

BRUM GROUP NEWS

August 1993

Issue 263

The monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group
(Honorary Presidents: Brian W Aldiss & Harry Harrison)

GROUP CHAIRMAN - TONY MORTON, SECRETARY - HELENA BOWLES, NEWSLETTER EDITOR - MARTIN TUDOR,
TREASURER - RICHARD STANDAGE, REVIEWS EDITOR - BERNIE EVANS, PUBLICITY OFFICER - STEVE JONES,
ORDINARY MEMBER - MICK EVANS, NOVACON 23 CHAIRMAN - CAROL MORTON.

This month's speaker is

GARRY KILWORTH

Friday 20th August 1993 7.45 for 8.45pm

Admittance: Members £2.50 Visitors £3.75

(half-price for 14-18 year olds on production of proof of age)

Garry Kilworth was born in York on 5th July 1941. Educated at Khomaksar School, Aden; Royal Air Force Bridgenorth School; Cosford Cadet School; H.N.C. business studies in 1974. He served as a Signals Master in the Royal Air Force from 1959 to 1974, going on to become a senior executive for Cable and Wireless, London and Caribbean from 1974 to 1982, since 1982 he has been a freelance writer. His work includes the sf novels *IN SOLITARY*, *THE NIGHT OF KADAR*, *SPLIT SECOND*, *GEMINI GOD*, *A THEATRE OF TIMESMITHS*, *ABANDONATI* and *CLOUDROCK*, as well as *WITCHWATER COUNTRY*, *SPIRAL WINDS*, *VOYAGE OF THE VIGILANCE*, *HUNTER'S MOON: A STORY OF FOXES*, *MIDNIGHT'S SUN: A STORY OF WOLVES*, *THE RAIN GHOST* and most recently the horror novel (under the name of Garry D Kilworth) *ANGEL* (Gollancz, £14.99). Although he was our Guest of Honour at Novacon 18 Garry hasn't spoken to the Group since 1981.

{Many thanks to TWENTIETH-CENTURY SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS, third edition, for the above information.}

Please note our **NEW VENUE** is the recently refurbished
upstairs **Function Room of THE AUSTRALIAN BAR**
(corner of Hurst Street and Bromsgrove Street in Birmingham city centre).

The BSGF meets at 7.45pm on the 3rd Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) in the upstairs Function Room of the Australian Bar, corner of Hurst Street and Bromsgrove Street in Birmingham city centre. The annual subscription rates (which include twelve copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to meetings) are £9.00 per person, or £12.00 for 2 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 and review copies should be sent to the reviews editor Bernie Evans, 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, Birmingham, B8 2AG (tel: 021 327 3023).

COLOPHON

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Personal opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the committee or the membership of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group.

All text by Martin Tudor except where stated otherwise.

This publication was printed on the CRITICAL WAVE photocopier. Contact the editorial address for details of WAVE's competitive prices.

Many thanks this issue to BERNIE EVANS for typing the Book Reviews, MICK EVANS, CLIVE RICHARDS, MICHAEL JONES, CHRIS and PAULINE MORGAN for writing them, STEVE GREEN and CRITICAL WAVE for the news in the Jophan Report, TONY MORTON for his piece and TONY BERRY for the use of his spare room.

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CHAIRMAN'S BIT

by Tony Morton

ON THE MOVE - AGAIN

Yes folks, the Brum Group has a new home. Well, actually, a return to an old home as we return to the AUSTRALIAN BAR in Hurst Street. The reason for the move is because the White Lion is to be completely refurbished and due to close soon. So, rather than wait for the closure and panic to find new premises, the Committee took the decision to jump before being pushed.

THE AUSTRALIAN BAR, if you haven't yet visited it since it reopened, has been completely 'done out'. The room upstairs is now excellent and tailor made for such meetings as ours. On top of this is the added attraction of an excellent selection of real ale (Greenalls Original, Tetleys, Davenports and 6X) and they serve pub food in the early evening!

For those that don't know, THE AUSTRALIAN BAR is situated on the corner of Hurst Street and Bromsgrove Street (just down Hurst Street from the Arcadian Centre and the Old Fox). See you there from 20 August.

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

THE QUIZ a report by Tony Morton

Congratulations to Rog Peyton and team on their win in the quiz last month. The margin of their victory (34 points) only emphasises my decision to seed Rog as top seed - either that or the fact that Dave based a lot of the questions from the newly published *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION* and Rog (as a book seller) has had ample time to browse through it. Only kidding Rog - just jealousy at not winning on my part. The prize was £20 (a fiver each) and was well won and deserved.

**FORTHCOMING
EVENTS**

20 AUGUST 1993: GARRY KILWORTH will be speaking to the Brum Group, 7.45pm for 8.00pm at our NEW VENUE the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street.

24 AUGUST 1993: *THE SUPERKID SHOW* "a stirring piece of comic-book theatre that at once pokes fun and pays homage to the cult and genre of the Super Hero. Superkid is our hero, who battles to save the world against impossible odds, and to ensure the safety of future generations. With a breathtaking set, and exciting costumes and technical effects, this is a show that will be totally absorbing for anyone over five. A winning blend of intrigue, action and humour." At the Solihull Arts Complex at 2pm, tickets £2.50, call 021 704 6994.

