

# BRUM GROUP NEWS

June 1993

Issue 261

The monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group  
(Honorary Presidents: Brian W Aldiss & Harry Harrison)

GROUP CHAIRMAN - TONY MORTON, SECRETARY - HELENA BOWLES, NEWSLETTER EDITOR - MARTIN TUDOR,  
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ORDINARY MEMBER - MICK EVANS, NOVAACON 23 CHAIRMAN - CAROL MORTON.

## This month's speaker is LOUISE COOPER

Friday the 18th June 1993 7.45 for 8.00pm

Admittance: Members £2.50 Visitors £3.75

(Half-price admission for 14-18 year-olds on production of proof of age and at the discretion of the Treasurer.)

Louise Cooper was born in Hertfordshire on 29 May 1952, she hated school (despite winning a scholarship to a locally prestigious private school) and so persuaded her parents to let her leave at the age of 15. After a succession of thoroughly detested office jobs her first novel *THE BOOK OF PARADOX* was published in 1973. Unfortunately this wasn't a good time for fantasy writers, but she persevered through a series of books and in 1977 she was finally able to pursue her writing full-time. Her first major success came on her return to the fantasy field with the Time Master trilogy (*THE INITIATE*, *THE OUTCAST* and *THE MASTER*). Since then her work has included the one-off novel *MIRAGE*, the eight volume Indigo series (*NEMESIS*, *NOCTURNE*, *INFERNO*, *INFANTA*, *TROIKA*, *AVATAR*, *REVENANT* and *AISSLING*), the Chaos Gate trilogy (*THE PRETENDER*, *THE DECEIVER* and *THE AVENGER*) and two children's novels *THE THORN KEY* (1988) and *THE SLEEP OF STONE* (1991). Louise lives in Westminster with her husband Gary, a music journalist, her other loves include cats (they are both devoted to felines of all sizes, particularly Siberian tigers), cookery, gardening, cricket (only watching!), steam locomotives and playing in a folk rock band.

*[Many thanks to Rog Peyton, Bernie Evans and Carole Jones of HarperCollins for the above information.]*

The BSGF meets at 7.45pm on the 3rd Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) in the upstairs function room of the White Lion, corner of Thorp Street and Horsefair/Bristol Street in Birmingham city centre. The annual subscription rates (which include twelve copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to meetings) are £9.00 per person, or £12.00 for 2 members at the same address. Cheques etc. payable to "the Birmingham Science Fiction Group", via the treasurer Richard Standage at meetings or by post c/o Bernie Evans (address below). Book reviews and review copies should be sent to the reviews editor Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH (tel: 021 558 0997). All other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to: Martin Tudor, 845 Alum Rock Road, Birmingham B8 2AG (tel: 021 327 3023).

## COLOPHON

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Personal opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the committee or the membership of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group.

All text by Martin Tudor except where stated otherwise.

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Many thanks this issue to BERNIE EVANS for typing the Book Reviews, all of our reviewers especially CHRIS MORGAN, STEVE JONES for his report on last month's meeting, STEVE GREEN, CRITICAL WAVE, CACTUS TIMES and ANSIBLE for the news in the Jophan Report and TONY BERRY for the use of his spare room.

## LAST MONTH'S MEETING

a report by Steve Jones

At our May meeting Colin Greenland told us about his latest novel *HARM'S WAY*, a space adventure set in the 18th century. He read us a couple of extracts: a description of the decadent Martian city of Ys, and the flight of the heroine Sophie on an ether-flying sailing ship.

The premise of *HARM'S WAY* is "What if Britannia was 'Queen of Space' as well as 'Queen of the Seas'? What if sailing ships could move through space as well as across the oceans?" In this alternative history the European nations are busy exploiting the whole solar system, and the British Empire is being forged on Mars and the moons of Jupiter.

The cover of the British hardback shows the flying ships off splendidly, with a variety of human and alien travellers wearing old-style spacesuits in the foreground. The American cover (with an awful picture of a girl and an angel) was passed around for us to laugh at.

A question was raised as to whether *HARM'S WAY* should be classed as science fiction at all, or would fantasy be a more accurate description? Colin replied it should be classed as *HARM'S WAY*. He just wrote the book, and the publishers decided which category to put it in.

Finally Colin told us how he got his big break by becoming Writer-in-Residence at the SF Foundation and getting an Arts Council grant for two years. This allowed him to get established as a full-time writer without having to do a more mundane job to support himself.

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*Due to a number of complaints received after the last meeting the Committee are sorry that it appears necessary to remind some members that courtesy and good manners are expected from people attending Brum Group meetings. The audience is there to listen to the speaker NOT fellow members of the Group; we would greatly appreciate it if people would refrain from making comments while the guest is speaking.*

Can YOU eat a  
'Desperate Dan Pie' ?  
Find out at the  
BEER & SKITTLES  
EVENING AT THE  
(newly re-named)  
LITTLE RIB ROOM  
(Bradley Green, Hanbury to  
Feckenham Road, B4090  
out of Droitwich)  
If you are interested  
call HELENA BOWLES  
on (021) 558 7591

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**on 11 JUNE 1993:**

**HARRY HARRISON,**

one of the BSFG's honorary  
presidents, will be

speaking to us

at an additional meeting

in the White Lion,

7.45pm for 8.00pm.

If you would like to join

Harry Harrison

for a Chinese meal

after the meeting,

please call

TONY or CAROL MORTON

on 0384 897206

by 8.00pm on

Thursday 10 June.

