

# Birmingham Science Fiction Group

Honorary Presidents : Brian W. Aldiss  
and Harry Harrison.

## NEWSLETTER 191

AUGUST 1987



THE BSFG MEETS ON THE  
THIRD FRIDAY OF EACH  
MONTH IN THE LABROKE  
INTERNATIONAL HOTEL,  
NEW STREET, IN THE  
CENTRE OF BIRMINGHAM.  
DETAILS OF THIS MONTH'S  
MEETING ARE GIVEN  
OPPOSITE.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE  
GROUP COSTS A MERE £5.50  
PER YEAR FOR ONE PERSON  
£8.00 FOR TWO PEOPLE  
AT THE SAME ADDRESS.

ALL CHEQUES AND POSTAL  
ORDERS PAYABLE TO BSFG  
AND SENT TO THE  
TREASURER CHRIS CHIVERS  
AT 51 BOUNDARY ROAD  
STREETLY SUTTON  
COLOFIELD WEST MID'S.

This month's meeting is on 21st August at 8.00pm  
and our guest is:

### DAVID BRIN

Born, raised and educated in California, Brin did his undergraduate work at the California Institute of Technology. He attended graduate school at the University of California at San Diego where he received a Masters Degree in electrical engineering and optics, and later did doctoral research in space and physics and astronomy, and received a Doctor of Philosophy degree. He taught both physics and astronomy at San Deigo State University, as well as classes in creative writing and the philosophy of science.

Brin's interests include backpacking, racketball, music, literature and what he terms "generic eclecticism." His articles have appeared in scientific journals as well as *Analog* and *The New Scientist*. He is also the author of four other novels, *SUNDIVER*, *THE PRACTICE EFFECT*, *HEART OF THE COMET* (with Gregory Benford) and *THE POSTMAN*, with a short story collection *THE RIVER OF TIME* recently published. Before any of his novels are submitted for publication, Brin has them read by scientists and other experts to ensure the accuracy of the story's background. To him, science fiction is not imaginary tales about spaceships, but speculative work based on the current body of scientific knowledge

## LAST MONTH'S MEETING

By now you've heard the story of Storm walking into Andromeda with a manuscript and asking how to get it published, etc, etc - well here's the REAL story, from the author's lips...

Storm DID go into Andromeda, but was "to shy" to approach anyone so "pushed a friend forward". Holmes, being his usual self, was eminently helpful (?) but luckily there was a rep. from Futura there who read it and took it back to HQ. The rest, as they say, is history.

This came as a response to opening questions when an apprehensive Storm Constantine met the ESFG.

She explained that her motivation to write came from being a librarian - from looking at other people's books (the spur to actually write) and to get out of the job! So she spent her nights at a dressing table with a typewriter on this idea she'd had. The book, THE ENCHANTMENTS OF FLESH AND SPIRIT is her attempt to move away from what Storm describes as the 'Smith's bookshelf compartmentation and concentrate on characterisation rather than hardware or magic. The story is based on the world as it could be (parallel world) on a down spiral (recession) when a mutation produces hermaphrodites, who later discover they can 'infect' others to become as they are. This develops into a 'man v new race' conflict. Sounds highly original (see Book Reviews page ).

Storm feels every writer lives their dreams through their novels, expressing the type of world in which they'd like to live. She however would like to expand out from novel to include other media. This will be begun with Book 2 which has a US musician writing poems as 'leaders' to chapters. A further step will be to set up workshops to help develop 'media skills'.

As to her own writing, Storm revealed her method was to write a draft, then redraft giving two complete drafts at which point it's re-read and if needed parts are re-written until she feels happy with it.

To conclude, Storm responded to questions and admitted admiring Stephen King (characterisation), Tanish Lee (writing), Jack Vance (wit) and Shirley Jackson (writing).

This was Storm's first meeting of this type and although nervous she acquitted herself admirably. An extremely interesting night.

## THE CHAIRMAN'S BIT

If you were at the July meeting you will know that I pointed out that we cannot use the Ladbroke Hotel in December, and asked for suggestions on what we should do for that meeting - given that we are not, for reasons that are well known, having a Christmas Party. A 'Black Country Pub Crawl' was suggested - but would that necessarily meet with much better support than 'Beer and Skittles'?

