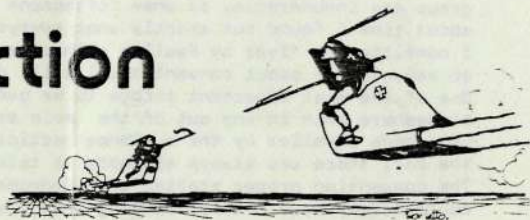


Birmingham Science Fiction Group

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



NEWSLETTER 179

AUGUST 1986

THE BSFG MEETS ON THE
THIRD FRIDAY OF EACH
MONTH IN THE NEW
IMPERIAL HOTEL, TEMPLE
STREET, IN THE CENTRE
OF BIRMINGHAM. DETAILS
OF THIS MONTHS MEETING
IS GIVEN BELOW.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP
COSTS A MERE £5.00 PER
YEAR FOR ONE PERSON
(£7.50 FOR TWO AT THE
SAME ADDRESS) OR £2.50
FOR SIX MONTHS (£3.75
FOR TWO PEOPLE AT THE
SAME ADDRESS).

ALL CHEQUES AND POSTAL
ORDERS PAYABLE TO BSFG
AND SENT TO THE TREASURER
CHRIS CHIVERS AT 51,
BOUNDARY ROAD, STREETLY,
SUTTON COLDFIELD, WEST
MIDLANDS.

The meeting will be held on August 15th at 8.00pm.

This month's speaker is

Dr. John Davies

This is John Davies' second visit to the
Brum Group: Those members who were at his
previous talk will remember what a successful
meeting it was! John works at the Department
of Space Research at the University of Birmingham.
He has discovered six comets and several
asteroids, which makes him well qualified
to have written his new book COSMIC IMPACT,
which was published on 24th July (with a
cover by our own Dave Hardy) - see review
later in this newsletter. His talk, well
illustrated by slides, has the same title
as his book, and should not be missed.

This newsletter was produced by Carol and
Tony Merton, 45, Grosvenor Way, Quarry Bank,
Brierley Hill, West Midlands, DY5 2LJ.

The deadline for next month's newsletter is
5th September.

The times I have heard "...you haven't been to a convention?" in tones of utter disbelief, followed by "...you must go to one" from one or another member of the group are innumerable, so when fifteencon loomed on the horizon I decided it was about time I found out exactly what everyone was raving about. I must admit that I committed my fiver to Pauline with some trepidation as although I have heard so many things about conventions I still didn't know quite what to expect.

One of the most important things to me over the weekend was the relaxed, friendly atmosphere both in and out of the main programme. The programme items themselves were made livelier by the audience participation, and if you were ensconced at the bar, there was always somebody to talk to.

The convention proper started with Andromeda's party and signing session; you could hardly move without bumping into one of the many authors around. As I am not well-read, there were many people whom I hadn't heard of, let alone read, or owned, one of their books. I seemed to spend half the evening having people pointed out to me, "...that's so & so" they'd say knowledgeably, and I'd think "who?". I still managed to talk to several of the authors, many of whom were very interesting. Many of the programme items appealed to me, and those I went to I enjoyed. They were neither too long or too short, were interesting, and more often than not provided some memorable moments, notably Dr. Jack Cohen's talk (if you missed that one ...), the Aldiss and Harrison double act etc. (I can't list them all). Of course, the whole point of Fifteencon was to celebrate the Brum group's Birthday. This was highlighted by the cutting of the annotated cake by Harry Harrison (in the temporary absence of Brian Aldiss who seemed to presume the con would run late!). The cake, needless to say, was soon surrounded by hungry bodies and the cake-cutters had to work at double speed to try to meet the demand.

One of the high points of the weekend must be the item on the history of the BSFG. For those members who have been in the group for a long time it provided their dose of nostalgia, and for the 'newies' among us (ie me) it gave a very amusing insight into the humble beginnings of the group. This talk also illustrated the BSFG members' (past and present) importance in British fandom, from the continuance of Novacon (one of the older cons) to their various positions of importance within fandom. On the other hand, it also showed that the Brum group had collapsed once through apathy, and without stalwarts like Rog, Pete, Stan and many of the other committee members past and present it could easily do so again. Although the hour-long item did have its serious moments, most of it was amusing anecdotes courtesy of Pete Weston, Rog Peyton and Ed James, all of which went to show just how little Rog has changed!

The final ceremony on the Sunday was well attended by guests and members alike, and not even the threat of the bar closing could dampen down people's enthusiasm. Everyone received their pressies and prizes, that is, the committee and gophers, who had all earned them, Brain and Harry who duly indulged in some horseplay with their 'horns', and those who won the raffle. We were also told of the intended recording of 'Mythago Wood', funded by the money raised by the raffle, for the blind. This seems to be a very appropriate charitable gesture for those of us who enjoy reading so much, to give some of our money to enable other people to benefit from the pleasure which we take so much for granted. Even this more serious aspect of Fifteencon had its funny moments, the poor man who collected the cheque looked a little bemused by us all!

All due praise must go to the committee who all worked very hard to produce such an efficient and very enjoyable convention. As for the Anus, I only hope it will be used for Novacon again in the near future because it is easy to get to, and the fact that all con rooms are on the same floor is much easier to cope with. What will I remember about Fifteencon? Lots of talking, listening, laughing and very little sleep.

