. But neither has it been a complete waste. I've enjoyed myself, and the effort has given me a heightened appreciation of the work of those who can manage what I make a mess of.

Maybe you can do better. It's certainly worth trying.



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Yorcon films

Carol Gregory

DEVIL DOLL (Tod Browning, 1936) 'X'

This is a classic horror film with the great Lionel Barrymore, in which human beings are reduced to mindless, grotesque manikins in order to carry out the main character's criminal plans. Like Tod Browning's other main contributions to the early development of the spine-chiller, Freaks (1932), this film is so rare that even I haven't seen it.

DEMON SEED (Donald Cammell, 1978) 'AA'

A glittering reworking of our favourite theme of man versus machine, or in this case Julie Christie versus machine. Proteus, a super-computer, is programmed with all human knowledge and as a result begins to get ideas above its station. Well, have you ever heard the patter of tiny transistors? You'll never trust your calculator again.....

ATOMIC SURMARINE (Spencer Bennett) 'X'

Described by a critic who ought to know better as a "harrowing suspense drama from tomorrow's headlines...", this is a must for all connoisseurs of cringeworthiness. An alien spaceship lands in the Arctic, and the US atomic submarine Tiger Shark is sent to investigate.

PROVIDENCE (Alain Resnais, 1976) 'X'

On the fringes of recent developments in science fiction, Resnais's first English language film explores the relationship between reality and fiction. A dying author is writing his last novel and re-inventing his past in the process until past, present and future are swallowed up in his own nightmare. This one's for me and anyone else who likes films they need to think about.

SHORT FILM PROGRAMME

To entertain and delight you on Sunday morning, the traditional quiet spot of any con, we have a selection of short films. The programme is 75% appropriate, and you can make up your own minds about the other 25% viz.

METAMORPHIS - the classy item, Grand Prix winner at Cannes in 1976, this brilliant short develops our modern preoccupation with 'filling in time' to its ultimate conclusion.

THE FIRST ALBERT MEMORIAL ON THE MOON/TALES OF OLD DARTMOOR

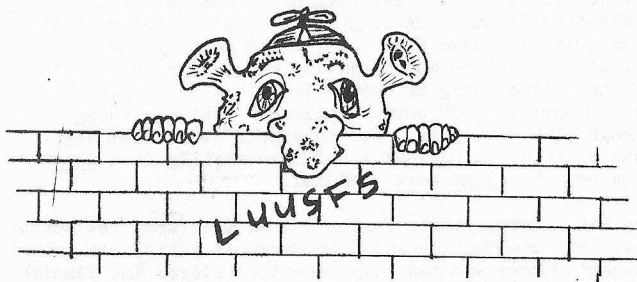
Both items from the famous Teleoons series, the latter is the other 25% mentioned above.

AN SF EDITOR AT WORK - an Astounding encounter for Harry Harrison and Gordon Dickson, over lunch with John W. Campbell. Gosh!

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (Stanley Kubrick, 1968)

What can I say? If you haven't seen it yet, I don't know how you managed it. Kubrick's visionary monument to scientific movie making (good bit, that) still overshadows all of its predecessors and most of the attempts made subsequently to grab our sense of wonder by the throat. It is one of the ten best films of all time, and should be seen at least once every five years, just to keep us all alive.

ANOTHER SCIENCE FICTION GROUP EXISTS IN LEEDS, AT THE UNIVERSITY



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Fandom In 1978

Alan Dorey

*

Now that we have been projected deep into the year of the British World Science Fiction Convention, experiencing all the turmoil associated with such a prestigious event, it seems opportune to cast our minds back to the Year Before IT Happened. Indeed, by hiding behind such a label we allowed ourselves to become subject to the fluctuations of the 'Fannish Market' to a greater degree than is usual. It was almost as if this was fandom's last chance to strengthen its paradoxical future - a strange mixture of 'radical minded conservatism'; changes being wanted in the standard of fanzines and fannish writing along with the curious habit of trying to seek solace in the welcome and reassuring atmosphere of conventions and fan groups. Such was the desire by the forces at work to 'create' replacements for fan writers and fanzines of old, that many fairly average people were discovered, and because few were actively discouraged, some actually progressed to become competent writers. Now, this is against the general rule of things: traditionally, only those who have the power, energy and sustained output succeeded amidst the barrage of criticism and invective that usually followed. Survival of the fittest, if you like - but it did work. The effect of SEACON could make 1979 an unknown quantity, and the reflection of interest brought about by Britain's first Worldcon since 1965 would no doubt ensure that fandom would never be quite the same again. Certainly many of the hardcore of fans producing fanzines and attending conventions wouldn't take much notice of the hiatus going on around them, but the sheer numbers of fanzines produced in 1978 surely indicated that something was happening. Although 1978 wasn't the 'fin de siecle' that some might have supposed, it was an interesting year - not necessarily from what it produced, but from what it might have produced.

A stale feeling was growing within fandom during the first few months of the year; those who had created the goods in previous years were rightly feeling stagnant. Those who had only recently entered the fannish fray were sitting around waiting for the luminaries to produce fanzines, often expressing the opinion that they would love to push out an issue themselves, but that they hadn't got the confidence. A classic case of stalemate that characterises the ups and downs of fandom. If in doubt, push it out - you can only make one mistake. Of course, if you continue making the same mistake, you must suffer the consequences, but generally, even amongst the most harsh of criticisms there is advice that once taken will improve the standard of a fanzine.

Dave Langford started the year with still more issues of TWIL DDU, the quality of which remained at a high point for most of the year. He continued the familiar recipe of neat, economical writing that would appeal to committed fan and non-fan alike. His standard of humour rarely flagged and ideas flowed from his keyboard. Kevin Smith's DOT, so often under rated, appeared a few times and Rob Hansen unleashed further issues of EPSILON. Indeed, 1978 was very much the year of the personalzine, especially with a master of the medium, Roy Kettle, giving us an issue of TRUE RAT in time for SKYCON. If only he had done further issues and not restricted himself to the duty-bound Skycon issue. Once Greg Pickersgill had exhausted himself with issue 6 of STOP BREAKING DOWN (which must have broken down just that once too often; it proved to be the last fanzine he produced that year), the way seemed open for people to spring up like so many skittles on a bowling alley - and since critics such as D. West had bowed out for a while (only one issue of DAISNAID), there were few people around able or willing to send down accurate shots to scatter the pins to the four corners of the world. Rob Hansen's EPSILON underwent a fundamental change in that he strove to include topical comment, bringing fresh ideas to old talking points and generally forcing people to respond to his provocations. He had the opportunity to do what he felt was right, and it worked.

Peter Roberts pressed on with CHECKPOINT, which was as useful as ever, Ian Maule continued in his ways with NABU; but all these fanzines were old, they'd all had their genesis in years gone by. Whilst they allowed fans to sit back and talk about the fanzine scene, they were the only publications that could really be discussed. No wonder fanzine reviewers gave up - how many times can you say the same things about the same few fanzines without giving into more exciting matters such as tortoise racing?