The Committee feel that a restaurant meal, organised on a fairly informal basis for those members who wish to partake, is the best solution. However, there is plenty of time to make your opinion known - just write to the Members' Forum - we shall consider all serious suggestions carefully. There is no excuse for complaining later! Ideas for a venue are also welcome.

Meanwhile, we can virtually guarantee that the last 'formal' meeting will close the year with a bang, as we have our co-President, Harry Harrison, in November. With David Brin in August and Bob Shaw in October, we shall be getting our money's worth...

*David*

# NEWS

Brian Aldiss is set to appear at the Birmingham Festival of Readers and Writers on November 16 (Monday). As a major author and good speaker try to go along.

\*

Forthcoming meetings are to include Bob Shaw (October) and Harry Harrison (November) - don't miss either!

December poses a quandary with no formal meeting arranged - due to last years fiasco. Suggestions were flooded at the July meeting and these included a pub crawl (from Holmes - who else?) or a meal, however this is a GROUP decision so let's have some ideas - use the Members Forum to make suggestions and a vote will be taken later (but not too late to book). Get writing.

## ANDROMEDA SIGNING SESSIONS

Saturday 22nd August, Harry Harrison 11am - 1 pm and Adrian Cole 1pm onwards.

Saturday 5th September, Midday Iain Banks, 1.30 onwards Jonathan Carroll.

Andromeda is at 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham B1 1TA.

Another BSFG member is featured in a novel, after Bethan's appearance in LIGHT FANTASTIC we now have Novacon Chairman Bernie Evans getting murdered in Shaun Hutson's book Victims.

\*

The new Stainless Steel Rat book is dedicated to "Rog Peyton and the BSFG"- Nice!

\*

Are the Scandinavians putting a real CON in Conspiracy? Evidence has landed on my desk regarding a scandal in the Scandinavian-European Fan Fund (SEFF); apparently with a day to go the administrator 'leaked' the figures of voting to the losing candidate's campaign upon which they 'collected' further votes (by proxy - illegal) up to/past the deadline to give their lad, Anders Bellis, a 3 vote win!!

However, apart from the illegality of including 'phone votes, the overall majority was not sufficient to declare a winner, but this didn't stop the administrator announcing Bellis as the winner. The evidence given to me (via Fanytt) is pretty conclusive - can Conspiracy do anything about it? Something should be done about it as it gives Fandom a bad image.

DECLARE THE PHONY VOTES ILLEGAL AND ANNOUNCE JOHAN SCHIMANSKI AS THE TRUE WINNER.

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Talking of Conspiracy anyone going who wishes to write a conrep on part, or all of the event contact us at the meeting.

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Andromeda's top ten for July.

Paperbacks.

1. Mirror of Her Dreams by Stephen Donaldson.
2. Dr. Who - the Sensorites by Nigel Robinson.
3. Foundation and Earth by Isaac Asimov.
4. Wielding a Red Sword by Piers Anthony.
5. War of the Twins by Weiss and Hickman.
6. Centering of the Circle by Johnathan Wylie.
7. The Proteus Operation by James Hogan.
8. Speaking of Dinosaurs by Phillip E. High.

9. The Bridge by Iain Banks.
10. Spinnerett by Timothy Zahn.

Hardcovers.

1. The Enchantments of Flesh and Spirit. by Storm Constantine.
2. Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency by Douglas Adams.
2. Sepulchre by Frank Herbert.
4. Guardians Of The West by David Eddings.
5. Fortune of Fear by L. Ron Hubbard.

## THE JOPIAN REPORT

BY MARTIN TUDOR

The big news last month broke, as is usual, too late for inclusion in the newsletter. What was it? Oh, merely the impending non-appearance of the 45th World Science Fiction Convention's Guest of Honour, Alfred Bester. In a letter received on the 25th of June by the Conspiracy'87 Steering Committee, Bester said "I'm afraid I've had a disaster which will probably rub off on you... Last year I had a bad fall which ruined knee, ankle and hip on my left leg. I was in hospital for months receiving a mechanical hip and prosthetic knee and ankle. I could barely walk but I had hopes. Then came the disaster. I was tottering to the bathroom when I fainted. I awoke with a gigantic black eye and the goddam mechanical hip thrown out of its socket. Back into hospital for more operations... I'm virtually bedridden and can only hobble around the house with the aid of a 'walker'. It will be impossible for me to leave the house, much less travel overseas to your convention. I deeply regret the loss of pleasure in attending and your loss of a Guest of Honour... Once again, my profound apology for my disaster, and I hope that Brighton will think kindly of me confined to my bed in a vegetative existence."

