

the Birmingham Science Fiction Group



HONORARY PRESIDENTS:

BRIAN ALDISS and HARRY HARRISON.

april 1985

newsletter-164

THIS MONTHS SPEAKER IS THE CREATOR OF HELLICONIA -

Brian aldiss

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 8.00PM PROMPT.
(DOORS OPEN 7.45) ON FRIDAY 19TH OF APRIL,
IN THE LARGE CONNAUGHT ROOM OF THE NEW
IMPERIAL HOTEL, TEMPLE STREET, BIRMINGHAM.
ADMISSION:- MEMBERS £1.25, NON-MEMBERS £1.50.

BRIAN ALDISS, author of the award-winning
HELLICONIA TRILOGY and an Honorary President of
the BSFG, has spoken to us on many occasions.
His most recent visit was in February of 1982
when he spoke about HELLICONIA SPRING the first
book of the trilogy, which won both the British
Science Fiction Association and the American J.W.
Campbell Awards for Best Novel of that year.

At this months meeting he will be talking
about the second and third books of the trilogy-
HELLICONIA SUMMER (available in paperback, TRIAD
GRANADA, price £2.50) and HELLICONIA WINTER
(released in hardback this month by CAPE, price
£8.95). All of the Helliconian Chronicler's
previous talks have proven to be most informative
and amusing, as he frequently spices them with
intriguing anecdotes about the publishing
industry - and scurrilous rumours about the
writers, publishers and agents whom he encounters.
On Saturday 20th April he will be signing books in
ANDROMEDA BOOKSHOP from 11.00am.

THE BSFG MEETS
ON THE THIRD
FRIDAY OF EACH
MONTH IN THE
NEW IMPERIAL
HOTEL, TEMPLE
STREET, IN THE
CITY CENTRE OF
BIRMINGHAM.
DETAILS OF SOME
FORTHCOMING
MEETINGS ARE
GIVEN BELOW.
MEMBERSHIP OF
THE GROUP COSTS
A MERE £5.00 A
YEAR FOR ONE
PERSON (£7.50
FOR 2 PEOPLE AT
THE SAME PLACE)
OR £2.50 FOR 6
MONTHS (£3.75
FOR TWO AT THE
SAME ADDRESS).
ALL CHEQUES &
POs, PAYABLE TO
BSFG, AND SENT
TO TREASURER,
CHRIS CHIVERS,
51 BOUNDARY RD,
STREETLY, SUTTON
COLDFIELD, WEST
MIDLANDS.

THIS NEWSLETTER
IS PRODUCED BY
MARTIN TUDOR OF
845 ALUM ROCK
ROAD, WARD END,
BIRMINGHAM.

DEADLINE FOR
THE MAY ISSUE
IS APRIL 29TH.

IF THERE IS AN
'X' IN THE BOX
BELOW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP HAS
EXPIRED AND IS
DUE FOR RENEWAL



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:-

MAY 17TH
MAXIN JAKUBOWSKI
JUNE 21ST
RANSEY CAMPBELL

Group News

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LAST MONTHS MEETING

- BERNIE EVANS.

The March Meeting, at which Frank Herbert was our guest, was a resounding success, with an attendance of almost 100 including several new and renewed members.

After a very late start, due to Frank Herbert's late departure from London after a live radio interview, his talk began around 10.15, and a very lively political

debate ensued (who says SF fans are childish?) most of this went right over my head, but many people enjoyed it. The talk then went on to more SF oriented matters, and wound up at about 11.45 with a short signing session.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to apologise for the late start, over which we had no control, and to thank everyone for their patience, we should also like to offer special thanks to our guest for not letting us down after a very long and trying day.

To those who found it necessary to leave before the guest arrived, we hope it won't put you off visiting us again in the future.

(THE UNOFFICIAL VIEW) LAST MONTHS MEETING

--WILLIAM McCABE.

It isn't everyday you get someone as famous as Frank Herbert at the BSFG meeting - and this was nearly just another day. The meeting began at 8.00pm with the announcement that the night's guest would be late - by two hours and the bar was open now (just to give everyone something to do).

So the meeting proper began at ten or thereabouts with FH demonstrating his awareness of local politics (local to Washington anyway) and describing his ideal system of 'democracy' - instead of all these elections we have the country run by randomly selected committees. He moves on to explain how he manages to get the places in his book to seem so real - he takes pictures from selected places ('360 degrees') and works in the scenery. He tells us that he has written the definitive book on the American Indian (*Soul Taker*) and that he always refuses to discuss work in progress (the next episode of *Dune*). Finally he tells us at 11.30 that he has got to go - he's got two signing sessions tomorrow one here and one in London.