25-28 AUGUST 1993: *GODSPELL* by Stephen Schwartz, performed by the Belgrade Youth Theatre at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, tickets £2.50. Call 0203 553055.

28 AUGUST 1993: STORM CONSTANTINE will be signing at Andromeda, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, from noon. Call 021 643 1999 for further details.

28 AUGUST 1993: COMIC MART at the Hotel Ibis, Ladywell Walk, off Hurst Street, Birmingham. Doors open 11am, admission 50p, contact: Peter Lennon, 15 Yew Tree Close, Batchley, Redditch, B97 6SU (0527 585036).

3-6 SEPTEMBER 1993: *GROUNDHOG DAY* (PG) will be showing at the University of Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry. Call 0203 524524 for details.

3-6 SEPTEMBER 1993: *CONFRANCISCO*. 51st world science fiction convention at the San Francisco Marriott Moskone Convention Center. Guests of Honour: Larry Niven, Tom Digby, Alicia Austin, Jan Howard Finder. MC: Guy Gavriel Kay. Attending \$145 on the door. British Agent: Chris O'Shea, 12 Stannard Road, London, E8 1DB.

4 SEPTEMBER 1993: BRIAN LUMLEY will be signing at Magic Labyrinth, Rutland Street, Leicester from 5.30pm and will be speaking to the Leicester Science Fiction Group in the function room of the Rainbow and Dove from about 8.00pm. Call Steph Mortimer or Dave Holmes at Magic Labyrinth on 0533 518178 for further details of this and future signings and meetings.

17 SEPTEMBER 1993: IAIN BANKS will be speaking to the Brum Group, 7.45pm for 8.00pm, at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street (to be confirmed).

18 SEPTEMBER 1993: IAIN BANKS will be signing at Andromeda, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, from noon. Call 643 1999 for further details.

30 SEPTEMBER 1993: WILLIAM GIBSON will be signing copies of *VIRTUAL LIGHT* at Andromeda, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, from 1pm. Call 021 643 1999 for further details.

1-3 OCTOBER 1993: FANTASYCON XVIII. Midland Hotel, Birmingham, Guests of Honour: Peter James, Tad Williams and Les Edwards, Master of Ceremonies Dennis Etchison, further guests to be announced. Attending £20 (to British Fantasy Society members) £30 (non-members), Supporting membership £10. Contact: Mike Chinn at 137 Priory Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 0TG (tel: 021 474 2585).

15 OCTOBER 1993: BRIAN W ALDISS will be speaking to the Brum Group, 7.45pm for 8.00pm, at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street (to be confirmed).

5-7 NOVEMBER 1993: NOVACON 23 the Brum Group's own sf con, at the Royal Angus hotel in the city centre. Guest of honour Stephen Baxter. Attending membership costs £25 until 1st October and then £30 on the door. Supporting membership is £8.00 (please note that this will NOT automatically reserve an attending place, but it WILL ensure receipt of all of the convention's publications and entitle you to vote in the Novas). Although the hotel has agreed to increase the membership ceiling from 300 to 350 people the committee advises you to register early, as they will if necessary turn people away on the door. Further details from Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH (tel: 021 558 0997).

11 NOVEMBER 1993: COMIC MART at the Hotel Ibis, Ladywell Walk, off Hurst Street, Birmingham. Doors open 11am, admission 50p. Contact: Peter Lennon, 15 Yew Tree Close, Batchley, Redditch, B97 6SU (0527 585036).

12-14 NOVEMBER 1993: ARMADACON V "the friendly science fiction and fantasy convention", at the Astor Hotel, Elliot Street, The Hoe, Plymouth. Attending £20.00 (one day £10.00) to Marion Pritchard, 4 Gleneagle Avenue, Mannamead, Plymouth, PL3 5HL (tel: 0752 267873).

19 NOVEMBER 1993: DEBATE between representatives of the Brum Group and the Birmingham University SF & F Society, 7.45pm for 8.00pm at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street (to be confirmed).

22-27 NOVEMBER 1993: *THE INVISIBLE MAN* following a hugely successful run in the West End this sinister story of a tormented, twisted and transparent scientist will be retold at the Alexandra Theatre, Suffolk Street, Birmingham. Tickets £6.00-£14.50, tel 633 3325, credit cards 643 1231.

26-28 NOVEMBER 1993: CON-YAK, annual international Beneluxcon, venue probably Altea Hotel, just outside Amsterdam. Guests of honour to be announced. Contact Richard Vermaas, James Wattstraat 13, 1097 DJ Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

17 DECEMBER 1993: CHRISTMAS PARTY, 7.45pm for 8.00pm at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street.

21 JANUARY 1994: BSFG AGM & AUCTION, 7.45pm for 8.00pm at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street.

1-4 APRIL 1994: SOU'WESTER. 45th UK national sf con. Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Guests of honour: Diane Duane, Neil Gaiman, Barbara Hambly, Peter Morwood. Until November 1993: Attending £25.00 (£23.00 for paid-up pre-supporting), Supporting £12.50, children aged 9-14 (on 1 April 1994) £12.50, £1.00 for "babies and beasts". Contact: 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ.