- all in all a very interesting and enjoyable weekend.

It started out as an anniversary party for the B.S.F.G. and Andromeda book shop and wound up as the convention that had more authors per attendee than any other convention. Over 200 people gathered at the Royal Angus in Birmingham for the weekend get together, and few people had believed that an SF group could stay together for that number of years. One or two older members of the group swore the group was 25 years old not 15, and we saw the photographs to prove that Rog Peyton actually had hair in the old days, which shows that conventions should carry a government health warning.

As the main convention hall was out of action due to refurbishment, or was it the last room party that got out of hand?, attendees had to cope with an hotel that was below it's normal standard, but it seemed to add to the atmosphere.

With many references to Novacons as they were in the old days, Fifteencon seemed to capture something of the old flavour of past cons. With that in mind what will happen when the B.S.F.G. gets to 21 or 25 years old?!

FIFTEENCON IN RETROSPECT -The BOSS speaks

Well, it's over, the keys have gone back to the receptionist, the last die-hards are waiting for the bar to re-open. There's nothing more for me to do except say my last good-byes and go home.

It's been a time of anxiety, of lots of little worries and the odd big one, of sheer bloody boredom sitting at the desk when no-one was arriving, but more than anything it's been a time of pleasure and euphoria.

The first rule of Conreps should be objectivity, but I can't! Objectivity you can have from other people, I shall just tell you of a few personal highs and lows.

<u>Best Moment</u>	At the very end, leaving the hotel with cheers ringing in my ears, it felt GREAT!!
<u>Worst Moment</u>	At the very beginning, I arrived at the hotel to find workmen in the Wroxton corridor and the Rotunda, together with trestles, tools, leads snaking all over the floors, and was told it would be like that for the entire weekend.
<u>Best Triumph</u>	Being told an hour later that my protests & pleadings had worked, they would be confined to the Wroxton. (O.K.-a painter escaped into the corridor, but you should have seen the place on Friday afternoon!)
<u>Best Sight</u>	Iain Banks in the Rotunda, surrounded by con desks, holding his arms aloft and shouting "I'm looking for a convention to go to". Welcome to Fandom Iain.
<u>Worst Sight</u>	A broken light-shade in the Ariel. But well done all of you, that was the only complaint the management had about us the whole weekend.

You'll have noticed I haven't mentioned the programme, that's because I didn't see most of it. I wish I had, it looked good, people kept telling me it was good. The Closing Ceremony was the only item I was there for in full, but I enjoyed that. I also enjoyed the food, which makes a change at the Angus!!

In my (very biased) opinion it was a good convention, and I had a great time just talking to people, drinking, and solving the odd problem, with the assistance of an extremely helpful and friendly set of hotel staff.

To close I would like to express my thanks to my committee, Dave Packwood - Programme, Pauline Morgan - Memberships & Hotel Registratidn, & Chris Chivers - Treasurer & Video Room.

My thanks also to Rog Peyton for Souvenir Programme Book, advice, and the initial "kick-up-the-backside", to Dave Hardy for artwork on P.R. 1 & 2 and on T-shirts & badges, to Helen Eling for doing the raffle, to Tim Illingworth the Chief Gopher, and to all the other Gophers. Finally a special thank-you to all of you who came to the convention and made it the success that it was.

BRIAN W. ALDISS

Monday
14.vii.86

Dear Bernie,

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that I had a marvellous time at the Convention over the weekend just gone, and I want to thank you and dear old Rog and the committee and all members of the Brum Group for making me (and my drunken friend, Mr Harrison) so welcome. It was entirely a pleasant occasion, full of fun and memorable moments.

If I could pick out one element which particularly gave me pleasure, I would mention the excellent and unusual topic chosen for the Sunday morning topic - Fringe Benefits. Sorry, but drink and old age have wiped from my memory the name of the elegant six-foot-six tall fan with pint glass in his hand who was responsible. Often, it is a chore for writers to sit on panels and discuss with simulated enthusiasm some subject they have done over hundreds of times before. Fringe Benefits was a new subject, to me at least, and it brought forth a really lively session at a pretty deadly hour of morning.

As a result of that session, or partly so, I am trying to arrange (with the journalist Wendy Graham who taped everything) to get together a good fandom book, in which, of course, our beloved Brum Group will largely figure (don't worry, I'll change the names to protect the guilty)... If anyone feels like sending me any incriminating photographs or anecdotes, I'd be grateful. Working title for the book: WE LIVED LIKE PIGS.

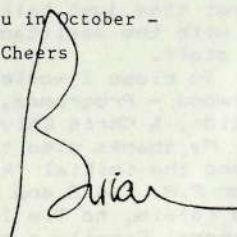
It's a great honour for Harry and me to be Presidents to your group, which now has such a long tradition of fun, instruction, and hospitality behind it. The true spirit of fandom lives on. I want to thank you very much for the walrus tusk or tryannosaurus toenail (I'm not sure which it is) with which you presented me yesterday, at the end of our talk. It is marvellous, with its tremendous inscriptions, and is greatly admired. Thanks very much for this most imaginative gift, which I greatly treasure.

Perhaps you'd like to read this out at the next meeting, or at least show it to Rog. I would like everyone to know how warmly I cherish my ties with the Birmingham SF Group.