**FORTHCOMING**

**EVENTS**

8-12 JUNE 1993: *ERIK THE VIKING* a new touring production of Terry Jones' children's book and film will be on at the Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton. Tickets £4.00-£8.00, call 0902 29212 for further details.

12 JUNE 1993: HARRY HARRISON will be signing *HAMMER AND THE CROSS* from 10.30am at Andromeda, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, call 021 643 1999 for further details.

18 JUNE 1993: LOUISE COOPER will be our June speaker, 7.45pm for 8pm at the White Lion.

18-20 JUNE 1993: *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* will be showing at the Triangle Cinema, Holt Street, Birmingham (behind Dillons bookstore in the Aston Triangle area of the Aston University campus). For further details call (021) 359 3979/4192.

23-27 JUNE 1993: *CANDYMAN*, "a faithful and visually imaginative adaptation of Clive Barker's story 'The Forbidden'", will be showing at the Arts Centre, University of Warwick, Coventry. Call (0203) 524524 for further details.

25-27 JUNE 1993: *TWIN PEAKS - FIRE WALK WITH ME* will be showing at the Triangle Cinema, Holt Street, Birmingham (behind Dillons bookstore in the Aston Triangle area of the Aston University campus). For further details call (021) 359 3979/4192.

26 JUNE 1993: ROBERT RANKIN will be signing *THE BOOK OF ULTIMATE TRUTHS* (hardcover) and the paperback of *ARMAGEDDON III* and GRAHAM JOYCE will be signing copies of his new hardcover *HOUSE OF LOST DREAMS* from noon at Andromeda, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, call 021 643 1999 for further details.

11 JULY 1993: COMIC MART at the YMCA, Granby Street, Leicester. Opens midday, contact Golden Orbit, 9 Stratford Way, Huntington, York, YO3 9YW.

16 JULY 1993: BRUM GROUP QUIZ NIGHT teams of three will compete for glorious prizes! 7.45pm for 8pm, at the White Lion.

24 JULY 1993: ROBERT HOLDSTOCK will be signing his new Mythago Wood book *THE HOLLOWING* and BOB SHAW will be signing copies of his new hardcover *WARREN PEACE II: WARREN PEACE* and the paperback of *WARREN PEACE I: WHO GOES HERE?* at Andromeda, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, call 021 643 1999 for further details.

31 JULY 1993: COMIC MART at the Midland Hotel, New Street. Doors open midday. Contact Golden Orbit, 9 Stratford Way, Huntington, York, YO3 9YW.

?? AUGUST 1993: ORSON SCOTT CARD will be signing at Andromeda, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, call 643 1999 for further details.

28 AUGUST 1993: COMIC MART at the Hotel Ibis, Ladywell Walk, off Hurst Street, Birmingham. Doors open 11am, admission 50p, contact: Peter Lennon, 15 Yew Tree Close, Batchley, Redditch, B97 6SO (0527 585036).

3-6 SEPTEMBER 1993: CONFRANCISCO. 51st world science fiction convention at the San Francisco Marriott Moscone Convention Center.

Guests of Honour: Larry Niven, Tom Digby, Alicia Austin, Jan Howard Finder. MC: Guy Gavriel Kay. Attending \$125.00, supporting \$25.00 until 16 July, \$145 on the door. Contact British Agent: Chris O'Shea, 12 Stannard Road, London, E8 1DB.

1-3 OCTOBER 1993: FANTASYCON XVIII. Midland Hotel, Birmingham, Guests of Honour: Peter James, Tad Williams and Les Edwards, Master of Ceremonies Dennis Etchison, further guests to be announced. Attending £20 (to British Fantasy Society members) £30 (non-members), Supporting membership £10. Contact: Mike Chinn at 137 Priory Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 0TG (tel: 021 474 2585).

5-7 NOVEMBER 1993: NOVACON 23 the Brum Group's own sf con, at the Royal Angus hotel in the city centre. Guest of honour Stephen Baxter. Attending membership costs £25 until 1st October and then £30 on the door. Supporting membership is £8.00 (please note that this will NOT automatically reserve an attending place, but it WILL ensure receipt of all of the convention's publications and entitle you to vote in the Novas). Although the hotel has agreed to increase the membership ceiling from 300 to 350 people the committee advises you to register early, as they will if necessary turn people away on the door. Further details from Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH (tel: 021 558 0997).

11 NOVEMBER 1993: COMIC MART at the Hotel Ibis, Ladywell Walk, off Hurst Street, Birmingham. Doors open 11am, admission 50p. Contact: Peter Lennon, 15 Yew Tree Close, Batchley, Redditch, B97 650 (0527 585036).

26-28 NOVEMBER 1993: CON-YAK, annual international Beneluxcon, venue probably Altea Hotel, just outside Amsterdam. Guests of honour to be announced. Contact Richard Vermaas, James Wattstraat 13, 1097 DJ Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

1-4 APRIL 1994: SOU'WESTER. 45th UK national sf con. Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Guests of honour: Diane Duane, Neil Gaiman, Barbara Hambly, Peter Morwood. Until November 1993: Attending £25.00 (£23.00 for paid-up pre-supporting), Supporting £12.50, children aged 9-14 (on 1 April 1994) £12.50, £1.00 for "babies and beasts". Contact: 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ.

30 APRIL - 1 MAY 1994: COME-BACK CON. The first Belgian BeNeLuxcon in a long time at the Rubenianum House, Antwerp, Belgium. Attending

650BF, Supporting 500BF until 31 Dec 1993, then Attending 750BF, Supporting 650BF until 31 March 1994, children up to age 6 free admission, age 6-12 50% of current price. Contact: Alfons J Maes, Zandkapelweg 18, B-2200 Noorderwijk, Belgium.