30 APRIL - 1 MAY 1994: COME-BACK CON. The first Belgian BeNeLuxcon in a long time at the Rubenianum House, Antwerp, Belgium. Attending 650BF, Supporting 500BF until 31 Dec 1993, then Attending 750BF, Supporting 650BF until 31 March 1994, children up to age 6 free admission, age 6-12 50% of current price. Contact: Alfons J Maes, Zandkapelweg 18, B-2200 Noorderwijk, Belgium.

27-30 MAY 1994: INCONCEIVABLE. Second 'humour' con from Octarine, Tudor Court Hotel, Draycott, near Derby. Attending £20.00 (£18.00 for members of Octarine or ZZ9, contact 12 Crich Avenue, Littleover, Derby, DE23 6ES.

1-5 SEPTEMBER 1994: CONADIAN, 52nd world science fiction convention, at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. Guests of Honour Anne McCaffrey, George Barr, Barry B Longyear, Fan Guest of Honour Robert Runte. Attending US\$85.00, CAN\$95.00, Supporting US\$25.00,

CAN\$30.00 until 6 September 1993. Contact British Agent: Helen McCarthy, 147 Francis Road, London, E10 6NT.

14-17 APRIL 1995: CONFABULATION 46th UK National sf con at the Britannia International Hotel, London. GoHs Lois McMasters Bujold, Bob Shaw and Roger Robinson. Attending £15.00, Supporting £10.00, children born on or before 13 April 1981 pay the supporting rate and small children (born on or before 18 April 1987) pay nothing. Contact: Confabulation, 3 York Street, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH.

24-28 AUGUST 1995: INTERSECTION, 53rd world-con, SECC, Glasgow. Guests of honour Samuel R Delany, Gerry Anderson. Attending £50.00, Supporting £15.00, please note that Glasgow pre-support and friend benefits expired on 30 April 1993 when pre-supporters became non-members and Friends became supporters. Contact: Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH.

27 DECEMBER 1999 - 2 JANUARY 2000: MILLENIUM. Venue to be announced, but definitely in Northern Europe (probably a BeNeLux country or UK), £3.00 (£10.00) per year, to be deducted from eventual membership fee (to be announced before 1997). Contact: Malcolm Reid, 2/R, 9 Airlie Street, Hyndland, Glasgow, G12 9RJ.

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Although details are correct to the best of my knowledge, I advise readers to contact organizers prior to travelling.

Always enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope when writing to any of the above contact addresses. Please mention the BRUM GROUP NEWS when replying to listings or advertisements.

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JOPHAN REPORT #65

by Martin Tudor

Edgewood Press have just published a collection of stories by this month's speaker, Garry Kilworth. *HOGFOOT RIGHT AND BIRD-HANDS* is a collection of 13 tales of dark fantasy and science fiction from *OMNI*, *INTERZONE*, *BBR*, *ZENITH* and elsewhere, with an introduction by Robert Holdstock.

It is available from Edgewood Press, PO Box 380264, Cambridge, MA 02238, USA, for \$9.00 plus \$5.00 postage.

Garry D Kilworth's *ANGEL* is being promoted as his first horror novel; it seems Gollancz is unaware of *THE STREET*, published by Grafton in 1988 as by "Garry Douglas", which bore the memorable cover blurb "In a leafy suburb near you, the black tarmac is boiling for revenge...".

Unfortunately one of the recent "large number of redundancies" at Hodder & Stoughton was Kate Farquhar-Thomson, their Publicity Co-ordinator. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Kate for her help in the past and wish her the best of luck in the future.

If you wish to contact her - with details of forthcoming events, party invites, or whatever - she can be reached at 78 Merton Road, London, SW18 5SR.

Any rich film fans amongst you might be interested in learning that in October Hodder & Stoughton plan to publish the *RADIO TIMES FILM AND VIDEO GUIDE* compiled by Derek Winnert, film editor of *RADIO TIMES*, with an introduction by Barry Norman. With information on over 20,000 films in its 1500 pages it will set you back £29.99 in hardback or £16.99 trade paperback.

NIGHTSIDE THE LONG SUN by Gene Wolfe (£15.99) was due out from Hodder & Stoughton last month, whilst forthcoming books include a new short story collection from Stephen King *NIGHTMARES AND DREAMSCAPES* (£15.99, October); reissues of King's *THINNER* (£14.99, December) and James Herbert's *THE MAGIC COTTAGE* (£15.99, December); Chung Kuo Book Five *BENEATH THE TREE OF HEAVEN* by David Wingrove (November, £16.99).

Last month saw the publication of Graham Joyce's third novel *HOUSE OF LOST DREAMS*

(£15.99) by Headline, while this month we see *WINTER OF THE WOLF* by R A MacAvoy and *THE LONG LOST* by Ramsey Campbell (£16.99).

Other forthcoming titles from Headline include in September *MR MURDER* by Dean Koontz (£16.99); *BLACK WOLF* by Philip Caveney (£16.99); *ENDLESS NIGHT* by Richard Laymon (£16.99).

October sees *LOVEDEATH* featuring five novellas by Dan Simmons (£8.99, £16.99); *THE SUMMONING* by Bentley Little (£16.99).