All the best to everyone -

See you in October -

Cheers

A large, stylized handwritten signature, likely 'Brian', written in dark ink. The signature is written over the word 'Cheers' and extends downwards.

As a footnote to Fifteencon, 228 people attended (more than some of the earlier Novacons). It made a profit, and some of the profit - £200.00 - will be donated to the N.S.P.C.C.. With regard to the recording of 'Mythago Wood', £200 was raised at Novacon 15, the remaining £150 was donated by the BSFG.

Extracts from a letter to Rog Peyton from Kim Stanley Robinson. Dated 1st July.

....Thanks again for having me to Birmingham for the talk to the SF group and the signing at Andromeda. Please tell the members of the group that my evening there was the most enjoyable event of that sort that I have experienced so far. And the signing was very pleasant as well.

....It's looking more and more like I will be coming to Novacon, so if you could tell Tony about that and perhaps send along any other information you might have I'd appreciate it.

....Have fun at Fifteencon, and thanks again for the wonderful time in Birmingham.

Yours.

Stan.

Last Month's Meeting

The entertaining quiz (thanks Vernon) was won by Stan Eling, Mike Jones and William McCabe. What we want to know is who sacrificed the penny? (£50 divided by 3 is 16.66 and 2p over)!!

Future Programme

September - Toby Roxburgh, THIS MEETING WILL BE ONE WEEK LATER THAN USUAL ON 26TH SEPTEMBER, MORE NEWS AT THIS MONTH'S MEETING.

October - Brian Aldiss, Trillion Year Spree will be published around then.

November - Debate with Birmingham University.

December - Christmas Party.

January - AGM and Auction.

Andromeda's top ten for July

1. Dr. Who - The King's Demon.
2. Walking on Glass by Iain Banks.
3. Wasp Factory by Iain Banks.
4. Magic Kingdom For Sale Sold by Terry Brooks.
5. Palace Of Eternity by Bob Shaw.
6. A Darkness At Sethanon by Raymond Fiist.
7. The Blackcollar by Timothy Zahn
7. Lyonesse II - The Green Pearl by Jack Vance.
9. Blackbird in Silver by Freda Warrington.
10. Executive - Bio of a Space Tyrant, Volume 4 by Piers Anthony.

It's easy to take Dave Hardy for granted.

He attends almost every Brum Group meeting but never gets drunk or asks the speaker long, boring questions, so you hardly notice he's there. He's been a perennial committee member but gets on quietly with his job, currently secretary, formerly publicity officer and chairman. He designed the silly green alien that was the trademark of Fifteencon, but has never sought personal publicity from such fan-art (well, hardly ever).

In fact, it would be easy to forget that Dave Hardy is one of the top space and SF artists in the world. The recent death of Chesley Bonestell has left a vacancy for the number one space artist, and Dave is one of the strong contenders. As for SF art, he's one of the most renowned cover artists on US magazines, having painted more covers for The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction over the last fifteen years than anybody else, and having contributed the two best covers to Analog during 1985 (readers' poll results).

And when such an important artist has a big exhibition of his paintings in Moseley you should all give yourselves a treat and go along to look round. Or, rather, you should have done, because it's finished now.

There were thirty-six of his pictures on display at the Helios Gallery at prices ranging from £43 to £483 (the odd numbers being caused by VAT). They gave a good indication of Dave's range as an artist, including astronomical pictures, SF magazine covers (including those two best of 1985 from Analog), fantasy pictures, a text-book diagram, a background used in "Blake's 7", some film pre-production art from "Silverworld" (what?), and some startling lettering for the German film "Nekropol". Some paintings were on wood, just to be different. There was at least one original from Dave's book Galactic Tours (the one with the Bob Shaw text) which included a self-portrait. And there was a set of superb UFO pictures that surely deserve to be available in book form. The prize for the oddest subjects must go to a trio of pictures of orchids blooming among the stars.

Still, there was something for everyone (especially the rich), and if you missed it you should be ashamed of yourself.

THE JOPHAN REPORT

MARTIN TUDOR

"A triumph of style over content!" - was Greg Pickersgill's TAFF victory statement, according to Dave Langford's *ANSIBLE* report. It was a close contest, out of 249 votes cast Judith Hanna polled 61; Simon Ounsley 84; Greg Pickersgill 98; Hold Over Funds & Write-Ins 6, thus leading to eliminations and a second ballot wherein Simon polled 114 and Greg 125 - just enough to send Greg to Atlanta this year.

Further Transatlantic Fan Fund news as reported by intrepid newszine editor Langford reveals that - "the declared 1987 TAFF candidates (Bill Bowers, Brian Earl Brown, Mike Glicksohn, Jeanne Gomoll) had been mostly sold on attending the '87 Eastercon (BECCON) as being more typical of UK fandom than a tacky old Worldcon. This determination wavered 'in view of the way that Eastercon and the British Worldcon later in the year are respectively shaping up' (P. Nielsen Hayden, *Tafflivia* 6,) and all four now wish to attend Conspiracy. Because the latter looks so wonderful, or because of wicked rumours about Beccon's fan programme? Can there be a connection with Steve Green's and Kev Clarke's withdrawal of their offer to run silly Eastercon games? " In answer to Dave's questions there is no connection between Green and Clarke withdrawing their offer to do the BECCON silly games and the TAFF candidates changing their minds about attending BECCON but there is more than a little truth in the 'wicked rumours about Beccon's fan programme'.

