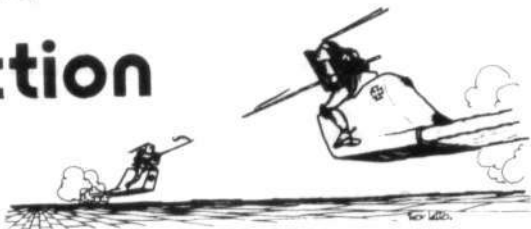


Birmingham Science Fiction Group

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



NEWSLETTER 98

OCTOBER 1979

The Birmingham Science Fiction Group meets at THE IVY BUSH on the corner of Monument Rd. and Hagley Rd. on the third Friday of every month. This meeting on Friday 19th October at 8.00 pm. New members always welcome.

Treasurer :- Dave Holmes,
75, Willows Crescent,
Cannon Hill,
Birmingham B12 9NE.

First off :- Many apologies for the debacle of last month. Due to a b***s up nothing went right and everything went wrong. To make up for it now this newsletter is going to be worth reading. We have to thank STAN EALING for RED FLAME and Mr. LONGLEY for the artwork. Now for this month.

OCTOBER MEETING - Fiday October 19th.

DOUGLAS ADAMS - Author of 'HITCH HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY'.

If you were sitting listening to Radio 4 on Wednesday, March 8th, you probably expected to listen to a guided tour of the planets - but then you discover that it's not what you anticipated. Earth's about to be demolished to make way for the Hyperspatial express route.

Suddenly people wanted to know more about the Author - according to the blurb in the book he has been, a Hospital porter, a barn builder, chicken shed cleaner, bodyguard, radio producer and is now responsible for the improvement of Dr WHO, as he is now the script editor.

At the World S.F. con (SEACON '79) in Brighton, 'Hitch Hiker' was nominated for the best dramatic presentation; But for the better exposure of 'SUPERMAN' it never won.

Come to the meeting and find out why ZAPHOD BEEBLEBROX has 3 arms, what the Terran equivalent of a PAN GALACTIC GARGLE BLASTER is, why the number 42 is the answer to LIFE, UNIVERSE and EVERYTHING.

BE THERE



NOVEMBER MEETING

November 16th. There have been many requests from members of the group, but notwithstanding our Chairman, Dave Hardy, will be sowing a selection of his own 8mm films this month, (Oh no!). Many members won't have seen these before, and those who have haven't been seen since !

Seriously, though, these are extremely competent examples of amateur film-making - there are 4 films but there won't be time to show all of them. Probably shown will be 2002 : A SPACE ODDITY and a delightfull little fantasy film starring Davids daughter Mary. There isn't a title for this as yet so David is offering a prize of a piece of original artwork for the person who comes up with the best title.

CHRISTMAS PARTY SPECIAL

Friday 21st December is the date for this year's Brum Group Christmas Party. This year we won't be having a film that is shown on TV the week before! We aren't having a film. This year we thought an evening of fun and 'games' (No Lawrence, not D & D). The games Master for the evening will be our Treasurer , Dave Holmes. There'll be a raffle for the usual bottle of Scotch plus a good Buffet. in fact , it will be a £2 buffet for only £1 - who says your friendly local committee doesn't look after you ? BUT as the party will be held at our new venue THE IVY BUSH , only 50 tickets will be sold - first come , first served. Apologies in advance to those who are too late. There will be a limit of 2 tickets per member (so you can bring your Wife/husband/ fiancee/fiancee/girl-friend/boyfriend). So £1 for each ticket to :-



The treasurer, Dave Holmes, 75, Willows Crescent, cannon Hill, Birmingham B12 9NE.
P.S. There Will be a bar extension , naturally (about 2' 6").

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Well, as you guessed, we didn't get H. G. WELLS to appear, who we got was JOHN HAMMOND, Secretary and founder of THE H. G. WELLS SOCIETY. If you were an afficianado of H. G. Wells you might have enjoyed the talk, but if you were like me, I think you might have had some difficulty enjoying it. I found my attention wandering during Mr. Hammonds' talk, due I think, to his delivery, which I found dry and uninteresting so consequently I was unable to feel at any time I was involved in his talk.
The information was there, but

For reviews, hints, news, illustrations anything to make our job easier and this thing more readable. Please send them to either of the addresses below or hand them to a Committee member.

Ian Warner,
65 Bewdley Road,
Kidderminster,
Worcs.

Eddie Stachelski,
54 Woodfield Street,
Kidderminster,
Worcs.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FADED SUN: KESRITH by C.J.Cherryh, DAW Books 1978, \$1.95, 252 pages.
Reviewed by Pauline E.Morgan.

There are three intelligent species in this version of the universe, humans and the humanoid regul and mri. All three are implausibly portrayed---full of contradictions and incongruous in their behaviour. The regul (dominant species until their recent defeat by the humans) are colonists and merchants. For a race whose language lacks the words for "courage" and "imagination" they have done remarkably well to invent space travel and colonise hostile worlds. The adult regul are so fat as to require machines in order to move around. They are said to be incapable of killing in cold blood yet will slaughter their young for minor infringements. With all the advantages of technology they are unable to tell the sex of their young before puberty.