In November comes *THE DRACULA SYNDROME* by Richard Monaco and William Burt featuring over 20 real cases of twentieth-century vampires (est. £16.99); *THE FOUNDATION* by F Paul Wilson writing as Colin Andrews (£16.99); *FLOWERDUST* by Gwyneth Jones - a South-East Asian fantasy which builds on an episode from her earlier book *DIVINE ENDURANCE*; *NIGHT-SHADES* by Tanith Lee (£16.99) and finally December brings us *GOLDEN EYES* by John Gideon (est. £16.99).

Steve Bowkett's new adult horror novel, *THE COMMUNITY*, written under the name Ben Leech is published by Pan next month (with a launch at Fantasycon in Birmingham in October). Also out in September is *YARROW* and *THE LITTLE COUNTRY* by Charles de Lint.

October will see the paperback publication from Pan of the fifth volume in Douglas Adams' Hitchhiker "trilogy", *MOSTLY HARMLESS* (£4.99). Also out from Pan in October will be *THE VOR GAME* by Lois McMaster Bujold (£4.99); *DARK VOICES 5* edited by Stephen Jones and David Sutton (£4.99); *CRYBBE* by Phil Rickman (£4.99); *GREAT IRISH STORIES OF THE SUPER-NATURAL* edited by Peter Haining (£5.99).

November will see *THE POSITRONIC MAN* by Asimov and Silverberg (£4.99); *FALLEN ANGELS* Niven, Pournelle and Flynn (£8.99); *IN THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND* by Michael Flynn (£4.99).

Then in December *ACHILLES' CHOICE* by Niven and Barnes (£4.99); *CIRCLE OF LIGHT* by Martin Middleton (£4.99); *THE SPIRIT RING* by Lois McMaster Bujold (£4.99).

To celebrate the fifth volume of their *DARK VOICES* anthology Pan will be running a readers competition for the best short, horror story.

The winner will receive a cash prize and the winning story will be published in *DARK VOICES 6*. Runners-up will win prizes of £50.00 worth of any Pan books of their choice.

Full details will be published in the back of *DARK VOICES 5* along with the entry form. Closing date for entries is 31 January 1994 and the prizes will be presented at the 1994 Eastercon in Liverpool.

White Hawk Press is seeking critical articles and personal essays on August Derleth for the second volume of *RETURN TO DERLETH*, scheduled for June 1994 ; publisher James P Roberts is open to submissions (2000-5000 words) from 1 September until 31 January, at 950 Jenifer Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703, USA, with rates set at US\$500/1000 words plus a contributor's copy.

Leading sf literary agent Scott Meredith died in New York on 11 February, aged 69. Clients included Arthur C Clarke, who first submitted short stories to Meredith in 1947 and whose career was given a major boost by the sale of *THE EXPLORATION OF SPACE* to the Book of the Month Club in 1952.

Meredith was also involved in the genesis of *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*, having met director Stanley Kubrick when negotiating the movie rights to Peter George's novel *THE RED ALERT*, filmed as *DR STRANGELOVE*.

Fancy a *VELVET VAMPIRE WHITBY WEEKEND*? The annual gathering of the Vampire Society in Bram Stoker's holiday haunt, 17-19 Sept-

ember 1994, includes a journey by steam train across the Yorkshire Moors and a formal banquet at the fourteenth century Bagdale Hall. Just (!) £140.00 including accomodation, plus an extra £40.00 if you wish to travel with the main group from London.

Contact Carole Bohanan, 9 Edgar Road, Sanderstead, South Croydon, Surrey (tel: 081 645 9531).

A CHANGE OF ZINERY #15, published by the Peterborough SF Club, includes a nostalgic look at past Eastercons from veteran sf fan Vin† Clarke and a profile of novelist John Davys Beresford by Pete Cox.

For a copy and details of the group's activities (meetings are currently held fortnightly at various venues across the city), send a reply-paid envelope to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 0RB.

Congratulations to Andromeda's Chris Monk and Linda Lancaster, whose marriage has been scheduled for 9 October now that Chris has found a date which doesn't clash with any major conventions.

CRITICAL WAVE

THE EUROPEAN SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY REVIEW

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

"One of the best of the business journals...I never miss a copy..." - Bruce Sterling.

"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 W Aldiss.

CRITICAL WAVE is published six times per year and 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 & movies. Regular features include publishing news, portfolios by Europe's leading sf & fantasy artists, extensive club, comic mart & convention listings, interviews with prominent authors & editors, fiction market reports, fanzine & magazine reviews, festival and convention reports.

Previous contributors have included: MICHAEL MOORCOCK, IAIN BANKS, CLIVE BARKER, LISA TUTTLE, NICHOLAS ROYLE, COLIN GREENLAND, DAVID LANGFORD, ROBERT HOLDSTOCK, GARRY KILWORTH, BOB SHAW, DAVID WINGROVE, TERRY PRATCHETT, RAMSEY CAMPBELL, LARRY NIVEN, BRIAN W ALDISS, ANNE GAY, STEPHEN BAXTER, RAYMOND FEIST, CHRIS CLAREMONT, MARK MORRIS and STORM CONSTANTINE.

A six issue subscription costs only £8.50 or a sample copy £1.95; these rates only apply to the UK, overseas readers should contact the address below for further details. Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to "Critical Wave Publications" and sent to:

Martin Tudor, 845 Alum Rock Road, Birmingham, B8 2AG. Please allow 30 days for delivery.

