

BRUM GROUP NEWS

April 1992

Issue 247

The monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group

(Honorary Presidents: Brian W Aldiss & Harry Harrison)

GROUP CHAIRMAN - TONY MORTON, SECRETARY - CAROL MORTON, NEWSLETTER EDITOR - MARTIN TUDOR, TREASURER - RICHARD STANDAGE, REVIEWS EDITOR - BERNIE EVANS, PUBLICITY OFFICER - AL JOHNSTON, ORDINARY MEMBER - MICK EVANS, NOVACON 22 CHAIRMAN - HELENA BOWLES.

JOHN JARROLD

Science Fiction Editor of Legend Books will be addressing the BSFG
on Friday 10th April 1992

(please note this is one week earlier than our normal meetings)

7.30pm for 7.45pm Admittance: Members 1.25 Visitors 2.25

A fan since 1973 when he attended his first sf convention, JOHN JARROLD went on to work as a reader for various publishers and agents, including the world renowned Carnell Literary Agency. After a few years spent out of fandom he came back with a vengeance in the 80s helping to create Mexican, found Frank's Apa and producing the Nova Award winning fanzine, PREVERT.

Working as a Librarian at the time, he had long wanted to find more regular employment within the genre. His perseverance, knowledge of the field and sheer stubbornness finally paid off when he was offered the post of sf editor at Macdonald Futura. Having spent some time working with such authors as Iain Banks, Harry Harrison and Anne Gay, John was promoted to Editorial Director of Macdonald's Orbit imprint. Fortunately for John as Maxwell's empire began to crumble, endangering Macdonald publishing, he was offered Deborah Beale's old job as head of Random Century's Legend imprint.

The BSFG meets at 7.45pm on the third Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) in the upstairs function room of the White Lion, corner of Thorp Street and Horsefair/Bristol Street in Birmingham city centre.

The annual subscription rates (which include a copy of this monthly newsletter and reduced price entry to meetings) are nine pounds per person, or twelve pounds for two members at the same address. Cheques etc. payable to "the Birmingham Science Fiction Group", via the treasurer Richard Standage at meetings or by post c/o Bernie Evans (address below) book reviews should be sent to the reviews editor Bernie Evans at 121 Cape Hill,

Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH (tel: 021 558 0997). All other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to Martin Tudor, 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG (tel: 021 327 3023).

ASIMOV DIES, AGED 72

Isaac Asimov died on 6 April at New York University Hospital, aged 72. His brother Stanley informed the press that the writer died of heart and kidney failure.

Isaac Asimov was born in Petrovichi, USSR, on 2 January 1920, emigrating to the USA with his family in 1923 where he was naturalized in 1928.

After the appearance of his first published story "Marooned off Vesta" (*AMAZING STORIES*, 1939) he had, within a few years written or started work on the works which were to make him the Grandmaster of Science Fiction. The first story in his *ROBOT* series, "Strange Playfellow" (or "Robbie") appeared in 1940, the third story in the series, "Liar!" (1941), introduced his famous Three Laws of Robotics. Also in 1941 the most famous of his stories saw print, "Nightfall" - arguably the most popular sf story ever written. Finally, 1942 saw the publication of "Foundation", the first story in the famous series.

The fifties opened with the publication of the first of his many novels, *PEBBLE IN THE SKY* (1950). It was swiftly followed by the best work of his career *THE STARS LIKE DUST* (1951), *FOUNDATION* (1951), *FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE* (1952), *SECOND FOUNDATION* (1953), *THE CAVES OF STEEL* (1954), *THE END OF ETERNITY* (1955) and *THE NAKED SUN* (1957).

Many critics would argue that Asimov's science fictional career went rapidly down hill after the fifties, but few would deny his tremendous influence on the genre.

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Information regarding John Jarrold is courtesy of the Stan Nicholls interview in *INTERZONE #41*. Thanks this time to RICHARD STANDAGE, PAULINE MORGAN and MICHAEL JONES for taking the time to contribute to the newsletter, STEVE GREEN for his contribution to the *JOPHAN REPORT*, BERNIE EVANS for editing the reviews and producing the labels, MICK EVANS for his work on the reviews, DAVE HARDY for the *JOPHAN* and *REVIEWS* headings, TONY BERRY for putting up with the *WAVE* photocopier. The contents of this issue are copyright 1992 the BSFG, on behalf of the contributors, to whom all rights revert on publication. Personal opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the committee or the BSFG. All text by Martin Tudor except where stated otherwise. This publication was printed on the *CRITICAL WAVE* photocopier.

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR TREASURER

by Richard Standage

Those of you who attended the February meetings may have noticed a one-off (two-off?) price hike in the admission charge. For anyone wondering about this allow me to explain. Because money is a bit tighter at the moment than in the recent past, the committee have decided to adopt a pricing policy for each meeting.

