

# BRUM GROUP

# NEWS

October  
1989

Issue  
No.217

The monthly Newsletter of the  
**BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP**  
(Honorary Presidents: Brian W. Aldiss and Harry Harrison)

1989 Committee: Chairman - Bernie Evans Secretary - Chris Murphy  
Treasurer - Chris Chivers Newsletter Editor - Dave Hardy Reviews Editor -  
Mick Evans Publicity Officer - Helena Bowles Novacon 19 - Martin Tudor

This Month's Meeting is on:  
Friday 20 October at 7.45pm



Admission: Members £1.25  
Visitors £2.00

This month's Programme Item is:

**Debate with Birmingham University SF Group**

The Motion to be debated (set by the University Group, as it's their turn) is:

**"THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THAT COMICS ARE THE CUTTING EDGE OF SF"**

After having Neil Gaiman to speak to us last month, this sounds topical! For the motion we have Mike Ibeji and Stefan Dziewanowski (University), and against it Rog Peyton (surprise, surprise!!) and well known member A.N.Other (and possibly A.N.Author). The debate will be chaired by that gimlet-eyed master of ceremonies and take-no-nonsense, Tim Stannard. An enjoyable evening will be had...

*The BSFG meets on the third Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) at the PENGUIN (ex LADBROKE) HOTEL, New Street, Birmingham at 7.45 pm. Subscription rates: £6.00 per person (£9.00 for two members at same address)*

*Cheques etc. payable to the BSFG, via the Treasurer, c/o the Chairman (below). Book Reviews to Mick Evans at 7 Grove Avenue, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 7UY (Telephone 021-707 6606), which is also the Chairman's address. Other contributions and enquiries to Dave Hardy, 99 Southam Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 0AB (telephone 021-777 1802, fax 021-777 2792)*



# GROUP NEWS

Last Month

## Neil Gaiman

Neil, hiding at first behind dark glasses but later risking an unshielded glance at us, opened by saying that Bernie had reminded him two days ago that he was supposed to be talking to us about 'Humour in Science Fiction'. He didn't, but instead gave us an entertaining insight into the world of a writer who dares to combine the worlds of novels and comics. He did this mainly by reading extracts from his new book, *Good Omens* (the 'hero's' name is Damien...), on which he has collaborated with Terry Pratchett (insisting that although he has enjoyed writing with Terry, it will be the last collaboration he does). The reason for the collaboration was that Neil did not want to be 'typecast' with his first novel as a writer of humour, since then future horror novels, etc., might not be taken seriously; but doing it with Terry made it acceptable. Most of the novel was written between 3am and 5am, after he had finished other work, and often they 'squirted' pages down the telephone line, using modems. "Working with Terry was triffic."

At school he had told the Careers Officer that he wanted to do comics. After some thought, that worthy said "Have you ever thought about Accountancy?" Neil's first book was *Ghastly Beyond Belief*, in which he says he collected all the really 'good' bad bits in other books. He then decided that he should do something worthwhile, but didn't - he became a journalist, working for *Today*. When they asked him to write a piece on Witchcraft, inventing anything he couldn't dig out by interviews and research, he said he wouldn't. "Why not?" "Because I'm not working for you any more!" In 1984 he discovered Alan Moore (comic writer extraordinaire), and wrote his first 'graphic novel' (ie. short story written specially for comic use), which was vaguely autobiographical, and for which he has just sold the film rights (though he doesn't see how they could make it!). He then wrote a book about Douglas Adams, *Don't Panic!*

By the time you read this we should know which publisher has bought *Good Omens*. From the excerpts we heard it will be worth waiting for.

## !!SPECIAL NOTICE!!

Please note that due to the date of Novacon this year, our regular monthly meeting will be held on Friday 10th November, not 17th. Be sure not to miss it, as we're hoping to have our Co-President, Harry Harrison with us!

Are you going to Worldcon in Holland next year? If so, are you interested in going with other Brum Group members as a party? Or car/petrol-sharing? (Four in a car is cheaper than two, on the ferry) Or are you flying? If you are interested, PLEASE LET THE COMMITTEE KNOW - SOON.

