

BRUM GROUP NEWS

August 1995

Issue 287

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

GROUP CHAIRMAN - CAROL MORTON, SECRETARY - ANNE WOODFORD, NEWSLETTER EDITOR - MARTIN TUDOR, TREASURER - STEVE JONES, PUBLICITY OFFICER - SARAH FREAKLEY, ORDINARY MEMBER - ALAN WOODFORD, NOVACON 25 CHAIRMAN - TONY MORTON, NOVACON 26 CHAIRMAN - CAROL MORTON.

This month's speaker is

DAVID A HARDY

who will address the Group on Friday 18th August 1995,

7.45 for 8.00pm. Admittance: Members £2.50; Visitors £3.75,
(half-price for 14-18 year olds on production of proof of age).

Astronomical and sf artist DAVID ANDREWS HARDY, born 1936, learned his craft at the Margaret Street College of Art in Birmingham, and was soon painting for the British Interplanetary Society. Going on to illustrate a nonfiction book by Patrick Moore, *SUN, MYTH, AND MEN* (1954); later illustrating and co-writing *CHALLENGE OF THE STARS* (1972) with Moore. DAVID A HARDY's work has appeared on magazine and book covers, most notably (since 1971) many covers for *THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION*. It was for one of these covers that he developed his famous "Space Gumby", Bhen, a green alien which has lent humour to his vivid astronomical scenes. An important artist for the Australian/UK monthly magazine *VISION OF TOMORROW* (1969-70), he has also worked for *SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY*, *IF* and *GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION*. His book credits include *ATLAS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM* (1982), *VISIONS OF SPACE* (1989) and *GALACTIC TOURS* (1981). As well known for his astronomical paintings in the accurate tradition of Chesley Bonestell as for his sf work, he has been a long-time member of the BSFG and has chaired the group on a number of occasions. *[Many thanks to THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SF by Clute and Nicholls for much of the above information.]*



The BSFG 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 £10.00 per person, or £13.50 for 2 members at the same address. Cheques etc. should be made payable to "the Birmingham Science Fiction Group" and sent to the Treasurer, Steve Jones, c/o 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Mids., B66 4SH. Book reviews, review copies and other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to: Martin Tudor, Newsletter Editor, 845 Alum Rock Road, Birmingham, B8 2AG.

COLOPHON

The contents of this issue are copyright 1995 the BSGF, 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 membership of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group.

All text by Martin Tudor except where stated otherwise. This publication is printed on the CRITICAL WAVE photocopier. For details of WAVE's competitive prices contact:

Martin Tudor, 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG.

Many thanks this issue to BERNIE EVANS for producing the address labels; STEVE GREEN, CRITICAL WAVE and WHAT'S ON for the news in the Events Listing and TONY BERRY for the use of his PCW and spare room.

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Unfortunately due to illness our scheduled speaker, Colin Greenland, has again had to pull out.

As this page is being produced we are in negotiations for another speaker - the front cover should have full details.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

UNTIL 25 JANUARY 1996: *THE DEVIL IS AN ASS* Ben Jonson's tale of devil worship, wife stealing, major business frauds and the strange appearance of a Spanish lady, as Hell is transported to seventeenth century London. At the Swan Theatre Stratford-upon-Avon. Call 01789-295623 for further details.

UNTIL 7 SEPTEMBER 1995: *LORD OF THE FLIES* the world premiere of Nigel Williams stage adaptation of William Golding's classic tale, directed by Elijah Moshinsky. At The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon. Call 01789-295623 for further details.

18-19 AUGUST 1995: *RESERVOIR DOGS* at the Midlands Arts Centre Cinema, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Call 0121 440 3838 for details.

18-20 AUGUST 1995: *PRECURSOR* small, informal convention at the Hertfordpark Hotel, Stevenage. Attending £15.00 made payable to "Rob Hansen". Room rates twin/double £20.50, single £23.50 per person per night. Contact: 144 Plasnet Grove, East Ham, London, E6 1AB.

18-21 AUGUST 1995: *LIVE WIRES AND RAW DRAWINGS*, the Best of British Animation 2, at the Midlands Arts Centre Cinema, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Featuring *THE BIG STORY*, *TRIANGLE*, *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*, *BOB'S BIRTHDAY* and *PIB AND POG*. Call 0121 440 3838 for details.

18-24 AUGUST 1995: *CRUMB* Terry Zwigoff's fascinating and disturbing portrait of Robert Crumb, the creator of *Fritz the Cat* and *Keep on Truckin'*. Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121 643 7277 for details.

22-24 AUGUST 1995: *ED WOOD* Tim Burton's biopic of the world's worst director, starring Johnny Depp. Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121 643 7277 for details.