The Conspiracy committee, determined not to lose touch completely with their GoH, are arranging to have an interview with Bester recorded (the interview will most likely be conducted by Julius Schwartz, the Senior Editor at D.C. Comic, an SF fan for over forty years and a long time friend of Bester) and they will be trying to set up a live telephone link with Bester at the convention.

The good news is that it has now been officially confirmed that Arkady and Boris Strugatsky will definitely be attending the convention. You win some you lose some.

It has also now been confirmed that the group appearing in the Friday night rock concert at Conspiracy will be Hawkwind. They will be performing their 'Elric' set, complete with dancers and "spectacular visuals". According to Ian Sorenson's 'International Conspiracy Journal' #5 (the newzine for Conspiracy'87 staff and the source of much of this news) 'Elric' is - "reckoned to be Hawkwind's best ever show."

The 'on the door' membership for Conspiracy will be £45 attending or £15 per day. As of, around, the 17th of July the con had 3841 attending, 472 supporting, 33 children and 84 day members. Slightly larger than the average Brum Group meeting eh? All of which means the convention has now broken even.

On Saturday the 25th of July Conspiracy'87 received a Europe wide plug via the Skychannel Satellite; TVS plan to make a documentary about the con as part of their series 'The Human Factor and the convention also received an honourable mention in 'New Scientist', in praise of the no smoking policy. (No comment.)

I had hoped to be able to include some information about the main programme streams at Conspiracy, but despite hanging on until the last moment, nothing has arrived. I can, however, mention a few items that might be of interest to BSFG members on The Fan

Programme. First, on the Thursday night at 23.00 in the Clarence Room of the Metropole Hotel (The Fan Lounge) there is "THE ANDROMEDA FAN ROOM PARTY - Birmingham's Andromeda Bookshop, Europe's largest science fiction specialist store, invite you to start the convention in style at their party - drink, music and dark corners supplied." On Friday at 13.30 in the Norfolk Room of the Metropole Hotel (as are all the items mentioned below) Rog Peyton, former BSFG Chairman, will be appearing on a panel discussion entitled "WHO NEEDS THE BSFA?". Later that same day, at 19.30 Rog will again be appearing as part of the Dirty Capitalists team, in Steve Green's "COLD CURRY AND CUSTARD". Steve, one time newsletter editor of the BSFG, has created this quiz game, a variation on the world-famous 'Trivial Pursuits', streamlined to make it faster and more visual. It includes, amongst its other refinements, questions designed to test the panelists' ability to second-guess fannish opinion on a variety of subjects, with a format similar to ITV's 'Family Fortunes'. Three teams, the Filthy Pros (writers/editors), the Dirty Capitalists (bookdealers) and the Great Unwashed (fans) display their respective skills.

In "DOES YOUR BOOKSELLER KNOW HIS ONIONS?" on Saturday at 19.30, the staff of Andromeda Bookshop lead by former BSFG treasurer Dave Holmes do battle with the staff of London's Forbidden Planet, in a quiz designed to test both SF knowledge and alcoholic capacity... Who will your money be on? On Sunday at 17.00 Pete Weston, another former BSFG Chairman, will be presenting a talk entitled "WHAT HAPPENED IN BRITISH FANDOM IN THE SIXTIES?". Finally, on Monday at 13.30 this years Novacon Chairman and former BSFG publicity officer Bernie Evans will be presenting an 'article' as part of "CONRUNNER" - a live version of Ian Sorenson's fanzine of the same name. So now you know where all those former BSFG committee members go to die...