John Brunner was an expensive speaker because he had to travel a considerable distance and we received no financial backing from his publisher. To have broken even on this meeting purely from on the door charges would have meant charging a small fortune. Fortunately your committee had a brainstorm (wonderful the way alcohol loosens the braincells) we decided to spread the cost over the two meetings. As Greg Bear was one of our cheaper speakers (because a large part of his expenses were met by his publisher) this worked out quite nicely.

Our decision appears to have worked. So far no one has objected to the higher charges on these meetings (dissentions invited), and the more numerate amongst you might be interested to know that the extra revenue generated from the price rise amounted to around £30 which, to within a few pence, was our profit on the two meetings. Any purists out there who think that we should not be making any profit at all might like to bear in mind that if we had charged regular prices for both meetings our net income for the month would have amounted to just 64p. Remembering that Twentycon cost the Group £1066, at that sort of monthly return it would take us until the 3189 to regain our financial position of this time last year - just in time to finance One Thousand Two Hundred and Twentycon.

CORRECTION

Last issue I ran details of DREAMCON in the *JOPHAN REPORT*, unfortunately part of the address was incorrect. If you are

interested send £1.50 to:

Dreamcon,
160 Beaumont Road,
Bournville, Birmingham, B30 1NY.

ATTENTION.....

This month's meeting will be held
ONE WEEK EARLIER than normal on
Friday the 10th of April,
when John Jarrold the science fiction
editor of Random Century's Legend
imprint will be speaking to the Group

FOR SALE

FOR SALE ... *STAR TREK*: Video tapes and books. 40 video tapes in perfect condition (most only watched a few times) and 32 *STAR TREK* novels (all in good condition). Also 14 *DOCTOR WHO* video tapes and 2 *DOCTOR WHO* novels, again all in excellent condition. Everything in excellent condition. Price new £642.00, ONLY ASKING £250.00 or near offer. Call Dave on (021) 558 3857.

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ZENITH / ZENITH SPECULATION FOR SALE. Peter Weston's seminal critical review of sf. Contributors include Aldiss, Brunner, Harrison, Leiber, Moorcock, Niven, Offutt, Pohl, Priest, Silverberg, Stableford and many others. I have in good condition, issues 8-32 (1965-1973), a useful historical collection: £25 including postage. Contact David Sutton, 021 444 6188.

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FANZINE COLLECTORS: 1970s British fanzine checklist now available, also the original Peter Robert's checklists for '30s to '50, '51

to '60 and '61 to '70, all at 80p each or £3 the lot, post-paid from Vince Clarke, 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BN.

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BSFG 20th ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR BOOKS: Articles by BRIAN ALDISS, HARRY HARRISON and ANNE GAY. Only £1.95 (postpaid), cheques payable to "THE BSFG", to MARTIN TUDOR, 845 Alum Rock Road, Birmingham, B8 2AG.

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BEYOND THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR ... TO THE ENCHANTED CONVENTION by Walt Willis and James White, sequel to the 1954 allegorical fan classic, US edition now available at £3 post-paid or £8 collectors autographed edition, from Vince Clarke, 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent DA16 2BN.

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GALAXY MAGAZINE: A selection of 75 issues from the years 1953-65, in good condition. An excellent way to start a collection and enjoy some of the best sf of those years. Best offer over £30 secures. Call Peter Weston on 021 354 6059.

The Jophan Report by Martin Tudor

The 50th Jophan Report

The British networking of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* continues to be plagued by BBC censorship. The latest victim, according to John Gullidge of *SAMHAIN*, is the episode "The High Ground", which has a terrorism theme and could (in the mind of BBC's controller Alan Yentob) be taken as an allegory for the war in Northern Ireland; unlike "Conspiracy", which suffered cuts, this instalment will be lost in total. The episode is, however, available as half of a sell-through cassette release.

FIRE WALK WITH ME, the eagerly-awaited *TWIN PEAKS* spin-off, will open before Laura Palmer's murder and then leapfrog to the bizarre conclusion of the tv series in an effort to tie up the loose ends. Absent from the original cast: Sheryllyn Fenn and Lara Flynn Boyle, the latter having also been replaced by Anne Parillaud in *INNOCENT BLOOD*.

Peter Hewitt, director of *BILL AND TED'S BOGUS JOURNEY*, is the latest name chalked down for the long-proposed *JUDGE DREDD* movie, with Arnold Schwarzenegger reportedly interested in playing Mega City One's granite-jawed lawman.