In an effort to fill gaps in the fannish market, several dire fanzines appeared during the run-in to SKYCON and the month or so following. Most were poorly produced - after all, what had they to copy? Had they ever heard of a class fanzine like WRINKLED SHREW? - and continued to contain badly written pieces of mediocre quality. Some tried valiantly to tackle the problem of producing a fanzine that was new, but then, so little in fandom these days is new. Since the humorous fanzine was modish, Andy Firth tried with FLEDGLING, which saw two issues before disappearing in a cloud of obscurity. It had some nice ideas, but they just weren't projected in an appealing manner. And this is what it all comes down to, the question of projection. A scientist once said that in producing a theory, it had to be sufficiently difficult to follow in order that the academics would take it up. Similarly, a fanzine has to assume a certain amount of intelligence in its readers. There has to be a balance between the appeal of the subject matter and the way in which it is presented, and this is so often the thing that is so sadly lacking. How many people would have read Richard Barycz's YCZ if he hadn't stuck to a stubborn design and layout? His problem was just the strange and wonderful way in which he actually put the pages and typeface together. By the time one had worked out which pages had to be read in which order, the reduced, cramped typeface boldly confronted those who were still with it. As I say, a balance is necessary, but it's hardly surprising that this is missing from many of the new fanzines that appeared - it can only be gained by experience, and that's something that many fanzine editors patently hadn't got.

What next then? Well, there's always the university or SF clubzine, several of which appeared last year. These magazines are generally circulated amongst a mostly undiscerning audience, torn between the two stools of not daring to criticise the production (because for them, this is a fanzine) whilst there is the chance that his/her fiction writing aspirations might be furthered by the magazine. So often this is the way, and the existence of a university grant to subsidise the magazine should ensure that production at least is polished. With one or two exceptions, this is rarely the case. BLACK HOLE from Leeds University fluctuated in content wildly during the year, ranging from semi-fannish pieces to a typical tired and lacklustre fiction magazine. This no doubt reflected the changing of editorships several times, which is one reason why such magazines never make the grade within fandom - there is no continuity. CHRYSALIS from St.Andrews in Scotland lacked even BH's reasonably proficient layout, and that from UMIST, Manchester (GROK) defies description.

Clubzines too proliferated, ranging from the Leicester group's ETHEREAL SKIE through CIDEREAL TIMES to F.O.K.T. But again, the question is, what do we want from a fanzine? After all, what real harm do generally inoffensive little publications such as these do to fandom at large? Ostensibly nothing, but, if your first contact with fandom is through these magazines, then little of what fandom turns out to be in comparison would be of immediate appeal. Some groups actively despised fandom, Nottingham at one time being an example. Secondly, the fan writers of tomorrow have got to come from somewhere, and being allowed to thrive in small magazines with very little feedback (other than locally interested parties, too often other contributors) is not a good introduction to the high standard of writing and criticism that fandom demands. This may well be taking the fun out of producing fanzines, but if you are expecting people to read your work, haven't they a right to be entertained? Do not paying customers at a soccer match complain if they have to sit through tedious no-score draws ad infinitum?

General zines looked at the start of 1978 as if they were going to be the most numerous form of publication, if not the most literate. Running through the spectrum and taking in the restrained competence of John & Eve Harvey's GHAS (later retitled WALLBANGER), Dave Cobbledick's TIOFART, John Collick's PROCYON, Ian Maule's NABU, Terry Jeeves' ERG, Rob Jackson's MAYA and the GANNETSCRAPBOOK. Of these, Jackson's MAYA is perhaps the one most folk will latch onto and praise, and indeed the single issue to appear in 1978 was of a high standard. But of the others, GHAS, NABU and the GANNETSCRAPBOOK notwithstanding, there was really very little to shout from the rooftops about. Indeed, from a current poll in the BSFA's MATRIX (itself improving as the year went by), many people are still thinking along the lines that a fanzine can only be a genzine or clubzine, typified by the voting of FOKT as the best fanzine of all time. This incredulous result makes the mind boggle, and without wishing to denigrate the improving FOKT, this is as about as accurate as naming a three-toed sloth as the fastest animal in the world.

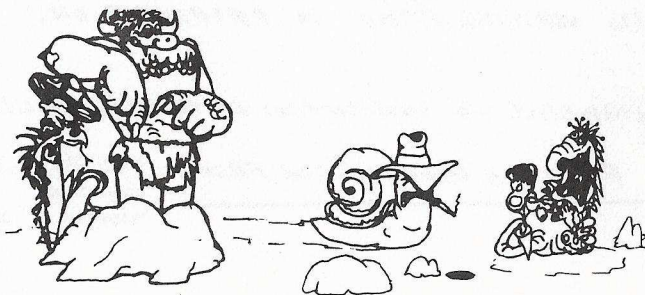
Fanzines can be personalzines, as I have mentioned, and this was typified in the 1978 NOVA awards at NOVACON, in which the top three fanzines were personalzines, namely my own GROSS ENCOUNTERS, Kev Smith's DOT and Dave Langford's TWILL DDU, which also topped the CHECKPOINT fan polls. This country needs genzines because it is they that will ultimately provide the writers of the future. But what it doesn't need

is a crop of poorly executed ones; it requires something of the ilk of WRINKLED SHREW at its height, and in Simone Walsh's SEAMONSTERS, we have at last perhaps got it. This is most definitely my tip for the fanzine of 1979. Personalzines are all very well, but they do have a limited audience, and one suspects a limited life as the author runs out of ideas. Dave Langford has so far proved me wrong, and I trust that he will continue to do so. But, there is the danger that too many personalzines will appear, and the trend must go back to genzines before it is too late. Like my appeal for more people to get into fanzine reviewing (July 1978), it produced results, but now it seems that everybody wants to review, which is why I await the return of Pickersgill and West to show the world how it is really done.

New forces did appear last year, and although by December I was writing that my opinions of late '77 'that there was little hope for fannish fanzines' were a little unjustified, I was still unconvinced that they would fulfill their potentiality. I was pleased that people had come forward to prove that good, creative writing could still be produced. John Collick turned from his PROCYON (born of youthful enthusiasms at the age of 13) to write a lively conrep for Mike Dickinson's ADSUM, which itself was a welcome change from the usual fannish production. Rob Hansen's EPSILON continued to improve, and Ian Maule's NABU whilst still embedded in a small rut, produced several good outside pieces, especially the first of Joe Nicholas's fanzine reviews and a conrep by John Brosnan. Dave Bridges consolidated his position as probably the best fanwriter to emerge since the stirring into action of Pickersgill and Kettle in 1969/70. His ONE OFF 5 was marvellous, and one only wished that he'd done sufficient issues that year to become eligible for inclusion in the NOVA award. There were also signs that Steev Higgins would soon produce something of worth, and the year ended with the distinct feeling that there was at least something to look forward to in 1979.

And with some of the fanzines I've received since January reflecting the situation, I'm happy.