22-24 AUGUST 1995: *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON - IN 3D* Jack Arnold's 1954 classic. Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121 643 7277 for details.

24-28 AUGUST 1995: *INTERSECTION*, 53rd world-con, Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, Glasgow. Guests of honour Samuel R Delany, Gerry Anderson, Vine Clarke. Attending £100.00 on the door. Contact: Admail 336, Glasgow, G2 1BR, Scotland.

25 AUGUST 1995: *THE EMERALD FOREST* having read Robert Holdstock's novelisation you can see John Boorman's original 1985 movie. Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121 643 7277 for details.

25-28 AUGUST 1995: *LIVE WIRES AND RAW DRAWINGS*, the Best of British Animation 2, at the Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry. Featuring *JUKEBOX RUN*, *BRITANNIA*, *HIS COMEDY*, *THE BIG STORY*, *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*, *ABDUCTEES*, *TALES FOR THE VIENNA WOODS*, *SAVE ME*, *JUMPING JOAN*, *BOB'S BIRTHDAY*, *AH POOK IS HERE* and *PIB AND POG*. Call 01203-524524 for details.

27-29 AUGUST 1995: *PULP FICTION* Quentin Tarantino's violent and hilarious thriller.

Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121 643 7277 for details.

2 SEPTEMBER 1995: CHRIS PRIEST will be signing copies of THE PRESTIGE, his latest novel, at Andromeda Book Shop, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, 12.00-1.00pm. Call 0121 643 1999 for details of this and other signings or to order signed copies.

2 SEPTEMBER 1995: CHRIS EVANS will be signing copies of MORTAL REMAINS, his latest novel, at Andromeda Book Shop, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, 12.00-1.00pm. Call 0121 643 1999 for details of this and other signings or to order signed copies.

2 SEPTEMBER 1995: WOLVES OF FENRIG, DR WHO group meet at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham, 3pm-10.30pm. Contact: 161 Dangerfield Lane, Darlaston, Wednesbury, Staffs., WS10 7RU for further details.

2 SEPTEMBER 1995 - 27 JANUARY 1996: FAUST PARTS I AND II, Swan Theatre Stratford-upon-Avon. Call 01789-295623 for further details.

3-4 SEPTEMBER 1995: BATMAN Lealie Martinson's 1966 camp classic. Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121 643 7277 for details.

3-4 SEPTEMBER 1995: MODESTY BLAISE Joseph Losey's 1966 op-art extravaganza, starring Monica Vitti, Terence Stamp and Dirk Bogarde. Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121 643 7277 for details.

4 SEPTEMBER 1995: BRAZIL Terry Gilliam's dark vision of a bureaucratic future society. Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121 643 7277 for details.

5 SEPTEMBER 1995: THE BLACK LODGE, Birmingham's informal gathering of horror and dark fantasy fans meet in the bar of the Australian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham, from 8.30pm. Copies of the group's newsletter, THE REGISTER, are available for a reply-paid envelope from: 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 7LQ.

9 SEPTEMBER 1995: STEPHEN BAXTER will be signing copies of THE TIME SHIPS, the authorised sequel to H G Wells' THE TIME MACHINE, at Andromeda Book Shop, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, 12.00-1.00pm. Call 0121 643 1999 for details of this and other signings or to order signed copies.

15 SEPTEMBER 1995: MARK CHADBURN, journalist, and author of UNDERGROUND and NOCTURNE, will speak to the Brum Group in the upstairs room at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street, Birmingham, 7.45pm for 8.00pm.

15-19 SEPTEMBER 1995: ED WOOD Tim Burton's

biopic of the world's worst director, at the Midlands Arts Centre Cinema, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Call 0121 440 3838 for details.

23 SEPTEMBER 1995: KEN MACLEOD will be signing copies of his first novel, THE STAR FRACTION, at Andromeda Book Shop, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, 12.00-1.00pm. Call 0121 643 1999 for details of this and other signings or to order signed copies.

23 SEPTEMBER 1995: IAIN BANKS will be signing copies of WHIT, at Andromeda Book Shop, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, 12.00-1.00pm. Call 0121 643 1999 for details of this and other signings or to order signed copies.

23 SEPTEMBER 1995: COMIC MART at Carra Lane Church Centre, Birmingham. Opens noon. Contact: Golden Orbit, 9 Stratford Way, Huntington, York, YO3 9YW.

3 OCTOBER 1995: THE BLACK LODGE, Birmingham's informal gathering of horror and dark fantasy fans meet in the bar of the Australian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham, from 8.30pm. Copies of the group's newsletter, THE REGISTER, are available for a reply-paid envelope from: 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 7LQ.