Robert Sheckley's 1958 novella "Immortality Delivered" has been filmed as *FREEJACK* by New Zealand director Geoff Murphy, responsible for the apocalyptic *THE QUIET EARTH*. Emilio Estevez leads as a time-jumping racing driver, with support from Rene Russo as his girlfriend, Anthony Hopkins as a ruthless tycoon and Mick Jagger as a bounty hunter, his first screen role since 1970's *NED KELLY*.

The swashbuckling romp *ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES* shun-ted *TERMINATOR 2: JUDGEMENT DAY* and *SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* into second and third place in the UK box office league for 1991; the respective receipts were £19.8M, £18M and £17.1M. Only one British movie featured: *THE COMMITMENTS*, with £5.6M.

Meanwhile, sf and fantasy themes continue to prove popular at the video shops; the top release in 1991 was *GHOST*, with *TOTAL RECALL* and *ROBOCOP 2* in third and seventh place. The 1992 chart is certain to feature *TERMINATOR 2*, released to the rental market on 17 February.

David Cronenberg's adaptation of William S Burroughs's land-mark "novel" *THE NAKED LUNCH* will be premiered in London on 24 April, with a national release from 1 May. *THE SOUTH BANK SHOW* devoted its 15 March programme to Cronenberg's work, with a report on the making of his new movie.

BAD KARMA, winner of *THE DARK SIDE'S* recent "Opportunity Shocks" competition, is now available on cassette. Copies cost £12.50, from director Alex Chandon at 29 Brookfield Mansions, 5 Highgate West Hill, London, N6 6AT.

After *MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN*, with Chevy Chase as the disappearing yuppie, director John Carpenter will team up with sfx engineer Rick Baker for a remake of the 1950s monster movie *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*.

Authentic accents will be in short supply in Francis Ford Coppola's forthcoming adaptation of *DRACULA*. Keanu Reeves (Ted in the "Bill and Ted" sequence) will play Jonathan Harker, singer Tom Waits will feature as Renfield and Bill Campbell, recently seen as *THE ROCKETEER*, will play "Quincy the Texan", whomever that might be.

As well as an obligatory appearance from Stephen King in Mick Garris's adaptation of King's *SLEEPWALKERS*, there are also cameos from directors Clive Barker, Tobe Hooper, John Landis and Joe Dante. Other King-inspired projects in the pipeline include *NEEDFUL THINGS*, optioned by Rob Reiner's Castle Rock Entertainment for a reported \$1.75 million, *THE TOMMYKNOCKERS* (set to become an ABC mini-series), *CREEPSHOW 3*, *THINNER*, *NIGHT FLYER*, *CHILDREN OF THE CORN 2* and *THE STAND*.

Barker, meanwhile, is executive producer on *CANDYMAN*, to be directed by Bernard Rose.

TransAtlantic Entertainment released the hit horror film *POPCORN* to the UK rental market on 14 March, with the snappy catchline "Buy a bag... Go home in a box".

Twentieth Century-Fox is to remake Dutch director George Sluizer's acclaimed thriller

THE VANISHING, with one twist on the usual process of Hollywood larceny: Sluizer will return to the helm, working from a screenplay by Todd Graff.

The British Library is contemplating introducing admission charges when its new wing is opened, a move which could set a precedent for regional reference libraries. The author Margaret Drabble was among those who made a personal protest against the proposed charges outside the House of Commons on 27 February.

Helicon, the 1993 national British sf convention, has announced that the well known Dutch fan and con-runner, Larry van der Putte, has joined their roster of guests as Fan Guest of Honour.

The first Peterborough Fantasy Fair will be held at the Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton (A47 Soke Parkway, Junction 16), from 11am-5pm on 17 May. As well as book, record and model stalls, the event should include role-playing demonstrations and a "local sci-fi author autograph session". For further details, contact Bruce King on 0480-216372.

RED STAINS, an anthology of "extreme horror", will be published by Creation Press on 30 April, priced £5.95; among the contributors are Ramsey Campbell, D F Lewis and James Havoc, whose novel *SATANSKIN* is published by Creation on 2 April.

Creation Press was founded in 1989 as a wing of Creation Records but has since become autonomous; future plans include an expansion into graphic novels, beginning with *THE SONGS OF GILLES DE RAIS* by James Havoc and Mike Philbin, to be published in two volumes in May and November. The current catalogue can be obtained by sending an A5 sae to 83 Clerkenwell Road, London, EC1M 5RJ.

Mark Morris's third novel, *THE IMMACULATE*, will be published by Piaktus Books in June, priced £14.95. A review of *STITCH* his second novel, which has just appeared in Corgi paperback, will appear in the May issue of *BRUM GROUP NEWS*.

Jonathan Carroll's new novel *AFTER SILENCE* was published by Macdonald on 2 April, priced £14.99; *OUTSIDE THE DOG MUSEUM* appeared in Futura paperback on the same day, priced £4.50. Carroll describes *AFTER SILENCE* as "my biggest departure yet, and terribly sad. Guilt is the prime mover in it."