The mri are more imaginative, yet have allowed themselves to be almost wiped out. Their warrior caste acts as mercenaries for the regul. The humans---newcomers to the interstellar arena---seem politically naive.

After 43 years of human-regul warfare the regul concede defeat and transfer control of a few planets to the humans, including Kesrith, the "homeworld" of the mri. So much can be gathered by wading through the first hundred pages, up to the waist in a terminology intended to make the mri alien. Yet it takes more than strange words to make a race alien, and much less, like the absence of a glossary, to alienate the reader. The plot keeps a low profile until half-way through, when it weakly raises its head. Ms Cherryh has tried to make this a political novel, but she lacks the skill of, say, Allen Drury, and fails to be convincing. Most confusing is the lack of time scales. Although the impression is given that Kesrith has been the mri homeworld for centuries the reader is eventually told that they have only been there for the duration of the war.

Having finished the book you are left with a vivid after-image of Kesrith---a wild, hostile planet, full of unseen pitfalls. The only real aliens in the book are the indigenous lie-forms of Kesrith, including the bearlike dusei which appear capable of forming telepathic bonds with the mri. Perhaps it was for Kesrith itself that the book was nominated for a Hugo. Ms Cherryh promises better things to come. P.E.M.

THE TELEVISION APOLLO ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMMES. The difference in treatment between the BBC and ITV documentaries was rather typical of these opposing channels (writes Dave Hardy). While the BBC treated the subject seriously and, especially in the second part on BBC-2, in depth, with a probing look by James Burke at the real facts behind the US Moon-landing programme, ITV's effort was decidedly superficial. Producer Tony Palmer apparently had access to a tremendous amount of beautiful visual material from NASA, which he strung together with no regard for chronological or any other sequence. Images from one flight were linked with craft-to-Earth communication sounds from another, and Apollo, Skylab, Soyuz and even Gemini film hopelessly intermingled, all with background music from Mike Oldfield's Incantations. However, all the programmes are preserved by the Group for posterity on VHS video cassettes, and members who wish to judge them for themselves can do so by arrangement. Ring Dave Hardy on 777 1802 for details.



NEW BOOK DISCOVERED !!!

On Friday, 3rd August, in the Daily Mirror, an article headed "SCI-FI" (Ugh!) revealed a NEW VAN VOGT NOVEL - quote - "Van Vogt, Author of such classics as "SLAM" and "THE WEAPON MAKERS" ".

'SLAM'??

Yes 'SLAM' !!

Rog., can you order copies?

'STAR TREK - THE MOVIE' is released on Thursday, 20th December at the Odeon.

The W.E.A. class on SF at Selly Park Girls School has been cancelled due to lack of interest.

NOVACON 9

Don't forget to register for NOVACON 9 if you haven't already done so. Supporting membership is only £2.00 so see STAN EALING on Friday at the meeting. Guest of honour is CHRISTOPHER PRIEST author of "THE SPACE MACHINE", "A DREAM OF WESSEX" etc. Remember - NOVACON 9, 2nd - 4th November.

SIGNING SESSIONS

DOUGLAS ADAMS will be signing books at ANDROMEDA on Sat. 20th October between 12 am. and 2 pm.

Next door at WILLIE'S WINE BAR on Tuesday 23rd October between 5.30 pm. and 8.00 pm. will be ROGER DEAN signing "VIEWS".

P. DRUIELLET signing "LONE SLOANE" and "YRAGAEL", J. JONES, M. KALUTA, B. S. SMITH & B. WRIGHTSON signing "STUDIO".

Note: They will be only signing "BIG 'O'" posters and books BOUGHT ON THE DAY.

ROBERT HEINLEIN

A new Robert Heinlein book "NATURE OF THE BEAST" will be serialised in "OMNI", starting in the October issue.

DID YOU KNOW BIT

Did you know that at SEACON '79 - 19,000 pints of beer were drunk?? Not bad for a weekend.

Artwork on pages 1 and 2 by Chris Holmes and page 4 by Mr. Longley.
Our Thanks.



**ANDROMEDA
BOOKSHOP**



IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE A SIGNING SESSION
WITH

douglas adams


FOR

**HITCHHIKERS
GUIDE TO
THE GALAXY**


BASED ON THE FAMOUS RADIO SERIES
ON

SATURDAY, 20th OCTOBER, 1979

BETWEEN 12 - 2.00



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(021) 236 1112



YOU ARE INVITED TO A PARTY!

ANDROMEDA BOOKSHOP IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE A SIGNING SESSION/PARTY WITH NO LESS THAN 6 (YES SIX) INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS WHO WILL BE SIGNING BOOKS OF THEIR WORK:-

ROGER DEAN — JEFF JONES
BARRY SMITH — MIKE KALUTA
BERNI WRIGHTSON
PHILLIPE DRUILLET

ALL 6 ARTISTS WILL BE SIGNING BOOKS NEXT DOOR TO OUR SHOP IN WILLIE'S WINE BAR FROM 5.30 PM ON TUESDAY 23RD OCT.

BUY THE BOOK(S) OF YOUR CHOICE FROM OUR SHOP — GET YOUR FREE DRINKS TICKET — GO NEXT DOOR — GET THE BOOK(S) SIGNED AND JOIN THE PARTY!

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