Chris Morgan has sold another story, a horror tale entitled 'Cogito, Ergo Sum', to Nicholas Royle for the anthology *Darklands*, to be published by Xanadu. Recently (Saturday 23 September) Chris was in London for a mass signing session of *Other Eclipses III* edited by Rob Holdstock and Chris Evans. His story in that is 'Losing Control', part of which he read to the Brum Group in March (so if you want to know how it ended go and buy a copy from the Andromeda Bookshop!).

Contents of this issue (c) 1989 The Birmingham Science Fiction Group, etc. Thanks to Tim Groome for artwork, to Martin for the Jophan Report, and to all book reviewers.

# Impressions of Noreascon 3 by Robert Sneddon

This year's Worldcon, *Noreascon 3* in Boston, passed by me in a series of disconnected episodes separated by exhaustion fugues. Some of what follows is entirely first-person apocryphal. I remember:

Being given a smile, my registration badge and a gopher tag.

Assembling the Art Show.

Walking around the Art Show and pretending I could afford something. Walking around the hucksters' room and knowing I couldn't afford anything.

Buying a lot of stuff anyway.

Meeting Brian Burgess there and knowing exactly how Captain Ahab felt.

Thanking Great Ghu that Brian didn't have any pork pies with him.

Female fans who didn't weigh 30 stones.

Male fans who weighed over forty.

Ogling the the pretty girls in skimpy costumes.

Trying to decide which ones were boys.

Deciding I didn't care and ogling anyway.

Louis Wu's Birthday Party with 5000 guests and not enough sushi.

British/Dutch room parties with beer and wine and whisky and stroh and. . .

American room parties with invitations, bouncers and nothing alcoholic.

Eating Munchies and nothing else for five days.

The really neat skiffy Hugo Award bases.

Feeling embarrassed looking at the tatty wooden *Conspiracy* Hugo Award bases.

Not hearing anything about New Era Publishing during the Hugo Awards.

Too many programme items (800 for Chris-sake!)

Not having enough time to see a tenth of what I wanted to see.

The way everything ran on time (except the films I didn't want to see anyway).

The clever and expensive and cheap and silly costumes in the Masquerade.

Noticing the clever things weren't all expensive./And the silly things were rarely cheap.

The Sheraton's ice-age air conditioning (and fast lifts).

The Christian Science center and its pool with underwater 'Keep Out' signs.

The teardown.

The friendship of Boston fans in giving a stranger crash space for four days.

Wondering whether it had been worth it.

Deciding yes, it had.

Trying to figure how to get to Boskone in February.

## New Member: August

In August we were joined by Dylan John Harris, who lives in Saltley and heard of the Brum group through Waterstones. He says he enjoys 'anything good!' (though by whose definition he doesn't say).

New members have been a bit thin on the ground in recent months: please don't forget to spread the word around about the Brum Group. The more members we have, the better we are able to keep subs and admission fees down...

## WHERE WAS I?

In response to the hundreds of queries (well, one or two) about my movements last month, and the reason for the Newsletter being taken over by Bernie & Co., no, I didn't go over for Worldcon - I was on the 'other side':

I flew from London to Los Angeles; drove from L.A. to Pasadena; flew from Los Angeles Burbank to Las Vegas; drove for 12 hours to a ranch in Moab, Utah; drove from Moab to Phoenix and then Tucson, Arizona; flew from Tucson to Los Angeles; from Los Angeles to New York; and from N.Y. to London...

All this took about 17 days, starting with the Voyager/Neptune encounter at Pasadena, followed by a Space Artists' Workshop in Canyonlands and Arches National Parks, Utah, with many of the same US and Soviet artists whom I met in Iceland last year. Then up to Arizona (via Monument Valley) with Bill Hartmann to visit Kim Poor, whose company Novagraphics is publishing a print of my painting 'Proxima's Planet'. I had to sign, number and date 750 copies (it's a limited edition, selling over there for \$75.00), and I've got writer's cramp!