Meanwhile, his earlier novel *VOICE OF*

OUR SHADOW is scheduled to go before the cameras in 1993, whilst director Barry Levinson has begun pre-production on his adaptation of "Mister Fiddlehead", an early short story.

Suzy McKee Charnas's horror novel *THE VAMPIRE TAPESTRY* was published by the Women's Press on 26 March, priced £6.95. Its third chapter is the Nebula Award-winning novella "Unicorn Tapestry", which has been staged in both Canada and France under the title "Vampire Dreams".

The Polytechnic of East London has announced that from the end of the financial year 1992/93 the Science Fiction Foundation must be self-financing. In other words, as Paul Kincaid clarifies in the March 1992 Special Issue of the Friends of Foundation Newsletter "the Foundation must generate funds to pay for every aspect of Polytechnic involvement, including accommodation, salaries, services, incidental expenses and so on" by April 1993.

Of the various options considered by the Council of the Foundation only two were deemed practical. The first would be to "Stay and Pay" which would involve raising around £34,000 a year. The second would be to "Move On", this option would involve either finding another place of higher education willing to act as host and possibly part-sponsor the Foundation, or possibly buying a house and re-establishing the Foundation on its own site. The problem with the second option is that it would require a considerably higher initial outlay.

Whichever course of action is chosen the Foundation will need to raise a lot of money. Please send money, suggestions, ideas, comments, offers of help or anything else which is going to contribute to the preservation of the Foundation to: Roger Robinson, 75 Rossalyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG.

Thanks for the news this time goes, in the most part, to CRITICAL WAVE, which is still Europe's only independent sf, fantasy and horror news and reviews magazine. Regular features include publishing news, extensive club and convention listings, interviews with prominent authors and editors, video, film and comics reviews, fiction market reports, fanzine and small press reviews, convention reports and theatre reviews. CRITICAL WAVE #25 is currently available for £1.95, or a six issue subscription costs only £7.50, cheques payable to "Critical Wave Publications" should be sent to Martin Tudor at the address on the cover of this newsletter.

CRITICAL WAVE

THE EUROPEAN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY REVIEW

"CRITICAL WAVE is the most consistently interesting and intelligent review on the sf scene."

- Michael Moorcock.

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I never miss a copy..."

- Bruce Sterling.

"CRITICAL WAVE is intelligent and informative,
one of my key sources of news, reviews and comments."

- Stephen Baxter.

"I don't feel informed until I've read it."

- Ramsey Campbell.

"Don't waver - get WAVE!"

- Brian Aldiss

Founded in 1987 by Martin Tudor and Steve Green, CRITICAL WAVE has established a reputation for hard-hitting news coverage, perceptive essays on the state of the genre and incisive reviews of the latest books, comics and movies. Regular features include publishing news, portfolios by Europe's leading science fiction and fantasy artists, extensive club and convention listings, interviews with prominent authors and editors, video, film and comics reviews, fiction market reports, fanzine and small press reviews, convention reports and theatre reviews.

Previous contributors have included: MICHAEL MOORCOCK, IAIN BANKS, CLIVE BARKER, LISA TUTTLE, COLIN GREENLAND, DAVID LANGFORD, ROBERT HOLDSTOCK, GARRY KILWORTH, SHAUN HUTSON, DAVID WINGROVE, BOB SHAW, TERRY PRATCHETT, RAMSEY CAMPBELL, LARRY NIVEN, STEVEN BARNES, DAVE CARSON, DAVID A HARDY, BRIAN ALDISS, ANNE GAY, STEPHEN BAXTER, GRAHAM JOYCE, D WEST, JIM PORTER, RAYMOND FEIST, CHRIS "FANGORN" BAKER, CHRIS CLAREMONT, MICHAEL MARRAK and STORM CONSTANTINE.

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If you wish to subscribe please complete the coupon below. Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to "CRITICAL WAVE PUBLICATIONS" and sent to: Martin Tudor, 845 Alum Rock Road, Vard End, Birmingham, B9 2AG.

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- I wish to purchase the following back issues at £1.50 each:
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- I'm feeling flush and wish to take out a Lifetime Subscription for only £75.00.

Name

Street

City, County, Postcode

Country

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

10th APRIL 1992: JOHN JARROLD editor of Random Century's Legend imprint will be speaking to the Group. Please note that this is the regular meeting of the Group which is being held A WEEK EARLY because the customary 3rd Friday would clash with the national sf convention. (See below and the back cover).