I realise that I've left a lot out and made many sweeping generalisations; If space had permitted, I could have gone on for the fifty or so pages of reviews that I wrote last year, but I'd just like to mention a few fanzines that are worth looking at right now. John Collick has created 101 BALLOONING ADVENTURES THAT THRILLED THE WORLD, and a totally new duo, Simon Ounsley and Graham James have produced OCELOT, which I highly recommend. And then there was Chris Priest bringing out DEADLOSS, a highly entertaining personalzine, Simone producing issue 3 of SEAMONSTERS, and the hopes that Greg might get himself together again. Yes, an interesting year and one only hopes that the imminent approach of SEACON prompts people to produce material worthy of the fannish traditions that this country has. Too many rash actions could produce fanzines that we would be ashamed to show the Americans; we know they respect British fandom - let's ensure that they continue so to do.





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Ron Bennet & Alan Dorey

Leeds has gone tentacle-in-pseudopod with science fiction since the emergence of the field as a genre in its own right; the first overseas chapter of Hugo Gernsback's Science Fiction League was formed in Leeds in 1935. And two years later Leeds was the venue of the country's first SF convention, attended by such worthies as Arthur C Clarke, Eric Frank Russell, Les Johnson and Wally Gillings.

During the war, when an organised fandom all but disintegrated because of interested parties being scattered far and wide across the globe, Mike Rosenblum, farm-working to the north of Leeds, used to cycle home every evening to throw together issues of Futurian War Digest, an invaluable contact magazine published on the unused reverse sheets of special prepared American fanzines, so scarce was paper during those pretty dismal times.

In the early fifties the Leeds club was revived under the grand-sounding title of the Leeds Science Fiction Association. It held regular meetings in attic rooms at the Adelphi Hotel on Leeds Bridge for some years until the Landlord considered that the members had refurbished and renovated the rooms up to the standard whereby they could be let out as bedrooms to hotel guests. During this time members were hyper-active with publishing fanzines such as New Futurian (Michael Rosenblum), BEM (Mal Ashworth and Tom White), Ploy (Ron Bennett) and Orbit (George Gibson). By the end of the decade however, meetings were becoming more and more irregular, and this group, probably from the Golden Age of fandom, had no direct link with the group which centred on the University some ten years later.

The university SF society began operations in late 1973, and soon produced people like John and Eve Harvey and Dave Pringle. Their magazine, Black Hole commenced operations after a suggestion from Lee Montgomerie, and was reasonably well established by the time Carol Gregory joined in 1975. There was a certain feeling of pioneering at this juncture, with many guest speakers and films being put on. The magazine went litho in December of that year, and it was in 1977 that Alan Dorey came into contact with them.

After attending the 1977 Eastercon, the small drinking sessions at the Victoria Hotel between Mike Dickinson, Dave Pringle and D.West were enlarged by the arrival of Carol Gregory, Kate Jeary and Alan Dorey, and it was here in November that the 'bold' step to run the 1979 Easter convention was taken. Meetings began to grow, and the university group became a separate group as they too took in more and more members. Moves were made to find another pub in early 1978, and a temporary upheaval ensued as the Eagle was tried before settling on the West Riding, where a regular force of people turn up every Friday night. Folk from Manchester and Sheffield started turning up every now and again, and the 'decision' was taken in early 1979 to turn the meeting on the last Friday of every month into a form of 'Northern Tun' gathering. Fanzines proliferate, the many titles coming from the Leeds Group including Adsum, Gross Encounters, Sirius, Procyon (now Entropy), Canopus, Daisnaid, Ocelot, O'Ryan and the University's Black Hole. This is quite apart from various one-off titles such as Victor, Isaac Astral's SF Weekly, Derik Prince of Fandom and Reflections. So, all in all, you could say that the group is at the very least, active.

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No. 15, our latest issue, features Michael Moorcock (on the history of New Worlds), Stanislaw Lem, David Pringle, Brian Stableford and Thomas M. Disch (on Close Encounters), together with reviews by Mark Adlard, Hilary Bailey, John Clute, Richard Cowper, John Sladek, Cherry Wilder and many others.

Forthcoming in no.16 are contributions by Michael Moorcock, David Pringle, Mack Reynolds and Brian Stableford, while no.17 -- a special Worldcon issue -- will include, among many other items, two articles by Fritz Leiber and one by Brian Aldiss.

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WANT TO WRITE SF?

The Science Fiction Foundation is organizing an intensive residential writers' workshop, to be held in central London on 12th-16th July 1979. The course tutor will be Yorcon Guest of Honour RICHARD COWPER, assisted by Malcolm Edwards from the SFF. The course is open to anyone, although prospective attendees will have to submit samples of their work in advance.

Attendance is strictly limited, so if interested write for full details as soon as possible to:

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... or seek me out during the convention weekend.

Taff

The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund exists to help well-known sf fans across the Atlantic to meet foreign fans and attend conventions on the other side of the ocean. It has proved to be one of sf fandom's most successful projects and since 1953, when the fund was created, ten European fans have made the trip over to America and nine Americans have visited us in Europe - all of this on money raised by sf fandom.

Several candidates are nominated for each trip and the winner is selected by the votes of interested fans on both sides of the Atlantic. This year three well-known and well-liked American fans have been nominated for TAFF - Fred Haskell, Terry Hughes, and Suzanne Tompkins. Voting has been going on since the beginning of the year and with luck and a telephone call to the American Administrator, Roy Tackett in Albuquerque, we should know the result by the end of Yorcon. The winner will be coming to the Worldcon in Brighton.

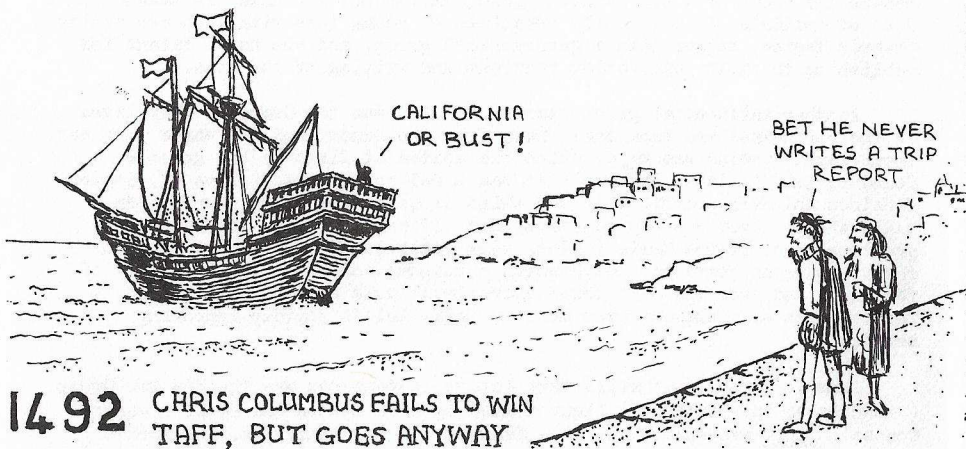
The deadline for voting is this Saturday, April 14th. Ballots, containing voting rules, candidates' platforms, and other information will be available at the registration desk or in the fan room or from me in person. There's a voting fee of at least 50p as a contribution to the fund.

