

HONORARY PRESIDENTS: BRIAN ALDISS & HARRY HARRISON.

Birmingham Science Fiction Group

newsletter 166

June 1985

FRIDAY JUNE 21st - 7.45pm.
IN THE HERTFORD ROOM OF THE NEW IMPERIAL HOTEL.
THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER IS BRITAIN'S ANSWER TO STEPHEN KING -

RAMSEY CAMPBELL

Ramsey Campbell was born in Liverpool in 1946 where he lived for many years before moving to Wallasey, Merseyside. His first book was published when he was 18. He worked as a tax officer and librarian

before becoming a full-time writer in 1973. He has won both the British and the World Fantasy Awards twice, has written and broadcast extensively about the cinema and is now widely recognised as Britain's finest horror writer.

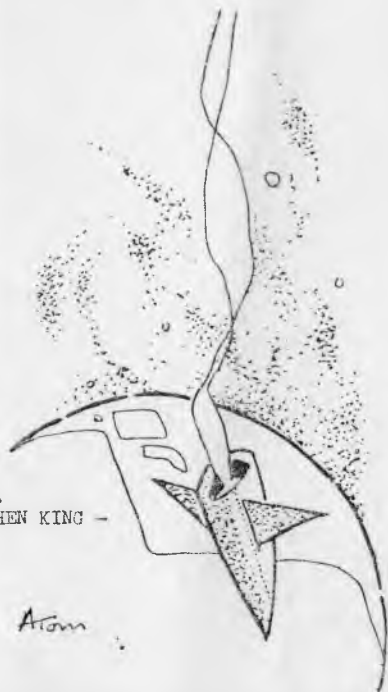
His short fiction covers both Lovecraftian pastiche and psychological terror and in recent years he has mastered the novel. Titles include *TO WAKE THE DEAD*; *THE DOLL WHO ATE HIS MOTHER*; *THE NAMELESS*; *THE FACE THAT MUST DIE* and most recently *INCARNATE*. (There will be a signing session at *ANDROMEDA BOOKSHOP* on Saturday 22nd of June at noon.)

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 people 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 has been produced by MARTIN TUDOR of 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG. Deadline for the next Newsletter is Wednesday the 3rd of July. IF THERE IS AN 'X' IN THE BOX ON THE RIGHT YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS EXPIRED AND IS DUE FOR RENEWAL!

THEODORE STURGEON (1918-1985)

When the BSFG Committee heard of the untimely death of Theodore Sturgeon in May of this year we decided that this Newsletter should contain a tribute of some kind. We are very grateful to Brian Aldiss for sending us the following piece at very short notice.



STURGEON: Mercury Plus X

by Brian Aldiss

Sturgeon? The name was magnetic. There it was, perpetually cropping up attached to the stories I most admired. Sturgeon: quite an ordinary Anglo-American word among exotics like A.E. van Vogt, Isaac Asimov, Heinlein, Simak and Kuttner. Yet - spikey, finny, odd. And it was not his original name. Theodore Hamilton Sturgeon was born Edward Hamilton Waldo. To the usual boring undeserving parents. That was on Staten Island, the year the first World War ended.

So there were two of him, as there are of many a good writer. A bright side, a dark side - much like our old SF image of Mercury, remember, so much more interesting than banal reality. He had a mercurial temperament.

The bright side was the side everyone loved. There was something so damned nice, charming, open, empathic, and elusive about Ted that women flocked to him. Men too. Maybe he was at the mercy of his own fey sexuality. If so, he was quizzical about it, as about everything. One of his more cutesy titles put it admirably: "If All Men Were Brothers, Would You Let Your Sister Marry One?" Not if it was Sturgeon, said a too-witty friend.

He played his guitar. He sang. He shone. He spoke of his philosophy of love.

Ted honestly brought people happiness. If he was funny, it was a genuine humour which sprang from seeing the world aslant. A true SF talent. Everyone recognised his strange quality - "faunlike", some nut dubbed it; faunlike he certainly looked. Inexplicable, really.

Unsympathetic stepfather, unsatisfactory adolescence. Funny jobs, and "Ether Breather" out in Astounding in 1939. So to an even funnier job, science fiction writer. It's flirting with disaster.

I could not believe those early stories: curious subject matter, bizarre resolutions, glowing style. And about sexuality. You could hardly believe your luck when one of Ted's stories went singing through your head.