17th - 20th APRIL 1992: Illumination, the 1992 National British SF Convention at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. Guests of honour Paul McAuley, Geoff Ryman and Pam Wells, for further information write to Illumination, 379 Mytle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. For details of the Illumination Writer's Workshop which was mentioned last issue call Sally-Ann Melia on 05646 2054 (evenings).

22-25 MAY 1992: INCONSEQUENTIAL. "Humour" theme, organized in conjunction with Octarine (the SF&F Humour Society). Aston Court Hotel, Derby. Guest of Honour Robert Rankin. Attending membership £21. Details: via 12 Crich Avenue, Littleover, Derby, DE3 6ES. "Inconsequential - be there or don't."

6-8 NOV 1992: NOVACON 22 the Brum Group's own sf con returns to the Royal Angus hotel in the city centre. Guest of Honour Storm Constantine. £18 until end of Eastercon 1992,

£20 until one month before con after which only on the door memberships available at £25. Details: Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH.

8-12 APR 1993: HELICON '93. 44th British national sf con, Hotel de France, St. Helier, Jersey. Guests of honour George RR Martin & John Brunner. Attending £20. Supporting / Family Membership / Children 8-14 are all £10 each. Details: 63 Drake Road, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 1LQ.

28-31 MAY 1993: MEXICON V. "Straight" sf con, venue to be announced possibly at the Cairn Hotel in Harrogate. Attending £18 until Novacon 22. Details from: Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH (tel: 558 0977).

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Aston University Fantasy and Science Fiction Society have challenged the BSFG to a debate at a special meeting at Aston Uni.

We choose the date they have proposed the motion: *"This house believes that it is man's duty, as the most highly evolved living organism on this planet, to pursue the goals of evolution to their maximum."*

If you are interested in taking part in this debate please tell TONY MORTON at this month's meeting.

BLACK COUNTRY EXCURSIONS

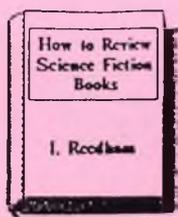


**SPECIALIST IN REAL ALE AND NOSTALGIA TOURS OF THE
BLACK COUNTRY**

THE FAMOUS BLACK COUNTRY BEER BUS TOUR
will take place on the evening of
Saturday 16th May
Price £7.50 per person
payment by 10th April to: **MARTIN TUDOR**

"This tour is certainly not for those suffering from a heart complaint! A Fun Night can be had by all travelling around the Real Ale Pubs the Black Country is famous for, on board a unique Double Decker Bus. This tour also includes a Supper."

Advance deposits were received at the AGM from the following: VERNON & PAT BROWN (£2), NICK MILLS & Jo (£2), TONY & CAROL MORTON (£2), ANDY & SHARON WRIGHT (£2), BERNIE & MICK EVANS (£2), PETE & EILEEN WESTON (£2), RICHARD STANDAGE & HELENA BOWLES (£2) and TONY BERRY (£1). If you're on the list and you still wish to take part please subtract the relevant amount from your payment. If you're on the list and cannot go please contact Martin Tudor, who will refund your initial deposit.



Book Reviews

KING OF MORNING, QUEEN OF DAY by Ian McDonald
Bantam, 389pp, £4.99, p/b

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

The breadth of imagination encompassed in this volume shows why Ian McDonald is considered such an exciting author. Set in Ireland, a land with a powerful myth heritage, it is the story of three women. The first is Emily, an adolescent in 1913 who is fascinated by those myths. So much so that she is able to create them in reality and is physically drawn into her imagined world. Next is Jessica, Emily's daughter, who has inherited her mother's ability but is unaware that she has conjured the two delightful old men who rescue her from her burning home when she is a small child.

Jessica's story begins when she is a young woman and her father, wishing to rid her of her uncouth and lying behaviour, sends her to a psychologist. Around the same time she begins to discover that some of the stories she invents are coming true - especially so in the case of the fictitious boyfriend, created so as not to be ridiculed by her friends who are already dating. As the truth about her identity is unravelled by Dr Rooke, the psychologist, her childhood guardians, still around but generally unseen, find it increasingly difficult to protect their charge from the attentions of Emily and her creations. Jessica is faced with the choice of embracing her mother's world, or rejecting it.

Enye, Jessica's granddaughter, is a modern woman working for an advertising agency. She also has a secret life. At night, she stalks the city streets, sword in hand, hunting the creatures that the Adversary has sent against her. This is the legacy that Emily has left her.

The three sections of this book are approached in different styles, each compatible with the period in which the protagonist lived - Emily's section takes the form of letters and diaries, a large part of Jessica's is first person narrative (by Dr Rooke), while Enye's has a film-like quality crammed with special effects.