There's also a TAFF auction during the weekend, and I hope to see you there. If anyone wants more information on TAFF, just ask - or write. The address is:

Peter Roberts, 38 Oakland Drive, DAWLISH, Devon, UK.

I look forward to your support, and have a good con.

Peter Roberts,
European TAFF Administrator.



This Fandom-These Changes: Ian Williams

As you sit sipping your chilled drink in the luxurious air-conditioned atmosphere of the Dragonara, surrounded by the buzz of amiable conversation coming from unknown, half-familiar and friendly faces, you tend voluntarily to reflect on how much fandom has changed during the now-dying decade, and on the differences between this and your first science fiction convention. Well, I do anyway.

Scicon 70 was my first. It was held at a dire hotel, since demolished, not far from Euston Station in London. The building was old, seedy, populated by a rude and hostile staff, and had a bar that closed at 10.30 p.m. The convention wasn't much better. The programme had an unhealthy emphasis on the then-controversial Scientology, but seemingly little to do with science or fiction. The atmosphere was bad, the attendance around 200. It was a really dismal con. And it was the only one of the year.

But then fandom wasn't too impressive at the time either. The scene in the early part of 1970 was somewhat dispiriting, and there seemed little activity in the local fan groups. The BSFA was trundling along, but lacked any sense of dynamism. Fanzines by and large were weak unimaginative affairs, the only bright spots being Peter Weston's Speculation (on SF) and Peter Roberts' new 'zine, Egg (on Fandom). Eastercons, then the only con of the year, were small and tended to be held for fans (chiefly fanzine fans) by fans. Most fans were considerably worse off financially than they are now, and there was little contact with overseas fandom. British fandom was thus, in 1970, a cosy, quiet little backwater.

It was later that year that the seeds of change began to sprout. The first sign of anything new was the vulgar, iconoclastic fanzine Fouler. It was edited and mostly written by Greg Pickersgill and Roy Kettle, who stirred things up with their uncompromising honesty about fanzines and scathing contempt for contemporary moribund fandom. Fouler, Pickersgill and Kettle, became the focus of a new fannish group, Ratfandom; the name was taken from a joke of Kettle's. It was mostly comprised of young fans with a common attitude towards fandom, rather than a geographical group, and who had a talent for publishing the most interesting fanzines and writing of the time.

Another influential group started in 1970 was the Gannete. They lived in the North-East and took their name from the Sunderland pub where they met. Their first fanzine was Maya, which was edited at first by the group's founder, Ian Williams. Initially it was a melange of material on SF, fandom, fanzines and even poetry. With the third issue it was taken over by Ian Maule who improved the reproduction, and refined the focus to fandom with great success. It was Maule (along with Peter Roberts) who did much to revive overseas contacts. The Gannets published and wrote for a variety of fanzines, and over the next three years built up a solid reputation in fandom which was enhanced even more by Harry Bell's rapidly improving artwork.

Less important, but still very active in fanzines was the new MaD Group (Manchester and District) figureheaded by Lisa Conesa and Peter Presford. Conesa's Zimri was one of the best fanzines of the early 70s. Presford's Malfunction was one of the worst.

A further highly important development came in 1971 with the first of the annual Novacons. It was held in Birmingham and organised by the Brum Group led by Peter Weston and Rog Peyton. They felt that one convention a year was too little and they were proved to be right. Originally Novacons were designed as being a more informal, relaxing version of the Eastercon, but as attendances grew, the difference between the two simply became the shorter duration of the former (two days instead of four). That there were now two cons a year meant more social contact between fans which mustn't be underestimated in any evaluation. Weston and Peyton were also the brains behind the superb Eastercon 71 held at Worcester. It was held in a modern hotel, was well run, had a strong programme and set the standard against which other Eastercons were subsequently judged.

In 1974 the Gannets organised that year's Eastercon at Newcastle. Tynecon was a landmark in British conventions. The atmosphere was very friendly, the programme varied and full, and the hotel couldn't have been bettered. It was also the largest British convention to date, with an attendance exceeding 400. This was due to the appearance of Science Fiction Monthly which publicised fandom extensively in its news pages. Bob Shaw (the Guest of Honour) gave the first of his now traditional Eastercon speeches, and quite possibly the attendance and atmosphere did more to get newcomers into fandom than any other con of the decade.

The bid for the 75 Eastercon was won by Ratfandom. Pickersgill believes this period marked the end of the Rats as a specific entity, although the name continued to be used after the factors that had brought them together had disappeared. Season 75 at Coventry proved even larger than Tynecon and, if not quite as hectic, was still a great success.

As in everything, the younger generation takes its turn at becoming the establishment, running conventions and publishing the fanzines against which others are judged. And generally the fanzines were the best. Malcolm Edwards had taken Vector to unparalleled heights. Pat and Graham Charnock published the excellent Wrinkled Shrew which contained some of the finest fannish writing around. Greg Pickersgill came back to fan-editing with Ritblat, and in 76, Stop Breaking Down with Simone Walsh. Roy Kettle's writing was getting better and funnier as was Harry Bell's artwork. Rob Jackson took over Maya from Ian Maule, changed the emphasis back to Williams' original lines, only making a better job of it, as a comparison with the latter's short-lived 'zine Goblin's Grotto shows. Maya became the most successful British fanzine of the decade.

All in all the mid-seventies were an exciting time in fandom. There was life and vitality in fanzines, a thriving fannish attitude, several good conventions (including the Novacons) and a lot more moving around and visiting between fans. This ambience even inspired the Fanncons. The first, held in Blackpool in February 76, was arranged by Gray Boak as a completely unprogrammed weekend for fanzine and social fans. It had an attendance of 30 and was great fun.

The same can not be said of Mancon 5, the 76 Eastercon which was run by the MaD group and chaired by Peter Presford. It was an unmitigated disaster from every conceivable viewpoint. It was held on an uncomfortable college campus (Owen's Park), the programme was poor and suffered from a disastrous lack of organisation, as did the entire convention. The MaD Group virtually disbanded afterwards.

Fortunately the rest of the year wa n't bad. There was the Gannet-run Silicon 1 in Newcastle over August Bank Holiday. It was a relaxing con with mininmal programming and a solid emphasis on fandom and conversation and was very successful, as were succeeding Silicons. The Novacon that year was also pretty good and apart from Mancon, 76 was the best year for conventions to date.

