

Birmingham Science Fiction Group

November 1978

No. 87

The Birmingham Science Fiction Group meets once a month on the third Friday of each month. Meetings are held at the Imperial Hotel, Temple Street, Birmingham, commencing at 8 p.m. Membership is £1.50 per annum - payable to Dave Cox, 2, Allard, Glascote, Tamworth, Staffs. Non-members are always welcome.

Editor for this issue: Steven J. Green,
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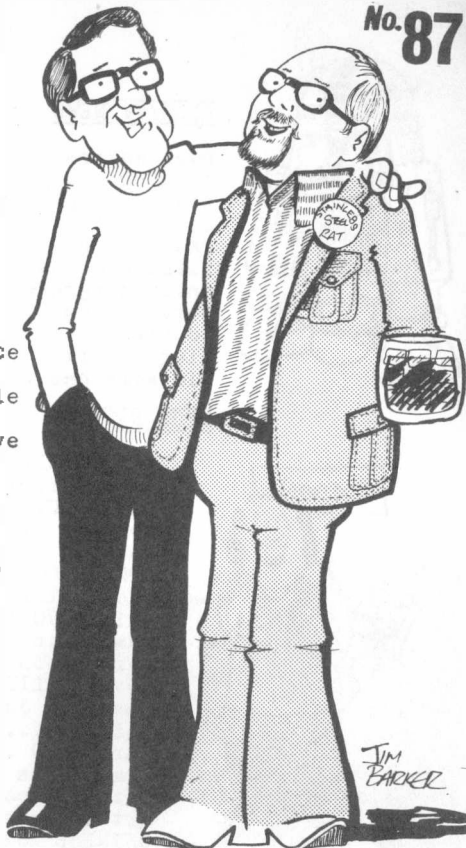
BSFG NEWS

Guest at our November 17 meeting is Nick Austin, sf editor at Sphere Books, whose November output includes Jack Finney's *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*, Gordon Dickson's *TIME STORM* and Poul Anderson's *A CIRCUS OF HELLS*.

His visit will provide a rare chance to hear the publisher's side of the science fiction industry - and to compare it with the views voiced by those authors who've recently visited the BSFG.

For further information on forthcoming meetings and guests - see page three.

Book Reviews - Page 4



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



THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK

JANUARY
FEBRUARY
MARCH
APRIL

MAY
JUNE
JULY
AUGUST

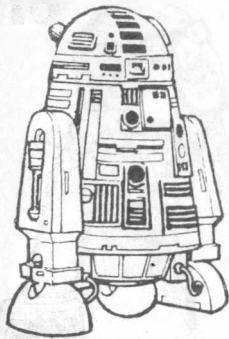
SEPTEMBER
OCTOBER
NOVEMBER
DECEMBER

Editor Colin Lester on *THE INTERNATIONAL SF YEARBOOK*, the first edition of which is now out at £2.95 from Pierrot Publications:

"Many of my proof corrections were ignored, and I made lots of mistakes too, (ISFY 2 will be better !)

"Pierrot are dragging their heels somewhat (not unusual) over negotiations for the next issue of ISFY, so I don't yet have a deadline.

"I would imagine that it will be in about a year's time, since they're talking about one every 18 months or so - however, this could change at any time.."



FILM/TV NEWS

Buck Rogers is to return - in a new \$6m television mini-series being produced for NBC in the States; newcomer Gil Gerard is slated to play the lead role ... A.E. Van Vogt has been offered a contract to script "Voyage of the Space Beagle" for the UK-based company Limelight Productions ... Production on the filming of Ray Bradbury's MARTIAN CHRONICLES has halted over union disagreements with management policy - no one is quite sure whether it will appear as a film or a tv series (in this country, it may be both...) ... The FBI has been called in to plug security leaks on the STAR TREK set - rumour has it that Jim Kirk has been promoted to Admiral...