Editorial Apologies - No doubt by now you will have realised that that this month the Newsletter is not only late but also close to invisible...and/or snudged. These two facts are closely related. My two month old Brother Golfball has decided that it has no intention of printing clearly, hopefully this should be sorted out by next month - one way or the other - he muttered...

2010

PAGE THREE

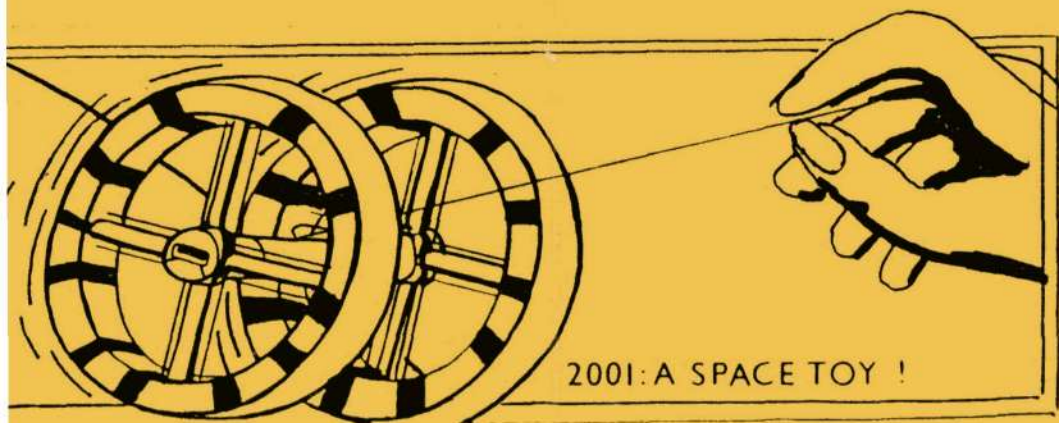
REVIEW BY DAVE HARDY.

2010 (MGM) Written, produced and directed by Peter Hyams, based on the book by Arthur C. Clarke.

A prominent member of the Brum Group has already stated publicly that he found 2010 boring and left the cinema in a bad mood. I attended the same press screening, and left feeling quite satisfied. Oddly enough, the same prominent member wrote in a 'renowned magazine' - let's just call it S.V. - that he greatly enjoyed DUNE because it made the viewer work and contained no cuddly little aliens. Now I enjoyed DUNE too, but I just wonder if he worked hard enough on 2010?

Let's face it: you either loved 2001 or you loathed it. If you enjoyed it, chances are that you'll like the sequel. And vice versa. For me, 2001 was magic the first time I saw it: there had been no SF film like it. 17 years later, we have grown blasé about beautifully produced SF movies, and especially we are used to stunning special effects (many of which 2001 pioneered). The SFX in 2010 are well up to standard, with bonuses for the scientifically minded. Io and Europa are very convincingly portrayed (though I'd have liked to see a volcano erupting on Io), as is Jupiter. And there are questions, which if you are quick you can answer before the script does. Like why has the 'Discovery' mysteriously turned yellow? Ah yes, of course...

There are shortcomings in the film, of course. The hotting up of hostilities on Earth, with consequent friction between American and Russian crew-members, is an important part of the story. Yet the friction, instead of increasing as events in space and on Earth become more tense, seems to be smoothed out until relationships between crew-members (male and female, with a particularly stropky Russian leader) become almost cosy. Dave Bowman has a rather ephemeral role, appearing on the TV screen of his former wife and as an invisible hairdresser to his dying mother. Then he reappears in the 'Discovery' with a vital message, looking remarkably young (and at times remarkably old), and finally beats old HAL company after he is abandoned in space. No secrets here - it's all in the book, though much in the book is of necessity



2001: A SPACE TOY !

omitted, as usual.

I must admit that my attention slipped a few times in the first hour. The most gripping moments, after that, were the atmospheric braking round Jupiter (though the ship did seem a long way out) and persuading HAL to fire the motors to boost them out of orbit to safety. (This was the most gripping moment for the above member - okay, we all know it's Rog.) The finale, which, strangely enough, had something in common with the 'Genesis Effect' in STAR TREK II- though with vastly more scientific rationale - I found stunning and moving.