But enough about Conspiracy'87, before we finish I have a couple of other conventions to mention. First, Terry Pratchett will be Guest of Honour at CONOPOLY, the Coventry Poly SF mini-con on the 5th of December 1987. Attending membership £3.50 to - Kevin McVeigh, SF Group, Coventry Polytechnic, Priory Street, Coventry. Second, FANTASYCON XII, have as their Guests of Honour M. John Harrison, George R.R. Martin and J.K. Potter. Their Master of Ceremonies will be Douglas E. Winter, and their venue remains the same as last year - The Midland Hotel, New Street, Birmingham. The convention will be the weekend following the Worldcon, 4th to the 6th of September 1987. Supporting membership is £3.00, attending membership £10.00 (or £9.00 for British Fantasy Society members). Send to - FANTASYCON XII, 15 Stanley Rd., Morden, Surrey, SM4 5JH. If you wish to join the BPS send an SAE to the same address. Last summer a years membership was £8.00 but the price may have changed.

Finally, a plug for the British Science Fiction Association, information, in the form of a sample mailing, can be obtained from the Co-ordinator Paul Kincaid, at 114 Guildhall Street, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1ES. A years membership is currently, I believe, £10.00.

"World Science Fiction Convention" and "Worldcon" are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society, an unincorporated literary society.

*A bid for the 1990 Worldcon*

# Go Dutch - our way!



That means we will look after the program and you will have the time of your life. We've come all the way from Holland to entertain you with Old World hospitality and a New World of possibilities for the 48th World Science Fiction Convention.

Interested? (Of course you are!). Look for the fans with those Big Mouse buttons and T-shirts, or treat yourself to a real Dutch room party: we'll come up with the drinks and you'll leave with a pre-supporting membership. Look out for our posters for the time and place.

By the way, if you haven't received your buttons and wooden shoes as a pre-supporter, come and visit us at Brighton and get your goodies!

*The 1990 Worldcon in Holland? Sounds great!*

**Pre-supporting  
membership £ 4.00**

KLM Dutch Airlines has been appointed official carrier for the 48th Worldcon in the Hague.  
Worldcon 1990, P.O. Box 95370, 2509 CJ The Hague,  
Holland.

**AGENTS' CORNER**

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# BOOK REVIEWS

ENCHANTMENTS OF FLESH AND SPIRIT - THE FIRST BOOK OF THE WRAETHTHU, by Storm Constantine, Macdonald, £11.95, 318 pages, reviewed by Carol Morton.

The Wraeththu are an off-shoot of the race of Man- they originated from a single major mutation, and flourish by inoculating humans (generally males - but this is not clarified), with Wraeththu blood. This causes a violent reaction and, if they survive, the hosts find themselves changed both physically and mentally and become Wraeththu. Because of these ceremonies the Wraeththu are said to perform all sorts of dark practices including human sacrifice. So when Cal - a Wraeththu arrives at a remote and impoverished community Pellaz - a young human male - is both fascinated by Cal and also very wary of him. But he overcomes his trepidation and accompanies Cal to Saltrock a Wraeththu community where Pellaz is incepted into the Wraeththu. The rest of the novel deals with Pellaz's journeys and adventures with Cal as they travel south to find the city of Immanion the first and capital city of the Wraeththu.

This is a truly excellent novel and if I hadn't known differently I would have said that this was the work of a fully seasoned writer but this is Ms. Constantine's first novel written with polish and flair. Her characters are believable and the world in which it is set could so easily be our world if industry was allowed to pour its poisons unchecked into the environment. This has become one of my favourite novels, don't wait for the paperback, go out and buy it now!

SPEAKER FOR THE DEAD by Orson Scott Card, Century, £10.95, 415 pages, reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

Speaker For The Dead has already won the Nebula Award and, like its predecessor Ender's Game, may win the Hugo as well. If it does so, this will be the first time that two books in the same trilogy have done the double. The reason? This book has everything: pace, style, a good plot, well drawn characters, complexity and scientific accuracy.

Most of the action is set on Lusitania, the only planet that, in three thousand years of human space exploration, has been found to have intelligent, indigenous population. Rules of contact between the colonists and the natives (called "piggies") are very strict so that they do not become contaminated by advanced technology. When the Xenologer is killed by the piggies a call is sent out for a Speaker for the Dead. This is someone who will find out and speak the truth about his life, and death, to the community. The one who arrives is Andrew Wiggin. Unknown to all, he is the Ender who, three thousand years previously, wiped out the other intelligent species.