PHANNISH FIZZICKS

by Al Johnston

All you ever wanted to know about Life, the Universe and Everything: Part 5.

Many of fans will be aware of Quantum Theory, if only through watching *QUANTUM LEAP* on Tuesdays. Some will also know that energy comes in indivisible quanta that sometimes behave as waves and sometimes as particles. These people will also realize that the fundamental building blocks of the universe change state in infinitesimal "quantum steps" rather than the giant leaps more usually thought of. A smaller group will know that physicists are much exercised trying to reconcile quantum theories with "classical" theories like relativity, which assume that the Universe operates in a smooth continuous fashion. Some of these people may even care.

Fizzicists, however, are aware that life is not smooth, nor is it necessarily continuous. There are all kinds of large-scale events in the Universe that people tend to assume are continuous, but which on closer examination turn out to operate in quantum fashion.

Fashion for example: one visit to any clothes shop should serve to demonstrate that the apparent plenitude of available clothes sizes is merely an optical illusion brought on by ill-founded optimism. There are, in fact, only two sizes of clothes: too big and too small. This explains why supermodels are paid so much; it isn't what they do, it's their rarity value: clothes fit them. These women are not born, nor are they made, they are random fluctuations in the macro-scale quantum Universe: the odd results from the collapsing of Schrödinger wave functions at the far ends of the distribution. Quantum Mechanics need better scaffolding. No one ever hears of supermodels either before or after their careers: they pop into existence, fuel the delusions of the clothing industry for a while, then pop out again. Robert A Heinlein stumbled near this truth in *STARSHIP TROOPERS*, but then blew it by suggesting that his protagonist *alter his uniform!* As if the entire fabric of the Universe were susceptible to needle and thread! Heinlein,

of course, remained blissfully unaware that this situation is far more common in civilian life.

Most other demonstrations of large-scale quantum effects involve fluids of one sort or another. Showers are a prime example. Whatever the dial may have you believe, any shower has only two operating temperatures: too damn hot and too bloody cold. Standard international symbols depicting a jet of steam and a reproductively challenged cupro-zinc alloy simian are currently being produced.

A further example involves a hold-over from a previous article: Bowlesian Motion. As some of you may be aware, and the rest of you will probably guess, the level of liquid in containers is governed by quantum effects. Until recently scientists needed to cool liquid Helium to less than 1K to observe these effects, a procedure involving a lot of time and a few million quid's worth of equipment. The reward is to watch a few grammes of the stuff flowing up over the edge of its beaker and down the side into a reservoir. Then Science met Helena Bowles and these experiments were promptly abandoned. As anyone who has been in a pub or at a con bar with Helena can confirm, she has no need of near-absolute temperatures or indeed liquid Helium to reproduce these effects. Furthermore, she can do it with whole pints. Any liquid will do (although she prefers real ale if you want to see for yourself). To the uninitiated the process appears to be a straightforward quantum transition; the beer (or whatever, if you insist) starts in the glass, then appears on the floor with no discernible interval between. Repetition of the experiment seems necessary to capture all the time-dilational subtleties involved. Go ahead; it's more fun than the old method, and in the current climate of Government Science cuts, marginally cheaper.

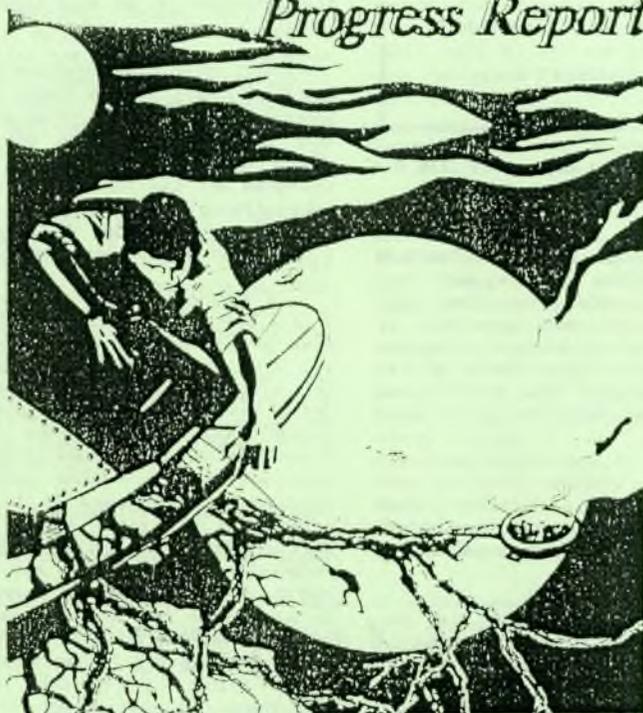
*This edition of PHANNISH FIZZICKS sponsored by
the H Bowles Ale Solicitation Fund.*

HAVE YOU GOT SOME SPARE STORAGE SPACE ?
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which as you might guess include more
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Does THIS look Familiar?

Progress Report One



If NOT.....

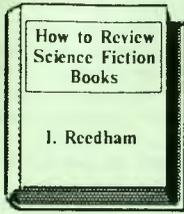
YOU HAVEN'T JOINED

NOVACON 23

GUEST OF HONOUR STEPHEN BAXTER

TO RECTIFY THIS OVERSIGHT
CONTACT :-

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Book Reviews

LORD KELVIN'S MACHINE by James P Blaylock
Grafton, 244 pp, £4.99, p/b

Reviewed by Mick Evans.