7 OCTOBER 1995: WOLVES OF FENRIG, DR WHO group meet at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham, 3pm-10.30pm. Contact: 161 Dangerfield Lane, Darlaston, Wednesbury, Staffs., WS10 7RU for further details.

12-22 OCTOBER 1995: THE 11TH BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL FILM AND TV FESTIVAL. Booking opens September; further details will appear here as they become available.

15 OCTOBER 1995: GAMES DAY & GOLDEN DEMON '95. "Thousands of Games Workshop hobbyists will get together for a dazzling day of exciting games and special events whilst Citadel miniature painters and modellers compete for the coveted Golden Demon Slayer Sword" (it sez here). The National Indoor Arena, Birmingham. Call the booking office on 0121-767-4321 or INFOTEL's 24-hour information line on 0839-333-554 (calls charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute all other times) for further details.

20 OCTOBER 1995: ROBERT RANKIN author of the humorous Brentford Triangle and Armageddon series will speak to the Brum Group in the upstairs room at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street, Birmingham, 7.45pm for 8.00pm. (NB: TO BE CONFIRMED.)

23-28 OCTOBER 1995: RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET winner of the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Musical returns to the Birmingham Hippodrome. Call the box office on 0121-622-7486 for further details.

Wednesday 25th October
**RETURN TO THE
 FORBIDDEN PLANET**
 at the Birmingham
 Hippodrome, Hurst Street.
ANNE WOODFORD is
 organising a block-
 booking for this
 performance (curtains open
 7.30pm). Block-bookings
 receive a £3.00 reduction
 per ticket. Anne is taking
 deposits of £5.00 per
 person NOW! Either speak
 to her at this month's
 meeting or call her on
 0121-559-7761
 for further details.

28 OCTOBER 1995: **COMIC MART** at Carrs Lane
 Church Centre, Birmingham. Opens noon.
 Contact: Golden Orbit, 9 Stratford Way,
 Huntington, York, YO3 9YW.

3-5 NOVEMBER 1995: **NOVACON 25** the Brum
 Group's own science fiction convention at a
 new venue - the Chamberlain Hotel, Alcester
 Street, Birmingham. Guests of Honour: Brian W
 Aldiss, Harry Harrison and Bob Shaw, with
 Special Guest Iain Banks. Attending member-
 ship is £25.00 until 1 October 1995. Supp-
 orting membership costs £8.50. Progress
 Report #3 and hotel booking forms are
 available, the deadline for hotel bookings has
 been extended until September. Contact CAROL
 MORTON, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West
 Midlands, DY9 8SS, cheques should be made
 payable to "Novacon 25". Room rates are now
 only £17.50 per person per night in
 twin/double and £35.00 pppn in a single,
 prices include full English breakfast.

3-5 NOVEMBER 1995: **ReContaminated 1995**, anim 
 convention at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham.
 Attending £21.00 until 30 September, £26.00
 thereafter. Contact: Martin Pay, 29 Langton
 Avenue, Chelmsford, CM1 2BW.

4 NOVEMBER 1995: **WOLVES OF FENRIC, DR WHO**
 group meet at the Australian Bar, Hurst
 Street, Birmingham, 3pm-10.30pm. Contact:
 161 Dangerfield Lane, Darlaston, Wednesbury,
 Staffs., WS10 7RU for further details.

7 NOVEMBER 1995: **THE BLACK LODGE**,
 Birmingham's informal gathering of horror and
 dark fantasy fans meet in the bar of the Aus-
 tralian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham, from
 8.30pm. Copies of the group's newsletter, **THE**
REGISTER, are available for a reply-paid

envelope from: 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull,
 West Midlands, B92 7LQ.

17 NOVEMBER 1995: **UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE**
 featuring the BSFG versus **THE BIRMINGHAM**
UNIVERSITY FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY.
 In the upstairs room at the Australian Bar,
 Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street, Birmingham,
 7.45pm for 8.00pm. (NB: TO BE CONFIRMED.)

30 NOVEMBER - 2 DECEMBER: **ARTHUR KING** an
 original musical comedy by Sculpture Theatre
 Company, produced in conjunction with Solihull
 Arts Complex. "The days of chivalry are not
 lost to us, they live on in the heart of a
 small boy - Arthur King. He believes it is
 his destiny to be King of the Britons but
 first he must become King of 4B and the
 school playground. Assisted by his knights
 Gavin and Lance and the mysterious caretaker
 Mervin he embarks on his quest. Performances
 2.30pm and 7.30pm in the @Library Theatre.
 Call the Solihull Arts Complex Box Office on
 0121 704 6962 for further details.