END OF MAY 1994: INCONCEIVABLE. Second 'humour' con in Derby, date to be announced. Attending £15.00, contact 12 Crich Avenue, Littleover, Derby, DE23 6ES.

1-5 SEPTEMBER 1994: CONADIAN, 52nd world science fiction convention, at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. Guests of Honour Anne McCaffrey, George Barr, Barry B Longyear, Fan Guest of Honour Robert Runte. Attending US\$85.00, CAN\$95.00, Supporting US\$25.00, CAN\$30.00 until 6 September 1993. Contact British Agent: Helen McCarthy, 147 Francis Road, London, E10 6NT.

14-17 APRIL 1995: CONFABULATION 46th UK National sf con at the Britannia International Hotel, London. GoHs Lois McMasters Bujold, Bob Shaw and Roger Robinson. Attending £15.00, Supporting £10.00, children born on or before 13 April 1981 pay the supporting rate and small children (born on or before 18 April 1987) pay nothing. Contact: Confabulation, 3 York Street, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH.

24-28 AUGUST 1995: INTERSECTION, 53rd world-con, SECC, Glasgow. Guests of honour Samuel R Delany, Gerry Anderson. Attending £50.00, Supporting £15.00, please note that Glasgow pre-support and friend benefits expired on 30 April 1993 when pre-supporters became non-members and Friends became supporters. Contact: Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH.

27 DECEMBER 1999 - 2 JANUARY 2000: MILLENIUM. Venue to be announced, but definitely in Northern Europe (probably a BeNeLux country or UK), £3.00 (£10.00) per year, to be deducted from eventual membership fee (to be announced before 1997). Contact: Malcolm Reid, 2/R, 9 Airlie Street, Hyndland, Glasgow, G12 9RJ.

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*Although details are correct to the best of my knowledge, I advise readers to contact organizers prior to travelling.*

*Always enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope when writing to any of the above contact addresses. Please mention the BRUM GROUP NEWS when replying to listings or advertisements.*

## JOPHAN REPORT #63

by Martin Tudor

First thing this time is an apology for missing out one of the Hugo nominees for Best Novelette last issue. (This is what comes from copying the details from a rag like *ANSIBLE* instead of digging out my list from *WAVE's* wonderfully reliable source John Dallman!) The full list should include "The Arbitrary Placement of Walls", Martha Soukup.

Congratulations to Lisa Mortimer and Dave Holmes on the birth of their second child, Megan Selina Holmes, on the 2nd of June.

Congratulations are also in order for Novacon 20 chairman Nick Mills and Jo McCahy, who have recently announced their engagement.

There must be something in the air because one-time Novacon tech supremo Nic Farey has also announced his engagement the (arguably) lucky lady being US fan Dee Ann Lipscomb, they will be married in September.

Definition of a trufan? Mick Evans, having travelled up to Scarborough for Mexican V on the Thursday, travelled back to Birmingham on the Saturday so that he could get to Wembley in time for West Bromwich Albion's play-off against Port Vale. Having seen his team win 3-0 on the Sunday afternoon he travelled back to Scarborough, arriving back at the con around midnight. On Tuesday, of course, he travelled back home to Birmingham... Enjoy the convention Mick?

This year's British Science Fiction Award winners were announced over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend at Mexican V. Winner of the Best Novel was *RED MARS* by Kim Stanley Robinson (runner-up *HEARTS HANDS AND VOICES* by Ian McDonald), Best Short Story "The Innocents" by Ian McDonald in *NEW WORLDS 2* (runner-up "The Coming of Vertumnus" by Ian Watson, *INTERZONE #56*). Best Artwork was the cover of *HEARTS, HANDS AND VOICES* by Jim Burns (runner-up the cover of *KAETI ON TOUR/INTERZONE #66* also by Jim Burns).

As previously reported the Best Dramatic Presentation category was dropped this year due to lack of interest. At the BSFA AGM, which was held at Mexican V, it was decided to drop the category completely from now on.

*DEATH BECOMES HER*, the black comedy directed by Robert Zemekis, was named best

achievement in special effects at the 24th British Academy of Film and Television Awards

Major cast changes are rumoured for the seventh season of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*, with Patrick Stewart and Brent Spiner said to be considering quitting the Enterprise bridge. Meanwhile, Professor Stephen Hawking turned up on the set for a guest appearance, presumably as a Holodeck image of himself.

Robert DeNiro has reportedly agreed to play the monster to Kenneth Brannagh's Frankenstein in Brannagh's adaptation of the Mary Shelley classic, due to be filmed in Britain.

Jon Pertwee has returned to the role of Doctor Who - in a BBC radio serial. Although he starred in the stage spin-off in the late 1980s, Pertwee left the tv series in June 1974, and the new adventure will probably be set during that period.

The box office nosedive of Eddie Murphy's *BOOMERANG* has probably put paid to his plans to film *THE GREEN HORNET*.

Rumours continue to circulate that William Shatner has submitted a script to Paramount for *STAR TREK VII*, although parallel rumours reject this due to the poor audience reaction awarded the fifth movie, which Shatner directed and co-wrote. In any case, it seems likely that any future film project would feature characters from *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*, even if only in a cameo.