The plot encompasses misunderstandings, family conflict, xenophobia, a biological enigma and religious intolerance but throughout it is a superb read. This is one book you cannot afford to miss.

DINNER AT DEVIANT'S PALACE, by Tim Powers, Grafton, 300 p., £2.95.  
reviewed by Anne Gay.

Tim Powers is without doubt one of the major talent writing in the U.S. today. This novel is a paperback imprint taken from Chato and Windus last year, and shows the breadth and scope of his ability.

At first sight the setting of Dinner at Deviant's Palace is not particularly original. Gregorio Rivas, a musician eking out a living in post-Holocaust California, is inveigled into rescuing his former girlfriend from a mystery religious cult. Will he succeed? Of course he will. You know books with downbeat endings are not a favourite among s.f. readers. So why bother reading the thing?

Because it's brilliant, that's why. The detail of his imagination, the skill with which he creates likeable but human characters, and above all his sheer originality and charm will grip old Tim Powers fans. Even with such a seemingly un-prepossessing scenario there are whole areas that Powers weaves into his own compelling web that captures the reader's attention.

A word of warning. Tim Powers may be original but parts of his work are taken up with the dark side of human nature. On the other hand, there is the satisfaction of having identified with the workers for mankind.

Don't just take my word for it. Dash out and pester Rog with all possible speed.

A PLACE AMONG THE FALLEN by Adrian Cole, Allen & Unwin, £10.95, 352 pages,  
reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

In so many fantasy novels evil comes out of the east. This is no exception. The people of Omara have no belief in magical power---indeed a group known as the Deliverers go round killing anyone who might be tempted to. Into this world comes Korbillian, who has power, with a tale of a mindless, growing evil in the east. He draws to him those who might help him in his bid to destroy it. On the surface this is a quest novel involving a fight of good against evil, but there is a valiant attempt to portray the principle players as real people with failings. It does not quite succeed. The pace is fast but the novel contains many vaguely familiar elements---underground races, sick ground, hostile vegetation--- and insufficient tension is built up to give the reader complete satisfaction. One problem is the frequent point of view changes. However, a laudable attempt.

HEROS FOR WARGAMES, Stewart Parkinson, Paper Tiger, £7.95, reviewed by Chris Chivers.

A book long awaited by all fantasy wargamers on the figures used in role playing games and fantasy battles. This volume gives the background to how the miniatures are made, from the initial concept to the finished model. With pages of original sketches and some full page colour prints, the modeller is taken stage-by-stage through how to produce a beautifully finished figure from the original kit. The individual sections deal with the production of the cast kit and how long a kit run is liable to last before a new figure takes its place, due to the mould becoming damaged and unusable. The stages of building the kit and the tips and hints that produce a unique model are well put over, so that the average modeller will have no problem in improving his skills.

The stages of painting a model, so as to give fresh ideas on how not to ruin hours of painstaking labour are thoroughly dealt with so as to give the model a superb finish. Also dealt with in this volume is a section on dioramas and how to display the characters to their best advantage. With pieces on the individual model makers of the major companies in this particular field through to the master painters, this book gives a thorough introduction to the world of miniature fantasy figures.



THE FIONAVAR IMPERIVY BUCK, 1&11 THE SUMMER TREE 322 pages, THE WANDERING FIRE, 298 pages, by Guy Gavriel Kay, Gollancz, £2.95 each, reviewed by Carol Morton.

Five young American college students find themselves transported to the world of Fionavar by Loren Silvercloak - a mage and his source Matt Söfen ostensibly for the purpose of being part of the celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of King Ailell's reign. In reality Silvercloak knows that one of the - Kimberly - is a seer and their land stands in desperate need of her talents. Thus starts THE SUMMER TREE. Their arrival precipitates Fionavar into war and each of the five find they have a vital role to play in this against the forces of Rakoth Maugrim - a fallen god known as the Unraveller.

THE WANDERING FIRE takes up where the story left off at the end of THE SUMMER TREE. All five adventurers have been changed by their stay in Fionavar, and have begun to understand the roles they must play to save not only Fionavar but all of the worlds that the weaver has created, because the destruction of Fionavar would destroy them all - Earth included.

This trilogy looks set to become a classic, it somehow reminds me of Tolkien with Celtic and Norse myths included for good measure. It is a truly epic tale written with great style on a grand scale. Highly Recommended.