2 DECEMBER 1995: **WOLVES OF FENRIC, DR WHO**
 group meet at the Australian Bar, Hurst
 Street, Birmingham, 3pm-10.30pm. Contact:
 161 Dangerfield Lane, Darlaston, Wednesbury,
 Staffs., WS10 7RU for further details.

5 DECEMBER 1995: **THE BLACK LODGE**,
 Birmingham's informal gathering of horror and
 dark fantasy fans meet in the bar of the Aus-
 tralian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham, from
 8.30pm. Copies of the group's newsletter, **THE**
REGISTER, are available for a reply-paid
 envelope from: 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull,
 West Midlands, B92 7LQ.

15 DECEMBER 1995: **BSFG CHRISTMAS MEETING -**
BEER & SKITTLES. Bookings now being taken,
 see below for details.

16 DECEMBER 1995: **COMIC MART** at Carrs Lane
 Church Centre, Birmingham. Opens noon.
 Contact: Golden Orbit, 9 Stratford Way,
 Huntington, York, YO3 9YW.

5-8 APRIL 1996: **EVOLUTION 47th UK National**
 Convention, the Radisson Edwardian Hotel at
 Heathrow. Guests of honour: Colin Greenland,
 Bryan Talbot, Jack Cohen. Attending £24.00,
 supporting £14.00. Contact: 13 Lindfield
 Gardens, Hampstead, London, NW3 6PX.

29 AUGUST - 2 SEPTEMBER 1996: **LACON III 54th**
 World SF Convention, Anaheim Convention
 Center, Anaheim Hilton and Towers and Anaheim
 Marriott, California, USA. Guests: James
 White, Roger Corman, Elsie Wollheim, Connie
 Willis (Toastmaster), Takumi and Sachiko
 Shibano (Fan Guests of Honour). Attending
 \$110.00, Supporting \$35.00. Contact: c/o
 SCIFI, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409, USA.

28-31 MARCH 1997: INTERVENTION the 48th UK National SF Convention, Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Theme "communication". Guests Brian W Aldiss, David Langford, Jon Berg and Octavia Butler (NOT Robert Silverberg as previously announced). Attending £20.00, supporting £10.00, cheques (payable to "Intervention") should be sent to: 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants., PO10 7TS.

3-5 SEPTEMBER 1997: LONESTARCON 55th World SF Convention, San Antonio, Texas, USA. Attending was \$65.00. Contact: PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755-2277, USA.

27 DEC 1999 - 2 JAN 2000: MILLENNIUM. Venue to be announced, but definitely in Northern Europe (probably a BeNeLux country or UK), £3.00 (f10.00) per year, to be deducted from eventual membership fee (to be announced before 1997). Contact: Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Road, West Norwood, London, SE27 OSZ.

□□□□

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. If you know of any events which you think may be of interest to members of the BSFG please send details to the Editor. If you have attended any events or seen any films or videos that you would like to recommend to other members (or warn them of) please feel free to write a report/review and send it to the editorial address.

FREE admission
to the BSFG meeting of
your choice!
Simply introduce someone
to the BSFG and when they
join you will be issued a
ticket for FREE ADMISSION
to the meeting of your
choice! See Steve Jones,
for further details.

BY POPULAR DEMAND!

**THE BRUM GROUP'S
CHRISTMAS MEETING**

**will again be a
BEER & SKITTLES**

evening at

the Samson & Lion,

Wordsley on

Friday 15 December.

CAROL MORTON is now taking bookings for this popular event. Deposit £5.00 per person. Food, transport, prizes and skittles will be included in the final price. (Last year it was £10.00 per person, we will announce the price for this year as soon as possible.) Book early as places are limited.

JOPHAN REPORT #87

Fancy surfing the NET, browsing the WEB or cruising the INFOBAHN? Now's your chance, as Birmingham's first Cybercafé, Café Surf, has opened at the Arcadian on Hurst Street.

Open Monday to Saturday from 11am to 10pm, the ultra modern European-style café is equipped with 10 multi-media computers linked to the Internet. Offering on-hand guidance, training courses and an excellent range of food and drink (it says here!).

Unfortunately when intrepid BRUM GROUP NEWS reporter, Anne Woodford, popped in she found the place deserted; with no one apparently interested in even speaking to her let alone offering "on-hand" guidance!

In July the Solihull Arts Complex were awarded £68,500 from the National Lottery fund. The money will be used to help meet the cost of refurbishing and extending the Theatre Bar (I like their priorities!) and foyer.

INTERVENTION

THE 1997 UK NATIONAL SF CONVENTION

The 1997 Eastercon will be put together by a committee whose core is the Wincon team, which has run three highly regarded regional conventions. Most of us also have experience of working on some aspect of an Eastercon or Worldcon.