Meanwhile, James Kirk remains the only lead character from the original show whose future fate has not been confirmed by the spin-off (Spock is currently an undercover diplomat aiding Romulan subversives, McCoy is a retired admiral and Scott was recently rescued from effective suspended animation whilst trapped within a transporter beam loop).

Codemasters, the Warwickshire-based software company run by brothers Richard and David Darling, has won its three-year battle against Nintendo over the accessory *GAMES GENIE*. The US Supreme Court rejected the games giant's claim that the package, which can increase or decrease difficulty, infringed copyright. The court set damages at approximately £2M, based upon the damage to Codemaster's worldwide sales of £65M.

Filming has apparently begun on an adaptation of the John Wyndham novel *STOW-*

AWAY TO MARS, Ridley Scott is reportedly scouting locations for *BLADE RUNNER II* in Borneo and Southern Star is said to be working on a 13-episode *ADDAMS FAMILY* tv series, most likely owing more to the 1991 movie than the classic 1960s small-screen interpretation.

The success of *QUANTUM LEAP*, by March Britain's second most popular American import (*ROSEANNE* topping the chart, and *STAR TREK* repeats coming in third), has now inspired a series of spin-off novels by Ashley McConnell, *CARNY KNOWLEDGE* and *TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT*, both published by Boxtree in May. Boxtree also publishes *THE QUANTUM LEAP BOOK*, including biographies, plot synopsis and background data, on 24 June, priced at £12.99.

The fifth season of the show looks set to accentuate the pace of the fourth; in one show, Al is shot by the murderer with whom Sam has temporarily exchanged bodies.

Authorities in Jacksonville, Florida, have ordered libraries to restrict the original Brothers Grimm version of *SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARVES* to members over the age of eight, claiming the violence is too graphic for younger readers.

London's Scala Cinema was ordered to pay £1000 of Warner Brothers' £3300 court costs in March after been found guilty of breach of copyright for screening *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE* last April. The film is effectively banned in the UK.

The actor James Doohan, best known as Scotty in *STAR TREK*, has received an honorary doctorate from the Milwaukee School of Engineering in recognition of the character's assistance in promoting the field as a career choice.

Dana Andrews, who died on 17 December aged 83, starred in a number of science fiction and fantasy movies during the 1950s, including *NIGHT OF THE DEMON* (*CURSE OF THE DEMON* in the USA) and *CRACK IN THE WORLD*.

A selection of original artwork by Edd Cartier, dating back to the late 1940s, has been placed on the market by Weinberg Books; catalogues are available for \$1.00 from 15145 Oxford Drive, Oak Forest, IL-60452, USA.

Margo Skinner, the widow of author Fritz Leiber, died on 13 January, aged 72; they married in May last year following the discovery that she had terminal cancer, after

20 years together, initially as his secretary. Leiber died in September 1992.

Mike "Simo" Simpson is researching a project on interpretations of the *FRANKENSTEIN* myths, through film, television and comics. Anyone who can help with research material or by recommending texts is invited to contact him at 29 Crane Street, Cobridge, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire, ST1 5EF.

The second edition of *THE REDEEMER*, the new fashion/fetishism journal edited by former film-maker Nigel Wingrove, includes an interview with author Anne Rice, an overview of horror cinema ("Society's Scapegoat?") and a discussion of erotica in cartoons. Copies cost £3.50 plus p&p (UK free, continental Europe £1.50, Canada/USA £3.50, Australia/New Zealand/Japan £4.50) from BCM Box 9235 (CW), London, WC1N 3XX.

Lucius Shepard's *THE ENDS OF THE EARTH*, which received the 1992 World Fantasy Award for best collection, will be published in trade paperback by Millenium on 8 July, as will the hardback edition of his vampire novel *THE GOLDEN*.

The British Science Fiction Association is relaunching its writer's journal *FOCUS*, introducing non-fiction articles as well as short fiction by members. Stories (up to 5000 words), brief "forum" pieces (600-800 words) and artwork should be forwarded to Carol Ann Green (5 Raglan Avenue, Raglan Street, Hull, HU5 2JB) or Julie Venner (42 Walgrave Street, Newland Avenue, Hull, HU5 2LT). The first issue is scheduled for June.

Sf fans may be surprised to read in the May *EMPIRE* that Forrest J Ackerman is "treated with awed reverence by the science fiction fraternity" for coining the phrase "sci-fi".

Bridport Arts Centre in Dorset is running a creative writing competition, offering £1000 first prizes for the best unpublished poem (no more than 40 lines) and short story (1000-5000 words), plus runners-up prizes of £500 and £250 in each category. The cost of entry is £3.00 and further details can be obtained for a reply-paid envelope from 9 Pier Terrace, West Bay, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 4ER; the closing date is 30 June.

American author and editor Avram Davidson died on 8 May, aged 70, from complications arising from an ongoing diabetic condition.

BOOK  
REVIEWS

*(We are indebted to Chris Morgan for our first review this month. In spite of the lack of review copies available, Chris managed to get hold of one, and produced the lengthy review below. I make no apology for taking up almost two sides with this, it's an important book, so on with it, and thanks Chris.*

*- Bernie Evans.J*

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THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION

Edited by John Clute & Peter Nicholls  
Orbit, xxxvi + 1370 pp, £45.00, h/b

Reviewed by Chris Morgan.

Who edited the *QUARK* original anthologies? What's an edisonade? Which authors have won Best Novel Hugo awards in consecutive years? How much unexceptional sf did Robert Hale publish? Who created the *SPACE 1999* TV series? And just what is science fiction, anyway? All the answers, and much more, may be found here.