Set in a mythical Victorian England, this is as much fantasy as sf. The "feel" of the book is a cosy mixture of Sherlock Holmes and H G Wells. Substitute Holmes for Langan St Ives and Moriarty for Dr Ignacious Narbando and it could almost be a Holmes story. American writers such as Tim Powers and Blaylock certainly seem to have a keen interest in 19th century England.

The first half of the book is the better half, involving St Ives' pursuit of Narbando, who has been frozen after falling into a river and later revived by a miracle drug. Narbando had murdered St Ives' intended, hence the pursuit, and hence also his desire to use the time machine. He hopes to go back and prevent the murder, which is the focal point of the second half of the book.

This latter half is very tedious, not living up to the promise of the first half. It is only Blaylock's skill as a story teller that saves the book from complete failure. As it is, the book disappoints. Blaylock has the talent to do a lot better than this, although it is worth a read if you are interested in this time period.

THE LOST DOMAIN by Martin Hocke
HarperCollins, 383 pp, £9.99, "C" Format

Reviewed by Clive Richards.

Upon first picking up this sizeable tome I was struck by its similarity to other fantasy epics such as *DUNSTON WOOD*, *WATERSHIP DOWN* and *THE COLD MOONS*, all being stories using animals as a template to oppose the failures and faults of humanity. This made the reading initially appear daunting because of the adage "Once you've read one you've read them all.". However, as I progressed into the book I became more captivated by the style and pattern that Hocke uses to parody humanity. It has all the classic ingredients, with a hero who is somewhat subversive and reactionary in his views and a satirical vision

of a society transported into the three tier world of the owls.

In this world the Tawnies represent the top aristocratic elite, the Barn Owls are the proletariat and the Immigrants are foreigners. The story smacks of the great historical uprisings of the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy who rule by divine birthright and hereditary occupation. It goes very close to the bone in opposing some of mankind's more arrogant assumptions as to their rights in relation to the food chain, romance, battles and the struggle for the protection of heritage.

As with all books of this ilk, it needs to be read lightly. It is probably more a book for nature lovers than serious fantasy readers, and it definitely left me with a feeling of déjà vu.

THE DECEIVER: The Chaos Gate Trilogy, Book 1 by Louise Cooper
Grafton, 280 pp, £4.99, p/b

reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

For her latest series of books, Louise Cooper has returned to the world of her "Time Master" trilogy. Fifty years after the Chaos gods defeated those of Order and Tarod returned to his place amongst his Chaos brethren, the last of those who remembered him is dying. The Matriarch of the Sisterhood and the High Margrave's representative come to the Star Peninsular to ratify Chiro Piadar Lin as the next High Initiate. Between them these three form the religious and secular triumvirate that keeps the world at peace. During the visit the Matriarch's niece dies in premature childbirth. Karuth, Chiro's daughter, thinks there is something strange about this child and connects the events surrounding her birth to the supernatural death of the Matriarch fourteen years later. Of course, no-one will listen.

Cooper is a flawed writer and this book seems to emphasise many of them. For a start she dwells far too much on inconsequential details instead of getting on with the story. The time-span involved in this volume is twenty-one years and although some of the background is necessary and the events significant her principle characters are not developed to any depth as the narrative rushes from the opening pages to a minor climax at the end of this volume. It would have been far better to start much closer to the end and give the necessary information as flashback. Stylistically, there are also problems; irritatingly changing point of view several times in a single scene and often using three words when one is more than adequate. There are good ideas here but, as

in other books by this author, good editing would have improved the quality and enjoyment immensely.

THE DECEIVER: The Chaos Gate Trilogy, Book 1 by Louise Cooper
Grafton, 280 pp, £4.99, p/b

reviewed by Chris Morgan.

After enjoying Louise Cooper's humorous talk to the Brum Group, I found it a dreadful anticlimax to read one of her books. She's a third-rate writer who, despite having churned out at least eighteen published fantasy novels, hasn't learnt much about how to write.

Space forbids the cataloguing of all her crimes against literature, but I can't recall reading a worse paced book than THE DECEIVER: it's too slow and boring where it should pull the reader along and it's too shallow and undetailed precisely where it ought to pause and build up suspense. And it should have begun with p.79, since everything earlier is either irrelevant or could better have been told through flashback. Many scenes are ruined because the author tells too many facts rather than showing characters interacting, while others are ruined because she leaps from viewpoint to viewpoint in a jerky and uncontrolled fashion.

The style is day-glo purple prose, right over the top, with clumsy dialogue, often unintentionally comical as characters call each other by name in almost every speech and tell each other information they already know, just for the reader's benefit. ("You forget that as well as a physician I'm also a fifth-rank adept.")

The plot is the hackneyed old tale of the mad scientist (with a beautiful daughter, of course) who plans to take over the world, except that here he's a mad demon. Meanwhile, the gods vacillate and the rather stuffy goodies quarrel over whether something bad is happening or not. Being the beginning of a trilogy, it offers no conclusion, but I certainly won't be bothering with vols two and three of this tripe, and I recommend you not to bother with volume one.

STEEL BEACH by John Varley
HarperCollins, 479 pp, £8.99, "C" format

Reviewed by Mick Evans.

