

# THE BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

(Honorary Presidents: Brian W. Aldiss  
and Harry Harrison)

Number 149

JANUARY 1984

The Birmingham Science Fiction Group has its formal meeting on the third Friday of each month in the Imperial Hotel in Temple street, Birmingham city centre. There is also an informal meeting on the first Tuesday of each month at the General Wolfe pub, on the corner of Aston road and Holt Street (near Aston university and the ill-fated Science Park). New members are always welcome. Membership rates are £3.50 per person, or £5.50 for two people at the same address. The treasurer is to be announced.

FRIDAY 20 JANUARY, 7:45 pm.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

There is no entrance charge this month. Visitors are welcome but only members may vote in the election. So far only a very few people have expressed interest in the committee positions (perhaps the rest of you are thinking it over?). They are:

Chairman: Peter Weston  
Newsletter editor: Eunice Pearson  
Secretary: Phill Probert  
Treasurer: Graham Poole

If anyone else is interested in these posts, or is interested in publicity officer or the two special posts created last year, then please ensure that you have a proposer and a seconder to nominate you at the AGM.

After the AGM an auction will take place. Please do bring along you unwanted books, magazines, fanzines etc.

It has been said that apa-B is rapidly declining. Are we? Answers on a small fanzine please, to Cathryn Easthope. And if you don't know what an apa is, then ask!

Both Margaret Thorpe and Chris Suslowicz are retiring from the committee. They have both been very valuable members and will be sadly missed. Margaret is leaving for a very good reason -- the Thorpe household is to have an

addition (and its not a cat). Ms/Mr Thorpe junior is expected sometime in June.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR ITALIAN CORRESPONDENT: GRAHAM POOLE.

"I apologise for not being present tonight but when we booked our winter holiday a few months ago, neither Jan nor I realised it clashed with the Brus Group AGM. Pete Weston has therefore asked me to write a few lines on why I'm standing for treasurer.

But first a little background history for those of you who don't know me too well. I've been an sf fan for sixteen years, attended my first convention in 1970, attended the first nine Novecons, attended conventions in America and Belgium, became Company Secretary of the British Science Fiction Association for a year or two and published one or two fanzines. In 1979 I dropped out of science fiction fandom until the summer of this year when Jan and I moved to Birmingham.

Birmingham, the home of the biggest and best sf group in the country, or so they say. Naturally I had to see if this was true and find out what the group was like. Jan and I certainly liked what we saw and we soon settled into regular attendance.

One thing, however, slightly puzzled me initially. Pete Weston showed great enthusiasm in seeing me back in fandom. Why? Then one day came the awful truth. "Gray, you're a qualified accountant, aren't you?" "Who's been talking" replied I, suddenly realising what was coming next. "We've got an AGM coming up next year and we're looking for a treasurer" Pete continued, "I think you'd do a first rate job. We need young fannish people on the committee." Pete knows how to flatter and persuade.

Having sown the seeds I thought about it.....or rather I checked with Jan to see if it was OK and since sh pestering me for days to write this, I reckon it must mean its OK. I have the qualifications to do the job (being suitably certified in 1975!) and the enthusiasm to do the job.

See you all in february."

--GRAHAM POOLE .



# News~

New English Library will possibly be re-issuing "Dune" by Frank Herbert, with Sting on the cover to tie-in with the film, due to be released this year.

A collection of PHILIP K. DICK's stories has been bought by Doubleday Books. It is entitled I Hope I Shall Arrive Soon and includes one unpublished story and a speech by Mr Dick on the art of writing sf, as well as other previously published but uncollected stories.

BBC are to make a 39-part sf series called The Tripods. It is based on John Christopher's trilogy of children's books, Beyond The Burning Lands, The Sword Of The Spirits and Prince In Waiting.

MARY RENAULT has died at the age of 78. Her superb historical novels have been a great influence on fantasy writing, particularly with her interpretation of the legends of Theseus.

LEONARD WIBBERLY, author of the hilarious "Grand Fenwick" novels died in november. His most famous novel, The Mouse That Roared was made into a film which starred Peter Sellers. He left several books completed, but unpublished, as yet.



If I am elected as Chairman of the BSFG, My first task would be to increase the membership fee to include one tin of dog food.



Once elected as Vice-Chairman, I shall make it my job to make sure that there is plenty of vice going on.