Incidentally, this painting is from my new book on space art, *Visions of Space*, which I HOPE will be published, by Dragon's World/Paper Tiger, by the time you read this. This contains the work of around 70 space artists, 'historical' and contemporary, in 176 large pages and full colour. Signing session at Andromeda on. . .

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER AT NOON.**

Followed (it is hoped) by two stars from the TV serial *Red Dwarf* at 2pm.

**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER AT 11AM:**

Harry Harrison to sign *Bill the Galactic Hero* on the *Planet of Robot Slaves* and the paperback of *Return to Eden*, and at 12.30pm RODNEY MATTHEWS to sign *Last Ship Home* and his 1990 Calendar.

**SATURDAY 18 NOVEMBER: DAVID GEMMELL - *Last Guardian* - and PAT-RICK TILLEY - *AMTRAK WARS 5*.**

\*

## Artist Profile: TIM GROOME

Observant readers may have noticed that from time to time I have featured work by new artists. However, one artist has graced our pages many times over the last 20 months or so - on the cover and inside. He is Tim Groome, whose work can usually be seen at Novacon Art Shows, too. Tim is, in many ways, an undiscovered talent; his work is original, often with a macabre (some might say warped) sense of humour. Many fanzine editors could do a lot worse than enlist Tim's talents...



(Take a long look at this one)

### Advance Notice: Christmas Party

There will be a Party, on similar lines to last year's, on the normal Friday in December (15th), but, as before, at Aston University.

The Group will again be subsidising the price of tickets, so that you will only have to pay around £3.00 for a great evening, with buffet. Watch out for further details!



• THE TOOTH FAIRY •

# NEWSFILE

News and Gossip from the world of SF,  
including Martin Tudor's celebrated  
JOPHAN REPORT.

If you have any information, don't  
keep it to yourself - send it in.  
(This does mean YOU!) (Yes - YOU!!)

## THE JOPHAN REPORT #29

As mentioned in the insert last month C J Cherryh's novel *CYTEEN*, Connie Willis' novella "The Last of the Winnebagos" and George Alec Effinger's novelette "Schrodinger's Kitten" headed the winners of this year's Science Fiction Achievement Awards, presented at Boston's Noreascon III. Willis and Effinger have already received Nebula Awards for these same stories from the SF Writers of America. Britain's Dave Langford was named best fanwriter, the film *WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT* ? best dramatic presentation, Brad W Foster best fan artist and Mike Glycer's *FILE:770* best fanzine. The other winners were Charles N Brown's *LOCUS* (its fourteenth Hugo for best semi-prozine), Michael Whelan (best pro artist), Mike Resnick's short story "Kirinyaga", Gardner Dozois (best pro editor) and Samuel Delany's non-fiction work *THE MOTION OF LIGHT IN WATER*. Michaela Roessner received the John W Campbell Award as the best new writer of 1987-8.

TV 89, a telegenre convention due to be held over the weekend 25-26 November, has been cancelled. Organiser Simon Coward reports that due to a lack of members, they had no option but to cancel the con.

Britain's newest small press imprint, *Little Fish*, is seeking sf and fantasy for its novella line, to be launched this autumn. The London-based company is planning print runs of 15,000 and above, distributed through supermarkets as well as high street outlets such as W H Smiths. Each paperback volume will contain about 50 pages and cost £1. Authors are invited to submit manuscripts 15-20,000 words in length, both fiction and non-fiction. "Good, readable writing," outlined spokesperson Philippa Richmond. "Nothing too specialist - they mustn't be preaching to the converted." Payment will be in the form of a £400 flat free for total rights, plus a royalty of around three percent. Enquiries should be addressed to Little Fish Ltd, 2 Clanricarde Gardens, London, W2 4NA.

William F Temple, sf author and a founder member of the British Interplanetary Society (along with his one-time flatmate Arthur C Clarke), died on 15 July, aged 75. His first novel, *THE FOUR-SIDED TRIANGLE*, was published in 1949 and filmed by Hammer four years later. Later books inc-

luded the "Martin Magnus" sf juveniles & 1954's *THE TRUE BOOK ABOUT SPACE TRAVEL*. He leaves a widow and two children.