We believe that a good convention begins with an idea, not a hotel, so our programme will use the tried and tested Wincon method of taking a poor innocent concept, feeding it through a shredder and checking out the results. In this case the victim of our depravities is **COMMUNICATION.**

We will:

- Look at actual and fictional attempts to talk to extra-terrestrial intelligence and other life forms on this planet.
- Discuss the social impact of telecommunications and extrapolate our findings into the future.
- Examine languages ancient and modern, and consider whether the translators in Star Trek don't translate Klingon because it is made up entirely of obscenities.
- Delve deep into the triptych of Language, Truth and Logic and present extracts from the semaphore

Guests of Honour

*Brian
ALDISS*

*Jon
BING*

*Octavia
BUTLER*

*David
LANGFORD*

28-31 March 1997
**ADELPHI HOTEL
LIVERPOOL UK**

*Attending Membership: £20
Supporting: £10
(Valid to 30 Nov 95)*

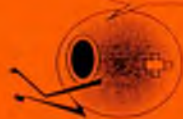
**Contact: 12 Crowsbury
Close, Emsworth, Hants,
PO10 7TS, UK**

e-mail: intervention@pomppey.demon.co.uk

version of Wuthering Heights.

- Ask if it is as good to talk as British Telecom want us to think and whether Microsoft is

OH MY GOD,
IT'S FULL OF
BARS!



planning to bring out a spell checker for crop circles.

So if you've ever wanted to write short stories in Nadsat or Newspeak, discuss the relationship between language and perception, find out how an Ansible is really supposed to work or how to transmit Morse code by monarchy, then you want to come to **INTERVENTION.**

We intend to fascinate, to educate, to amuse and to engage the imagination. To help us in our endeavours we need scientists, engineers, social historians, people who believe in Flying Saucers, people who don't believe in Flying Saucers, actors, writers, translators, adapters, artists, linguists, philologists and the plain people of Fandom. If you want to help please get in touch.

BOOK REVIEWS

BLACK LIGHTNING by Mark Jones
Gollancz, £9.99, 299pp, h/b
Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

This is a thriller which is marginally science fiction. It is set in a near future Russia (so near that by the time the book was completed some of the parameters had changed). Molniya is the new super-weapon. It enhances the world's electromagnetic field to produce the kind of electrical interference produced by the Aurora Borealis. When activated it will knock out all the West's electronic equipment rendering Europe and America helpless. This post-Yeltsin Russia is controlled by a mafia who are intent on Empire building.

Into this background comes an American agent, Renard, who even before the start of the novel has been betrayed and captured. Left for dead he claws his way out of a shallow grave and is mistaken for someone else – the Russian contact he was supposed to meet – and goes along with the deception. His initial mission was to get the codes which will enable the West to neutralise Molniya, or, failing that, carry out the impossible task of destroying the installation.

There is a lot of Bond-like action, skull-duggery and romance, including the inevitable race against time to save the Western world. For the thriller genre this is a plausible scenario but too low key as far as the innovative ideas are concerned to appeal to die-hard science fiction readers. The action sequences are fast moving and would translate easily to the screen. Jones is a competent writer with a good knowledge of Russia, having lived in Moscow. However, there are slow passages where the author's voice intrudes, demonstrating his knowledge, particularly that gleaned from his scientific research.

THE DRAGONS OF HEOROT by Larry Niven,
Jerry Pournelle and Steven Barnes
Gollancz, £16.99, 447pp, h/b
Reviewed by Carol Morton.

This novel is set some 20 years after the events in *THE LEGACY OF HEOROT* and finds a schism developing between the original colonists of Avalon and their children, who

call themselves the Seconds.

The Seconds object to the myriad rules and regulations set down by their parents. The parents need these rules because of the "hibernation instability" that caused partial memory loss which most of them went through while travelling in suspended animation to Avalon. These rules helped them survive the initial years on Avalon when they were virtually under siege from the reptiles known as Grendels. Now, however, all of the Grendels have been killed on the island settlement and the Seconds want to expand out on to the mainland.

Some automated mining equipment that was left on the mainland ceases functioning without warning. Cadman's daughter, Linda, and her husband go to investigate – taking their baby Cadzie with them. Linda and her husband are gruesomely killed, but Cadzie is left inexplicably unhurt. When the site is investigated, there is no trace of what killed the couple and why Cadzie should have been left alive. These deaths are just the excuse that Aaron, the self-styled leader of the Seconds, needs to explore the mainland.

The Seconds discover even stranger fauna on the mainland and some evidence that there is an animal that kills Grendels. The parents order the Seconds back. Aaron refuses; Cadman follows; suddenly all contact with the mainland is lost.