But moving hastily on from the TAFF news we come to the recently launched GUFF 1986-7 race. The candidates seeking a free trip from Australia to Brighton for the 1987 Worldcon Conspiracy are Valma Brown, Irwin Hirsh, and Jean Weber. In addition to these there is also one write-in candidate, Tim Jones of Aotearoa, New Zealand. Although he did have his nominators for GUFF assembled on time his nomination was ruled out of order because one of his nominators, while born in Europe, had not been active in fandom until after moving to New Zealand. Jean Weber one of the three regular candidates has written that she is pleased with Jones' candidacy as some fans are trying to promote GUFF not just as an Australian - Britain fan exchange, but as a programme including New Zealand and Europe as well. If I pull my finger out there should be some ballot forms, with the respective platforms of the candidates, available at this month's meeting. However as the write-in candidate Tim Jones obviously can't be included on the Ballot Form here are a few details about him. He was born in Cleethorpes and raised in Grimsby which is no doubt why he moved to Australasia

some 24 years ago. He publishes a genzine-of-sorts called *TIMBRE*, helped organise the 1982 New Zealand National Convention (OCTACON) and is a member of the New Zealand apa AOTEARAPA. Initially his nominators were Judith Hanna, Frank Macskasy Jnr, Tom Cardy, Roger Weddall, Pauline Meinung and Rex Thompson.

Still on the subject of overseas news albeit of a more serious nature comes an appeal to all SF fans everywhere on behalf of Eduard Markov, who is a fan stuck in the USSR at the moment and desperate to leave there. Eduard wants to come to the West so that he may live in freedom and pursue a career in uncensored writing. He wants to have a chance to get his books published and to live a life free of threats and continual harassment. He has heard of the SF community in the west and of how this community helps its members. He has asked that a direct appeal be made to the fans over here to help. With the kind indulgence of Carol and Tony Morton there should be a flyer accompanying this newsletter giving details of how you can help, if not simply approach me at the meeting where I will be able to give you more information. Don't feel that you will make Eduard's situation any worse by attempting to help as he has already been made a *non-person* in Soviet society.

The 1986 Ditmar Awards, the Australian SF achievement awards, were announced at SWANCON XI in Perth recently -

BEST AUSTRALIAN NOVEL: *ILLYWHACKER* - Peter Carey.

BEST INTERNATIONAL FICTION: *THE COMPASS ROSE* - Ursula Le Guin.

BEST AUSTRALIAN SHORT FICTION: *THE BULLET THAT GROWS IN THE GUN* Terry Dowling.

BEST AUSTRALIAN FANZINE: *METAPHYSICAL REVIEW* Editor- Bruce Gillespie

BEST AUSTRALIAN FAN WRITER: Leigh Edmonds.

BEST AUSTRALIAN FAN ARTIST: Nick Stathopoulos.

WILLIAM ATHELING AWARD: George Turner.

Continuing with the subject of awards we have the Hugo nominations to be voted on at CONFEDERATION the 1986 Worldcon in Atlanta:

NOVEL: *BLOOD MUSIC* - Bear, *CUCKOO'S EGG* - Cherryh, *ENDER'S GAME* - Card, *FOOTFALL* - Niven & Pournelle, *THE POSTMAN* - Brin.

NOVELLA: *GREEN MARS* - K.S. Robinson, *THE ONLY NEAT THING TO DO* - Tiptree, *SAILING TO BYZANTIUM* - Silverberg, *THE SCAPEGOAT* - Cherryh, *24 VIEWS OF Mt FUJI, BY HOKUSAI* - Zelazny.

NOVELETTE: *DOGFIGHT* - Swanwick & Gibson, *THE FRINGE* - Card, *A GIFT FROM THE GRAYLANDERS* - Bishop, *PALADIN OF THE LOST HOUR* - Ellison, *PORTRAITS OF HIS CHILDREN* - G.R.R. Martin.

SHORT: *DINNER IN ADOGHAST* - Sterling, *FERMI AND FROST* - Pohl, *FLYING SAUCER ROCK AND ROLL* - Waldrop, *HONG'S BLUFF* - Wu, *SNOW* - Crowley.

NONFICTION: *BENCHMARKS: GALAXY BOOKSHELF* - Budrys, *AN EDGE IN MY VOICE* - Ellison, *FACES OF FEAR* - Winter, *THE JOHN W. CAMPBELL LETTERS, VOL. 1* - Chapdelaine & Hay (ed), *THE PALE SHADOW OF SCIENCE* Aldiss, *SCIENCE MADE STUPID* - Weller.

DRAMATIC: *BACK TO THE FUTURE, BRAZIL, COCOON, ENEMY MINE, LADYHAWKE.*

PRO EDITOR: Terry Carr, Judy-Lynn del Rey, Edward L. Ferman, Shawna McCarthy, Stanley Schmidt.

PRO ARTIST: Kelly Freas, Don Maitz, Rowena Morrill, Barclay Shaw, Michael Whelan.

FANARTIST: Brad Foster, Steve Fox, Joan Hanke-Woods, William Rotsler, Stu Shiffman.