*BATMAN* has become the first movie to gross more than £2M during its opening weekend in Britain. Richard E Grant will star in *WARLOCK II*; Lori Singer is expected to return also, although possibly not in the same role, since Grant describes the new movie as a prequel.

Britain has a new monthly sf newsletter, *THE INTERMEDIATE REPTILE*, edited by the team which will produce the ConFiction newsletter next year. The two-page publication will be distributed at meetings, conventions or via subscription (10 stamped envelopes to 9 Graham Road, Wealdstone, Harrow, HA3 5RP). The August edition opens with an article by Dave Langford which blames petty oneupmanship between Pan Books and New English Library (specifically Kathy Gale and Humphrey Price) for delaying the softback edition of Brian Stableford's *THE EMPIRE OF FEAR* from next month until next Easter; also included is a report on Fiction 2000, the cyp-erpunk seminar in Leeds which featured papers by Greg Bear, Greg Benford and Harry Harrison among others.

Birmingham's Aston University hosts Mega Quiz '89, an event for the region's DR WHO fans in aid of the city's children's hospital, on 18 November. The proceeds will be further boosted by an auction of artwork, posters and photographs from the tv series. For full details, contact Dan Rowley at 10 Wentworth Drive, Whitestone, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV11 6LZ.

Veteran British sf fan Sid Birchby was hospitalised after suffering a severe stroke on 31 July. His right side was paralysed and his speech impaired. Active in fandom since the 1930s, he took over the editor-ship of the *Probe Newsletter* after the death of Hal Chibbett in the 1970s and wrote a regular column for the fanzine *MICROWAVE* during the early 1980s. Sid and his wife Jay can be contacted at 40 Parris Wood Avenue, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 0ND.

### STOP PRESS!

Malcolm Edwards has left Gollancz to become Editorial Director at Grafton. (That information-given to me by both Chris Morgan and Arthur C. Clarke, who is currently in Britain to receive his CBE later this month. -Ed.)



All books reviewed in these pages by members have been provided by the publishers, who will receive a copy of this Newsletter. Members may keep books reviewed by them (or may donate them as Raffle Prizes, or Auction Items, if feeling generous...) Please keep reviews to under 150 words, unless instructed otherwise. Deadline for reviews: at least 2 weeks before next meeting

**THE AWAKENERS** by Sheri S Tepper; Corgi; 512 pages; £3.99 Paperback.

Reviewed by Maureen Porter.

Approaching this with some trepidation, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that *The Awakeners* is an above-average example of the panoramic quest-type novel. Tepper has conceived an outlandish but somehow believable series of races, one parasitically dependent on the other, with a need for human flesh satisfied through the rituals of a sinister and unpleasant religion. Through all this winds the Great River, the heresy of burial in water, and the Rivermen and the Boatmen travelling on what I somehow envisage as being pseudo-Mississippi paddle-steammers. The world, its peoples and cultures are well-developed and feel sufficiently real to make the reader accept the story, the glossaries and directories are unnecessary, as the story is clear, coherent and certainly worth reading without tedious re-iteration.

**LAND OF DREAMS** by James P Blaylock; Grafton; 264 pages; £2.50 paperback.

Reviewed by Maureen Porter.

There are inevitably comparisons between this and Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, but having read the two consecutively, whilst I recognise the similarities of plot - a carnival comes to town in both novels, and brings many strange revelations in its wake - the tone of Blaylock's *Land of Dreams* is altogether softer than Bradbury's powerful elegy of regrets and lost youth. Symbols and preoccupations familiar to any reader of Blaylock's works surface yet again - green elixirs, carp and Dr Narbondo all put in appearances as Jack, Skeezix and Helen try to solve the mysteries brought to the surface by the carnival's arrival. It's an odd story, less hectic, less superficial than some of Blaylock's work, and to be highly recommended. My one regret is that the magnificent cover loses a great deal in reduction to paperback format.