"It", with Cartier illustrations, in Unknown. Terrifying. "Derm Fool". Madness. The magnificent "Microcosmic God", read and re-read. "Killdozer", appearing after a long silence. There were to be other silences. "Baby is Threes": again the utter incredibility with complete conviction, zinging across a reader's synapses. By a miracle, the blow-up version, "More Than Human", was no disappointment either. This was Sturgeon's caviar dish. Better even than "Venus Plus X", with its outré sexuality in an hermaphrodite utopia.

As for those silences. Something sank Sturgeon. His amazing early success, his popularity with fans and stardom at conventions - they told against the writer. Success is a vampire. In the midst of life we are in definite trouble. They say Sturgeon was the first author in the field ever to sign a six-book contract. A six-book contract was a rare mark of distinction, like being crucified. A mark of extinction. Ted was no stakhanovite and the deal did for him; he was reduced to writing a novelisation of a schlock TV series, "Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea", to fulfill his norms.

At one time he was reduced further to writing TV pilot scripts for Hollywood. He lived in motels or trailers, between marriages, between lives. Those who read "The Dreaming Jewels" or "Venus Plus X" or the story collections forget that writing is secretly a heavy load, an endless battle against the disappointments which come from within as well as without - and reputation a heavier load. Ted was fighting his way back to the light when night came on.

About Ted's dark side.

Well, he wrote that memorable novel, "Some of Your Blood", about this crazy psychotic who goes for drinking menstrual discharge. Actually, it does not taste as bad as Ted made out. That was his bid to escape the inescapable adulation.

One small human thing he did. He and I, with James Gunn, were conducting the writers' workshop at the Conference of the Fantastic at Boca Raton, Florida. This was perhaps three years ago.

Our would-be writers circulated their effusions round the table for everyone's comment. One would-be was a plump, pallid, unhappy lady. Her story was a fantasy about a guy who tried three times to commit suicide, only to be blocked each time by a green monster from Hell who wanted him to keep on suffering. Sounds promising, but the treatment was hopeless.

Dumb comments round the table. I grew impatient with their unreality. When the story reached me, I asked the lady right out, "Have you ever tried to commit suicide?"

Unexpected response. She stared at me in shock. Then she burst into a hailstorm of tears, collapsing on to the table... "Three times," she cried. Everyone looking fit to faint.

"It's nothing to be ashamed of," I said. "I've tried it too."

"So have I," said Sturgeon calmly.

He needn't have come in like that. He just did it bravely, unostentatiously, to support me, to support her, to support everyone. And I would guess there was a lot of misery and disappointment in Ted's life, for all the affection he generated. Yet he remained kind, loving, giving. (The lady is improving by the way. We're still in touch. That's another story.)

If that does not strike you as a positive story, I'm sorry. I'm not knocking suicide, either. Everyone should try it at least once.

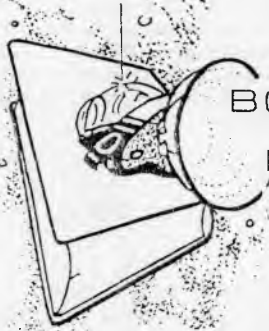
Ted was a real guy, not an idol, an effigy, as some try to paint him. He was brilliant, so he suffered. I know beyond doubt that he would be pleased to see me set down some of the bad times he had. He was not one to edit things out. Otherwise he would have been a less powerful writer.

There are troves of lovely Sturgeon tales (as in the collection labelled "E Pluribus Unicorn"), like "Bianca's Hands", which a new generation would delight in. He wrote well, if sometimes over-lushly. In many ways, Ted was the direct opposite of the big technophile names of his generation, Doc Smith, Poul Anderson, Robert Heinlein, et al. His gaze was more closely fixed on people. For that we honoured him, and still honour him. Good for him that he never ended up in that prick's junkyard where they pay you a million dollars' advance for some crud that no sane man wants to read.

Ted died early in May in Oregon, of pneumonia and other complications. Now he consorts with Sophocles, Dick, and the author of the Karma Sutra. He had returned from a holiday in Hawaii, taken in the hopes he might recover his health there. That holiday, incidentally, was paid for by another SF writer - one who often gets publicity for the wrong things. Thank God, there are still some good guys left. We are also duly grateful for the one just departed.

- Brian Aldiss.

Written in haste on a train bound
for Paddington. By demand. No charge.