NATFACT 7 By John Tully, Magnet, £1.75, reviewed by Chris Chivers.

Natfact 7 alias National Factory 7 built to house the rebels of a state-run Britain is the theme for John Tully's book. Written for 10 - 14 year olds the language and the faults in some of the characterizations are perfectly pitched for this age group.

Skip Greeves is the standard rebel type at odds with a Socialist state controlled country, and he is quickly recruited into the underground movement A.C.E.. Also at Natfact 7 is Brian Harvard an undercover agent for the state, but why he was recruited is a mystery as his ineptitude makes him more of a slapstick comedy character.

The final outcome of the rebel versus state battle is a foregone conclusion. A book with very few surprises, it's well written for the age group that it is intended for.

EMERGENCE by David R. Palmer, NEL, £2.95, 291 pages, reviewed by Tony Morton.

A ten year old girl stranded in a fallout shelter during a nuclear war discovers her past and her (potential) future. EMERGENCE is written as a journal of events that happen to (young) heroine Candida Smith-Foster after the nuclear disaster. The characters are believable and human and interrelate well; the book is well written with a story told as a humble tale of human endurance. I liked it. Worth a read.

THE FAJED SUN TRILOGY by C. J. Cherryh, Methuen, £3.95, reviewed by Donald Thompson.

Originally published in 3 volumes, it concerns relations between three races; the Mri, a humanoid race currently acting as mercenaries, although clearly far more than simple soldiers; the Regul, their current employers, who seem to be vaguely armadillo-like with the armour growing thicker with age and restricting movement, and who have eidetic memories but little imaginative ability and thus little adaptive capacity; and humans, who having just won a war against the Regul are determined to make sure that they keep up the military/political/economic advantage. The Regul representative naturally wishes to ensure that this does not happen, and, fearful of a Mri-Human alliance attempts to kill all the Mri on the old principle 'no survivors, no problem'. However the two Mri survivors are joined by a human and a chain of events is set into motion that leads to the full unfolding of what the Mri represent and the potential for gain they represent.

Competently written, THE FAJED SUN TRILOGY is not one of her best works,

but Methuen are to be applauded for making the set available in one volume, providing a pleasant and not too misleading a cover (along with the artist's name) and a well produced book. I hope we may look forward to this format being used extensively in the future for this and other writers.

THE LIGHT OF EDEN by W. A. Harbinson, Corgi, £2.95, 439 pages, reviewed by Helena Boules.

I am not quite sure whether to class this novel as religion, philosophy or nutty. It covers the major aspects of Judaism and Christianity (conveniently ignoring the other three major religions) linking these in with time travel, UFOlogy, mythology, parapsychology - and virtually every other dlogy that is not a hard science. Having said that, the book is enthralling. It provides an original interpretation of evolution (or should that be explanation?), with the heroine, Frances Devereux, acting (experiencing?) out the turning points of human development, extending right back to her being identified as Eve. My only gripe is that the author's grip of mythology was less extensive than might be desired and, given his particular interpretation of events in Eden, it would have been better to make Frances a parallel or archetype of Lilith rather than Eve (this would also make a good deal of sense in the rest of the narrative as well). If you have read Eric Von Daniken, read this (but only if you are capable of totally suspending all inherent belief systems - this book is heavy).

WIELDING A RED SWORD by Piers Anthony, Grafton, £2.95, 331 pages, reviewed by Carol Morton.

This - the penultimate novel in the INCARNATIONS OF IMMORTALITY series - deals with Mars the incarnation of war. Mym is a Prince of Gujarat who has the unfortunate impediment of a stutter. The two women he loves are taken from him by the machinations of Satan and through further plotting by Satan he becomes Mars, but an inexperienced Mars in a time of great conflict. Eventually Mym gets trapped in Hell, but with the help of Ligea - a siren - he escapes and we are given further glimpses and more clues to the interconnecting plot line of this series.

The best of the series - so far - was the first novel but this is eminently readable and the series as a whole is good, though I must admit the author's notes (47 pages this time) are getting wearisome.

