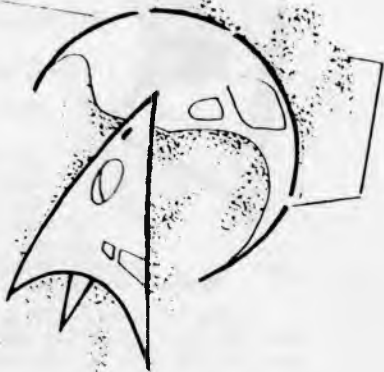


HONORARY PRESIDENTS:

CELAN ALDIES and HARRY HARRISON.

the  
**Birmingham  
Science Fiction  
Group**



newsletter - 165

May 1985

The Birmingham Science Fiction Group meets on the Third Friday of each month in the New Imperial Hotel, Temple Street, in the city centre of Birmingham. Membership of the Group costs a mere £5.00 per year for one person (£7.50 for two people at the same address) or £2.50 for six months (£3.75 for two at the same address). All cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the BSFG and sent to the treasurer, CHRIS CHIVERS, 51 Boundary Road, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

This Newsletter is produced by Martin Tudor of 845 Aluz Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG, and printed courtesy of Tim Stannard. The deadline for the June issue of the Newsletter is MAY 31ST.

If there is an 'X' in the box on the right your membership has expired and is due for renewal!



THIS MONTHS SPEAKER IS:-

## MAXIM JAKUBOWSKI

Maxim Jakubowski is a British writer, critic, translator and anthologist. Educated in France he writes in both French and English preferring to concentrate his writing in the field of short stories. Most of his works concern themselves with music, doomed love, sex and death. He has written several stories about Moorcock's character Jerry Cornelius as well as having had a few books published pseudonymously.

A prolific anthologist in France he has also edited an interesting collection of French SF in English - TRAVELLING TOWARDS EPSILON (NEL 1976); a collection of SF from writers all over the world - TWENTY HOUSES OF THE ZODIAC (NEL 1979); and more recently two collections of SF and Fantasy for Unicorn - LANDS OF NEVER and BEYOND LANDS OF NEVER.

The meeting will begin at 8pm prompt on Friday 17th of May in the New Imperial Hotel, Temple Street, Birmingham city centre.

DAMIANO - R.A. ACADEMY. Corgi £1.75 232 pages.  
Review by Helena Howles.



## BOOK REVIEWS

Damiano Deltrano is a witch. He is also a rather confused, and above all, human young man who has a great love for his city: Partestrada. As a result of this love, when Partestrada is invaded by the Roman general Pardo Damio will go to any lengths to save his city, even as far as making a pact with the Devil to ensure peace for Partestrada.

The story centres around Damio's adventures, as he tries to find Saara the Fenwoman - reputedly the most powerful witch in the Italies - to beg her aid for his city, it is also the story of his struggle to come to terms with the implications of his sorcerous powers. Everyone says a witch is damned from birth, yet Damiano doesn't feel damned and if he was, surely the angel Raphael would never have befriended him?

This is a wonderfully written book with superbly drawn characters and the only quibble I have is that the narrative tends to linger over some of the more bloody scenes rather self-indulgently. Despite this minor defect which the story quickly overcomes the book is well worth reading.

WHAT ABOUT THE BABY? - CLARE McNALLY. Corgi £1.75.  
Review by Steve Green.

According to popular theory, if you provided an infinite number of monkeys with an infinite number of typewriters, eventually one of them will begin producing the collected works of William Shakespeare. What the theory neglects to mention is what the remaining members of the Simian Secretariat will be cluttering their waste paper bins with, but I have a strong suspicion several million will be churning out bubblegum for the brain of the calibre of WHAT ABOUT THE BABY?

It's difficult to say what's the more disappointing, the contrived 'plot' hammered out of Ira Levin's far superior ROSEMARY'S BABY or Ms McNally's blatantly inadequate performance as a writer. Instead of characterisation we find lists of fears and traumas, instead of logical flow a sequence of gory incidents loosely fitted around the theme of devil worship and rigged to supply the 'shocks' in pre-determined instalments. If it wasn't so devoid of life one could almost applaud its unpretentious artificiality.

There are novels in the horror genre of genuine merit - Robert Falcon's NIGHTHUNTER series is evidence in itself that the constraints of pre-packaged prose need not strangle the medium - but this sort of dross fools no one, except possibly its author.

DIVINE ENDURANCE - GWYNETH JONES. Unicorn £2.95 232 Pages.  
Review by Pauline Morgan.

A good first novel. It is the story of Cho's journey in search of her brother. With her are Divine Endurance, a small brown cat, who has raised and continues to teach Cho, and Gress, a pony they meet on the way. The world they enter is a far future Malay peninsular. Technology is still present but limited and running down. There is unrest within and between the various states. Cho only wants to make people happy. She becomes involved with Derveest, a rebel leader royal lineage, who realises that the world is dying. Some questions remain unanswered, some passages could profitably been extended, but overall this is a very creditable effort.

Other books received:- CREWEL LYE by PIERS ANTHONY; IN SEARCH OF SCHRÖDINGER'S CAT by JOHN GRIBBIN; A RUMOUR OF ANGELS by M. BRADLEY KELLOGG; HAMMER'S SLAMMERS by DAVID DRAKE and THE HILLS OF HOMICIDE by LOUIS L'AMOUR - all of which will be reviewed next month.