I didn't find *DRAGONS* as entertaining as *LEGACY* because the story seemed to stutter – it did not flow; possibly because of the jumping back and forth between the island and the mainland stories, possibly because the character of the Seconds were sketchy, but mainly because the plot of this novel was nowhere near as good as *LEGACY*. Another case of a successful tale best left alone.

INSIDE THE MIND OF GENE RODDENBERRY THE CREATOR OF STAR TREK by Yvonne Fern
HarperCollins, £6.99, 228pp, 'c' format p/b
Reviewed by Joyce Smart.

This book is based on conversations between Roddenberry and Fern during the last few weeks of his life. I found some of the dialogue to be rather repetitive, but the rest of the book is fascinating.

STAR TREK was the vehicle Roddenberry used to present his views, without being overbearing or beating the big stick. He gave the all important feeling of hope to millions of people, young and old, and gave them the chance to escape and explore their own innermost worlds of untapped fantasy. *STAR*

TREK had enough of that special ingredient to survive and go further than anyone imagined possible. The worldwide following of the original series, THE NEXT GENERATION, DEEP SPACE 9, VOYAGER and the many movies is now nothing short of phenomenal!

The underlying meaning is different for each and every person, but the general message seems to be: "Live in peace with your fellow man/woman/child. Respect all races and be in harmony with each other. Work for the good of mankind - not against it."

The book is extremely well written. Yvonne Fern promises that a second volume will emerge sometime around 2011, revealing matters that Rodenberry insisted be kept secret until 20 years after his death. I hope I am still around to read it.

GOLD UNICORN by Tanith Lee
Orbit, £4.99, 179pp
Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

This is a delightful children's novel and a sequel to BLACK UNICORN. Although the daughter of a sorceress, Tanaquil hasn't any overtly magical powers, just a talent for mending things. In BLACK UNICORN she had found the bones of an animal and put them together. The magical overspill from her mother's experiments had put flesh on the skeleton. The reborn unicorn had then needed Tanaquil's help to get back to its own world. Now, travelling back in the general direction of her home, but reluctant to actually get there, she encounters rumours of war and a mighty Empress who is conquering the world. Tanaquil is horrified to discover that the Empress is her half-sister Lizra. Lizra's motives are worthy but totally misguided. She thinks that if she can rule the world then she can make everybody happy. She is too naive to realise that this sort of thing doesn't work, too "young" to be persuaded she is wrong and slightly unstable. Lizra has had built a mechanical unicorn to lead her armies but it doesn't work. Tanaquil, she is convinced, will mend it. Reluctantly, she does, with unfortunate consequences, but also turns it into a Gate to another, Hell-like dimension into which Tanaquil, Lizra and some of her guard fall during an attack by mousps (flying mice with wasp stings in their tails).

Although written for a younger audience, this book will be enjoyed by all. The characters are well rounded, with distinct identifiable personalities. Lee touches on some of the problems that affect young people

of the age of Tanaquil and Lizra and allows them to handle them in an adult fashion. Lizra in particular shows very adolescent qualities in the way she swings from childish petulance to adult perceptions. One of the most charming things about this book is the peevish. This is Tanaquil's companion/pet and has learnt to talk - another overspill from her mother's magic - but is still very much an animal.

ARE WE ALONE? by Paul Davies
Penguin, £5.99, 108pp, p/b
Reviewed by Chris Ridd.

This book is based on a series of lectures by the author (a well known figure in the Cosmology universe) at the University of Milan, so if you attended them, you'll know what is in this booklet.

For the benefit of those (like me) who missed the lectures, the booklet contains a short history of the search for extra-terrestrial life. Mostly though, it is a discussion about consciousness, evolution, the many-universes theory, and so on.

I don't think there is any information or theory in the book which hasn't already been expounded by Professor Davies and friends in public, but it is at least a small book, and much less intimidating because of this.

THE TANGLE BOX by Terry Brooks
Legend, £5.99, 335pp, p/b
Reviewed by Carol Morton.

This novel is the fourth in the "Magic Kingdom of Landover" series, which tells of Ben Holiday, grieving at his wife's death, buying the magical kingdom from a mail order catalogue and becoming its king.

THE TANGLE BOX has Ben settled down as a very good king having overcome, in the previous books, many enemies and with a wife, Willow, who announces that she is carrying Ben's child. Willow is a dryad and for her to give birth, she is told by the Earth Mother, she must collect soil from Ben's world, from Landover and from inside the fairy mists - to reflect the mixed parentage of the child and root herself in this mix of soils. The Earth Mother also tells Willow she must undertake the journey herself - not with Ben.

Horris Kew, who was exiled from Landover, returns - albeit involuntarily, thanks to a malevolent spirit residing in the tangle box, who wishes to take over Landover. To that end the spirit arranges for Ben to be

transported to an area that seems like a maze, suffering from amnesia and in the company of two of his enemies, Strabo the dragon and the witch Nightshade - both of whom have also lost their memories.