SEMIPROZINE: *FANTASY REVIEW, INTERZONE, LOCUS, SF CHRONICLE, SF REVIEW.*

FANZINE: *ANVIL, GREATER COLUMBIA FANTASY COSTUMERS' GUILD NEWSLETTER (BOO HISS!), HOLIER THAN THOU, LAN'S LANTERN, UNIVERSAL TRANSLATOR.*

FANWRITER: Don D'Ammassa, Dick Geis, Mike Glycer, Arthur Hlavaty, Dave Langford, Patrick Nielsen Hayden.

JOHN W. CAMPBELL MEMORIAL AWARD: Karen Joy Fowler, Guy Gavriel Kay, Carl Sagan, Melissa Scott, Tad Williams, David Zindell.

Back in March at NORWESCON in Seattle the PHILIP K. DICK AWARD, for best original paperback of the previous year was presented to Tim Powers for his novel *DINNER AT DEVIANT'S PALACE* (ACE). While back in April at the 21st Annual Nebula Awards Banquet and Conference in Berkeley, California the 1986 Nebula Awards went to the following:

BEST NOVEL: *ENDER'S GAME* by Orson Scott Card.

BEST NOVELLA: *SAILING TO BYZANTIUM* by Robert Silverberg.

BEST NOVELETTE: *PORTRAITS OF HIS CHILDREN* by George R. Martin.

BEST SHORT STORY: *OUT OF ALL THEM BRIGHT STARS* by Nancy Cress.

GRAND MASTER AWARD: Arthur C. Clarke.

Nebula related news - MARVEL COMICS have been busily sending copies of their *MOONSHADOW* comic to SFWA members along with a plea for the institution of a Nebula comics category. But perhaps the most interesting Nebula related news comes from Norman Spinrad's incredible full-page ad in *SCIENCE FICTION WRITER'S OF AMERICA BULLETIN*, headed "A Matter of Literary Principle & Personal Pique" Dave Langford reports that it 'loftily begins "WHEREAS science fiction has come under increasing attack from the mainstream critical establishment at a time when many of us are seeking to establish its bona fides as seriously-intended literary art --" After a few more whereases we come to the meat: "I therefore hereby withdraw my future work for consideration

for the Nebula Award.... To those who surmise that I am doing this out of personal pique at having not received a Nebula nomination for *CHILD OF FORTUNE*, I freely admit that this was a consideration. That such a work failed to be nominated proves, if nothing else, that the literary standards of the SFWA as a whole have diverged so far from my own that to accept a future Nebula would, for me, be an act of cynical hypocrisy." '.

Moving, albeit briefly, away from awards Arthur C. Clarke is over in Britain as I type these words, promoting his new book *THE SONGS OF DISTANT EARTH* which he describes as "the book for which I feel I'll be remembered". On Friday 8th of August he will be speaking (or by the time you read this 'he spoke') at the National Film Theatre in London.

This would appear to be an appropriate time to mention that yet another award is about to be launched. The Arthur C. Clarke SF Award -£1000 for the best British SF novel of the preceeding year, the first presentation to be next Easter - will be run by the BSFA, SF Foundation and the International Science Policy Foundation, who will jointly prepare a shortlist of Approved Nominees.

This year's BSFA AWARDS went to Brian Aldiss's *HELLICONIA WINTER*, Dave Langford's short story from *INTERZONE* - "CUBE ROOT", the film *BRAZIL* for Best Media Presentation and Jim Burns for Best Artist. While I'm still talking about awards and the like I may as well mention the winners of the first Independent British Fan Poll. Best Fanzine was a tie between Steve Higgin's *STOMACH PUMP* and Simon Ounsley's *STILL LIFE*; Best Article went to Ounsley's *NOVACON 14 REPORT*.

'Now for something completely different...' Michael Moorcock is spearheading a campaign to persuade W. H. Smith to remove the John Norman *GOR* series from prominent positions on its shelves, along with similar works which "unequivocally promote the author's beliefs that women enjoy being brutalised, enslaved, humiliated, and so on". In a letter to *THE GUARDIAN* (10th June), he points out that W. H. Smith already chooses not to stock or give prominent display to magazines it considers "likely to give offence to the majority of its customers," a list which at one time included his own *NEW WORLDS*. Morally he is opposed to censorship, he adds, but this would merely be an enforcement of the company's own rules, not his own.

On June 14th of this year, at the age of 86, the Argentinian writer Jorge Louis Borges died. Borges, generally regarded as the most important Spanish writing author of this century, among his best known fantasies are *THE CIRCULAR RUINS*, *THE LIBRARY OF BABEL*, and *FUNES, THE MEMORIOUS*. His reviews and essays include examinations of SF

and Fantasy. He was frequently nominated for the Nobel Prize for literature, as well as for the Nebula Award but never won, although he received many other literary awards, including the 1979 World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement.

This year's SEFF race has been won by Maths Claesson, with 38 votes for Maths as opposed to 30 votes for Anders Bellis. Out of a total of 72 votes received only 11 came from Britain. In case you've forgotten SEFF is the Scandinavia/Europe. Maths will travel to a British convention this autumn - probably to NOVACON 16. The fund currently has around £300 available.

Other Scandinavian news - Sam Lundwall has withdrawn from public activities for the foreseeable future "in order to think and read, and perhaps even create something worthwhile." The Swedish fan-owned publishing house LFP is publishing a collection of Terry Carr's fan writing entitled *FANDOM HARVEST* to be available in late August this collection will be published in English and will be available for \$16 (postage included) from: LFP, Råsundvågen 29, S-17030 SOLNA, Sweden. The next title in the LFP fan-writing series will be a collection by the Irish fan John Berry.

