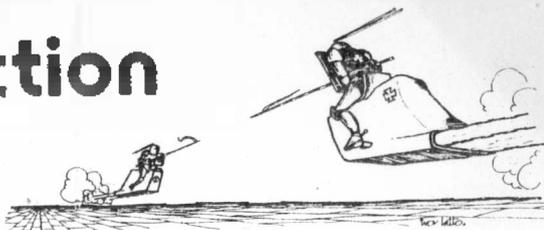


# Birmingham Science Fiction Group

(Honorary Presidents: Brian W. Aldiss and Harry Harrison)



The Birmingham Science Fiction Group (BSFG) meets every month on the third Friday of each month. Meetings are held at the Imperial Hotel, Temple Street, Birmingham and the programme commences at 8pm. Membership is £1.50 per year - our treasurer is Dave Cox, 2 Allard, Glascote, Tamworth, Staffs. Non-members always welcome.

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NEWSLETTER No 86

October 1978

Chairman's note...In case anyone thinks that an author's visit to talk to the group is a one-way affair, I'd like to quote from a letter I received from Colin Kapp after last month's meeting:- "...I thoroughly enjoyed the whole trip, and furthermore I learnt a great deal. I have come away thoroughly convinced that I should be devoting a lot more of my time to SF writing rather than less, as has currently been the case." Perhaps we can justifiably give ourselves a small pat on the back when Colin's next novel is published!

NEWSFLASH...NEWSFLASH....Author Robert Lionel Fanthorpe conspires with BBC Television to sabotage the regular meetings of the BSFG! It was reported today that Robert Lionel Fanthorpe, author of over 160 science fiction novels, had cancelled his forthcoming talk to the BSFG. The talk was scheduled to be given on Friday, 20th October. 'A prior engagement' was the reason given by Mr Fanthorpe. Less than 48 hours later BBC television announced that their regular Tuesday night screening of STAR TREK was to be rescheduled to be shown on Friday evenings at 7.10pm commencing on Friday 20th October! Committee members are convinced that this is no coincidence. Especially when one considers that an entrant in the Fancy Dress at last year's STAR TREK Convention was listed as 'Bron Fane - Peacelord of the Universe' and that in the official listing of Fanthorpe's works are several novels under the pseudonym 'Bron Fane'. Further sabotage was made with the BBC's announcement that the late-night Friday film (on 20th October) was to be the SF film BARBARELLA. Neither Mr Fanthorpe nor the BBC could be contacted for comments. Nor could any member of the BSFG committee - it is understood that they were busy running around trying to organise an alternative programme. End of NEWSFLASH....

Future Programme...what can we say? Ride with the tide? Cancel the meeting? Not on your life! There will be a meeting on Friday the 20th October but what it will be we're not yet sure. We do have an emergency programme item organised for just such an event but if we can get a speaker, we will. Note however that the meeting will start at 8.30pm, so you can watch STAR TREK and then get to the meeting. And you'll be able to get back home in time to watch BARBARELLA at 10.50pm. Who says your committee don't look after you?

The November meeting will be a talk from Nick Austin, science fiction editor of Sphere Books.

TAPE LIBRARY - In the past it has been our practice to tape the various talks that have been given to the group. After many months of re-recording and editing we are pleased to announce the opening of our new cassette library, created to preserve the cream of the group's guest

talks. Talks by Anne McCaffrey, Joe Haldeman, Fred Pohl, Colin Kapp - all available for members to listen to in the comfort of their own homes. If you'd like full details of tapes available, see Steven Green at future meetings or write to him (enclosing s.a.e.) at the address above.

## RED FLAME: PART 4 BY STAN ELING

Red could see right through his invisible companion's problem. The answer (owing its origin to Joseph Ellis Trevor at Cornell University) was simple:-

775  
33  
2325  
2325  
25575

Despite the simplicity of the problem, Red was still in trouble. While deliberating over the answer, his ship had travelled into OYEZ territory and even as Red tapped in the correct answer with a triumphant flourish, the ship gave a gigantic lurch as a tractor beam fastened onto its vitals and it ploughed into the planet's surface. When he regained consciousness, Red discovered that they were in a great underground cavern filled, as far as the eye could see, with fish tanks of all shapes and sizes, each tank perched on a pedestal some five feet above the floor. Gazing out of these tanks were shad, hake, perch, bream, tuna, squids, porpoise, etc., each fish equipped with either a telescope or binoculars in order to get a better view of the new arrivals. Walking into the cavern they found themselves inextricably fixed to a pair of thought-controlled skate-boards which at once took them around the cavern so that the fish could see them better. After many hours of travelling around the cavern they were eventually bought before a puncheon of majestic proportions, with a purple canopy above. Sensing that this might contain a fish of some importance, Red removed his cod-piece as a sign of respect. He stood to attention as a wrinkled old octopus emerged from the dark recesses and glided to the front of the tank. Contacting them telepathically, he apologised for abducting them and introduced himself as Hal E Bot. He explained that he needed their help. His Brother, Tur Bot, the famous inventor and juggler had, some six months previous, built a time-machine into which he had climbed and then vanished. Unfortunately, Tur's rival, Stur John, had tampered with part of the setting on the control panel and Tur Bot had been unable to return to his own time. One of Tur's assistants, Tin O'MacKeral, had been working on the problem ever since but had had no luck. Stur John would not reveal how he had altered the setting so had been imprisoned in the saltwater tanks at Sar Dene. Hal directed them to Tur's laboratory where Tur had, over the past few years, adapted himself so that he could breathe air or water and really have a whale of a time. In the laboratory, Tin O'MacKeral explained the workings of the time machine - the designation in the past (or future) being fixed by a series of buttons in a straight row. They knew that the first 7 buttons were correct but that the last 3 had been altered. There was a logical progression from each button to the next one but try as they had, they could not work out the next three settings. Red and his invisible companion climbed into the machine and looked at the row of buttons. Red immediately saw the answer and set the buttons to the right letters which effishently whisked them off to the next leg of their odyssey. Which letters did Red set in the other three buttons? Solve by next Friday and win a pint off Stan.

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