While Ben is lost the spirit inhabiting the tangle box begins a campaign of divide and conquer. The only person with the key to return Ben is Willow and she has vanished.

The original novel, *MAGIC KINGDOM FOR SALE - SOLD!*, was entertaining enough and *THE BLACK UNICORN*, the second was okay, but I feel the tales are becoming stale and the characters tired, so maybe it is time to leave well alone. For fans of Terry Brooks only.

THE SHIP WHO WON

by Anne McCaffrey and Jody Lynn Nye
Orbit, £15.99, 330pp
Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

THE SHIP WHO SANG was a marvellous, if sometimes sentimental book. It evoked strong emotions in its readers. It is not surprising then that there was a demand for a sequel. *THE SHIP WHO WON* is one of them.

What does an author do, you might ask, when they have so many ideas for novels, an audience demanding those novels and not enough time to write them? Some would continue to produce work at their own pace. Anne McCaffrey has chosen a different tack. She writes long synopses of her proposed novels, including a lot of detail, then passes it over to a younger, trusted author to fill it out and complete the ideas. This is the third sequel to *THE SHIP WHO SANG* to have been written in this way. (This is the fourth book that Jody Lynn Nye has been the collaborator on but the first in this sequence.) For those of you who are unfamiliar with the set up, severely physically disabled people have the opportunity to live useful lives as the Brain in a space ship. They are partnered by normal human, the Brawn. This partnership is between Carielle and Keff. They are explorers. Their greatest achievement would be to find another space-faring race but so far, if there are any out there, they have eluded contact. In this trip, Cari and Keff find a sentient race on the pleasant planet Ozran. The natives appear to be docile farmers and Keff starts the process of trying to communicate with them. Then they discover there is another group here who can manipulate devices and teleport in ways that seem like magic. Slowly, Cari and Keff work out exactly what is going on, and since this is a science fiction novel there is inevitably

a rational explanation for the magical phenomena.

Throughout the book there is a feeling that what is good about it, come from McCaffrey's original synopsis. The whole, though not badly written, lacks the sparkle and intensity of that first book and if this had appeared first, would have made little impact. When she writes the entire book, McCaffrey is an exciting author, this suffers from being a collaboration.

THE WILD SHORE by Kim Stanley Robinson
HarperCollins, £4.99, 343pp, p/b
Reviewed by Chris Ridd.

This book has been reprinted using a similar style cover to the author's successful "Red/Green/Blue Mars" books in order, one assumes, to attract the author's latest readers to his slightly older efforts.

It is based in southern California around 60 years after a brief (wouldn't they all be?) nuclear war, which has left America on the losing side, ruined, and in forcibly separated communities.

All knowledge about the pre-war age has achieved near-mythological status amongst those born (like the main characters) since the war. The story revolves around a 17-year old boy travelling to San Diego from his small rural community near Orange County using a secretly rebuilt railroad (sic). In San Diego he is introduced to the American resistance movement and also gets a book describing a post-war American's travels around the world.

THE WILD SHORE is pleasantly enough written, and although the characters aren't too completely fleshed out, they are just about interesting enough to keep you reading.

THE TIME SHIPS by Stephen Baxter
HarperCollins, £15.99, 454pp
Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

THE TIME MACHINE by H G Wells was the best-known precursor of a whole sub-genre of sf novels dealing with travel into the past and the future and the paradoxes that can arise. Wells' story dealt mainly with one particular future in which the human race had divided into the underground dwelling Morlocks and the butterfly race of Eloi, each dependant on the other but representing opposite sides of human nature. Stephen Baxter has written a sequel to the original novel.

Baxter has faithfully copied Wells'

archaic style but is able to add a dimension of richness owing to the passage of a century in real time between the writing of the two books. THE TIME SHIPS begins in 1891, the day after the dinner party in which the Time traveller revealed his excursions into the future. He is, however, wracked with guilt at having left Weena to her fate and resolves to travel forward again and rescue her. As he sets the machine in motion and the days flicker past he begins to notice that the sequence is not the same as before. He emerges into real time long before Weena's period and the sun has apparently gone out. What he discovers is that the people of this futurity have built a Dyson sphere around the sun in the orbit of Venus. He meets a race which he likens to the Morlocks in that they have chosen to live in darkness but who are masters of their created world. One, Nebogipfel, introduces him to the idea of multiple futures, suggesting that the one he is now in is an alternative to Weena's. The Time Traveller resolves to go back in time to persuade his younger self not to build a time machine, the logic of which, as Nebogipfel points out is dubious. He gets caught up in an alternate 20th century in which the First World War did not end in 1918 but continued well into the 1930s with time travel rather than the atomic bomb being the goal that both British and German scientists are racing to achieve first.