WORLDCON BIDS - Renowned Australian fan Jack R. Herman has entered the race for the 1988 World SF Convention. He is the Convenor of the Australian bid committee for "Sydney Cove in '88". Herman wrote in a press release dated the 6th of June 1986 that the bid is "not just a clone of an American bid, but a unique word-of-mouth campaign aimed at those fans dissatisfied with the four current bids". Those bids being the Bermuda Triangle (on the SS Norway), Cincinnati, New Orleans and St. Louis, all American based bids, despite the fact that the Bermuda Triangle bid is calling itself an "off the continent" bid. Herman has named the Shore Hotel and Convention Centre in Artarmon, Australia, as the Sydney Cove bid facility. He also says that the programme emphasis will be on serious discussion of scientific and social issues underlying SF, and on items encouraging participation by all convention members. Voting on the site of the 1988 World SF Convention will take place at CONFEDERATION in Atlanta in August of this year.

Other Worldcon bids that I have information of to hand are BOSTON IN '89 (PO BOX 46, MIT Branch Station, Cambridge, MA 02139 USA), and of course HOLLAND IN 1990 - pre-support by sending £4.00 to Colin Fine, 205 Coldhams Lane, Cambridge, CB1 3HY. PERTH IN '94 pre-support by sending £2.00 to 5 Kinbrace Way, Lynwood 6155, AUSTRALIA. And last but by no means least EDEN IN '96 - "The day of creation was Sunday, 23rd of October, 4004 B.C." - Archbishop James Ushur of Armagh (c. 1650). According to the flyer this is a bid for the 54th (and last) World SF Convention to celebrate

the 6,000th birthday of everything. The six days of this Worldcon will feature creationist programming. Pre-supporting membership is \$10.00 to: Creation Association, 103 Wright Street, Hurstville 2220, Australia. (It, perhaps, should be noted that 'Eden' is a fishing settlement and holiday resort on the south coast of N.S.W. which features some very intelligent killer whales and a harbour to rival Sydney's - and also a Flag Inn.)

Forthcoming conventions in the Birmingham area include:

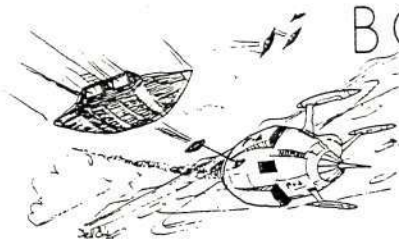
FANTASYCON XI to be held over the weekend 26th to 28th of September 1986. To take place at the Midland Hotel in New Street. The Guest of Honour is Dennis Etchison. The Master of Ceremonies is Samantha Lee and the Special Guest is Jody Scott. Supporting membership is £2.00. Full attending membership is £10.00. Send your cheques/postal orders (made payable to FANTASYCON) to - FANTASYCON XI, 15 Stanley Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5DE.

NOVACON 16 to be held the weekend of the 31st of October to the 2nd of November 1986. At the De Vere Hotel in Coventry. Guest of Honour E. C. Tubb. Special Guest Chris Evans. Membership a mere £8.00 to 86 Berwood Farm Road, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, W. Mids.

BECCON'87 to be held over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend, 17th to 20th April 1987. At the Metropole Hotel in the NEC. Guest of Honour Keith Roberts. Supporting membership £5.00; full attending membership £10.00 (until November 1st) to: BECCON, 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middlesex, UB5 4BU.

At BECCON'87 the site of the 1988 Eastercon will be decided. So far there are two bids for the right to hold the 39th Annual British SF Convention. The NORWESCON '88 bid is being organised by the Warrington SF Group, who aim to hold the con in Manchester. To pre-support them send £2.00 payable to NORWESCON, to Rochelle Dorey, 22 Summerfield Drive, MIDDLETON, Lancs., M24 2WW. The opposing bid FOLLYCON '88 aims to hold the con in the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool. To pre-support them send £1.00 payable to FOLLYCON, to 104 Pretoria Road, Patchway, Bristol, BS12 5P2.

Many thanks to my various news sources LOCUS, American semi-prozine available from Andromeda Bookshop for £1.95 per copy. ANSIBLE from Dave Langford, (5 issues for £2) at 94 London Rd., Reading, BERKS., RG1 5AU. SHARDS OF BABEL from Roelof Goudriaan & Lynne Ann Morse, (8 issues for £5) at Noordwal 2, 2513 EA Den Haag, the Netherlands. THYME the Australasian SF News Magazine edited by Peter Burns & Roger Weddall (10 issues for £5 from European agent Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh St., Pimlico, London, SW1V 2ER). Also apologies to the various sources which I've quoted almost verbatim without previous acknowledgement this being due to the customary lack of space.



BOOK REVIEWS

COSMIC IMPACT by John K. Davies, Fourth Estate,
£9.95 (hardback), 197 pages, Reviewed
by David A. Hardy.