BOOK NEWS

MIKE ASHLEY: volume 5 of his HISTORY OF SF MAGAZINES will be out from N.E.L. around March '79 ... HILARY BAILEY: her novel OUTLAWS appears Stateside in Condor by end of '78 - no data yet on UK publishers ... J.G. BALLARD: now working on new - as yet untitled - novel ... EDMUND COOPER: currently working on JUPITER LAUGHS short story collection for Hodder & Stoughton ... PHILIP JOSE FARMER: THE OTHER LOG OF PHINEAS POGG from Hamlyn in January '79 ... ROBERT HOLDSTOCK: currently working on third novel, REMEMBERING ... GARRY KILWORTH: novel SPLIT SECOND (formerly SOUL-BROTHERS) from Faber & Faber in June '79, currently working on fourth novel, TRINITY ... HENRY KUTTNER: Hamlyn to publish MUTANT in March '79 ... MIKE MOORCOCK: second Corum series out from Granada in '79, Cornelius series from Fontana in uniform edition soon, illustrated novel THE ENTROPY TANGO (with art by Romain Slocombe) from Mayflower in autumn '79, THE CHINESE AGENT from same company in spring '79 ... JERRY POURNELLE now working on THE HIGH FRONTIER, an anthology of off-planet colony stories ... JAMES H. SCHMITZ: Hamlyn to publish THE LION GAME in January '79 ... BOB SHAW: new novel VERTIGO out from Gollancz and Ace at end of '78 ... BOB SILVERBERG: currently editing Pinnacle's sf line, signed up to write LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE ... BRIAN STABLEFORD: CRITICAL THRESHOLD from Hamlyn in February '79 ... JOHN VARLEY: second novel, TITANS, to be serialised in ANALOG... A.E. VAN VOGT: TO CONQUER KISAR to be published soon by DAW in the States...

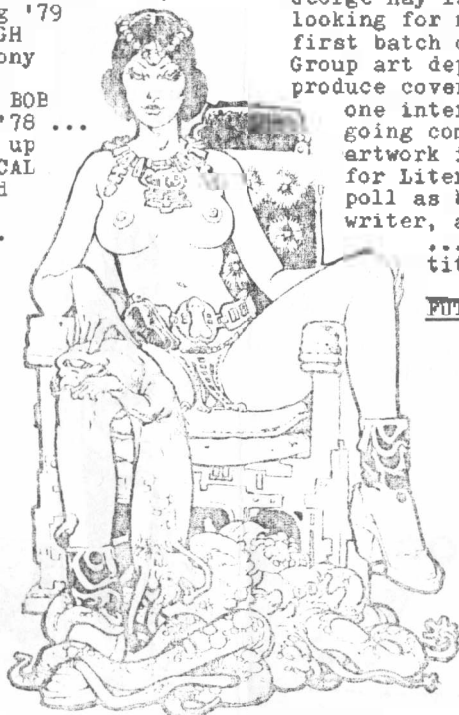


AWARD NEWS

Alan Dorey's fanzine GROSS ENCOUNTERS con this year's NOVA Award at Novacon 8 on November 5...

1978 Nebula Awards: Novel - GATEWAY (Pohl)
 Novella - STARDANCE (Robinson)
 Novelette - THE SCREWFLY SOLUTION (Tiptree (Sheldon))
 Short Story - JEFFTY IS FIVE (Ellison)
 Special Dramatic Presentation Award - STAR WARS

1978 Locus Poll: Novel - GATEWAY (Pohl) (SF)
 - SILMARILLION (Tolkien) (Fantasy)
 Novella - STARDANCE (Robinson)
 Short Fiction - JEFFTY IS FIVE (Ellison)
 Publisher - Del Rey Books
 Magazine - P&SF (Editor: Ed Ferman)



CONVENTION

FANTASYCON 5: 23-25 February, 1979; De Vere Hotel, Coventry; GoH: Karl Edward Wagner.
 Registration: £1 (US: \$3)
 Details: Mike Chinn, 1, Buttery Road, Smethwick, Warley, B67 7NS.

SEACON '79: 23-27 August, 1979; Hotel Metropole, Brighton; Guests: Brian Aldiss, Bob Shaw (Toastmaster), Fritz Leiber.
 Supporting membership: £4.50.
 Attending membership: £9.
 Details: 14 Henrietta Street, London.