This is a laudable sequel, and one that Wells would never have been able to write because of the understanding of scientific and technological change (as well as the knowledge of historical events) that is available to Baxter. This makes it more enjoyable as the Time Traveller is still portrayed very much as a Victorian gentleman and his adventures are viewed very much from that kind of perspective. The book will be enjoyed most by readers familiar with the original but those coming to it without that familiarity may well find it overlong and lacking in emotion.

OTHER LANDS by Jonathan Wylie
Orbit, £16.99, 360pp, h/b
Reviewed by Carol Morton.

Zoe March went through an acrimonious divorce from her brutal husband Thomas; married her lover Michael Glover and settled down to happy and contented life in the Norfolk countryside. A bad road accident leaves Michael in a coma but he seems able to send messages to her via the answerphone and

his high-tech computer equipment. Zoe, when desperately trying to decipher his messages undergoes hypnotic regression and whilst under hypnosis finds herself sharing the body of a woman, Emmony.

Emmony lives in a world where magic works and is in a period equivalent to the European renaissance. Emmony is wife to the violent Quarterman Jevan and lover of Ghyl. Ghyl has been struck down by Quarterman Jevan who discovered their affair, and is in a coma. He will be sacrificed by Quarterman Jevan in a few days if he does not regain consciousness.

Zoe and Emmony's lives are somehow intertwined and the lives of their loved ones too. If Ghyl dies then so will Michael. Zoe must find a way to stay with Emmony long enough to bring Ghyl to consciousness.

This novel is something of a departure for "Wylie" as it is set in our world as well as a fantasy world and it works well. The two worlds are brought to life by the shared urgency of the two women and the character of Zoe is especially well written. The story never fails to hold the reader's attention; this is in my opinion the best of "Wyllie's" novels so far.

Please remember that
reviews of books
should reach
MARTIN TUDOR at
845 Alum Rock Road,
Ward End, Birmingham,
B8 2AG, within
ONE month of your
taking the book.

The following reviews from the following people are overdue, please ensure that these (along with reviews of books picked up at the LAST meeting) are passed to MARTIN TUDOR at this month's meeting on Friday:

Dave Cox: HOT SKY AT MIDNIGHT by Robert Silverberg (May).

Bernie Evans: THE DEUS MACHINE by Pierre Ouellette (February); NIMBUS by Alexander Jablokov (March); TO BUILD JERUSALEM by John Whitbourn (March).

Steve Jones/B'ham Uni: DRAGONCHARM by Graham Edwards (January); TALISMAN by Sam Lewis (January); WARHAMMER: WOLF RIDERS ed. David Pringle (March).

Carol Morton: WITCHES' BREW by Terry Brooks (May); RONAN THE BARBARIAN by James Bibby (May); KALEIDOSCOPE CENTURY by John Barnes (June).

Tony Morton: OTHERNESS by David Brin (June).

Join Our Four Stars at a SuperNovaCon!

Bob Shaw



Harry Harrison



Brian W. Aldiss



Iain M. Banks



NOVAcon
25

3—5 November 1995

at the Chamberlain Hotel, Alcester Street, Birmingham

Attending Membership: £25.00 until 30 September 1995, £30.00 thereafter.

★ A limited edition of 100 Novacon 25 T-shirts, featuring an exclusive, FULL COLOUR design by David A. Hardy, is available. One large size, only £10.50 each to Novacon members, £12.50 to non-members (+ £1.50 p&p)

Cheques, made payable to 'Novacon 25', should be sent to:
Carol Morton, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY9 8SS

Queries should be directed to Tony or Carol Morton on 01384 825386
(before 9.00 pm please)

MONTHLY MEETINGS 7PM TO 10:30PM
IN BIRMINGHAM & WOLVERHAMPTON

BIRMINGHAM
FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
THE AUSTRALIAN BAR, HURST STREET
CITY CENTRE BIRMINGHAM

WOLVERHAMPTON
THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
WOLVERHAMPTON VOLUNTARY
SECTOR COUNCIL
BELL STREET WOLVERHAMPTON



THE WOLVES OF FENRIC

MONTHLY MEETINGS FROM THE LOCAL DOCTOR WHO GROUP INCLUDING RAFFLES
QUIZZES OCCASIONAL GUESTS OLD EPISODES EXCLUSIVES & LOTS MORE!!!
FOR MORE DETAILS SEND AN SAE TO THE WOLVES OF FENRIC 161 DANGERFIELD LANE
DARLSTON WEDNESBURY STAFFS WS10 7RU