It is interesting that whilst we now accept as stannard fare giant starships flitting between galaxies, 'aliens' in all shapes and sizes, and laser bolts which zap around with the speed of sound (no, I don't mean light - you can see them move!), 2010, while depicting hardware and concepts which are barely ahead of today's technology, actually tackles in an adult way much more mind-boggling SF themes: superior extraterrestrial intelligence; the conversion of a gas-giant planet into a star and the creation of life on a frozen moon; all while taking care of the problem of war on Earth and giving mankind another chance. What more do you want?

Don't take Rog's word for it, or mine - go and make up your own mind.

P.S. Only today I had a letter from a systems engineer at NASA. In it he says: "There has been a steady emphasis on automation and artificial intelligence on the Space Station project, and this gives me the jitters to think that in 2001 I'll be around working on whatever real-life fulfilment exists of Kubrick's HAL prophesy..."

THE NEVERENDING STORY (Warner Bros.) Another Film Review By--

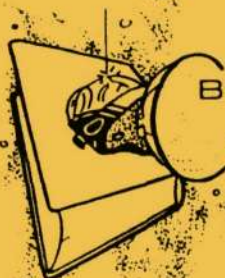
Dave Hardy

I suppose I should start by 'declaring an interest', since I did some (uncredited) production art for this film in 1982. However, so many changes have taken place since then that I was able to view it quite impartially - though with special interest.

My first advice, if it's not too late, is not to read the book first. With some film versions eg 2001 & DUNE, it helps if you have read the book. Those changes I mentioned though, have left little that is recognisable from the book, beyond a few characters, locations and basic ideas. Novel author Michael Ende was so disgusted with the reworking that he had his name removed from the credits!

Taking the movie purely in its own right, though, I enjoyed it a lot more than I expected. Some of the sets and special effects are really excellent, others are less successful. The film does suffer from some poor editing and cutting, but the acting is generally quite good. There are really only two main 'human' characters (both American): Bastian, who should be a rather unprepossessing fat little boy but isn't, in our world, and Atréyu, the athletic young hero who is sent on a quest to save the land of Fantasia from the all-consuming Nothing. Most of the other characters are heavily disguised as the creatures of Fantasia, and one is occasionally reminded of THE DARK CRYSTAL- especially in the scene with the gnomes. Falkor the 'luckdragon', rather resembles an elongated puppy, but is quite endearing.

In the film, the Nothing finally annihilates Fantasia so thoroughly that what is left looks like a bunch of asteroids floating in space. This is quite effective. But after Atréyu reports his supposed failure to the child-like Empress and Bastian is drawn into the story in person. I won't give away the ending because on balance the film is well worth a visit. Check it out for yourself at the FUTURIST.



BOOK REVIEWS

REVIEWS THIS MONTH ARE BY:--

Chris Morgan, Anne Gay, Dave Packwood,
William McCabe, Bethan Davies, and of
course Pauline Morgan.

In honour of this month's speaker
we'll start the reviews with -

HELLICONIA WINTER - BRIAN ALDISS.
Cape, £8.95,
282 Pages.

Reviewed by Chris Morgan.

So Brian Aldiss's three-volume saga of life on Helliconia comes to an end, with the planet slipping into a winter that will persist for centuries. In all likelihood the humans will be forced back into barbarism and the alien phagons will rule; the cycle will repeat itself. Yet this is not a novel of sadness or retreat; it is an adventure told in the grand manner with the planet -- complex, ever-changing ever-surprising Helliconia -- as hero. The story is set on the northern continent, Sibornal, and concerns the misfortunes of Luterin Shakerandit (most of the names are terrible tongue-twisters), a young man of good family who buys an army commission and soon finds himself involved in a mighty battle with the enemy. After his initial gallantry everything goes wrong for him; it is through his travels, hardships and casual meetings (there are some fine characters here) that Aldiss chooses to show Helliconia readying itself for winter. Many of the scenes are reminiscent of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. At the same time, the shadowy figure of the Oligarch -- Sibornal's ruler -- imposes various harsh ordinances upon the population in an attempt to ensure that the winter will be survived.