Like Robert Holdstock, Ian McDonald has a

deep understanding of the processes of myth creation. In some ways the phaguses (physical manifestations of the creatures of her mind) that Emily creates resemble the mythagos populating Holdstock's *MYTHAGO WOOD*. Also the Mygmus, the raw material from which a phagus can be created, is reminiscent of the Magmoss in the film *BARBARELLA* which supported the city but also fed off the evil of its inhabitants. The Mygmus feeds from Emily's dreams to create them in reality. Despite the similarities to other works, Ian McDonald has still managed to produce something which is highly original in its treatment of the themes.

ISAAC ASIMOV'S UNIVERSE VOL ONE: THE DIPLOMACY GUILD
Grafton, 260pp, £3.99, p/b

Reviewed by Michael Jones.

Good science fiction writing often involves a lot of painstaking background research and it must seem a shame to discard it after using it for just one story. How much better to use it over and over again, even bringing in different writers to create a whole library of stories all set within a common framework. In this case the framework has been provided by Asimov himself, although he has not written any of the stories. He has suggested a galaxy containing millions of habitable planets with six intelligent star-travelling races (humans and five others) to explore and occupy them. The twist is that these races differ sufficiently one from another that they do not want the same kinds of planets. Given that there are so many planets to choose from, there is no territorial conflict and the six races can co-exist in a state of peaceful rivalry as they each seek to promote events to their own advantage.

There is almost infinite scope for good story-telling in this scenario, but the contents of Volume One fail to exploit it to the full. A common theme is suggested by *THE DIPLOMACY GUILD* title, but this is almost completely ignored as four of the five writers concentrate instead on the idea of the discovery of historical evidence of a previous intelligent race, now disappeared. The exception is Poul Anderson, who has contributed a typically dark Andersonian tale of astronomical catastrophe, overflowing with emotion and drama. Of the rest, David Brin and Harry Turtledove's stories are short, workman-like and unmemorable, while Robert Shekley's is long, confused and unclear, and deserves to be forgotten. This leaves Robert Silverberg, and I should perhaps not have been as surprised as I was to find his opening story having the flavour of Asimov's own writing, seeing as they are

now collaborators. Be that as it may, the Siverberg and the Anderson stories are the only parts of the book worth bothering with.

A book like this has to be judged on two levels - on its own and as the introduction to a series. On its own it is only average, offering nothing so novel and exciting as to earn it an unqualified recommendation. As for the other - the basic idea of "Isaac Asimov's Universe" is laid out for us and we are introduced to the various alien races involved but that is not really sufficient. It should be really fantastic to hook us in and keep us coming back for more, and it simply isn't that good. - the hope that it might get better will not be enough. Verdict - disappointing.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS

ed. Noelle Watson & Paul E Schellinger
St James Press, 1016pp, £75.00, h/b

Reviewed by Martin Tudor

It is inevitable that any work of this magnitude is going to suffer from some flaws and that an attempt to cover a subject as diverse as science fiction in the twentieth century is bound to have some omissions and *TWENTIETH-CENTURY SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS* is guilty on both counts, but that said it is still an admirable and impressive work.

It features over 600 entries on authors considered by the editors to have made a major impact on sf during the twentieth century. Each of the entries containing: a biography of the writer; a bibliography of works by and about the author; and a critical essay (usually around 1000 words long) about each writer's work. In addition, there is an appendix devoted to foreign language sf writers.

Despite obvious omissions - there is no mention of British writers Keith Brooke, Stephen Baxter and Kim Newman, and curiously Stephen King has also been left out - I think there is little doubt that this is the most comprehensive work of its kind available to sf enthusiasts, and I doubt that the forthcoming publication of the delayed second edition of *THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION* will change this.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE by Phyllis Eisenstein

Grafton, 416pp, £4.50, p/b

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

This is the sequel to *SORCERER'S SON*. That book was received with enthusiasm. I cannot say the same about this one. Cray Ormoru, the Sorcerer's son, and the sorcerer who can give demons permanent freedom, sees a woman

in a magic mirror and is told that she is his heart's desire. What follows is predictable. At first he doubts what he is told but, curious, he seeks her out. She is Aliza, a sorceress who lives isolated from all human contact in a palace of crystallised ice, half in the human, half in the demon world. Cray sets about educating her, showing her that her studies are not the only thing worth pursuing. Of course there is the selfish, evil old man, her grandfather, who is keeping her prisoner. Much of the novel deals with trivia, Cray and Aliza spend much of it having intense discussions about the world outside and nothing much happening. Very disappointing.

PSYCHOMECH by Brian Lumley

Grafton, 351pp, £3.99, p/b

Reviewed by Michael Jones.