Any book that opens with the words "In five years the penis will be obsolete" just has to grab your attention, especially if you are male! I'm glad it did, for this is a fine far-future sf novel.

Earth has been taken over by aliens (giant beings) and humans have died en masse,

except for those on the outer planets and on Luna, which is the setting for the story. The aliens treat humans with total disinterest, simply using technology to bar them from Earth and otherwise ignoring them. Earth has been turned into a safe habitat for aquatic mammals, so they can't be all bad!

Humans have now lived on Luna for two centuries, and with modern technology many have actually lived all those years, and are referred to as "Earth born". Life is very comfortable and everything is taken care of by the central computer, which is one of the story's main characters. The tale revolves around top padloid (sic) reporter Hildy Johnson, who was born male, changes sex for a little variety in life, and later becomes pregnant. Despite this easy lifestyle people are becoming increasingly suicidal. Even the computer has become depressed, which means problems for everyone.

John Varley writes with wit and invention, and creates a very believable environment. I suppose I ought to mention the park in which dinosaurs are bred to provide the colonists' meat source, but that's a very minor part of the plot. There are a lot of wonderful things happening in this book, which is refreshing in its straight-forwardness of style. It's well worth a read for anyone interested in modern hard sf.

THE THROAT by Peter Straub
HarperCollins, 689 pp, £15.99, h/b

Reviewed by Chris Morgan.

Although Straub is best known for horror fiction, this is a murder mystery novel with only slight undertones of horror. It's connected through its characters, with Straub's previous novels, KOKO and MYSTERY, and through its themes with his most recent collection, HOUSES WITHOUT DOORS. Briefly, it is an account of Tim Underhill (a Vietnam veteran of about 50, now a writer) returning in the present day to Millhaven, the city where he grew up, to help investigate a series of murders. Nothing is either simple or straightforward. These murders parallel another series, committed in 1950, and to understand the present Underhill must re-interpret the past. The plot developments are always surprising and gripping. The characters are believably, enjoyably offbeat (but scarcely any of them are women; this is very much a man's book about men). And here is urban America at its worst - violent, seedy, corrupt, grasping and pretentious.

That would be enough for most writers, but Straub operates on a plane above most writers. Here he is also examining the

creative process, male bonding, the effects that the Vietnam war had on the Americans who served there (including some graphic flashback scenes in Vietnam), the ravages of Alzheimer's disease and the dangers of uncovering one's childhood nightmares. As a British reader I was amazed by American attitudes, baffled by some of the slang and occasionally confused by the multitude of characters, but I was never bored. It's a vivid and startling novel, beautifully written.

COELESTIS by Paul Park

HarperCollins, 254 pp, £14.99, h/b

Reviewed by Michael Jones.

The story is set on a distant planet discovered and colonised by the USA, where two alien races formerly co-existed in a strange semi-symbiotic partnership. Now one race, its fate a grotesque parody of the fate of aboriginals everywhere, had been made over into a poor imitation of humanity. The highest achievement open to them is to be able to afford enough reconstructive and prosthetic surgery to give themselves every outward appearance of being human. Meanwhile the other race, formerly dominant, has become virtually extinct.

I plunged into the first long chapter thinking this was a splendid book. The author has that gift of being able to paint pictures in the reader's mind without resorting to long and cumbersome descriptive passages, and he creates a fascinating alien world occupied by strange and complex people, both alien and human. I anticipated a story as fascinating and complex as its background, and there was a promise of action enough as hero Simon Maryam, a young consular official from Earth, is caught up in an aboriginal revolt. He and Katharine Styreme, a beautiful young human girl, find themselves taken captive while many around them are killed. Worse, their captors have allied themselves with a "demon", possibly the only surviving native of the other species, Homo Coelestis.

Unfortunately from this point on the book loses its way completely - none of the protagonists seem able to pursue a sane and logical course of action. Even Simon, while keeping some sort of reasonable goal in mind, devotes altogether too much time and effort to Katharine, allowing a love for her human-seeming beauty to blind him to her alien nature. She, on the other hand, descends deeper and deeper into a hallucinatory dream-world of unreal visions, threatening to drag Simon down with her. Eventually we realise that we are seeing two conflicting views of

the world. Katharine, as a native, perceives her world in a way which is totally unavailable to any human, Simon included. That perception strengthens as she regresses from her artificial semblance of humanity, back toward her true aboriginal nature. Simon, out of his misguided love, manages to save her from herself but it is too late to save the book, which has rambled on far too long.

There is a message here about how man will probably attempt to impose his way on the Universe as the only right way, just as the Europeans have imposed their way on the rest of the world to the eventual detriment of the aboriginal races. It is a pity that this message is so nearly lost in the confusion of a book which is at last half as long again as it should have been.

DREAD by Clive Barker

Eclipse, 90 pp, £6.99, Graphic Novel

Reviewed by Chris Morgan.

"Dread" was the best story in *THE BOOKS OF BLOOD*, a chillingly nasty account of people being held captive and forced to face their worst fears. Quid, a student of philosophy, destroys both Cheryl and Steve (fellow students) just as an experiment. Psychological horror, like this, is usually more real and terrifying than supernatural horror. And for this graphic novel version, artist Dan Brereton has made an excellent job of capturing the English background details and the subtleties of character.