This second edition of the 1979 volume of the same name is a hulking, finger-breaking doorstop of a book. Its vital statistics are mind-boggling: twice as many pages as the first edition, over 2900 author entries (up by 1100), 212 theme entries (up by 43), 544 films described (up by 258), artist entries up from 44 to 64, many TV entries, a greatly increased international scope; in all, 1.3 million words (up by over half a million) and over 4300 entries (up by 1500). Such an enlargement indicates not only the increased activity within sf over the last fourteen years but also a more comprehensive coverage of the field.

The only significant deletion since the first edition is the pictures, which were useful, entertaining and sometimes witty, besides breaking up the uniformity of the landscape, like oases in a desert. On the other hand, the eye-straining, 3-column, 73-line page has been changed to a clearer 2-column, 60-line format - much easier for us ageing fans who don't like to admit to failing faculties.

While it doesn't claim to be complete, it consistently tells you slightly less than you would like to know about major writers and

their works, and much more than anybody in their right mind needs about writers who've published one totally forgettable sf novel (or even a handful of such works). Does anyone out there care that BBC movie pundit Barry Norman wrote a near-future tale in 1975? Is there any point in chronicling the works of such minor figures as F Horace Rose or Herbert Best (to mention two examples out of many)? I note, in passing, that the first edition's euphemism for rubbish, "routine", has been superseded by "unexceptional" (so not only an extra half million words, but longer ones, too...).

But it would be very churlish to deny that this encyclopedia *is* an essential reference work and is probably *the* essential reference work for anyone who wants to discover more about science fiction.

One of its great virtues is that it's up to date. Thanks to its compilation on disc, new facts were added at a very late stage. For example, the deaths of both Keith Laumer and the Japanese author Kobo Abé are included, despite the fact that they died (coincidentally) on 22nd January 1993 and the publication date was 8th April 1993.

My greatest criticism is to question whether it is either justified or useful for a major encyclopedia such as this to restrict itself to sf, omitting all but a few fantasy and supernatural horror authors. In several places, particularly the "Fantasy" entry, but also under "Definitions", "Fabulation" and in their introductory material, Clute and Nicholls touch on the difficulties of differentiating between sf and fantasy. Of course one can distinguish stories set amongst future technology from stories set amongst pseudo-mediaeval swordsmen, but there is considerable middle-ground between such examples, where there can be no agreement, no clear-cut definition, no satisfactory disentangling.

Indeed, the problem (well, it's a problem for Clute & Nicholls) is made worse by the way in which many authors have clearly written both sf and fantasy (even mingling them within the same book), by the awarding of Hugos and Nebulas to works falling into either camp and by the fact that many (most?) readers of sf also read fantasy and vice versa. If the other leading reference works in the field (the Tuck *ENCYCLOPEDIA*, the Contento *INDEXES*, the Currey *FIRST PRINTINGS* and Robinson's book on pseudonyms) can cover sf and fantasy, why not this encyclopedia? The obvious excuse is that the resulting volume would be perhaps twice as big and twice as expensive, but this is not sufficient reason, and I feel that a companion volume on

fantasy is necessary and would enable most of this volume's most annoying omissions and idiosyncrasies to be avoided.

Let me justify my last thrust. While some fantasy authors are included because one of their books has slight sf connections, other fantasy writers (more skilled, more famous, more influential) have been omitted. Thus David Gemmell is included for his "post-holocaust venue" despite the fact that he has always seemed to be writing fantasy. Thus fantasy writer E R Eddison is included for his "influence on the sf genre", even though any such influence has, fortunately for all of us, been minimal, while the much more influential Peter Beagle has been omitted (though he was in the first edition of this encyclopedia!). Thus fantasy novelist Scott Baker is included only for his one sf novel despite the fact that his Ashlu fantasies display a highly scientific approach to the creation of shamanistic powers. Thus Jonathan Carroll, probably the most important writer to emerge within the fantasy genre in the past decade (and with undeniable sf elements in his novel *OUTSIDE THE DOG MUSEUM*) is denied an entry and only mentioned in passing. Thus Hugh Walker's awful fantasy trilogy beginning with *WAR-GAMER'S WORLD* is included for no convincing reason.

Of course I'm splitting hairs in my argument, but no more so than are the editors in their choice of material.

However sf is differentiated from fantasy, there are a few omissions from this second edition. Persons in this category include Tony Attwood (author of a *BLAKE'S 7* novelisation and the *BLAKE'S 7* programme guide), Woody Allen (apart from writing and directing *SLEEPER* and, I believe, the equally science-fictional *PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO*, he's written sf stories), Jack Cohen (influential advisor on xenobiology to Aldiss, McCaffrey, Harrison, Niven & Pournelle, etc, who I'm sure was omitted only because he doesn't fit into a category), Ken Grimwood (whose novels are as science-fictional as those of Jack Finney, who does get in) and artists Syd Mead and (perhaps the most astonishing omission of all) Patrick Woodroffe. And then there's Richard Adams, who not only gave rise to a new sub-genre of fantasy with *WATERSHIP DOWN*, but whose *SHARDIK* can be read as alternate world sf.

An important missing film is *WIZARDS* which, although ostensibly fantasy, is in fact about the conflict between magic and science (or, if you like, between fantasy and sf) and really should have been included.

A missing theme is Ukrainian sf. It gets a mention under "Soviet Union", but none of

the books translated into English, such as *AND MAN CREATED SYHOM* by Igor Rosokhovatski or *PALM OIL FOR CHARON AND OTHER FANTASTIC STORIES* by Leonid Panasenko, are listed.