So from one convention a year in 1970, we now had four in 76. Why? Basically, the Easter and Nova cons had grown too big. Whereas before conventions had an identifiable audience, attendees were now far more diverse in their expectations and interests, all of which had to be catered for. Once items about fandom and fanzines were an expected and welcome part of the programme, now they had become a minority event - a minority of whom the convention committee were a part. Alternative programming had begun in 75, there was a tentative stab at a fan room in 76, and the first fully effective one, organised by Pickersgill and Walsh, was at the 77 Eastercon. So the Faancon and Silicon were designed to bring together fans whose primary interest was in fandom without having the distractions of a large convention. Fandom originated cons were no more elitest or restrictive than Science Fiction conventions, but merely catered for a particular audience.

1977 was something of a mixture and mainly disappointing. Faancon 2 in Derby was bigger, but lacked the atmosphere of its predecessor. The Brummie run Eastercon was competent if uninspired. Silicon 2 faced a hostile hotel management, and Novacon's committee was practically that for the 78 Eastercon. The big event of the year was the success of the British bid at Suncon in Florida for the 79 Worldconvention.

In 1978 fanzines began to pick up again with new talents appearing and others maturing. The Leeds Group were the undoubted stars of the year, winning the bid for the 79 Eastercon, stirring up controversy in the BSFA and publishing some good fanzines. Alan Dorey was there with his argumentative Gross Encounters; Geoff Rippington published one of the best SF fanzines in some time with Arena, Kevin Smith and Rob Hansen also published good 'zines as did Simone Walsh with Seamonsters. Regrettably, the two big cons that year were disappointing, especially the eagerly anticipated Skycon.

Despite the number of good fanzines, it must be admitted that they seem less important to fandom than they used to be. They were primarily a means of communication between fans, but now with large numbers of fans living in London, the increased efficiency of transport between cities and the improving affluence of fans, there are far more opportunities for fans to meet and talk, making the urge to publish that much less. Local groups are less prominent than they were: Manchester seems to have faded away as an active centre; the Gannets still meet, albeit in smaller numbers, and there's just the current flourishing of Leeds. Yet despite this apparent similarity to the situation outlined at the beginning of the decade, fandom is thriving and growing. The new talents on the fanzine scene (Walsh, Dorey, Rippington, Hansen, etc.) and the continued interest and activity of established fans (Langford, Smith, Maule), ensure that things are far from moribund. Conventions continue to grow. Seacon 79 will be a landmark in the history of British fandom and will affect it for a far greater time than the duration of the evnt itself.

I don't know what's going to happen afterwards, but it will be interesting and fandom will be, as it always has been, a lot of fun.



1 - Haggard/Serious Look of
SF Intellectual

3 - Publishers/Convention
Badges

5 - Beer Stained scarf
for mopping
sweated brow

6 - Chewed nails
due to pending
zine deadline

8 - Levi Strides (what else)

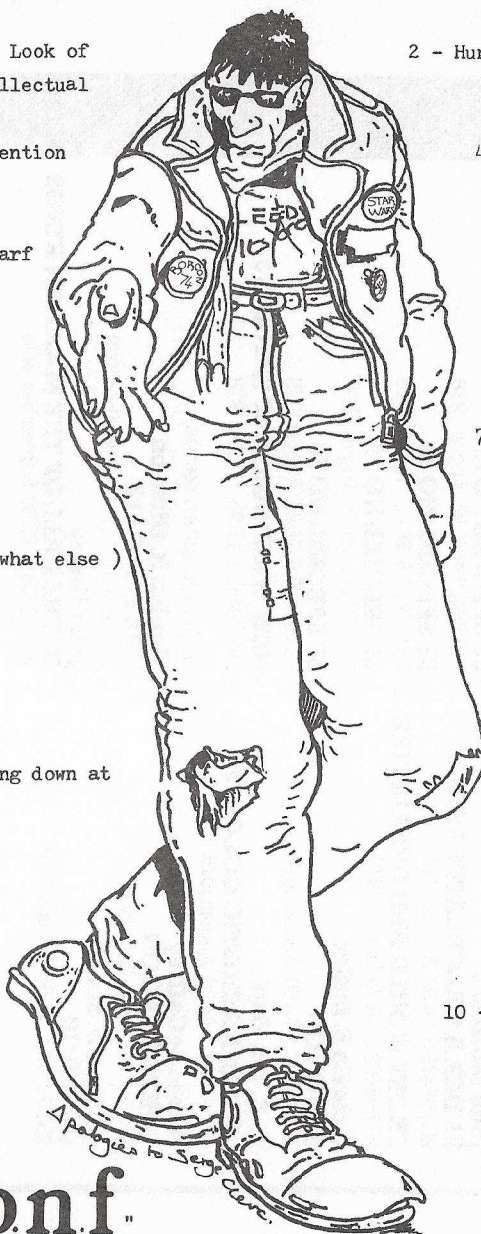
9 - Hole from falling down at
Silicon 1

2 - Hung-over (Too many
room parties)

4 - YORCON T-Shirt
(Limited Edition)

7 - Combat jacket from
student days - gives
street credibility

10 - Shoes worn out 'doing'
the bookshops



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AWARDS 1978

NEBULA AWARDS

NOVEL: Gateway (Frederik Pohl)
NOVELLA: Stardance (Spider & Jeannie Robinson)
NOVELETTE: The Screwfly Solution (James Tiptree Jr.)
SHORT STORY: Jeffy is Five (Harlan Ellison)

HUGO AWARDS

NOVEL: Gateway (Frederik Pohl)
NOVELLA: Stardance (Spider & Jeannie Robinson)
NOVELETTE: Eyes of Amber (Joan Vinge)
SHORT STORY: Jeffy is Five (Harlan Ellison)
DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: Star Wars
PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Rick Sternbach
PROFESSIONAL EDITOR: George Scithers
AMATEUR MAGAZINE: Locus (Edited by Charles & Dena Brown)
FAN WRITER: Richard E Geis
FAN ARTIST: Phil Foglio

JOHN W CAMPBELL MEMORIAL AWARD: Gateway Frederik Pohl)

FAN ACTIVITY ACHIEVEMENT (FAAN) AWARDS

SINGLE ISSUE: Maya 14 (Rob Jackson)
EDITOR: Rob Jackson
FANWRITER: Bob Shaw
HUMOROUS ARTIST: Alexis Gilliland
SERIOUS ARTIST: Jim Shull
LETTER OF COMMENT WRITER: Mike Glicksohn

CHECKPOINT FAN POLL 1977-1978

BRITISH FANZINE: Twll Ddu (Dave Langford)
BRITISH FANWRITER: Dave Langford
BRITISH FAN ARTIST: Harry Bell

THE REST

Ken McIntyre Award for Fanzine Art: Not Presented
Doc Weir Award: Greg Pickersgill
Nova Award for British Fanzines: Alan Dorey
BSFA Novel Award: The Jonah Kit (Ian Watson)
John W Campbell Award for Best New Writer: Orson Scott Card
Gandalf Award for Grand Master of Fantasy: Poul Anderson
Gandalf Award for Best Booklength Fantasy: The Silmarillion
(J R R Tolkein, ed.
Christopher Tolkein)



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An Alien Amongst Us

GUFF, the Get Up&Over Fan Fund, guarantees contributors an encounter with an alien being from the distant galaxies of Australia. In terms of accessibility, Australia may seem little closer than the Magellanic clouds; but using GUFF's incredible hyperdrive powered by the miracle ingredient money, a real Aussiefan can be brought into our very midst. Sceptics may scoff (they laughed at Galileo, they laughed at P.G.Wodehouse); at Seacon '79, though, GUFF's success will vindicate supporters' faith as the chosen Aussiefan is exhibited and displays his ability to consume substances fatal to mere Britons - such as the fabled fosters.