BOOK REVIEWS

It is customary to begin the Book Review column of this Newsletter with the latest work of our Guest Speaker. Unfortunately the review copy of Ramsey Campbell's most recent work - INCARNATE, did not arrive until yesterday - so in lieu of a book review I am publishing the Granada Press Release. INCARNATE is 472 pages long and £2.50, no doubt Rog will have a copy or two available at this month's meeting.

Ramsey Campbell



"The horror started when a 'controlled' experiment in prophetic dreaming got wildly out of control. It was aborted - but not before some dark door to a screaming shadow-world of nightmare had been opened - and left ajar. Now, as a bitter winter holds the country in its mortuary-cold grip, a monstrous presence begins to invade the lives of the original participants. Creatures glimpsed fleetingly in the original group dream eleven years ago are drawing them inexorably into a dreadful vortex of hallucination, insanity - and worse. One by one dreamers succumb to the diabolical force that threatens much more than their mere lives. Only Molly, a young production assistant decides to fight. Together with Martin, the crusading American film director she comes to love, she fights desperately to understand the nature of the horror and to conquer it before they, too, are absorbed and lost forever."

IN SEARCH OF SCHRODINGER'S CAT

JOHN GRIBBIN.
Corgi. £2.95. 302 Pages (with index).
Review by Paul Vincent.

Over the past decade or so, many books allegedly popularising science have, in fact, done little more than cloud the science with inaccuracies, inappropriate analogies, and a frequent failure to illuminate the general underlying principles. One of the more common victims of such confusing tomes recently has been quantum physics. Pseudoscience writers use the mind-boggling implications of quantum theory to 'explain' anything and everything: ESP, spoon bending, poltergeists, all are commonly drawn under the umbrella of quantum theory by those bandwagon-jumpers who, 15 years ago, were telling us with earnest sincerity that God wore a spacesuit!

The foregoing is by way of explaining this reviewer's delight at finally reading a clear, illuminating book on quantum theory for intelligent non-scientists. John Gribbin, fortunately, is an experienced science writer for 'Nature' and 'New Scientist', among others, and reveals herein an ability to strip away inessential detail from the subject to reveal the essence of quantum theory.

The book opens with an account of the gradual evolution of the classical model of atomic structure, tracing the many false starts and dead-ends which led, eventually, to Bohr's model of the atom. From this jumping-off point there follows the story of the emergence of quantum theory in its modern form, in which atoms are nothing so simple as a collection of solid particles, nor light anything as simple as a wave. Finally, the book moves with admirable caution into those gray areas which are still subject to ongoing research and philosophical pondering, such as the 'many worlds' theory which postulates not one but vast numbers of realities continually branching and rebranching - not parallel worlds but perpendicular! Finally we are faced with the choice of accepting that either everything is real or nothing is real!

For those who believe that 'truth is stranger than fiction' is merely glib, this book puts new life into that old cliché; whilst those who wish to write 'hard' SF and need to catch up with recent developments will find this invaluable (after all, Greg Benford's 'TIMESCAPE' was written by one well aware of the possibilities of modern physics). In short, for those SF readers to whom the genre offers more than trivial escapism, this book should prove essential reading.

DESTINATION:VOID - Frank Herbert (1966 rev. 1978)

THE JESUS EXPERIMENT - Herbert & Ransom (1979)

THE LAZARUS EFFECT - Herbert & Ransom (1983)

Overview by BOB VERNON.

TAKING LEAVE OF GOD - Don Cupitt (1982)

THE SEA OF FAITH - Don Cupitt (1984)

The Herbert/Ransom is a very strange trilogy. 'DESTINATION: VOID' is an almost impenetrable account of man attempting to create 'Artificial Intelligence' in the control computer of a projected colony ship; and succeeding. Thirteen years later Herbert and Ransom produced 'THE JESUS EXPERIMENT' continuing the story on the planet Pandora, a planet miraculously created by Ship, on which the colonists have to learn to live, accommodate themselves to the sentient Kelp, (a sea-weed system that controls the eco-sphere) and discover how they should Worship; live in obedience to the omniscient, God-like Ship. 'THE LAZARUS EFFECT' is set generations ahead of the Fall of the original colonists. Society is divided, mutations abound, and rogue mermen aspire to God-head, trying to control history and remake the planet in their own image.