Richard Garrison suffers from a recurring nightmare full of strange symbols and inexplicable happenings. Then one day in Belfast he saves the life of Thomas Schroeder, but both are injured, and Garrison blinded, by a terrorist bomb. In gratitude Schroeder devotes some of his enormous wealth to helping Garrison and soon the destinies of the two men are inextricably linked. Schroeder has plans to return from beyond the grave and merge his mind with a suitable subject - Garrison, inevitably. Garrison's suitability is determined by a weird combination of psychic research, ESP testing and astrological study, but there are obstacles to the fulfillment of Schroeder's plans. The psi machine called *PSYCHOMECH*, plays a large part in Garrison's struggle to overcome the forces arrayed against him and work through his nightmare.

It is a long and complex story, almost too much so for its own good. Parts of it seem to have been introduced simply for effect, rather than to make a contribution to the working-out of the plot, and these do not always come off. Neither do some of what would be called special effects if this were a film rather than a book, and the impression is that the author let himself get a bit carried away by his own imagination. The writing is patchy in places, and it would have been a better book if Lumley had kept it simpler, tightened it up a bit here and there, curbed his own worst excesses and devoted more time to producing literate and stylish composition.

There is a distinct field of what might be described as "techno-horror", partaking of both the hard sf and horror genres. From the latter it draws the slash-and-maim images, while the former is likely to make a contribution in the "weird science" area, such

NOVACON 22

WHEN: Friday 6th November to Sunday 8th November 1992

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WHERE: By popular demand we return to:

the Royal Angus Hotel
in Birmingham city centre.

NB: Due to limited space and restrictive fire regulations at the Angus we are forced to limit membership — details of exactly how few we will be allowed to have will follow once this has been agreed with the hotel. In the meantime we strongly advise that you REGISTER EARLY...

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WHO: Authoress extraordinaire - STORM CONSTANTINE

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COST: £18 until the end of Eastercon 1992, £20 until Monday 12th October 1992. £25 on the door. NB POSTAL APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE. THERE ISN'T ENOUGH TIME TO SORT OUT HOTEL ACCOMODATION AND CONFIRM THEM.

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COMMITTEE: The person who brought you the Wonderful TWENTYCON hasn't had enough yet - HELENA BOWLES is in the chair. Backing her are:

Bernie Evans on Registrations (when will this woman give up? Anyone willing to run a sweep?).

Richard Standage Treasurer (if we can drag him back from South America in time).

Tony Berry, Ops supremo and Guest Liason (we told him he could talk to Storm anyway, but he insisted...)

Carol Morton on Programme (Ex Newsletter Editor, Registrations bod for Twentycon and currently BSFG secretary, whither will our Carol go next?)

Jenny & Steve Glover are doing Publications (as well as publishing numerous fanzines, both jointly and seperately, they have run several cons and Jenny is currently editor of *MATRIX* the newsletter of the British SF Association)

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PROGRAMME: See our progress reports for details. Progress Report #1 now available, #14 will be distributed at Eastercon.

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HOW: That's easy make out a cheque to "Novacon 22" and post it to: Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH. Further details from Bernie on (021) 558 0997.

as the Psychomech machine, in the tradition stretching all the way back to Frankenstein. (Described by Brian Aldiss, remember, as the first real science fiction novel.) At its best this kind of book offers a real and unique excitement, and despite the criticisms already expressed I would describe this book as a good example. Excitement is here, horror is here, sufficient scientific rationalism to justify the dedicated sf fan is here, and once you have started it you have to finish. I give it a qualified recommendation.

BORN TO EXILE by Phyllis Eisenstein
HarperCollins, 182pp, £14.99, h/b

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

This book is considerably more interesting than *THE CRYSTAL PALACE*. It is the story of a young man, Alaric, who has the power to teleport. If anyone discovered he could do this he would be instantly condemned to the fire as a witch. The trouble is that when he is in danger he reacts instinctively. As a minstrel, fortunately, it is not peculiar for him to be constantly on the move. In form, the book is almost a series of short stories, each chapter encapsulating an episode in Alaric's wanderings, but each taking the tale a step forward as life would do. The world Alaric lives in is a fairly standard fantasy world until he reaches Castle Garlenon. Here, he discovers who his parents are. This part of the book tries very hard to be original and succeeds fairly well, though it does get a bit silly. On the whole, this is pleasant to read and demands little of the reader. It lacks depth and subtlety.

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1991 NEBULA NOMINATIONS

Best Novel: *ORBITAL RESONANCE* by John Barnes (Tor), *BARRAYAR* by Lois McMaster Bujold (Baen), *BONE DANCE* by Emma Bull (Ace), *SYNNERS* by Pat Cadigan (Bantam Spectra), *THE DIFFERENCE ENGINE* by William Gibson & Bruce Sterling (Bantam Spectra), *STATIONS OF THE TIDE* by Michael Swanwick (*ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE* 12/90-1/91, Morrow).