Sometimes it's information that's missing rather than entries themselves. For example, Joan Aiken gets a tiny and slightly apologetic entry which doesn't do the useful thing and tell the reader that she has written fantasy and horror for children and crime and horror for adults. In general, the listing of non-sf books by included authors is very inconsistent. And although some further reading references are offered at the ends of entries, more could and should have been mentioned.

And an alphabetical list of all the films dealt with would have been very useful.

Actual mistakes do not seem to be frequent, though a few are to be found, mostly very minor. It's annoying to find mistakes preserved from the first edition, especially when I drew attention to them then. One such is Edmond About's *THE MAN WITH THE BROKEN EAR*, which was first translated into English and published in London under that title in 1864 and not several years later. (I have my copy of the novel beside me as I write.) And an example of a new error is that the Richard Matheson entry lists *SHOCK WAVES* and *Shock 4* as separate collections, though they are the same.

Despite all my carping, this is a fine, systematic reference work, full of interest, and good value for money. I've found myself spending many hours dipping into it, enjoying checking up, enjoying learning, enjoying sf.

*THE MEMORY OF EARTH* by Orson Scott Card  
Legend, 294 pp, £4.99, p/b

Reviewed by Peter Day.

This is the first in a new five volume series. It is set on the planet Harmony, settled by humans nearly forty million years ago and put under the direction of an artificial intelligence, the Oversoul, high in orbit and programmed to guide and protect the people of Harmony. But now the Oversoul's systems are gradually starting to fail, and it decides it must return to Earth to be repaired. For this it needs human assistance, so it selects the members of one particular family, Volemak the Wetchik and his four sons, of the city of Basilica, and begins to prepare them for the task. Most of the action is seen from the viewpoint of Nafai, the youngest son, who turns out to be unusually sensitive to the messages from the Oversoul.

Although basically no more than a curtain-raiser to the rest of the series, this

book is by no means negligible, being a full-blown, well balanced novel with enough action of its own to satisfy anybody. The threat of war hangs over Basilca, with the ruthless opportunist Gaballufix stirring things up for his own ends, and they must resolve this situation before they can start. As if all that wasn't enough, the four brothers are at permanent loggerheads, barely able to tolerate each other.

This book gets the series off to an excellent start, and I await the rest of it with anticipation.

ELVISSEY by Jack Womack

HarperCollins, 319 pp, £15.99, h/b

Reviewed by Tony Morton.

Oddball novel mixing future shock and evangelism in a (presumably) parallel USA. I found the book slow, almost tedious in places, as Womack smartasses his way through both descriptive and dialogue narrative. While it has some good points, I failed to believe the premise of an Elvis-based religion taking such a hold. For while the jingoism inherent in America forces inward looking cults and ideology, it has little realism in the rest of the world. Yes, I know Presley et al are revered elsewhere, but the tendency is to treat such people as nutty. This in a way is also my response to this novel, nutty.

Womack has taken several odd ideas and incorporated them into a single entity - so it comes over as a mish-mash, neither one thing nor another. Using a machine to traverse to a parallel world to kidnap Elvis in order to manipulate your own populace, German (Nazi?) flying saucers, outlandish behaviour in a rebuilt company New York, drugs to do anything (make blacks white, suppress emotions, and so on) all prove to be too much and too complex. Seemingly for the American market alone, where I am sure it was well received. It did nothing for me.

ANVIL OF STARS by Greg Bear

Legend, 499 pp, £4.99, p/b

Reviewed by Peter Day.

Greg Bear is the author who routinely thinks *big*. This is the sequel to *THE FORGE OF GOD*, in which Earth was destroyed in an apocalyptic climax. By Galactic Law, any species which commits such an act of genocide must itself be destroyed, and this act must be carried out by any surviving victims. So, with the remnants of humanity resettled on Mars, their children, eighty-two in number, set out in a vast Ship of the Law, controlled

by an inscrutable artificial intelligence, to carry out this mission.

We follow the children on their long journey as, in their strange environment, they grow up and, variously, make and break friendships, love, part, jostle for leadership, die, go mad. And then, finally, they arrive. But how do you conduct war against aliens whose psychology is unknowable, whose technological brilliance means they can disguise whole planetary systems? Before the children can even start to try to carry out their task they have to find out whether the inhabitants of this system are indeed the culprits they're looking for.

This is a fascinating read. The awesome technological powers wielded by the aliens - and by the Ship, too - together with the author's evocation of a galaxy where it is sane to be paranoid, leave one breathless. If, like me, you enjoy having your mind blown, then Greg Bear is the writer for you.

MINDSTAR RISING by Peter F Hamilton

Pan, 438 pp, £4.99, p/b

Reviewed by Tony Morton.

A stunning debut novel from Hamilton, set in a near future Britain where global warming has radically altered the land area. The collapse of central government after the rise to power of a far left regime compromises the survival of big business, which is either nationalised or leaves for better climes. Once Downing Street is destroyed by a bomb, a new order begins to arise, more lenient and life once more begins to prosper - for the major corporations.

The story is of one man's (Greg Mandel) involvement with a company, Event Horizon. He has to prevent the death of its chairman. However, corporate greed comes to the fore as numerous events occur to try to prevent Event Horizon's new invention dominating the market to the exclusion of the other multi-nationals.