I fantasize that Bill Ransom is some kind of radical Jesuit. Jesuit; because he has prompted Herbert to follow through the theological questions raised by 'DESTINATION:VOID'. Radical; because the answers cut to the root of the 'God Question'. Is God an objective reality, or have we projected His image onto the void in order to deal with our own fears and needs? And can we tell the difference? If we cannot tell the difference does it really matter, as long as it helps us live our lives free from angst and in confident pursuit of good, right eousness and love? Whersein lies the nature of 'good, right and love'? And is 'myth' as truthful as empirical fact? The list goes on.

Don Cupitt has recently unpacked a lot of this, strongly suggesting that we cannot 'objectify' God and must accept and affirm our inevitable subjectivity, approaching the 'God Question' only from within our own limitations rather than assert dogmatic solutions. And it is enough, he argues, to live in that faith, that the Universe was created and is sustained by a just and forgiving, loving and consistent God, if it allows us to sense purpose and leads us toward subjective truth and loving living. We should be content and not lay claim to Absolute Truth and Unverifiable Fact.

The 'sea of faith' is always on the move, and has swept away the pre-scientific anthropomorphic image of God, the magical God that never stops tinkering with His creation and our lives, and induces guilt and fear as operating controls in the heart of man. Some still cling to that image, some wait for the tide to turn and bring it back intact. Others rejoice that the fresh tide has brought us the insights of Darwin, and Marx, Freud and Einstein, Jung and Popper, finding that they enrich rather than corrupt their theological understanding of the Universe and Man.

Herbert has spent a lot of time exploring theological and religious themes. Obviously in the 'DUNE' saga and 'THE GOD MAKERS', also in 'THE GREEN BRAIN', 'THE EYES OF HEISENBERG', 'THE SANTAROGA BARRIER', 'HELLSTROM'S HIVE' and many short stories. In this trilogy he has raised the questions more sharply, even though it starts badly with 'DESTINATION: VOID'. 'THE JESUS INCIDENT' is a marked improvement, and 'THE LAZARUS EFFECT' has style, characterization, plotting and a setting well up to the best of Herbert's other works. It also has a theoretical sub-structure that under-pins the whole firmly without imposing itself on the narrative form. You really don't need to read 'DESTINATION: VOID', you could read either of the Cupitt books instead, especially if you want to explore the ideas that lie beneath so much SF, and you are prepared to have your assumptions challenged.

THE TWILIGHT REALM - CHRISTOPHER CARPENTER. Arrow Books. £1.95. 303 Pages.

Review by Dave Packwood.

This book is an unpalatable mixture of sword and sorcery and RPG (role playing games). It is not at all surprising that the mania for Dungeons and Dragons, Runequest et al, has led to someone mixing the two and serving them up in novel form.

I've never heard of the author before and I don't wish to again for this book is puerile, and that's the kindest word that comes to mind. Its plot is simply this - five juveniles meet weekly to play a role game, only on this occasion the game takes on a different slant; the protagonists Uncle is taken over by a nefarious sorcerer, they are presented with models of warriors who will represent themselves on their adventures, and they are transported through a magical mirror into the land of Xhandarre. From this juncture the novel becomes appallingly badly written fantasy with more than a nod to Tolkien and his imitators.

In summary a dreadfully boring 'spin-off' novel with two dimensional characters and a stilted prose style. If you like immature trivia, then you may well identify with this book or indeed its characters.

THE SABLE MOON - NANCY SPRINGER. Corgi. 256 Pages. Review by Bethan Davies.

This book is the third in a trilogy (who said 'when's the fourth coming out?') although I wouldn't have known this if it hadn't been emblazoned on the rather attractive front cover of the book.

Basically, Trevyn, a star son, sets off to follow his Destiny, and subsequently endures the various hardships, imprisonments and coincidences of a typical 'quest' type novel in order to rid Isle of the evil magic of Wael, which, of course, he manages to do.

It is written in a pleasant, relaxed style, so that it is very hard for even people like me to become confused. Yet this same style, although easy reading at first, becomes cloying towards the middle of the book, improving nearer the end.

The story although not complex is quite compelling with few obtuse ideas, and those that there are are very succinctly explained, the main characters are very strongly portrayed and as there only four of them you can remember what each one is doing at a given time, which is no bad thing.

This is not an amazing, original or even particularly witty book, but if you enjoy a fantasy novel with a solid story and are willing to put up with its few flaws, then this is well worth a read. - The type of book you don't rush out and buy...borrow someone else's copy instead.

DRAGON'S EGG - ROBERT L. FORWARD. NEL. £2.25. 308 Pages.