Stepping back from the action, Aldiss also tells us (it would have been better if he'd shown us, instead) that life has changed for the worse on board the Observation Station which orbits Helliconia, and on Earth itself, to which pictures of the Helliconian saga are still being transmitted. Earth is now more alien to our eyes than is Helliconia! In this evolution of Earth and in the increasing degree of mysticism which accompanies it Aldiss seems to be trying to imitate (or pay homage to) Olaf Stapledon. *Helliconia Winter*, then is broad and complex, varying in pace and tone from dry political explanation to high melodrama. It is a grand conclusion to the trilogy, and I wish it had been longer.

THE EIGHTY-MINUTE HOUR - BRIAN ALDISS. Granada. £1.95. 283 pages.

Reviewed by Dave Packwood.

Here is a delightful re-issue from Granada. A pyrotechnical novel in which Aldiss dons the cape of literary magician and manages to conjure up every trick in the book, and a few more besides, secreted up his literary sleeve.

The scene is post World War III Earth: West is West and East is East and always the twain shall meet by virtue of the Cap-Com Treaty - the ultimate pact. Summit meetings are held, attended by the 'doubles' of leaders, whilst

the D.N. (Dissident Nations) try their level best to reduce Earth to it's previous bellicose existence.

Into this idealistic machinery of progress a spanner is hurled -- Time itself! Temporal 'tremor cordis' shakes the fabric of the universe rending radical reforms not only in the sphere of politics, but also the time-space continuum itself. Time-slips are strewn across the Earth's terrain like temporal banana skins, and across this bizarre stage androids, mad scientists, pneumatic heroines et al slip, slither and slide in search of the answer to Time's distemper: the key to it all, incidentally is the 'econoico-system' (a fantastical sub-atomic universe) which exists inside a pendant worn around the neck of Monty Zoomer, the world's leading holodramatist. All in all a scintillating fantasia: Read it!

HELLICONIA SUMMER - BRIAN ALDISS. Triad Granada. £2.50. 576 Pages.

Reviewed by Martin Tudor.

Having found *Helliconia Spring* interesting but a bit too dry, I approached this second volume of the Helliconian saga with mixed feelings. Would Aldiss, having set his scene begin to develop the grand themes and powerful narrative that would be needed to hold together such a massive trilogy? Or would he find himself bogged down again in extrapolations from scientific journals and lose track of that most vital of ingredients - the story?

Fortunately for the reader *Helliconia Summer* uses the solid groundwork of the first volume to good effect and tells a powerful story. The main characters of this story are a fifteenth century style King struggling to hold together his beleaguered kingdom, his Queen whom he betrays, and their wild, strange son who breaks away from his parents to achieve his own peculiar ends. This basic storyline is complemented by the occasional shifts of focus to the orbiting Avernus or the distant Earth, each of which offers us a different perspective, giving the story yet more dimensions. Certainly this is a novel well worth reading and I for one eagerly anticipate the publication of the final volume in a more affordable form.

THE SURVIVORS - MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY & PAUL EDWIN ZIMMER.

Arrow. £1.95. 238 Pages.

Reviewed by Bethan Davies.

Take an unexplored planet, the mysterious disappearance of the personnel of an Unity Exploration Base, as well as the unit sent to try and rescue them, and you have the basic ingredients of the plot.

The story itself concentrates on the characters, and does not 'remind' you of their situation every ten pages or so. It is written from the point of view of the only Terran on the crew; it might have been interesting to have written from the viewpoint of an alien, for a change. The others consist of; another protosimian (humanoid), a native youth whom they pick up on the way, and two protosaurians. One of these enormous reptilian creatures spends much of his time quoting philosophical remarks from the 'Divine Egg', while the other spends much of his time telling him to be quiet.

The characterisation was good, but I felt that the book concentrated a little too much on the humans, although this may

have been inevitable, as it was written from their point of view.

You are kept in suspense until the last page, as anything seems liable to happen. Every three chapters or so, our 'heroes' are put into mortal danger, yet every time they manage to escape. With the minimum of injury, however high the odds, which can sometimes be a little aggravating. But just enough things do go wrong to stop you thinking: 'Why do they have to be quite so brilliant at everything?'

There are a few ideas which aren't used that regularly, such as the humans (especially women) being considered of less value than aliens. The built-in translator disc - which overcomes a lot of problems, as approximately four languages are dealt with. Also, the bi-sapient evolutionpresent (shades of *Dinosaur Planet*?), which is explained in an interesting sub-plot, which is not revealed until the very end.

Although it is mainly a 'serious' story, it certainly has it's moments. One of my favourites being: 'Tomorrow he'd have a try at catching one of the little rabbit-like things. Even if he had to hide in the long grass and make a noise like a carrot.' Anybody who can write a line like that has my admiration.