If you have ever seen a movie such as METEOR or A FIRE IN THE SKY and wondered just how likely such a scenario is, this is the book to read. John Davies starts by relating in some detail meteoritic impacts in recent or historic times, then examines the origin of craters on the moon and the planets and other bodies in our Solar System. He explains the origins of the system, and how the debris of the original nebula still exists in the form of asteroids and comets; some of the former, known as Apollo asteroids, cross Earth's orbit.

A chapter is devoted to a search for craters on Earth - most having been obliterated by our oceans and atmosphere.

But of most interest to SF readers, perhaps, are the last three chapters, which deal with the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, the (definite)

possibility of a cataclysmic impact in the future - maybe even tomorrow? - and mining the asteroids for minerals.

I would have liked to see a few more speculative illustrations: most in the 8-page central section are concerned with photos of impact craters on Earth. But if you are thinking of writing another LUCIFER'S HAMMER this is a book you must read.

CITY OF SORCERY by Marion Zimmer Bradley, Arrow £2.95, 423 pages

Reviewed by Chris Morgan.

While the quality of Marion Zimmer Bradley's fiction is by no means even (one of her most recent offerings is a dire piece of hackwork called Warrior Woman) her later Darkover novels have all been worth reading. City of Sorcery is one of these, having characters in common with Thendara House and The Forbidden Tower. Although its plot concerns a well-assorted group of five women on a quest through snow and mountains, what it's really about is small-group dynamics---the camaraderie that develops among teams under stress. The characters are very well drawn, and I found it a fascinating read despite it being a trifle over-long and, in the end, not wholly credible. Also, did you know that Bradley wrote The Shadow of the Torturer and its sequels? It must be true. It says so in the front of this book.

Vance's Lyonesse is a huge, magnificent fantasy saga spanning decades and ranging across all the tiny kingdoms of the archipelago of Lyonesse to the south-west of Dark Ages Britain. Its complexity is staggering, with a multitude of characters and three major plot-lines, all interconnected. At the centre is the young and dashing King Aillas of Troicinet. His war against the Ska---fierce northern warriors---and his counters against the political schemings of the region's monarchs form a backcloth to the other stories. One of these is Aillas's perilous capture of Tatzel, the Ska princess he loves; another is the adventures of his wizard, Shimrod, in his pursuit of the exceedingly beautiful but strange Melanthe, a woman created by magic; the third concerns the abduction of Aillas's young ward, Glyneth, to the alien world of Tanjecterly.

As usual, Vance's choice of names is masterly. His invention of interesting people, places, things and magic spells is never-ending. It is a novel full of admirable qualities, bound together by considerable wit. Once again, Vance shows himself to be a step ahead of all his competitors.

STARKADDER by Bernard King, NEL, £2.50, 243 pages, reviewed by Bethan Davies.

I suppose the book isn't bad, but it isn't particularly good either. It concerns a man called Starkadder who has been granted three lives (and long ones at that) by the Gods, but another Norse God has cursed him so that each life will end in a betrayal, and unconvincing it is too. As a whole, it could hardly be described as rivetting, the plot be called substantial, nor the characterisation effective. Personally, I was not impressed, as although it is readable, it evokes very little response.

STARKADDER by Bernard King, NEL, £2.50, 243 pages, reviewed by Helena Bowles.

Despite the fact that this book is not badly written, I doubt it is supposed to be as funny as I found it. The basics of the plot are revealed by chapter two: Starkadder is an old Norse warrior with three lives, doomed to end each one with betrayal. He also does a lot incidental killing and the daughter of Agantyr, whom Starkadder has killed, takes her father's sword from his gravemound, despite his warning her of a curse. She passes the sword on to her son who is to find Starkadder and kill him. He is not pleased about the curse but resolves to find Starkadder, which he proceeds to do, pausing only to rape his mother in a fit of pique. The rest of the story can be predicted easily.

STARS IN MY POCKET LIKE GRAINS OF SAND, BY Samuel R. Delaney, Grafton, £2.95,
455 pages, Reviewed by Carol And Tony Morton.

When reviewing a book one feels obliged to finish it but although we both tried to read this neither of us could. The obsession with sex detracts from the stories rather than adding anything. A World Apart (the prologue), the first story while based on a good idea fails due to a too convenient ending. We both found the next couple of chapters disjointed and were forced to give up. Not recommended.

JERUSALEM FIRE By R. M. Meluch, Futura, £2.95, 224 pages, Reviewed by Tony Morton.

Entertaining, well written novel revolving around Aliahnd, a rebel runner who is more than meets the eye. He, along with others, are rescued from space and taken to a 'mythical planet' Iry, where Warrior-Priests rule. A collapsed galaxy-wide civilisation is slowly being re-built by the Na'id who rule the new empire and are the enemy Aliahnd is rebelling against - or is he?. An intriguing story of the future with plausible events and characters. Will Jerusalem fall? Read this - its well worth buying.

LIMITS by Larry Niven, Futura, £2.50, 240 pages, reviewed by Tony Morton.

A book of short stories, Limits covers both SF and fantasy and does so reasonably succesfully. I like the twist in "The Lion in hisAttic" - wonderfully told and his idea for nuclear waste is revolutionary. He also gives us five short stories under "More Tales from the Draco Tavern" all of which are readable . Yes, all in all anenjoyable read and well worth £2.50. Good overall value.

THE QUEST FOR MERLIN by Nikolai Tolstoy, Hodder and Stoughton,£3.95, 358 pages reviewed by Tony Morton.