Review by Anne Gay.

Jacqueline Carnot, a student, discovers a neutron star and naturally her professor takes all the kudos. But it is her son who actually goes to investigate the star they call Dragon's Egg in a ship that just had to be called the St. George. What he discovers makes exciting reading.

Handled in parallel, the story of the humans and the aliens they encounter is an interweaving of opposites and similarities. The aliens are engaging without being cute, and they linger in the mind of the reader long after the book has been closed. The humans are rather more forgettable.

Interleaved with all this is a lot of physics. Forward is, after all, a research scientist and contributor to scientific journals. This is a hard book, but persevere. It will more than repay you with the pleasure of new ideas and the stimulation of contact with dynamic extra-terrestrials.

STARMAN - ALAN DEAN FOSTER (from screenplay by Bruce A. Evans, Raynod Gideon & Dean Riesner.) Corgi. £1.95. Review by Bob Vernon.

I confess to an illogical and snobbish distain for film novelizations, a prejudice unfortunately reinforced by too many bad novels from bad films. But if the camel can say 'Damn it, I'm thirsty!', I can say 'Damn it, this is good!' The plot is simple and uncluttered, the narrative has pace and pathos, excitement and humour, the characterization is convincing, and if the film is as good as the book I look forward to seeing

it. You may call it 'E.T. for Adults' or 'Close Encounters of the Loving Kind', but I think it stands firmly on its own two feet.

I don't know anything about Messrs Evans, Gideon and Riesner, but Foster is well known through his Star Trek Logs, novelizations of 'Dark Star' and 'Krull' and his own 'Commonwealth' space operas. Full marks to him for a well crafted and unpretentious piece of entertainment.

THERE IS NO DARKNESS - JOE HALDEMAN & J.C. HALDEMAN II. Orbit. £2.25.

Review by Bob Vernon.

'...save that of ignorance,' and Joe Haldeман is certainly not ignorant about combat or astronomy, being a Vietnam vet. and a B.Sc. to boot, but his knowledge is put to poor use here. This joint effort echoes Haldeман's 'MINDERIDGE' and 'THE FOREVER WAR'; its main section being pre-occupied by gladiatorial confrontations on the hero's Galactic Study Tour, it's conclusion involving an inter-galactic telepathic swap-shop. Unfortunately the result is unexciting and unconvincing. The writing is competent but flat. The descriptions of the planets and satellites visited; the accounts of combat against opponents ranging from a bull to giant polar bear to various human teams; the characterizations and the 'rites of passage' socio-psychology; all lack depth.

Joe Haldeман has done it all before - better. As for Jack Haldeман II, I cannot guess what his contribution was. There is nothing original, progressive or 'modern' here.

CREWEL LYE (Xanth 8) - PIERS ANTHONY. Futura/Orbit. £2.50. 209 Pages.

Review by Helena Bowles

I've been awaiting this book for some time. Disappointed? Slightly. The story, as narrated by 400 years dead Jordan to Princess Ivy treats us to some fascinating insights into true Barbarian life - forget Conan and his friends they're just hype put about by the Barbarian Public Relations Department - as Jordan rides round Xanth deflowering maidens and being killed - several times. Killed? Yes. Jordan's talent is to recover from any injury, however severe, very quickly.

As with 'CASTLE ROOGNA' - the other 'mediaeval' Xanth novel - I felt this one did not quite measure up to the rest of the series being a little slow-moving, especially for the first 80 pages or so. However, it is worth persevering for there are several lovely moments - as when Jordan is trying to deflect 5 year old Ivy's intense curiosity about 'summoning the stork' - a ritual encountered once or twice in the narrative.

My verdict? A very punny book - you think that's bad? Read the book. Your sense of humour will be warped for life!

NIGHTRIDER - DAVID MACE. Panther. £1.95. Review by Chris Chivers.

A mission of implacable terror. A machine of irresistible power. A book of unbelievable boredom. From the first illustration of the Nightrider ship, what could have been a well paced and enjoyable SF novel was bogged down with page after page of technical jargon.

The mission to Hel to destroy the outsiders base became a minor subplot to the story of the crew of six, who, until three quarters of the way through the story, didn't realize that they were also fighting their own computer. (Seems familiar). When the Nightrider crew finally came into conflict with the Outsiders, the computer tried to take over the mission to fulfill the mission profile to its maximum specification.