Mandel, himself a product of hi-tech enhancement equipment, is able to provide ample protection but the inevitable happens, and here the twists begin. Once the chairman-owner (Philip Evans) is killed, his teenage granddaughter (Juliet) is left to run the company, providing diversion and misdirection in the plot as she proves more capable and devious than initially thought. The potential villain appears to be a cartel banker, Kendrick di Girolamo, deflowerer of a (very) young Juliet and ex-partner of Evans, out for revenge and kicks. Again a twist that leaves the story finely balanced leading to a knife edge finale that is expertly delivered.

Possibly the best debut novel since Bester, incorporating future prediction of climate, social, business and political behaviour, complementing this with hard science, believable scenarios, excellently balanced characters and a good, well told story. What more do you want? Not to be missed.

THE MOAT AROUND MURCHESON'S EYE

by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle  
HarperCollins, 401 pp, £14.99, h/b

Reviewed by Michael Jones.

Originally published in the US as *THE GRIPPING HAND*, this is the "long awaited" sequel to *THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE*. The earlier book was reputedly described by Robert Heinlein as possibly the best sf novel he had ever read. I would have hesitated to go so far but I am not about to give anybody an argument. Be that as it may, the new book is a worthy follow up to the old one; after eighteen years this is obviously not just a case of sequelitis.

*MOTE* ended with a naval blockade being set up to keep the inhabitants of the Mote system from getting out into human-occupied space. It was obvious that they would try to find a way round the blockade, and the premise of *MOAT* is that a way exists. This necessitates a new expedition to the Mote, involving a couple of the people who were there the first time, during which they (and we) discover a lot more about the system and its inhabitants. In fact, there is no landing on the planet this time, the only contact being with groups living and operating entirely in space. The humans' task is complicated by the lack of a unified government and the constantly changing alliances between various groups. In the end, however, it ceases to matter, as they have set in motion a change in the nature of the Mote race so fundamental that it will become alright to let them out after all.

As well as being a superb novel in its own right, *THE MOAT AROUND MURCHESON'S EYE* is a great sequel. Besides furthering the story, it illuminates many questions left unanswered in *THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE*, and if one thinks one has discovered points which the authors overlooked first time round, well, that's just being picky. The book is well constructed and rich with detail, the plot is complex yet logical and the story moves at a cracking pace where it counts. I firmly believe that these two writers, especially Niven, are responsible for some of the best sf ever to have seen print, and this is no exception. Top marks.

NON-STOP by Brian Aldiss  
RoC, 269 pp, £4.99, p/b

Reviewed by David B Wake.

Written in 1958, although it doesn't show its age other than by missing the middle initial, this is Brian Aldiss' epic "we're really stuck on a colony ship, not on a real world" story. He did it first (possibly), and it is done very well, with enough surprises to supplement the obvious one. Bob Shaw, in his *HOW TO WRITE SCIENCE FICTION* said this is a mined out sub-genre. Brian Aldiss certainly got some choice bits of ore.

This is a good yarn, told by a master, and concerns Roy Complain, a hunter of the Greene tribe, setting off with others on that wretched quest thingy to find out what it's all about. Thank goodness there is more to it than that, but you'll have to read the book to find out that the butler did it.

I'm sure it's on a lot of people's "must read" list. It isn't on mine because I've read it, and you should too. It might even be worth another look from the old hands amongst us.

A NOMAD OF THE TIME STREAM by Michael Moorcock  
Millennium, 457 pp, £10.99, "C" format

Reviewed by Tony Morton.

An omnibus edition including *THE WARLORD OF THE AIR*, *THE LAND LEVIATHAN*, and *THE STEEL TSAR*, under Moorcock's Eternal Champions logo, and containing partially rewritten sections. These are the stories of Oswald Bastable and his extraordinary adventures in the time streams. Told initially as narrative by Bastable to Michael Moorcock's grandfather, then told in the later stories as if written to the Moorcocks in manuscript form. They tell an unusual tale of parallel worlds and revolve on issues of import that Bastable seems to have to relive. He realises the implications of his fate, slipping into maturity and acceptance of his lot, while trying to stop the carnage that ensues.

Marvellously told stories full of British colonial mannerisms and allusions that develop into more modern thought. As he confronts his own shortcomings, Bastable interacts with others during his travels. Beginning as a prig, he is transported from a colonial North East Frontier to a parallel version, but not under the British Raj, which he finds confusing but finally accepts, only to be further flung to other worlds as fate moves him. He soon learns he has become a nomad within the time streams, linking with others who know better how to manipulate this fate, finally accepting the confrontations he lives through.

This is Volume six in Moorcock's Eternal Champions series that are being published in this format for the first time. Well worth reading (or re-reading if you remember the originals) particularly in this format with the additional dialogue. Excellent.

ISLAND AND EMPIRE BOOK ONE: DARK FIRE by Jonathan Wylie Corgi, 333pp, £3.99, p/b

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

I have to confess to being a little disappointed in this book yet I don't wish to condemn it by any means. Let me try and explain. Firstly, there are some good, innovative ideas in this volume of the kind that makes you believe that the author genuinely wishes to surprise the reader and is unhappy doing what other fantasy writers do - churn out the same tired story with just the names changed. Wylie has tried to produce something fresh and interesting.

Much of the story centres around the island of Zaly which is in thrall to the Xantic Empire. The governor of the island is Farrag, a totally evil b\*st\*rd, and unobvious with it. The events related here begin when Bowen is arrested by Farrag on his wedding day and shipped off to the capital as a hostage. His bride, Gaye, though blinded as a result of the events that took Bowen from her, has a chance to develop the powers that become key to the revolt being planned by Dsordas, the lover of her sister Fen. Another strand of the story involves Ifryn, the wife of Emperor Southan III, who, after ten years of marriage has just given birth to an heir. She is the gentle heart of the empire, but facing her is Verkho, the Chancellor who has ambitions to control the empire.