Which party do I belong to?  
The Legindeair Party

VOTE FOR ZOLTAN!  
NEXT BSFG CHAIRMAN

BIG PUPPY

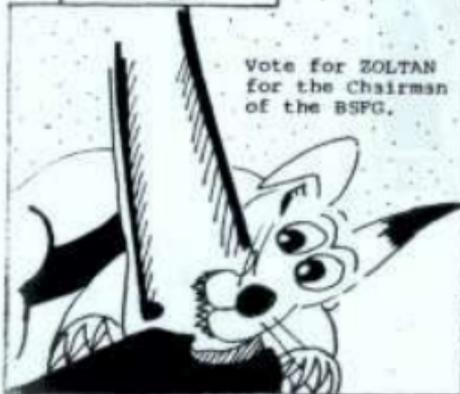


1984

Vote for Zoltan.  
Sniff out a good deal.

The  
BSFG  
Election  
Special

Vote for ZOLTAN  
for the Chairman  
of the BSFG.



Help Help.  
My swingometer  
has swung out  
of control.



## Andromeda Top ten

1. Lando Calrissian: Mind Harp Of Shary by Brian Daley. (Futura/Ballentine, £1.50)
2. Lando Calrissian: Flame Wind Of Oseow by Brian Daley. (Futura/Ballentine, £1.50)
3. Antrak Wars 1: Cloud Warrior by Patrick Tilly. (Sphere, £1.95)
3. Star Trek Short Stories by William Rotsler. (Arrow, £1.25)
5. Dr Who: The Five Doctors by Terence Dicks. (Target £1.50)
6. Running Man by Richard Bachman. (NEL, £1.75)
7. Floating Dragon by P. Straub. (Fontana, £2.50)
8. Ceres Solution by Bob Shaw. (Granada £1.50)
8. Pawn Of Prophecy by David Eddings. (Corgi, £1.75)
9. Shadow Of The Torturer by Gene Wolfe. (Arrow, £1.95)

This list was compiled by Andromeda Bookshop at 84 Suffolk street, Birmingham B1 1TA, telephone 021-643-1999.



# Reviews

ECLIPSING BINARIES by E.E. 'Doc' Smith with Stephen Goldin, Granada £1.50, 192 pp.

Chapter eight. The story so far. For the last seven chapters of this Empire-against-the-rebels space opera, (this time the Empire are the goodies) we have seen how the rebels have attacked the capitalist-running-dog-empire, only to be saved at the last minute by diminutive heroes from SOTE. (Service Of The Empire.) In this chapter, the mysterious head of the rebels, Lady A, plans to discredit one of the Empire's most respected leaders, Grand Duke Zander von Wilmenhorst. He is also the secret head of SOTE, no less. She is also out to discredit two of SOTE's best agents. The two midgets keep getting in her way at every attempt to take over the Empire. She almost succeeds in this attempt but again she is foiled, as to be expected when you are up against such good guys. This book is for people who like their science fiction lightweight. A sort of Star Wars saga for the literate, even down to the mini Deathstar. An action-packed book full of daring deeds, it will never impress some of the more rigid readers of science fiction. Yet it will be the starting ground for some of the new readers since it has a lot of the qualities that the unexperienced know about science fiction literature; space ships, robots, gadgetry and impossible odds. Even including a meaningless Chris cover just to make sure we know what we are reading. The only problem with this book, and the series as a whole is that EE Doc Smith died in 1966 and only really wrote the first story and scripted in outline the rest of this ten-part epic. Yet if you are missing some lightweight adventure in your reading, then try this series out.

THE STEPS OF THE SUN by Walter Tevis, Gollancz £7.95, 251 pp.

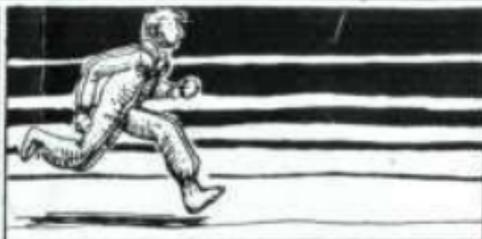
Bored, impotent multi-millionaire Ben Belson takes off to the stars to solve his own mid-life crisis, also to find 'safe uranium'. Walter Tevis paints a detailed picture of a world eighty years hence with little power, yet in this novel the character of Ben Belson fails to focus. Would Belson really have gone to the stars if his own problems had not coincided with that of a search for safe uranium? And with that power, a chance at restoring his beloved New York city to full glory. Yet the question is, would it be morally right to have a surplus of power recreating the evil days of our present? Belson has no qualms about changing the world. He would rather upset the balance of life in search of his own gratification. In the end, Belson's dream is fulfilled. And you can almost see all the years that America suffered without power go 'out the window' as the lights go back on. This is an interesting novel, yet not up to the same standard of Mockingbird or The Man Who Fell To Earth.

Both books reviewed by PHILL PROBERT.



# THE MAZE

BY D'ISRAELI  
D' DEMOU  
DRAUGHTSMAN



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