OTHER NEWS STOP PRESS

Ursula K. LeGuin has been awarded an honorary Doctorate of Literature ... A.E. Van Vogt is novelising his NEW WORLDS screenplay "Computerworld" ... Samuel R. Delaney is to edit the 1978 Nebula Award Anthology ... Jim Baen is out looking for stories for Ace's new sf magazine DESTINIES, which he is editing - first issue scheduled for October '78; hopeful sf authors should contact Jim at Ace Books, 360, Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010 ... Isaac Asimov's new sf adventure magazine, aimed at "the audience, not all juvenile, that discovered the Literature of Ideas through movies, comics and television", pays up to 5¢ a word - the editorial address is Box 13116, Philadelphia, PA 19107 ... Studio filming on the STAR TREK film is due to end in November, but release won't be until Christmas '79, "because of the anticipated months of special effects work" ... The Gollancz/Pan/Picador/Guardian £3,000 fantasy competition was won by D.M. Thomas's THE FLUTE PLAYER, a novel mythologising the lives of a group of Russian poets, including Osip Mandelstam and Boris Pasternak ... George Hay is to edit THE JOHN W. CAMPBELL LETTERS ... Hamlyn Paperbacks are looking for new cover artists - freelance sf editor Peter Pinto described the first batch of covers as "lousy, the result of directives to use the Hamlyn Group art department - and were the second or even third attempts by them to produce covers reaching the dizzy heights of the mediociously atrocious"; any one interested should contact design editor Dennis Barker at Hamlyn - the going commercial rate is paid, artists are credited on the back cover, and artwork is returned ... Catherine L. Moore has won the Ann Radcliffe Award for Literary Excellence ... Frank Herbert's DUNE won the BSFA's recent sf poll as best novel - Arthur C. Clarke was voted best science fiction writer, and Asimov's NIGHTFALL was placed first in the short story section ... LSP books are to distribute unavailable Ace, Daw and Berkley sf titles ... THE FURY (reviewed last issue) has opened in London...

PUTURE MEETINGS



Ken Bulmer, prolific author and a former president of the British Fantasy Society, will be our guest in February '79. Born in 1921, he produced seven issues of his fanzine STAR PARADE during 1941, and in the three-and-a-half decades since has been a regular contributor to the sf field and a familiar face at fan gatherings. His extensive experience in the genre and easy-going nature are certain to make this a meeting not to be missed.

Honorary co-president Harry Harrison hopes to be present at the BSPG's annual general meeting in January.

MAKE CERTAIN OF YOUR ATTENDANCE - RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR NEXT YEAR NOW !!

BOOK REVIEWS

by STEVE GREEN

Rating Key: 5 - Excellent
 4 - Recommended
 3 - Good
 2 - Average
 1 - Poor
 0 - Avoid



ALL MY SINS REMEMBERED Joe Haldeman Orbit 85p

Episodic, jerky, frequently protracted to the point of tedium - possibly Joe's worst work yet.

The three stories that constitute the bulk of this future-age-spy novel were hardly memorable to begin with, and the situation is worsened considerably by the linking chapters, which serve no other purpose than to pad out and - especially in the case of the prologue - infuriate the reader with their unconvincing pointlessness.

A disappointing non-starter. (1)

IN THE HALL OF THE MARTIAN KINGS John Varley Orbit £1.10

Like Larry Niven and his Known Space, John is rapidly building up a concrete vision of an astounding, sporadically plausible future where rampant technology and alien intervention (expanded upon in his excellent novel THE OPHIUCHI HOTLINE) have had a profound and irrevocable effect upon mankind.

The majority of the short stories in this collection are set in that universe, a cosmos populated by genetic clones, symbiotic 'pairs' and a human race no longer bound by barriers of body, sex or soul. Science fiction at its best. (5)

NIGHTWING Martin Cruz Smith Futura 95p

This new novel benefits greatly from the author's Pueblo Indian ancestry, the elements of Hopi spiritualism adding a touch of originality to what would otherwise be a very ordinary horror story.

Vampire bats sweep across the American Southwest, spreading death and the plague, until a Hopi deputy sheriff revokes the curse that heralded their coming and destroys the bat colony.

Fair reading, but nothing really innovative or noteworthy. (2)

STAR FLEET MEDICAL REFERENCE MANUAL Ellen Palestine Ballantine

Latest of the STAR TREK spin-offs: better than most, but lacking that essential spark of originality which made the earlier STAR TREK BLUEPRINTS and STAR FLEET TECHNICAL MANUAL so worthwhile.

In fact, the only truly interesting section of the book is reprint - the MANUAL's technical designs for McCoy's lab and equipment.

The rest of the book wavers between two categories - highly speculative "fact", such as text on the physiologies of STAR TREK's aliens, and pseudo-ST first aid diagrams.

For the most ardent fans of the show. (2)

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Art Credits

Page 2-3: Brian Lewis (from his cover illustration for ASTRON 1).

Page 1-4: Jim Barker.