**THE FINAL PLANET** by Andrew M Greeley; Legend; 302 pages; £3.50 paperback.

Reviewed by Dave Hardy.

"Ah, but 'tis a broth of a book, at all, at all!" If you can stand occasional bits of dialogue like this, you may well enjoy it - I did. There can't be many SF books with a background of religion (*A Canticle for Leibowitz* comes to mind of course), and still fewer which combine this with sex. This book does both - though quite mildly and inoffensively, and with humour. Can you imagine a Pilgrim Ship, belonging to the Holy Order of St Brigid and St Brendan, searching for worlds to convert, arriving at Zylong, where the inhabitants are allowed to indulge in frenzied marital (and extramarital) relations only two months in the year? One man - 24 year old Seamus Finnbar O'Neill - is sent down as a "psychic spy", to prepare the way for a landing by his ship, the Iona; perhaps its last chance for a landing. He ends up as ... well, read it and see.

**HEAVEN CENT** by Piers Anthony; N.E.L.; 324 pages; £5.95 1ge paperback.

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

Imagine you are a child again, just getting the hang of puns. Okay; then this, the latest in the *Xanth* series, is a lot of fun. In it, nine-year old Prince Dolph - a full magician - sets off to find the Good Magician Humfrey, who disappeared in a cloud of smoke. At the insistence of his mother, Dolph takes along an Adult Companion, a living skeleton called Marrow Bones. Dolph is also obsessed with discovering the secret of Summoning the Stork - the means of getting babies in Xanth. This is a question he asks everyone he meets, but no one will tell him the answer as he is too young. His adventures take him to the kind of places that children would love to visit but the book does get a little over-silly at times. Nevertheless, if you are looking for a very light read there are worse around.

**SHADOWS OF THE WHITE SUN** by Raymond Harris; Headline; 230 pages; £2.99 paperback.

Reviewed by Anne Gay.

Risha is the spoilt darling of one faction at the court of Gheo, an orbiting world created when far-flung space travellers returned to our Solar System. Into the rigid, coded society breaks a new element; murder. And Risha is chosen to hunt down the murderer... a man with whom she is in lust. From its turgid beginnings, in which Gheo's artificial society is examined, by following political finagling, *Shadows of the White Sun* rises to being an intriguing and racy story. Once characters are established and made sympathetic, this is a gripping and intelligent read.

GLORY LANE by Alan Dean Foster; N.E.L.; 295 pages; £2.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Al Johnston.

*Glory Lane* does for Heinlein's *Glory Road* what *Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers* did for the *Lensmen*; wisely avoiding direct parody, Foster nevertheless takes some good swipes at the idea of humans ("disgusting little carbon composites") saving a universe populated by many varieties of superior beings. This angle aside *Glory Lane* stands up well on its own as SF comedy; one long UFO chase through the Galaxy and beyond as our heroes attempt to preserve a bowling ball entity called Izmir from the curiosity of more and more powerful interested parties. Along the way come such gems as cultured Neanderthals leaving Earth to avoid the crude, violent Cro-Magnons; Shopping as the most spiritually significant activity possible; and the Great Cosmic Silliness of the world that owes its existence to a feeling of suicidal loneliness. Not quite as funny as Terry Pratchett, but highly recommended.

STORMWARDEN by Janny Wurts; Grafton; 378 pages; £12.95 hardback.

Reviewed by Carol Morton.

Even though Ivain the fire wizard betrayed him, Anskiere imprisoned the Frostwings but the price was a binding of part of his powers. Now the Sorceress Tathagres wants to release the wargs. To stop her, Anskiere seals himself and the wargs in a tomb of magical ice. Only a fully trained fire wizard can save him, but Ivain was the last one... When he was betrayed, Anskiere put a geas on Ivain that should he ever call Ivain or his descendants they would be bound to help. The last of Ivain's line is Jaric, a puny emaciated scholar with no knowledge of his lineage, but this is the only person who can help Anskiere. This is an excellent fantasy novel and moreover one that actually has a story to tell. The one SF element in the story does intrude in the fantasy plotline. For me it brought the pace of the novel to a grinding halt and it took time to get going again. Otherwise highly recommended.