GUFF, in short, is a charitable fund set up to ensure that someone from this farthest armpit of the Commonwealth will appear at Seacon in August. GUFF is wholly dependent on your contributions; the chosen Being will be determined by your votes. Candidates are John Alderson, John Foyster and Eric Lindsay: for a donation of 80p (minimum) you may vote for whichever you please! Ballot forms are available from the administrators and also at Yorcon. We have other, more painless ways of separating you from your money so essential to GUFF: many goodies will be auctioned at Yorcon, while there are also thrilling GUFF publications. One such is Up The Conjunction, a reprint of Bob Shaw's hilarious Skycon talk with illustrations by Jim Barker (signed and numbered: 50p); another is the epic saga of Gonad The Barbarian, offered in three slim volumes at £1 the set (written by countless people, illustrated by Jim Barker and Robin Hughes and annotated by such learned cretins as Alan Dorey and GUFF's UK administrator).

GUFF voting closes at the end of April, but we'll be craving donations right up to Seacon: transport and accommodation for one impoverished but well-loved fan may sound cheap when spread over all UK and Australian fans, but not all have contributed yet...slip us a quid and ease your conscience.

ooooO000oooo

UK Administrator: Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Ave, READING, Berks, RG2 7PW

Aussie Administrator: Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 103, Brunswick, Victoria 3056.



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Yorcon Art Show

When we took on the job of organising the Yorcon Art Show last summer, we had no idea of the amount of work involved, and consequently our ideas for the exhibition have become increasingly modest. Initial thoughts of selecting the work for display in advance were dispelled within approximately five minutes. The plan for producing a catalogue also bit the dust when we realised that the majority of artists do not know which, or what, artwork they will want to show until they actually arrive at the convention.

We are left with providing all the facilities for a display of artwork and trying to encourage artists to bring their work to the Convention in the Progress Reports. The response we have had at the time of writing is encouraging and the show is already very promising. However, the overall result depends upon the artists among you to produce the goods on the day.

The Artshow will be open during the day throughout the convention and we both look forward to seeing you there. Remember to vote in the Artshow competitions and if you are feeling rich, a significant number of the works are for sale. The Programme also gives details of the Art Show Auction which will take place towards the end of the convention.

We're both looking forward to the convention, and especially to meeting all the convention members in the Artshow.

Paul & Jan Matthews

The 1979 YORCON ART SHOW AWARDS

Following on from last year's introduction of artshow awards, we have decided to continue this noble practice. There will be several categories in which you can cast your ballot, and ballot forms with a list of the categories will be found in the Art Room in the Briantes suite on the main convention floor, adjacent to the convention hall.

The winners will be those pieces of work which poll the most votes, and awards will be made after the Banquet on the Sunday night together with the other award giving ceremonies. Any piece of artwork produced since last Easter (Skycon) will be eligible for voting.

The awards will take the form of Bottles of spirits, so get working now!

PLEASE VOTE IN THE ART SHOW AWARDS - NO COALITIONS ALLOWED

Award Rules



The 'Doc' Weir Award

Who was Doc Weir?

A fan; a schoolteacher who came into fandom late in life with a keen interest in both science fiction and fantasy, who enjoyed participating in many facets of SF fandom. He helped get the infant BSFA on its feet, corresponded with a considerable number of fans and wrote scholarly and entertaining articles for their fanzines. Was an active Cheltenham SF circle member and attended conventions where his talks were programme highlights.

What is the Award?

A goblet inscribed with the names of past winners, to be held for one year, and a signed certificate suitable for framing.

How is the winner chosen?

By YOU. The award is not given for any specific activity but for things in general. The award should go to the person you think most deserving. There is no restriction on whom it may be given to - it does not have to be a member of the BSFA or of the convention. By tradition, it is usually awarded to a fan whose activities have not been previously honoured. Voting is kept secret - only the winner's name is announced.

Who are the past winners?

Well.....

in 1963 it was PETER MABEY
in 1964 it was ARCHIE MERCER
in 1965 it was TERRY JEEVES
in 1966 it was KEN SLATER
in 1967 it was DOREEN PARKER
in 1968 it was MARY REED
in 1969 it was BERYL MERCER
in 1970 it was MICHAEL ROSENBLUM

in 1971 it was PHIL ROGERS
in 1972 it was JILL ADAMS
in 1973 it was ETHEL LINDSAY
in 1974 it was MALCOLM EDWARDS
in 1975 it was PETER WESTON
in 1976 it was INA SHORROCK
in 1977 it was KEITH FREEMAN
in 1978 it was GREG PICKERSGILL

Peter Mabey, Award Administrator

THE KEN MCINTYRE MEMORIAL AWARD

Who was Ken McIntyre?

Ken McIntyre was an artist whose work appeared during the fifties in New Worlds, Nebula and Science Fantasy. Ken was a keen SF fan, a regular attendee of the Easter Science Fiction conventions and a Knight of St. Fantony. He was always willing to do work for amateur publications completely free and his work can be seen in many fanzines of the last twenty years. Ken died from a heart attack in 1968.

Why an award?

Three people suggested independantly that some form of memorial was needed and after discussion the KEN MCINTYRE MEMORIAL AWARD was formulated. Although there are awards presented in the SF field, there is no award for artwork presented in Britain. It was felt that an award for art would help give encouragement to young artists in the field as well as giving some form of reward to established artists.

Rules for entry:

- 1) The Ken McIntyre Memorial Award will be presented annually. Each year it will be presented to the artist who, in the opinion of the judges, submits the most deserving piece of artwork.
- 2) The artist must be resident in the United Kingdom.
- 3) The piece of artwork must have appeared in an amateur publication during the twelve months January to December preceding the Easter at which the award is made.
- 4) The piece of artwork must be accompanied by a copy of the publication in which it appeared.
- 5) The subject matter of the piece of work must, in the opinion of the judges, be fantasy or science fiction.

How to Enter

The piece of artwork may be submitted by the artist himself or by the editor of the publication in which it appeared. The original together with a copy of the publication, must be handed to the registrations desk by 4.00 pm on the Saturday of the convention, or taken by the same time to the Art Show in the Brigantes Suite. If for any reason it cannot be handed in by this time, Keith Freeman should be notified in writing prior to the convention. The entries submitted will be displayed in the Art Show and the award presented at the Banquet on Sunday evening.

These are the rules that will apply for the presentation at the 1979 Easter Convention.