On the whole, a very readable book, as long as you persevere for the first few chapters. There's only one or two problems...I would advise you to ignore the cover. Also, I still haven't worked out to whom exactly the title refers. Is it really ambiguous or is it just me? Somebody read it and tell me - please.

ENCHANTERS' END GAME - DAVID EDDINGS. Gorgi. £1.95. 372 Pages.

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

The chain of events prophesied even before the beginning of the first volume, *Pawn Of Prophecy*, reaches its climax in this, the fifth book. *Enchanters' End Game* suffers from the same faults as the previous books: there is no resume of the plot, there are too many characters to keep track of and although competently written the emotional high spots do not quite work. Perhaps this is because nobody important dies despite the clash between the armies of the West, lead by princess Ce-Nedra, and the forces of the evil Angaraks. Meanwhile, Garion, the peasant boy now revealed as the High King, journeys to meet Torak, God of the Angaraks in combat. The book should have ended there the last section being mostly about weddings becomes tedious. The series is an epic about good versus evil and, unfortunately, the potentially interesting shades of grey representing real people have been swept aside in favour of the main theme.

EXTRA(ORDINARY) PEOPLE - JOANNA RUSS. The Women's Press. £1.95. 161 Pages.

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

Joanna Russ is one of the best feminist writers around. This volume contains five stories, vaguely and unnecessarily linked as they stand alone and the similarities in theme are obvious. The first story, *Souls*, (a Hugo winner in 1983) is the most powerful. In it, Radegunde, a mediaeval abbess attempts to protect the lives of the people in her community from marauding vikings. She, like the principal characters in each of the other

stories is different from their contemporaries either mentally or by sexual preferences. In them all the main character is not what she/he appears to others, being disguised to some degree, though none as heavily as in *What Did You Do During The Revolution, Grandma?* Here Issa becomes a huge black and silver demon in order to camouflage her sex.

Not to everyones taste but worth reading for the skillful use of language.

THE WANDERGROUND - SALLY MILLER GEARHART. The Women's Press. £1.95
212 Pages.

Reviewed by Chris Morgan.

Ms Gearhart writes well and presents an interesting future through the medium of many very short stories. What spoils the book is its lesbian feminist propaganda -- so blatant that one cannot help being amused. Its theme seems to be 'men and women can do nothing but violence to one another' -- rather an extreme point of view. The brevity of the stories is another fault. Although they do interlink to some extent, showing the build-up of anti-feminist feeling, the savage persecution of lesbians, and their retreat from cities to countryside (in a future USA), the characters are too many and too slight, and only a couple of scenes are long enough for tension to be present. What finally sinks the book, though, is the spontaneous development of widespread mental powers amongst these lesbian communities. They even talk with animals and plants -- all of which display human-level intelligence. It's too silly for words. Even so, feminists will probably enjoy this book, and Ms Gearhart is an author worth watching.

TRAVELLER IN BLACK - JOHN BRUNNER. Methuen. £1.95. 181 Pages.

Reviewed by Anne Gay.

Walking between Chaos and Order, the man with no name (not Clint Eastwood) has a mission. It is his task over the aeons to bring the Earth into Order. The staff in his hand is of curdled light and with it he fulfils destinies as people ask but not necessarily as they desire. But his magic is a part of Chaos, and if he succeeds in banishing Chaos will he too fade away?

In these four cyclical stories Brunner has developed an intriguing protagonist whose cunning and intelligence make for a good read. The settings are unusual, the action a constant surprise. Not surprising, then, that *Traveller In Black* has appeared before?

Perhaps it is. The beginning of each story is slow and not particularly appealing. Overcome this hitch; the charm and wit of each cycle will be a pleasant reward.

THE PLANET DWELLER - JANE PALMER. The Women's Press, £1.95. 147 Pgs.

Reviewed by Dave Packwood.

'Don't judge a book by its cover', the old maxim goes. Well, the cover of this book is dreadful and so is the prose inside: unfair? Not at all; both are the work of Jane Palmer.

Miss Palmer is described as being 'almost educated' and it shows. *The Planet Dweller* is a badly written, uninspiring, cliché

-ridden book with the accent on puerility. One finds it hard to dredge any redeeming morsel from this mishmash of feminism, class-consciousness and mawkishness.