FLIGHT FROM NEVERYON by Samuel R Delany; Grafton; 480 pages; £3.99 paperback.

RETURN TO NEVERYON by Samuel R Delany; Grafton; 399 pages; £3.99 paperback.

Reviewed by Chris Morgan.

These are the third and fourth books of Delany's massive (and massively different) fantasy series. *Return to Neveryon* marks the end of the cycle by repeating the very first story from *Tales of Neveryon - The Tale of the Gorgik* - not simply as a device to waste trees but to indicate (among other things) the non-linear nature of the Neveryon series. At no time during the four books was Delany content to tell a fantasy story; he was always more concerned with showing how characters are moulded by their environments and how social change is brought about by invention (particularly the invention of a written language), through political pressure and through disease. It has seemed likely throughout the series that Delany intended the work to be an allegory of contemporary New York life, and in *The Tale of Plagues and Carnivals* in *Flight from Neveryon* he makes this connection clear. In his subject matter there is the spread of AIDS in New York in 1984 and a parallel disease in Neveryon. The result illuminates Delany's working methods and intentions, though the book as a whole might, more honestly, have been titled *Rent Boys of Neveryon*. While Delany's writing is often stylistically brilliant throughout this series, it sometimes fails to be entertaining. The reader has to work hard to understand the author's intentions (not in itself a bad thing) and the struggle is, after the first volume, hardly worth it.

THE FORGE OF GOD by Greg Bear; Legend; 473 pages; £3.99 paperback.

Reviewed by Peter Day.

Europa, Jupiter's moon, has vanished. Then two alien spaceships, disguised as mounds in the landscape, are discovered, one in the Californian desert, the other in Australia. The messages their occupants deliver are mutually contradictory. And that's not all... Here we have the small, bizarre beginnings of a well-paced, deceptively low-key story of a doomed Earth, a catastrophe novel which, from this point on, proceeds with tragic inevitability on towards its quite majestic climax. While this book has neither the far-ranging scope, nor the sheer, breathtaking inventiveness of *Eon*, it does contain much of the same sort of richness and is, in addition, a tighter, more mature, and ultimately more convincing work than that sprawling opus. This is Greg Bear in complete control of his material, never going over the top no matter how cataclysmic his events. An excellent book - I recommend it.

THE FULFILMENTS OF FATE AND DESIRE by Storm Constantine; published by arrangement with Macdonald Futura by

Drunken Dragon Press; 424 pages; £13.95 hardcover. Reviewed by Carol Morton.

The third and final volume in the saga of the Wraeththu, an hermaphrodite people who become Man's successors on Earth. The central character of this volume is Cal, who was the catalyst who sparked off most of the major events in the two preceding volumes. In this volume Cal has hit rock bottom and has become a whore. In the course of his "duties" Cal discovers a royal Prince, Panthera, being held prisoner. Cal rescues Panthera and returns him to his family. During the journey Cal begins to discover his true place in the scheme of things and uncovers yet more of Thiede's perfidity, before he once more meets up with Pellaz. This is easily the most readable of the trilogy and possibly the best of the three books, so, Storm's misgivings about telling Cal's story have been unfounded. The whole trilogy has been excellent. Very highly recommended.

**SIGHTBLINDER'S STORY** by Fred Saberhagen; Orbit; 248 pages; £2.99 paperback.

Reviewed by Carol Morton.

The Magician's Academy at Triplicane has been conquered by the troops of "The Ancient One", its students slaughtered and the academy's Master encased alive in Magical ice. The same fate awaits Prince Mark of Tasavolta when he arrives at Triplicane. Ben and Zoltan, Mark's Companions, discover Sightblinder, the sword that causes others to see the wielder as the person he most desires or fears. Ben and Zoltan must use Sightblinder to enter the academy and rescue Mark. There is not much to say about this book, it is your formula sword and sorcery, very much like the other books in the series, with only a few place names changed. Probably only for completists.