Best Novella: "Man Opening a Door" by Paul Ash (*ANALOG* 6/91), "Apartheid, Superstrings, and Mordecai Thubans" by Michael Bishop (*AXOLOTL* 1989, *FULL SPECTRUM* #3), "Beggars in Spain" by Nancy Kress (*AXOLOTL*, *IASFM* 4/91), "Bully" by Mike Resnick (*AXOLOTL* 1990, *IASFM* 4/91), "The Gallery of His Dreams" by Kristine Kathryn Rusch (*AXOLOTL*, *IASFM* 9/91), "Jack" by Connie Willis (*IASFM* 10/91).

Best Novelette: "Gate of Faces" by Ray Aldridge (*F&SF* 4/91), "Guide Dog" by Mike Conner (*F&SF* 5/91), "Black Glass" by Karen Joy Fowler (*FULL SPECTRUM* #3), "Standing in Line with Mr Jimmy" by James Patrick Kelly (*IASFM* 5/91), "The Happy Man" by Jonathan Lethem (*IASFM* 2/91), "The All-Consuming" by Lucius Shepard & Robert Frazier (*PLAYBOY* 5/90, *IASFM* 5/91), "Getting Real" by Susan Shwartz (*NEWER YORK*).

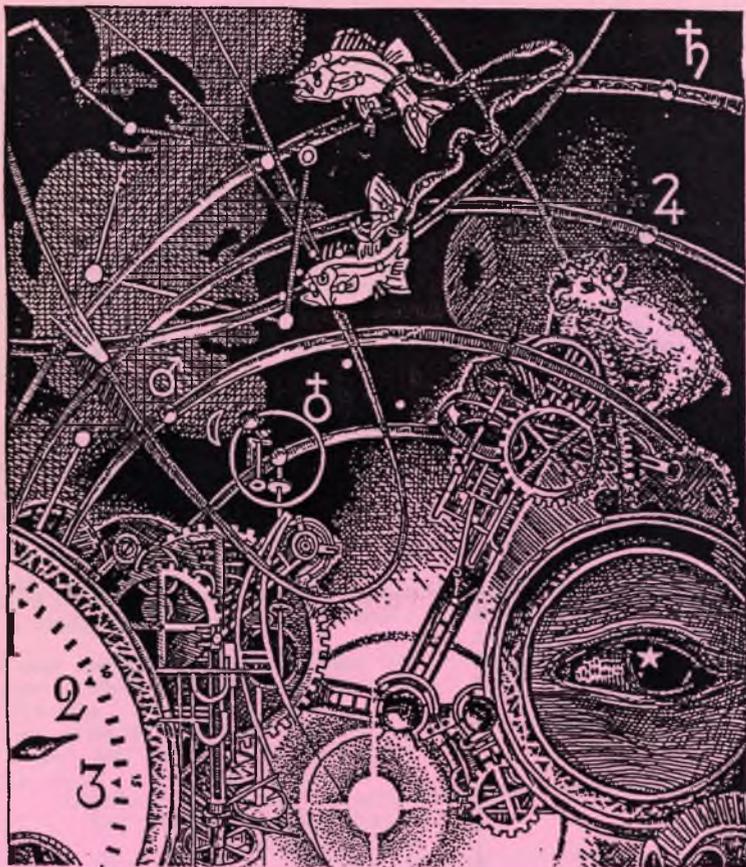
Best Short Story: "They're Made Out of Meat" by Terry Bisson (*OMNI* 4/91), "Ma Qui" by Alan Brennert (*F&SF* 2/91, *AUTHOR'S CHOICE MONTHLY* 17), "The Dark" by Karen Joy Fowler (*F&SF* 6/91), "Buffalo" by John Kessel (*FIRES OF THE PAST*, *F&SF* 1/91), "Dog's Life" by Martha Soukup (*AMAZINE* 3/91), "thebutton,andwhatyouknow" by W Gregory Stewart (*AMAZING* 6/91).

**ARTHUR C CLARKE
AWARD NOMINEES**

The nominees for the Arthur C Clarke Award trophy and £1000 cheque for 1991 are as follows: *RAFT* by S.M. Baxter (HarperCollins), *SYNNERS* by Pat Cadigan (HarperCollins), *WHITE QUEEN* by Gwyneth Jones (Gollancz), *ETERNAL LIGHT* by Paul J McAuley (Gollancz), *SUBTERRANEAN GALLERY* by Richard Paul Russo (Grafton) and *THE HYPERION CANTOS* by Dan Simmons (Headline).

The Award will be presented at the Minehead Space Festival in July, during the celebrations for Clarke's 75th birthday, it is hoped that Arthur C Clarke himself will be able to attend.

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