## News



NEXT MONTHS MEETING - JUNE 1985 - GUFF  
GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE:-

## RAMSEY CAMPBELL

'Good horror writers are quite rare - and  
Campbell is better than just good.'  
Stephen King

In my rush to complete the Newsletter last month I omitted probably the most vital piece of information of all from my YORCON III report - which bid won the right to hold the 37th Annual British SF Convention in 1986...but do not fear I shall now quickly but you out of your misery and reveal that after two extremely polished bid presentations the ALBACON bid edged out the CONTRAVENTION bid by just 6 votes. It has been said that after the first vote CONTRAVENTION was the bid that won by just two votes - the first vote being a show of hands however, it was decided to take a 'lobby vote' as a recount. Other scurrilous sources have declared that the only reason the Scots won was because the door used for ALBACON was considerably nearer the bar than that which was allocated to CONTRAVENTION. But whatever the reason for the change in votes next years Eastercon will again take place in Glasgow - further details next month.

Still on the subject of voting the results are now in on both GUFF, the fund for sending a British fan to Australia (and vice versa in alternate years) and the American equivalent DUFF. The winner of the GUFF race this year was EVE HARVEY who apparently beat her only opponent John Jarrold by a massive amount of votes. Jarrold's explanation for this landslide victory being that all his supporters were so drunk they forgot to vote...The DUFF race was only slightly closer with MARTY & ROBBIE CANTOR beating their nearest rival MIKE GLICKSOHN by a goodly margin of 71 to 42.

Fans of Douglas Adams will no doubt be interested to hear that he will be signing copies of 'the 4th book in the Hitchhiker Trilogy' in Andromeda Bookshop on Friday 17th of May from 5pm-7pm.

# NOVACON

Fifteen GUESTS OF HONOUR:

1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1985      Dave Langford  
De Vere Hotel                      James White  
Coventry

THE BRUM GROUP'S VERY OWN CONVENTION THIS YEAR CELEBRATES ITS FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY.

THE FIRST PROGRESS REPORT IS ALREADY OUT AND THE SECOND, WHICH WILL CONTAIN THE HOTEL BOOKING FORMS WILL BE PUBLISHED SOON. SO IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY

REGISTERED DO SO NOW! SEND A CHEQUE OR POSTAL ORDER MADE PAYABLE TO NOVACON 15 TO GRAHAM POOLE, 86 BERWOOD FARM ROAD, WYLDE GREEN, SUTTON COLDFIELD, WEST MIDLANDS, B72 1AG.

A WHOLE WEEKEND OF FILMS, DISCOS, LATE, LATE BARS & BIG NAME SPEAKERS FOR A MERE £7.00... YOU'D NEVER FORGIVE YOURSELF IF YOU MISSED IT SO REGISTER NOW TO ENSURE THAT YOU CAN -



## COME TO THE PARTY

# Lazlar Lyricon



# '85

Lazlar Lyricon is a new convention. It'll have something for everyone - Earthing or alien. Of course there's the dealers room, the auction, an art show and model competition, guests, talks, fancy dress, films and the essential 24hr bar. You want more? We've got more. Every room in the hotel is linked by video and during the day this will carry an information service telling you what's going on down in the con hall and exactly how late the programme's running! Not only that, but when all the programme items end, the video channel will show favourite films and videos all through the night.

More? A special feature of the Lazlar Lyricon is the wide range of games and competitions. We've got old games and new games, but all have been adapted to fit an SF theme. If you're bored watching other people have fun, come to Lyricon and join in. Lazlar Lyricon is being organised by Z29 Plural Z Alpha (The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy Appreciation Society) and is being held at the Strathallan Hotel, Birmingham. It runs over the bank holiday weekend 25th-27th May 1985, from midday Saturday to midday Monday (so you won't have to rush off and miss the closing ceremony).

Completed forms should be sent to: ROBERT COGGER, LAZLAR LYRICON, 10 BOURNE PARADE, BOURNE ROAD, BEXLEY, KENT, DA5 1LQ. All cheques etc. payable to 'Z29 Plural Z Alpha' please; and only one application per form please.

NAME ..... ADDRESS .....

TELEPHONE NO ..... DATE OF BIRTH .....

Please register me for Lazlar Lyricon '85 as follows:

- A Z29 member at £15.00 for all three days.....
- A non member at £16.50 for all three days.....
- A non member, taking membership (usually £2.95 pa) at £17.50 for all three days...
- One day registration (all classes) at £8.00....  please state day.....
- Supporting membership at £3.00 (may be converted).....

REGISTRATIONS MADE AFTER 1st APRIL 1985 WILL BE £2.00 MORE THAN THE RATES ABOVE.

Would you like to be a Human  or a Vogon  (please tick the relevant box)

Note: We may ask to change your team to ensure equal numbers.

HOTEL RATES are £15.00 per PERSON per NIGHT. Please tick whether you wish to reserve:

Single room  Double room  Twin room  for the nights of:  
 Friday 24th  Saturday 25th  Sunday 26th  Monday 27th

I AGREE TO PAY ALL MY HOTEL BILLS BEFORE LEAVING: Signed .....

Dated .....

RECEIPT FOR LAZLAR LYRICON '85

Received from.....the sum of.....

Signed.....