

= Vargo Statten Science Fiction Magazine =

Vargo Statten Science Fiction Magazine ( later Vargo Statten British Science Fiction Magazine , The British Science Fiction Magazine and The British Space Fiction Magazine ) was a British science fiction magazine which published nineteen issues between 1954 and 1956 . It was initially published by Scion Press , with control passing to a successor company , Scion Distributors , after Scion went bankrupt in early 1954 . At the end of 1954 , as part payment for a debt , Scion Distributors handed control of the magazine to Dragon Press , who continued it for another twelve issues . E.C. Tubb and John Russell Fearn were regular contributors , and Kenneth Bulmer also published several stories in the magazine . Barrington Bayley 's first published story , " Combat 's End " , appeared in May 1954 . The editor was initially Alistair Paterson , but after seven issues Fearn took the helm : " Vargo Statten " was one of Fearn 's aliases , and the magazine 's title had been chosen because of his popularity . Neither Paterson nor Fearn had enough of a budget to attract good quality submissions , and a printing strike in 1956 brought an end to the magazine 's life .

= = Publication history and contents = =

In the early 1950s , British publisher Scion published dozens of science fiction ( sf ) novels by John Russell Fearn under the pseudonym " Vargo Statten " . These were very successful , and Scion decided to take advantage of the popularity of the name by issuing a monthly sf magazine . The first issue was dated January 1964 and was edited by Alistair Paterson . The target audience included long @-@ time fans : Scion had notified established science fiction fan groups before the launch , so there was a letter column in the first issue , and a column by Vincent Clarke , a well @-@ known fan , covered fan news . Scion 's stated intention was to have at least 10 % of the magazine devoted to the sf fan community , and also to publish only stories by British writers . Paterson 's editorial policy for the fiction was aimed at younger readers , which led him to return a story by Brian Aldiss with a request for a rewrite to make it more suitable for teenaged readers . Aldiss , then right at the start of his career , refused , and never submitted a story to the magazine again . The stories in the early issues were mostly written by Fearn , E.C. Tubb , and F. Dubrez Fawcett , who also wrote gangster fiction for Scion .

In early 1954 , Scion were fined heavily for publishing a pornographic gangster novel . Key Scion staff decided to restart the company under the name Scion Distributors , with Paterson continuing as editor . The magazine format was changed from pulp to digest with the May 1954 issue ? the first from the new company . Scion Distributors had also acquired Scion 's debts when they restarted the company , and this included a large debt to the printers , Dragon Press . Scion gave Dragon Press control of the magazine with the December 1954 issue as payment for the debt , along with the novels they had rights to and their contract with Fearn . Paterson resigned and Fearn took his place , insisting when he did so that his pseudonym be removed from the magazine 's title . It was renamed The British Science Fiction Magazine from the September 1954 issue . In the opinion of sf historians Philip Harbottle and Stephen Holland , the quality of the magazine began to improve significantly , with stories by E.C. Tubb , Kenneth Bulmer , Fearn himself , and Barrington Bayley , whose first story , " Combat 's End " , had appeared in the May 1954 issue . However , sf historian Mike Ashley suggests that despite Fearn 's efforts , only the E.C. Tubb stories , published under the pseudonym " George Holt " , were a noticeable improvement in quality . When the circulation began to fall , Dragon Press quickly cut Fearn 's budget in half , from 25 shillings to only 12 / 6 per thousand words . This was half the word rate on offer at other British science fiction magazines of the era , and left Fearn unable to compete for the best stories . Fearn printed material of his own that he had been unable to sell elsewhere , and was also able to save some money by reprinting stories of his that had originally appeared in the U.S. magazines . More money was saved by changing the format to paperback size , and simplifying and standardizing the cover design . The magazine struggled on until early 1956 , when a printers strike caused Dragon Press to fold . The last issue appeared in January 1956 .

= = Bibliographic details = =

The first seven issues were edited by Alistair Paterson , and the remainder by John Russell Fearn . The magazine was priced at 1 / 6 throughout its run . It was initially pulp @-@ sized and 64 pages long , but changed to digest format at 128 pages with the May 1954 issue , and then to a paperback size , also at 128 pages , from the February 1955 issue onwards .

The title was initially Vargo Statten Science Fiction Magazine ; this changed to Vargo Statten British Science Fiction Magazine with the May 1954 issue , then to The British Science Fiction Magazine with the September 1954 issue , and finally to The British Space Fiction Magazine with the June 1955 issue . The publisher was Scion , Ltd. of London for the first three issues , then Scion Distributors , Ltd. of London for the next four issues , and finally Dragon Publications Ltd. of Luton for the remaining issues .