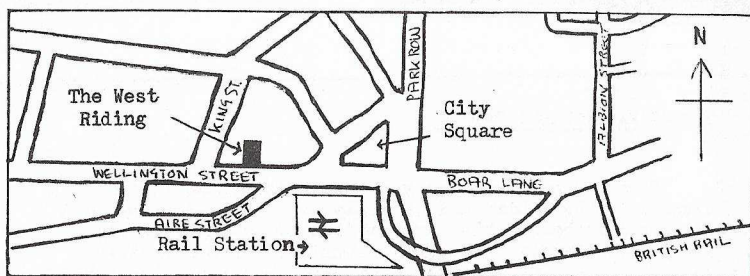
Keith Freeman, Award Administrator, 269 Wykeham Road, READING, Berks.

Previous Conventions

01	1937	Leeds		20	1969	✓ Oxford	Galactic Fair
02	1938	London				(GoH: Judith Merrill)	
03	1941	London		21	1970	✓ London	Scicin '70
04	1943	Leicester				(GoH: James Blish)	
✓ 05	1944	Manchester		22	1971	✓ Worcester	Eastercon 22
						(GoH: Anne McCaffrey)	
1	1948	London				(Fan GoH: Ethel Lindsay)	
2	1949	London		23	1972	✓ Chester	Chessmancon
3	1951	London	Festivention			(GoH: Larry Niven)	
4	1952	London		24	1973	✓ Bristol	OMPACon
5	1953	London	Coroncon			(GoH: Samueal R Delany)	
6	1954	Manchester	Supermancon	25	1974	✓ Newcastle	Tynecon
✓ 7	1955	Kettering	Cytricon			(GoH: Bob Shaw)	
✓ 8	1956	Kettering	Cytricon II			(FGoH: Peter Weston)	
	✓ 1957	London	Loncon	26	1975	✓ Coventry	Seacon
			World Convention			(GoH: Harry Harrison)	
9	✓ 1958	Kettering	Cytricon III	27	1976	✓ Manchester	Mancon 5
10	✓ 1959	Birmingham				(GoH: Robert Silverberg)	
11	✓ 1960	London				(FGoH: Peter Roberts)	
12	✓ 1961	Gloucester	LXIcon	28	1977	✓ Coventry	Eastercon '77
			(GoH: Kingsley Amis)			(GoH: John Bush)	
13	✓ 1962	Harrogate	Ronvention	29	1978	✓ Heathrow	Skycon
14	✓ 1963	Peterborough	Bullcon			(GoH: Robert Sheckley)	
15	✓ 1964	Peterborough	Repetercon			(FGoH: Roy Kettle)	
16	✓ 1965	Birmingham	Brumcon 2	30	1979	✓ Leeds	Yorcon
	✓ 1965	London	Loncon II			(GoH: Richard Cowder)	
			(World Convention)			(FGoH: Pat & Graham Charnock)	
17	✓ 1966	Yarmouth	Yarcon				
			(GoH: Ron Whiting)				
18	✓ 1967	Bristol	Briscon				
			(GoH: John Brunner)				
19	✓ 1968	Buxton	Thirddmancon				
			(GoH: Ken Bulmer)				

West Riding

If you're a science fiction fan and want to see more of fandom and fans in the North, why not come along to the West Riding meetings here in Leeds. These meetings, totally informal fannish gatherings take place on the last Friday of every month in the West Riding Hotel, Wellington Street, Leeds. Most of the Leeds group are regular attendees, and we often draw people from the other side of the Penines (Manchester) and from Sheffield in the 'south', so if you're within reasonable distance of Leeds, do come along. Meetings start at around 7pm, but come whenever you like - you provide the programme! If you require overnight accommodation, phone Mike Dickinson on Leeds (0532) 620256, and we'll see what we can do. See you at the next meeting on April 26th. A map showing the location of the West Riding is given below:



This is guaranteed not a D.West fund making scheme. That comes later.

The British Science Fiction Association is an organisation for anyone interested in SF.
The Association regularly produces:

VECTOR a journal about SF with reviews, articles and interviews.
MATRIX a forum for members with news, informal articles and letters.
TANGENT a magazine of fiction by amateur writers who are striving to be professionals.

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Further details from The Membership Secretary, Dave Cobbledick
245 ROSALIND ST, ASHINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND NE63 9AZ

BSFA

CHAIRMAN: ARTHUR C CLARKE



YORCON FANCY DRESS PARADE

Once you have allowed your brain to become rotted with alcohol during Friday and Saturday. why not allow the rest of your body become similarly afflicted by entering the Fancy Dress Parade on Saturday night. P R I Z E S will be given for the best costumes (or group efforts) in each of our four categories:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) Best Costume (Overall). | 3) Bravest Costume. |
| 2) Least Costume | 4) Best Fantasy Costume. |

These are not necessarily the final categories: If any costumes deserve a category of their own, well, why not? Our Master of Ceremonies will be Roger Peyton, and if you intend to enter, please declare your intention so to do at the registrations desk by Hotel Reception before the Saturday evening. This gives us plenty of time to finalise the details of the parade, which is due to commence at 10 p.m on Saturday night, prior to the Dance with live rock band. Those of you who saw Brian Burgess at Skycon's Parade, will not want to miss this year's 'entertainment'.

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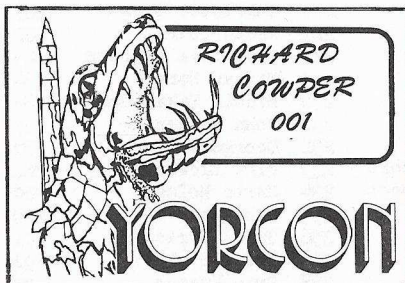
57