THE TRAVELLER IN BLACK by John Brunner, Methuen £2.50, 237 pages. Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

This is the first time that all the Traveller in Black stories have been published together in English. The additional story is the fourth (out of five) "The Things That are Gods" and fits neatly with the others. But even they are not identical with earlier imprints. Brunner has revised all the stories making them neater and stylistically tighter. It has been an act of polishing rough edges rather than rewriting.

The traveller is a mysterious wish-granter in a land on the borders between Chaos and Time. His task is to help the world from superstitition to reason by the banishment and dissolution of demons but he cannot act until asked. But the granting of the wish does not always have the effect the wisher expects as people rarely express themselves literally. Brunner is a fine British writer and although most of his novels are SF rather than Fantasy they will give an idea of the quality of his writing.

COLD PRINT by Ramsey Campbell, Grafton, £2.95, 365 pages, reviewed by Chris Morgan

"Britain's answer to Stephen King" says the cover blurb of this collection. But the claim is irrelevant to Cold Print, since more than half the stories were written when Campbell was in his teens and King (even younger) was still unpublished. These are Campbell's tales of the Cthulhu mythos, redolent with a dark and sinister menace, in which the narrators (mostly rather strange young men) uncover secret facts about hideous alien beings and are either driven mad by the knowledge or eaten alive. I suppose that one is either a fan of the Cthulhu mythos or not; I'm not. Campbell is usually a competent and entertaining writer, but this collection shows him at his worst, with poor characterisation and very little dialogue or character interaction to lighten the sombre tone of the narration.

RE - ISSUES reviewed by Tony Morton.

GALACTIC POT-HEALER by Phillip K. Dick, Panther/Grafton, £2.50, 189 pages.

The Dick classic re-issued. A tale of a man whose profession is obsolete and who is struggling along until a possible way out is offered by Glimmung. If you haven't read this do so.

ALLOUJEMENT FLED by James White, Orbit, £2.95, 320 pages.

A 'first contact' novel written by White and reissued to show the others how it's done. Wonderful 'human' characters; believable storyline, loved it. If you don't have it, BUY it.

TRULLION: ALASTOR 2262 by Jack Vance, Grafton, £2.95, 229 pages.

The waterworld of the fens, Trullion in the in the Alastor Cluster and home to the Trill. This is the story of the disruption of the easy-living carefree Trill by the pirates the Starmenters.

THE SWORDS OF CORUM by Michael Moorcock, Grafton, £3.95, 509 pages.

Re-issue of the three 'swords' books in one volume. One of Moorcock's heroic-fantasy series, with Prince Corum Jhaelen on a quest against the Madmen through the 'planes of Earth'. Powerfully written.

COSMIC ENGINEERS by Clifford D. Simak, Severn House, £7.95 (hardcovers), 159 pages

Simak's first full-length novel originally published in 1950. The story of how Mankind is given the task of saving the universe from disaster, by the Cosmic Engineers. If you've not read it I ain't saying what the outcome is. Recommended.

FADE OUT by Patrick Tilley, Grafton, £3.50, 541 pages.

The revised and updated version of Tilley's novel documenting man's first contact with an advanced alien intelligence. Brilliant characterisation and believable characters' reaction to the problems of an alien spacecraft landing, and the subsequent official cover up and events leading to a climax of exquisite tension. Imagine the panic if all the radar and tracking facilities went haywire. I couldn't put it down. Excellent read.

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Thankyou this month go to:

Martin Tudor - Dophan report

Pauline Morgan, Anne Gay, Chris Chivers, Donald Thompson, Helena Bowles and Chris Morgan - Book reviews.

Jiangorn - Novacon Artwork.

This newsletter was produced by Tony and Carol Morton, 49, Grosvenor way, Werry Bank, Brierley Hill, West Midlands, B75 2LJ. Deadline for next month's newsletter is 8th Sept (to allow for Worldcon reports).

30 October - 1 November 1987

The ROYAL ANGUS HOTEL, Birmingham

# NOVARCON 17

The Annual Convention of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group

GUEST OF HONOUR IAIN BANKS

MEMBERSHIPS WILL BE LIMITED TO 350

join early to avoid disappointment.

Membership is £10

For registration contact:

Mick Evans,

7, Grove Avenue,

Acocks Green, Birmingham,

B27 7UY.



A SCENE FROM "THE WASP FACTORY"