When the plot finally got underway it was just in time to end the book. Nightrider is definitely a book for incurable insomniacs and a 304 page story that could have been improved by removing 100 pages of padding.

THE EXILES TRILOGY - BEN BOVA. Methuen. £2.50. (Exiled from Earth '71; Flight of Exiles '72; Exiles from Earth '75). Review by Bob Vernon.

Methuen ought to have their wrists slapped for packaging this as adult SF when these stories first appeared as juveniles. And juv. they certainly are; no sex, no violence and precious few ideas.

The plot(?): World Gov exiles leading geneticists in orbiting space station lest they produce 'super-man'. They go off in search of a new earth, and eventually find it. Vol I is a non-event, Vol II is a flat footed adventure and Vol III is 'The Ballad of Beta 2' boiled down to banality. Each volume has the same sub-plot (two men chase one

woman, favourite always wins) and the other characters are so shallow I kept forgetting who was who. So; no points for setting or plot, dialogue or prose style. Quite well printed though. I would not give it to my children to read, 'nuff said?

V: EAST COAST CRISIS - HOWARD WEINSTEIN & A.C. CRISPIN. NEL £2.50.

Review by Bob Vernon.

'OK Weinstein, Crispin, listen in. I've got a great package for ya'.

'Yes, Mr Johnson?'

'Shura' hell yes. I tell ya, we do this TV Blockbuster see, and then this whole series of tie-in whatyacallums?'

'Books, Mr Johnson?'

'Dat's it. Books. Now, ya'really gonna like this, its creative, in fact it's yer actual Sci-fi. Isn't that whatyacallit?'

'Almost, Mr Johnson.'

'Good. Now hear this; from Outer Space come these gi-normous spaceships, hoverin' over every great city in America. No, dammit, in the World. Full of aliens, look jest like hoomans, come here cos they've got this ecological problem, real scientific, real tropical, topical, whatever. Say they're gonna give us all this advanced information if we help them manufacture whatever chemical they need to sort things out back home. Whatever, work it out. Got that?'

'Yes, Mr Johnson.'

'But, boys, but beautiful but, these aliens aren't really like us at all, in fact they're ... wait for it: REPTILES! Imagine that! Reptiles, like lizards, disguised as hoomans. Original? or Original?'

'Uh, yes, Mr Johnson. Lizards. Disguised. Same skeletal structure as humans, same vocal equipment, same environmental needs, but lizards. Wearing masks or something Mr Johnson?'

'Dat's right, you boys are really getting into it, I can see. Fancy masks! I like it. And they're not really after chemicals at all. They're really after us! To EAT! Plannin' on stuffin' their ships with thousands of hooman TV dinners. With me? Now wait for the marketing angle, this is brilliant. If these ships areall over the States - World I mean - we can push out books telling the story from different places, different angles, goddit? East Coast, West Coast, The Gulf and the rest England, Europe places like that. Same story, different angles. In fact all you have to change is the names!.'

'Mr Johnson, it's a great idea, but there might be a couple of technical problems with the story line, and people might not take to being fed the same story again and again.'

'Look bozoes, this is scieny fiction, not friggin literatoor, goddit!'

'Goddit, Mr Johnson.'

And so it came to pass that 'V' entered the world, followed inexorably by 'V: East Coast Crisis' which will be followed by, would you believe it 'The Pursuit of Diana' and who knows what next. 'W: after V'; 'X: Son of V'; 'ABC: long before V?'

News



David Bowie is to play one the (only) two human characters in the new Jim Henson/Brian Froud movie - Labyrinth.
Harrison Ford/Steven Spielberg arescheduled to make Indiana Jones 3.
Recently Frank Kappa's 200 MOTELS made it to number 20 in the music video chart.
The Guest of Honour at next year's EASTERCON in Glasgow - ALBACON III - will be none other than Joe Haldeman . Membership £9.00 to:-
ALBACON III, c/o VINCE DOCHERTY, 20 Hillington Gardens, Glasgow, G52 1PR. PR ONE containing the hotel booking forms is already out!

This year's ALBACON'85 (JULY 19th-22nd) has Harlan Ellison and Anne McCaffrey as Guests of honour , attending membership for that is £8.00 payable to ALBACON'85 and sent to the same address.

The Committee of BECCON are bidding for the right to hold the 1987 Eastercon at the NEC in Birmingham, pre-supporting membership is £1.00 and should be sent to BECCON '87, 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middx., UB5 4BU.