The plot revolves around a woman who hears voices that emanate from an entity who goes by the name of 'Moosevan'. This sender of nocturnal messages is, in fact, a planet. Thrown in for good measure is an eccentric Russian astronomer (Yuri) who has lost his way and as a consequence is stuck in semi-rural England with his reflectors and refractors. Then there is a trial of aliens who change shape, quarrel, fight, etc. Last but not least, galloping through the story is Daphne - an upper-crust equestrian virago who seeks to keep the local plebs in order.

All are hurled together into a final literary vortex out of which the best thing to emerge is the end of the book.

ORBITSVILLE DEPARTURE - BOB SHAW. Granada. £1.95. 192 Pages.

Reviewed by Martin Tudor.

Before I begin I feel I should declare that this review will be extremely biased. For many years now I have been a great admirer of the works of BoSh, both professional and fannish, and I must admit that I have yet to find one of his books that was not immensely enjoyable. Having said that it will come as no surprise to you that I greatly enjoyed this long-awaited sequel to *Orbitsville*.

It is typical Bob Shaw, tightly written, fast moving, solid storytelling. Set two hundred years or so after the first book, with Earth underpopulated and the urge to progress lost in the vastness of *Orbitsville*, the story concerns Garry Dallen and his quest for justice, or revenge, after the murder of his wife and child. This quest however leads him to a far greater end as he -- but I'd strongly advise you to read it yourself.

For those of you who are also fans of Mr Shaw he will be signing copies of this book at ANDROMEDA BOOKSHOP on Saturday the 20th of April from around 2.00pm.

MILLENNIUM - JOHN VARLEY. Sphere. £1.99. 216 Pages.

Reviewed by Chris Morgan.

If you were living in a far future full of pollution and genetic defects, and you had the ability to travel backwards through time, what would you do? Yes, you'd rush back to the 20th century, or even earlier, and live in unpolluted peace, wouldn't you? Instead, Varley's characters go to an immense amount of trouble to kidnap people from the past who are about to die imminently (airline passengers a few minutes from destruction, in particular) and take them to the future to help improve the gene pool of the human race. If you think you've come across the idea before it means that you've read Varley's excellent 1977 story *Air Raid*, from which this novel has been developed. For most of the way *Millennium* manages to maintain the fast pace and horrific nature of the story. It's a good novel, alternating between the grisly details of a 1980s air crash and the hunt, by far future time-travellers, for various anachronistic clues left behind by themselves, before the whole of history is irrevocably altered. (Shades of Wilson Tucker's *The Lincoln Hunters*.) Probably it's

Varley's best novel to date, even though the ending is unconvincing.

DESTINATION VOID - FRANK HERBERT. Penguin. £1.95. 218 Pages.

Reviewed by William McCabe.

At the (slightly) postponed meeting of last month I tried to ask the writer of this piece if he had anything to say about it. All he would say was "Read da book" - which leaves me with the problem of explaining why you shouldn't. It does have one advantage over the magnum opus *Dune* in that it is only 218 pages long. If you do try to read it you may feel it is much, much longer. To compound this fault the lurid cover tries to imply that this is fast-moving all-action stuff. It isn't. What it is is an attempt to put as much theory of the construction of Artificial Consciousness into something that could be loosely described as a novel.

The plot, minimal as it is, goes like this: four duplicate people (the originals are probably dead) are the crew of a star-ship bound for Tau Ceti but the disembodied human brains that work the ship have seized up almost immediately. In order to reach their destination they decide to build some kind of consciousness into the computer (that also runs the ship). They succeed (in the last dozen pages) and are instantly rewarded with a new Eden where there wasn't even a planet before and a new god (which is what the computer has now decided it is). Okay so I've given away the ending but, if you are going to find anything to enjoy in this book it wouldn't be the plot.

THE SEVENTH GATE - GERALDINE HARRIS. Unicorn. £2.95. 241 Pages.

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

How the quartet of books, of which this is the fourth volume, could end without some feeble revelation, worried me. I was, however, pleasantly surprised. The finale is unexpected and plausible. Kerish-Le-Taan, prince of the Godborn, has one more key to obtain before he can unlock the prison of the much-needed Saviour of Galkis. The writing is patchy, the author slowing down the pace by dwelling too long on sections that are less important and rushing where more time could profitably have been spent in developing characters. On the whole, the journey through the series is worth taking.

WE ALL DIED AT BREAKAWAY STATION - RICHARD C. MEREDITH.