I have always had a soft spot for the Arthurian legends so approached this eagerly-but found it a little 'dry'. Some quite intreguing theories are forwarded but are not sufficiently proven (in my opinion) to make a stable enough case on which to build. Continual referral to previous chapters forced much re-assessment of sections as refreshers which caused some loss of continuity in the 'quest'. Seeming more Tolkein-s tyle than real history in parts, still an interesting saga which may be worth a re-read to straighten out some areas. Worth a try.

THE QUEST FOR MERLIN, By Nikolai Tolstoy, Coronet,£3.95, 377 pages., Reviewed by Bethan Davies.

I found this book quite interesting in its subject matter, but it is very difficult to read and digest. Tolstoy will keep on refering back to something he has discussed in a previous chapter and expect you to remember it in great detail, which means you have to re-read sections to follow his argument. I must admit that I am neither particularly knowledgeable about this period of history or a historian but I feel fairly sure that a person with either of these benefits could pick large holes in Tolstoy's argument. Even I could see that much of Tolstoy's reasoning was based on supposition and was in the main poorly substantiated by his 'evidence', and at points he tended to be rather dogmatic. Unless you are very interested in the period, and are able to easily read such dry prose, I suggest you leave this book on the shelf.

A NOOSE OF LIGHT by Seamus Cullen, Futura, £2.50, 216 pages, reviewed by Helena Bowles.

It took me two months to read this book because I made the mistake of trying to read it in bed and - well, two pages a night is a sure cure for insomnia. The plot, such as it is, involves Maryam. a girl who is afraid of marriage as she has a phobia about the male penis (incidentally caused by her astral body being sexually assaulted by a Djinn called Hutti who has a phallus of disproportionate size and semi-independent intelligence). However, this does not prevent Maryam from following the advice of a wise and holy man and becoming a prostitute. And as for what (I suppose) is meant to be titillating - allow me to recommend Timothy Lea and Leslie Thomas, or, if you're really desperate Shirley Conran...

NOVACON 16

31st oct - 2nd nov 1986

de vere hotel, coventry.

g.o.h e.c. 'ted' tubb

special guest chris evans.



REGISTRATION : £8.00
(£10.00 on the door)

ROOM RATES :
£21.50 single,
£16.50 per person in double
Inc. Full English Breakfast.

FOR REGISTRATION SEND CHEQUES
PAYABLE TO 'NOVACON 16' AND
SEND TO : GRAHAM POOLE ,
86 BERWOOD FARM ROAD ,
WYLDE GREEN ,
SUTTON COLDFIELD ,
WEST MIDLANDS.

Signings at Andromeda

August 29th Ian Marter will be signing copies of his book Harry Sullivan's War. Ian was a Dr. Who companion (Tom Baker) Harry Sullivan, the book tells of Ian's life and experiences after he left Dr. Who.

September 6th Terry Pratchett will be signing copies of The Light Fantastic the sequel to The Colour Of Magic.

October 18th Brian Aldiss signing copies of Trillion Year Spree.

Our thanks this month go to :

Bethan Davies, Chris Chivers and Bernie Evans (well done Bernie) for the Fifteencon reports.

Dave Hardy, Chris Morgan, Helena Bowles and Bethan Davies for their book reviews.

Martin Tudor for the Jophan Reoprt, and Chri Morgan of his Exhibition report.

Rog and Bernie for letting us use letters sent to them.

And finally thanks to Tim Stannard for letting us use his photocopier to print this.

This appeal is made to all fans everywhere on behalf of Eduard Markov, who is a fan stuck in the USSR and is desperate to leave there.

Eduard is fluent in English as well as Russian, and he is expert in the field of both Eastern and Western Science Fiction and Fantasy. He has written a number of as yet unpublished works and translated many SF books and stories from English into Russian.

He, his wife Ludmilla and his son Sergei first applied to leave the USSR in 1979, they were refused and have been constantly denied permission to go since then. The reason given was that the invitation to go to Israel did not come from a close enough relative. This is clearly just an excuse as his sister lives in the West.

He is now desperately worried because his son has reached the age when he may be called up for military service. If this should occur it will be used as an excuse to deny a visa to leave almost indefinitely. The physical risk is an additional reason for worry.

Eduard wants to go to the West so that he may live in freedom and pursue a career in uncensored writing. He wants to have a chance to get his books published and to live a life free of threats and continual harassment. He has heard of the sf community in the West. He has heard how this community helps its members. He has asked that a direct appeal be made to you fans to help. You can help in a number of ways:

1) By writing to him at;

USSR,
RSFSR,
Leningrad 196340,
Kostyushko 10,
Apt 67,
Markov, Eduard.

2) By writing and complaining of his treatment and urging the Soviets to relent to;

Leonid Zamyatin,
Soviet Ambassador,
Soviet Embassy,
18 Kensington Palace Gardens,
London W8.

3) By registering him and his family for conventions and asking them to attend.

4) By inviting him to speak or take part in a convention.

Anything you do will help. Do not feel you will make Eduard's situation any worse because he has already been made a *non-person* in Soviet society.

If you wish for more information or if you are willing to do either 3 or 4 of the above, please contact: Dov Rigal, 68 Eden Road, London, E17 9JY. Telephone - Home 01 521 1153 or Work 01 831 2776.

Please copy this and circulate it to other fans.