Somehow though, the book does not quite hit the mark. Perhaps it is the long and intrusive chapter recounting the early life and rise of Verkho; or maybe the sketchy development of the relationship between Ifryn and her champion, Kerrell Adjeman. Perhaps the characters of Fen, Gaye, Dsordas and the rest of their family are not explored in enough depth. Certainly, the elements that make this story unique are underplayed, we do not see enough of the deviousness of Verkho, or the powers that underpin this world. Above all, there are insufficient contrasts, the nasty is not nasty enough, the emotions are not strong enough and the mysteries tantalise but do not compel. By far the most intriguing parts, though, are the snippets which begin each chapter. Hopefully, these will be brought more to the forefront in the next volume.

JOHNNY AND THE DEAD by Terry Pratchett Doubleday, 173 pp, £9.99, h/b

Reviewed by Tony Morton.

Another tale involving Johnny Maxwell first met in *ONLY YOU CAN SAVE MANKIND*, along with his mates. In this a prestige new office development is to be built on the local graveyard to which the, er, "residents" object. However, being dead they have trouble getting their views across. It transpires that only Johnny can see and hear them, so the dead use him as their intermediary.

A strange idea for a novel that includes all the usual Pratchett humour, but that somehow fails to meet expectations. Not that the overall effect disappoints, it just somehow lacks the sparkle I have come to expect from Pratchett. Johnny, as the main character and hero, provides ample material - as does his interaction with both his friends and the dead. I liked both "sections" ie the "live" bits culminating with the public meeting and the "dead" bits where the dead realise their potential. However they don't seem to blend particularly well, only relying on Johnny and reaction to him as the foil - such as when he seems to talk to thin air.

I presume we will meet Johnny Maxwell in further adventures, as he seems to be developing into a series hero, and I await the next story to see if this one proves (as I expect) only a blip.

#### THE CUTTING EDGE

by Terry Murray (story) and Jeff Anderson (art) Lion, no page numbers, £3.99, Graphic Novel

Reviewed by Chris Morgan.

Here's a graphic novel worthy of the name, a fantasy tale imaginatively and atmospherically portrayed. A pity it's book two in a series, so the reader who hasn't read book one will have problems understanding it. It helps if you first read the back-cover blurb, which should have been on page one.

The story is complex, involving a small kingdom, a blind queen, an absent king, an invading army, a mysterious bounty hunter... But the end result isn't as clichéd as you might think. Some of it's told in flashback. Generally it's cleverly and subtly drawn, though there are a couple of places where the viewpoint changes without warning, so that the boxes indicating one character's thoughts now, suddenly, indicate another character's thoughts - just a trifle confusing. At its best, the artwork is extremely good, though it's patchy, with a few too many hackneyed approaches and overused dramatic angles.

# BRUM GROUP NEWS

June 1993

Issue 261

The monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group  
(Honorary Presidents: Brian W Aldiss & Harry Harrison)

GROUP CHAIRMAN - TONY MORTON, SECRETARY - HELENA BOWLES, NEWSLETTER EDITOR - MARTIN TUDOR,  
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ORDINARY MEMBER - MICK EVANS, NOVA CON 23 CHAIRMAN - CAROL MORTON.

## HARRY HARRISON

will be addressing a **SPECIAL MEETING**

on Friday the 11th June 1993 7.45 for 8.00pm

Admittance: Members £2.50 Visitors £3.75

(Half-price admission for 14-18 year-olds on production of  
proof of age and at the discretion of the Treasurer.)

Harry Harrison was born in Stamford, Connecticut on 12 March 1925, he was educated at art schools in New York before going on to serve in the US Army Air Corps during World War II. He worked as a freelance commercial artist, edited SF IMPULSE and FANTASTIC and won the Nebula award in 1973. In addition to the many works under his own name, Harry has written under the names of Felix Boyd, Leslie Charteris and Hank Dempsey. His most popular characters remain BILL, THE GALACTIC HERO and Slippery Jim DiGriz, THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT.

Amongst his many works feature such classics as the Deathworld trilogy (which deals with ecological concerns), MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM! (which depicts the problems of over-population and was adapted to the screen as SOYLENT GREEN) and the WEST OF EDEN trilogy (which illustrated the problems faced when two intelligent races meet, the case in point being dinosaurs and humanity). One of the BSFG's honorary presidents, Harry has entertained the Group on several occasions, most recently when he was invited as a guest of honour at Twentycon.

*[Many thanks to 20th CENTURY SF WRITERS, THIRD EDITION (St James Press, £85.00) for much of the above information.]*

The BSFG meets at 7.45pm on the 3rd Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) in the upstairs function room of the White Lion, corner of Thorp Street and Horsefair/Bristol Street in Birmingham city centre. The annual subscription rates (which include twelve copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to meetings) are £9.00 per person, or £12.00 for 2 members at the same address. Cheques etc. payable to "the Birmingham Science Fiction Group", via the treasurer Richard Standage at meetings or by post c/o Bernie Evans (address below). Book reviews and review copies should be sent to the reviews editor Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH (tel: 021 558 0997). All other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to: Martin Tudor, 845 Alum Rock Road, Birmingham, B8 2AG (tel: 021 327 3023).