Venture SF No. 1. £1.95. 244pgs.

Reviewed by Martin Tudor.

The VENTURE SCIENCE FICTION series is a new imprint which aims to bring us 'the very best in adventure SF'. Edited by the Brum Group's own Chairman Rog Peyton and his business partner Rod Milner the Venture books will be publishing at the rate of one book a month. All the books in the series will be appearing for the first time in British paperback. 'Breakaway Station' the first of the series is a straight space opera story telling of a few gallant humans, brutally injured but restored to temporary artificial life who attempt to hold back the menace of the Jillies to buy Earth the few moments it so desperately needs to prepare to launch its final attack. The relocated WW II plot is redeemed by a couple of attempts by the author to explain the way the totally alien mind of the Jillies works. Coming soon in the Venture series we have:-

April - *Come Hunt An Earthman* by Philip E. High.
 May - *Hammer's Slammers* by David Drake.
 June - *Interstellar Empire* by John Brunner.
 July - *Starwolf* by Edmond Hamilton.



THE 36th ANNUAL BRITISH
 EASTER SF CONVENTION.
 APRIL 5-8th. THE QUEENS
 & DRAGONARA HOTELS IN
 LEEDS.

Guest of Honour:- Gregory Benford.
 Fan Guest of Honour:- Linda Pickersgill.

Despite everyone's fears about a split con and two hotels YORCON III ran very smoothly. Although this may have had something to do with the fact that as it rained most of the weekend not many people made the trek between the two hotels. The Queens hosted the Guest of Honour speech, the auctions and the vast majority of the excellent film programme, as well as the bookroom and the artshow. The Dragonara the fan room and programme, the creche, video room and the Main Programme.

Both programme streams were essentially serious in content but very entertaining, and despite the usual poor time keeping ran quite efficiently. Both Greg Benford (despite his rather strange political views) and Linda Pickersgill proved excellent GoHs.

The British Science Fiction Association Awards went to:-

Best Novel - *Mythago Wood* by Robert Holdstock. (Gollancz)
 Best Short Fiction- *The Unconquered Country* by Geoff Ryman.
 Best Media Presentation - *Company of Wolves* (dir. Neil Jordan)
 Best Artist - Jim Burns.

The DOC WEIR for services to fandom in general went to JIM WHITE.

The KEN MCINTYRE Award for best fanzine cover artist went to Iain Byers for the cover of *Wallbanger*.

The Great Pork Pie Race proved as popular as ever, the prize for most Boring Failure going to BAFF Mal Ashworth. The winning entry was that of Jim Barker, Pam Wells and Eve Harvey and there is no way I am going to describe that in a family newsletter!



The Publicity Officer Speaks!



Hi There! This is your Publicity Officer, Bernie Evans, with a cry for help.

Since January I have publicized the Group through posters in libraries, bookshops, video shops and other odd places. The Brum Group's own bookmark has been redesigned and is, or should be, on display at all the larger bookshops in

Birmingham, and as many of the smaller ones as I have been able to visit or contact. There has also been two interviews published in the local press, one in the 'Birmingham Post' and the other in the freesheet 'Brum Beat'. In order to assess the results of all this I need some feedback. So if you see a poster, or a bookmark or anything else relating to the Group, please tell me about it. Or if you are able to display anything yourself whether it be at work, in a local community centre or any where else please contact me so I can let you have some publicity material.

The best publicity for any organization such as ours will always be its own enthusiastic members - this is where YOU come in. Tell people about the Group, or better still bring a friend to the next meeting. If every member brings a newcomer, or an ex-member who has dropped out, it would be a great help to the Group. The BSFG must grow and develop to survive. If we rest on our laurels (who said 'What laurels'?) the Group will stagnate and die. Its YOUR Group. Help keep it alive!

We are also looking for new ideas for publicity, (I can't think of everything) so if anyone has any good ideas, please contact a Committee Member. The best new idea will be rewarded with FIVE paperback books donated by Rog Peyton. It's not often that Rog gives anything away, so don't miss this - take advantage now!

I hope you've enjoyed the meetings we've arranged since we became your Committee in January, if you haven't tell us why, and what it is you want - its you we're working for.

We want the Group to have a long and successful future, so come to the next meeting with ideas and comments, and don't forget to "BRING A FRIEND"!

((BERNIE EVANS can be contacted at 7 Grove Ave., Acocks Green, Birmingham. B27 7UY, or by phone - 707 6606.))