"Down Satan", also from *THE BOOKS OF BLOOD* and included here in illustrated form, is less convincing as a story. Why should a very rich man search for Satan? Why should he build a hell on Earth in North Africa? But Tim Conrad has done as good a job of illustrating it as one could have wished. This volume is okay if you like comics, but the original stories are better and a lot cheaper.

Well people, I hope you've all had a nice holiday. At least, I'm being kind and assuming holidays are the reason for the lack of reviews this time, as this has turned into the most miserable excuse for a book review column I've had since I started to do the job. I'd hate to think that it's lack of interest, or an eagerness to take the books coupled with a lack of the integrity needed to sit and expend the effort writing the reviews afterwards. Only the fact that Chris and Pauline both sent me a review of the same book saved these pages from total ignominy. One of our number has already been told no more books until I see some reviews, I'd hate to have to do that to the rest of you, so do us all a favour and get your fingers out, please. Bernie Evans

The Tiptree Award Cookbooks

The James Tiptree Jr Memorial Award, presented in memory of the late great Alice Sheldon for sf novels which explore and expand gender issues, is interestingly funded by bake sales and cookbooks. Limited stocks of the latter are now available in the UK. All proceeds go to award funds. Both books are classy 8½"x7" paperbacks, spiral-bound to lie flat while in use, with card covers (not included in the page counts below), decorations, graphics and an index. Both are designed and edited by Jeanne Gomoll.

The Bakery Men Don't See

90pp. Published 1991 and shortlisted for the nonfiction Hugo award in 1992.

Introductory material and essays by Diane Martin, Jeanne Gomoll, Pat Murphy and Pamela Sargent. Recipes (not always wholly serious) from ... Karen Babich, Pat Cadigan, Sherry Goldsmith, Maia Cowan, Ellen Datlow, Karen Joy Fowler, Ellen Franklin, Beverly Friend, Terry Garey, Roslie Lindner's Daughter Gretchen, Eileen Gunn, Jim Hudson, Bill Humphries, Karen Johnson (with Geri Sullivan), Phyllis Ann Karr, Joyce Worley Katz, John Kessel, Hope Kiefer, Susan Kinast-Porter, Nancy Kress, George 'Lan' Laskowski, Ursula K.Le Guin, B.Diane Martin, Catherine E.Martin, Diane Martin, Vonda N.McIntyre, Jeanne Mealy, Pat Murphy, Kathi Nash, John Peacock, John Pomeranz, Lucy Rhonor, J.F.Rivkin, Michaela Roessner, Carrie Root, William Rotsler, Richard S.Russell, Karen Schaffer, Georgie Schnobrich, Tracy Shannon, Andi Schechter, Stu Shiffman, Julie Shivers, Leah Zeldes Smith, Nevenah Smith, Sarah Smith, Laura Spiess, Susanna J.Sturgis, Steve Swartz, Amy Thomson, Leslie Turek, Janis Wells.

☞ 'Calories: About two hundred billion per bite (each cheesecake = 3-4 bites) and worth *every single one*.'—Pat Cadigan in austere mood.

Her Smoke Rose Up From Supper

112pp. Published 1993. Introduction by Karen Joy Fowler. Contributions by:

Jae Leslie Adams, Eleanor Arnason, Susan & Ruth Ballietto, David Bratman, Avedon Carol, Suzy McKee Charnas, Glen E.Cox, Mog Decarnin, Phyllis Eisenstein, Suzette Haden Elgin, Marjii Eilers, Jill Engel, D.C.Fontana, Ellen F.Franklin, James Frenkel, Terry A.Garey, Barb Gilligan, Jeanne Gomoll, Karen Haber, Karl Hailman, Joan Gordon, Ian K.Hagemann, Anne Harris, Bill Hoffman, Andrew P.Hooper, Jim Hudson, Bill Humphries, Julie Humphries, Gwyneth Jones, Phyllis Ann Karr, Joyce Worley Katz, Hope Kiefer, Nancy Kress, Janet Lafler, Sarah Lefanu, Ursula K.Le Guin, Shariann Lewitt, Linda Lounsbury, Diane Martin, Lynn Ann Morse, Pat Murphy, Ross Pavlac, Marge Piercy, Kit Reed, Lucy Rhonor, J.F.Rivkin, Michaela Roessner, Vicki Rosenzweig, Bill Rotsler, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Pamela Sargent, Joyce Scrivner, Tracy Shannon, Ariel Shattan, Andi Schechter, Lewis Shiner, Nevenah Smith, Sarah Smith, Laura Stinson, Candi Strecker, Susanna J.Sturgis, Steve Swartz, Amy Thomson, Leslie Turek, Lisa Tuttle, Joan D.Vinge, Deborah Wheeler, Laurel Winter, Donya Hazard White, Kim Winz.

☞ 'Maybe [Vonda McIntyre] thought if I submitted it I would stop making it and she'd never have to eat it again when she visits, but this is not so.'—

Ursula Le Guin on her *Cream of Food Soup*.

☞ These epic volumes may be ordered from **Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU**. He does not get any commission (chiz chiz chiz). Each book **£8.00** post free, or £7.50 if you can arrange to collect them in person—e.g at a science fiction meeting or convention.