convention members

1	Richard Cowper	56	Tim Illingworth	111	Robert Swann
2	Mrs. Richard Cowper	57	Paul Dormer	112	Jan Howard Finder
3	Mike Dickinson	58	D. West	113	Martin D Pay
4	Dave Pringle	59	Phil Rogers	114	Kathy Flint
5	Alan Dorey	60	Doreen Rogers	115	Mike Westhead
6	Greg Pickersgill	61	Ted Ball	116	John Brunner
7	Simone Walsh	62	Dave Gibson	117	Marjorie Brunner
8	Paul Matthews	63	Vera Johnson	118	Paul G Begg
9	Jan Matthews	64	David Wingrove	119	Judy Crowther
10	Charlotte Bowden	65	Arthur Cruttenden	120	Graham Smith
11	Kate Jeary	66	Wendy Cruttenden	121	Tony Berry
12	Ian Williams	67	David Webb	122	Phil Knight
13	Ann Pringle	68	Keith Freeman	123	Chris Bursey
14	Carol Gregory	69	Wendy Freeman	124	Bob Shaw
15	John Hindle	70	Gerald Bishop	125	Sadie Shaw
16	Richard Cooper	71	Keith Plunkett	126	Mike Ford
17	Ron Bennett	72	Urban Gunnarsson	127	Roy Hill
18	Graham Charnock	73	Jose Bernard	128	Rob Hansen
19	Pat Charnock	74	Kevin Smith	129	Immo Huneke
20	Linda Hutchinson	75	Mary Burns	130	Dave Shotton
21	Eve Harvey	76	Bill Burns	131	N. Howard
22	John Harvey	77	Peter Hammerton	132	Graham England
23	Colin Fine	78	Michel Feron	133	Mike Hutchinson
24	Jim Barker	79	Ken Slater	134	Sandy Brown
25	Dai Price	80	Joyce Slater	135	G.D. Sturge
26	Joseph Nicholas	81	Linda Williams	136	David Higgins
27	Howie Rosenblum	82	Mic Rogers	137	John Nixon
28	Roy Kettle	83	Rog Peyton	138	Ian Maule
29	Harry Bell	84	Arline Peyton	139	Janice Maule
30	Vernon Brown	85	Peter Mabey	140	A. Richardson
31	Pat Baxter	86	C.J. Walton	141	Bernadette Edgar
32	Rob Jackson	87	Fred Hemmings	142	Alan Morris
33	Coral Jackson	88	Tel Hudson	143	Alexandra Daly
34	Roy Mortimore	89	Peter Clarke	144	Brian Stableford
35	Daphne Mortimore	90	Michael Damesick	145	Chris Lewis
36	Lars Strandberg	91	Mark Woodward	146	Christopher Priest
37	Celia Parsons	92	Martin Easterbrook	147	David Todd
38	Bruce Healey	93	Dave Langford	148	Chris Jones
39	Joyce Mains	94	Hazel Langford	149	Tony Rogers
40	John Lowe	95	Ian Moor	150	Eric Batard
41	Bob Shaw	96	Brian Hampton	151	Owen Whiteoak
42	Peter Weston	97	Graham Poole	152	Donald Wollheim
43	Liese Hoare	98	Richard Hughes	153	Elsie Wollheim
44	Martin Hoare	99	Darroll Pardoe	154	Dave Holmes
45	Peter T Garratt	100	Rosemary Pardoe	155	Kathy Holmes
46	John Steward	101	Paul Kincaid	156	Marcus Rowland
47	Malcolm Edwards	102	Martin Stallard	157	Josh Kirby
48	Chris Atkinson	103	Gerry Webb	158	Leonard Kirkup
49	Stan Eling	104	David Thomas	159	David F Breen
50	Helen Eling	105	Al Fitzpatrick	160	Dave French
51	Robin Hughes	106	Ken Bulmer	161	Dave Cluett
52	Pat Meara	107	John Stewart	162	Joyce Cluett
53	Mike Meara	108	Edward Blair Wilkins	163	Dave Garnett
54	Rod Milner	109	Duncan Steel	164	Mike Strain
55	Bonny Milner	110	Valerie Steel	165	Tim Broadribb

166	Samantha Broadribb	221	Lee Montgomerie	276	Stewart Hurlbut
167	Alison Longbottom	222	Laurie Britton	277	Alan Marshall
168	Steev Higgins	223	A.G.Prior	278	Judy Mortimore
169	Derek Hepburn	224	E.Y.Alden	279	Richard Brandshaft
170	Anne Hepburn	225	Ethel Lindsay	280	Al de Bettencourt
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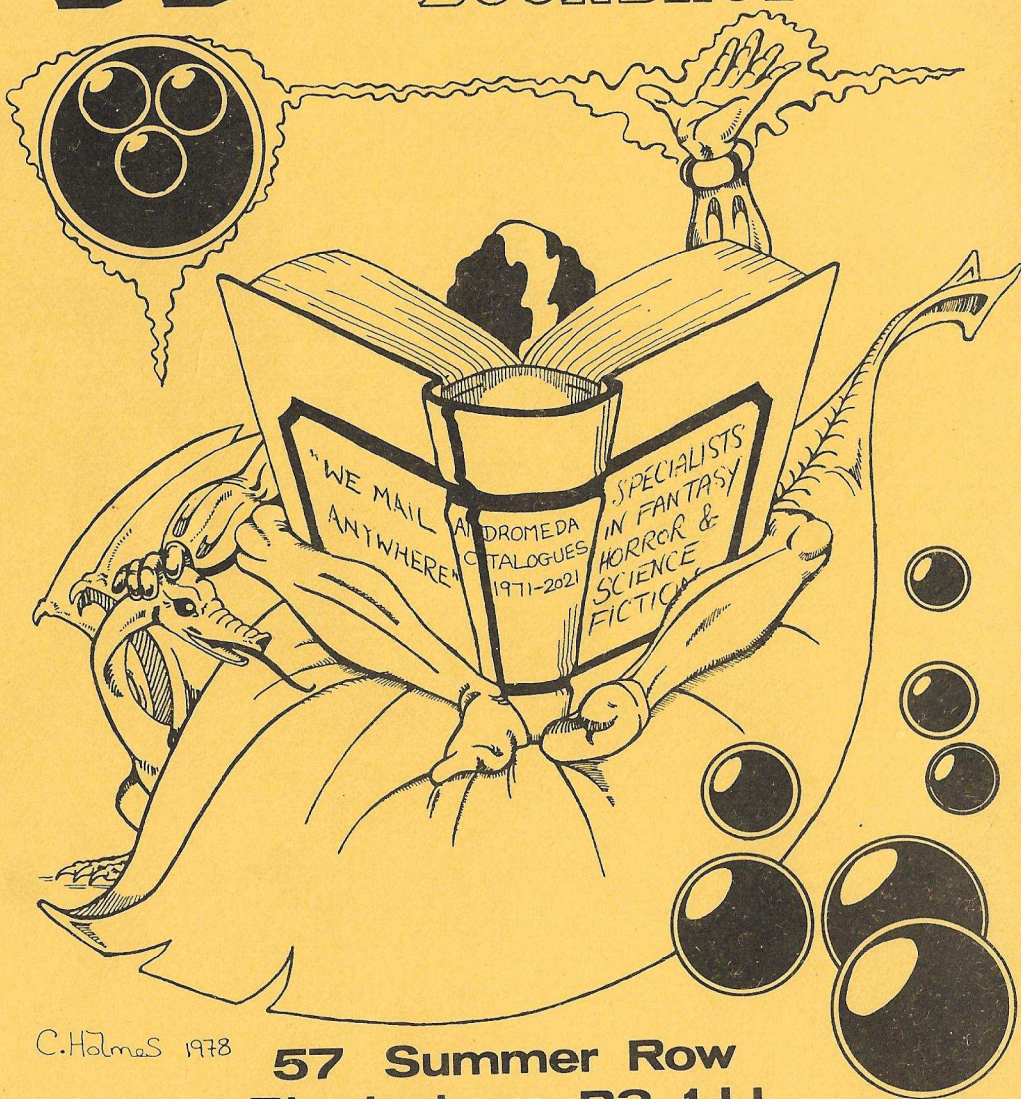
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Thank you all for coming - have a good time.

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