**ZENITH** edited by David S. Garnett; Sphere; 298 pages; £2.50 paperback.

Reviewed by Steve Jones.

This is a short story anthology entirely of British SF. Elizabeth Soubut's *Feminopolis* features over-the-top feminism, and I still can't tell if she is serious or not. Storm Constantine's *The Pleasure Giver Taken* is about the heartless Pleasure Giver Tavrian Guilden, set in a science fiction future where magic works. The inevitable cyberpunk is represented by William King's *Skyrider* and Ian McDonald's *Sandzenis*. In Christopher Evans' *The Bridge*, artists can create directly from their own imagination using intangible 'chimeras'. Robert Holdstock's *Time of the Tree* has a man growing a miniature forest on his own body. There are also stories by Lisa Tuttle, Barrington J. Bayley, Colin Greenland, Andrew Stephenson, Garry Kilworth, and Brian Aldiss. A fairly good anthology.

**THE FIRE SWORD** by Adrienne Martine-Barnes; Headline; 374 pages; £3.99 paperback.

Reviewed by Carol Morton.

Eleanor went to sleep in contemporary Wiltshire but woke up 800 years in the past in medieval England, whose current affairs bear no resemblance to the history she had studied. St Bridgat has called Eleanor to help recall the rightful king, Arthur, to the throne and banish the forces of Dark from the shores of Albion. An interesting twist on the established history of England, the period was obviously well researched and is excellently presented, with the hardships of that time graphically described, recommended.

**REVOLT OF THE GALAXY** - E E 'Doc' Smith with Stephen Goldin; Grafton; 195 pp; £1.95 p/b. Rev. by Lynn M Edwards.

The tenth book in the *Family d'Alambert* series, *Revolt of the Galaxy* is a typical 'Doc' Smith fast-moving space adventure but with the annoying descriptions of space battles missing. The family d'Alambert works publicly as a circus but secretly as agents of the Service of the Empire. The book follows various members of the Family in their spying and problem solving work as they try to identify and beat the enemy of the Empire. Good, light entertainment for space adventure fans.

**SORCERER'S LEGACY** by Janny Wurts; Grafton; 303 pages; £3.50 paperback.

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

Too many fantasy novels follow a well-worn trail of quest and tribulation with a little magic to ease the way. *Sorcerer's Legacy* brings magic to the fore making it a very potent force. Elienne is sharp-tongued and newly widowed. The conqueror of her husband's lands has plenty of nasty things in store for her until she is snatched away by the sorcerer, Ielond. In a different time she becomes a pawn in the power struggles at Pandaire's court, knowing that her only chance of survival is to pass off her unborn child as that of the heir to the throne. If she fails Prince Darion will die too. This is an excellent page-turning novel from an author who is able to breathe freshness into the genre. Highly recommended.

**BARD** by Keith Taylor; Headline; 293 pages; £3.50 paperback.

Reviewed by Peter Day.

Felimid mac Fal is a Bard of Erin, descendant of Druids and the Tuatha de Danaan, the ancient faery race of Ireland. At large in post-Roman Britain with his magic harp and his ancient, spell-charged sword, he incurs the enmity of the Jutish King Disc of Kent and is forced to flee his court, taking with him the enslaved kitchen-maid Regan. From then on it's adventures all the way as he wanders the land, encountering enemies wherever he goes and disposing of them. This is competently written light entertainment, an above-average swashbuckling fantasy with a solid, semi-mythic flavour all of its own which manages to avoid most of the usual clichés, and I enjoyed it very much. This is one that could run and run.

**DRAGONSDAWN** by Anne McCaffrey; Bantam; 380 pages; £6.95 lge paperback.

Reviewed by Manika Charalambous.

The latest book by Anne McCaffrey chronicles the progress of the first colony on Pern. Of course there were no dragons then, only fire lizards, and Thread which can be destroyed by fire or water was unknown. When Thread did fall it devoured all organic matter in its path. The colony's only hope was to enlarge the fire lizards by bio-engineering and hatch the first dragons. I thoroughly enjoyed this book which like all Pern books links in perfectly with all the rest.