

# BRUM GROUP NEWS

October 1993

Issue 265

*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, NOVACON 23 CHAIRMAN - CAROL MORTON.

This month's speaker is

## **BRIAN W ALDISS**

Friday 15th September 1993 7.45 for 8.00pm

Admittance: Members £2.50 Visitors £3.75

(half-price for 14-18 year olds on production of proof of age)

Brian Wilson Aldiss was born in East Dereham, Norfolk, on 18 August 1925. Following his education at Framlingham College, Suffolk and West Buckland School he served in the Royal Signals in the Far East. Since then he has worked as a bookseller in Oxford, literary editor of the *Oxford Mail*, science fiction editor of Penguin Books and art correspondent at the *Guardian*.

There is not enough space here to even begin to list Brian's works, or indeed to begin to list the honours he has received. Author of *GREYBEARD*, *BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD*, *FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND* and the Helliconia Trilogy amongst many others, he has received two Hugos, a Nebula, a Ditmar and two BSFA awards - to name but a few. A popular speaker at conventions the world over, Brian was guest of honour at Novacon 12.

*{Many thanks to TWENTIETH-CENTURY SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS, third edition, for the above information.}*

*Please note our venue is the recently refurbished  
upstairs Function Room of THE AUSTRALIAN BAR  
(corner of Hurst Street and Bromsgrove Street in Birmingham city centre).*

The BSFG meets at 7.45pm on the 3rd Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) in the upstairs Function Room of the Australian Bar, corner of Hurst Street and Bromsgrove 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 (although it would help if they were *on time* next month Bernie!), ROG PEYTON, DAVE HOLMES, LINDA KRAWECKE, STEVE GREEN and CRITICAL WAVE for the news in the Jophan Report and Events listing, TONY BERRY for the use of his spare room and RICHARD STANDAGE and HELENA BOWLES for the use of their PCW.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

4-16 OCTOBER 1993: *RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET* by Bob Carlton at the Birmingham Hippodrome, Hurst Street. Monday to Friday 7.30pm and Saturday 8.30pm. Tickets Monday-Thursday £16.50, £14.00, £11.50, £9, £7.50, Friday and Saturday £18.50, £15.50, £12.50, £10.00, £8.50. Wednesday 2pm all seats £8.50 and Saturday 4pm all seats £12.50. Call the Box Office on 021 622 7486.

15 OCTOBER 1993: BRIAN W ALDISS will be speaking to the Brum Group, 7.45pm for 8.00pm, at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street.

16 OCTOBER 1993: GERRY ANDERSON will be signing copies of *FAB FACTS* (paperback, £5.99) at Andromeda, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, from noon. The book goes behind the scenes

of Anderson's popular *THUNDERBIRDS* tv series. Call 021 643 1999 for further details.

16 OCTOBER 1993: *STARFLEET BATTLES* the *STAR TREK* role-playing game from Taskforce will be demonstrated at Magic Labyrinth, Rutland Street, Leicester, from 11.00am. Lots of prizes, competitions etc. Call 0533-518178 for further details.

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 £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).

6 NOVEMBER 1993: TERRY PRATCHETT will be signing at Andromeda, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham. Call 021 643 1999 for further details.

10 NOVEMBER 1993: ROBERT JORDAN will be signing at Magic Labyrinth, Rutland Street, Leicester, from 5.00pm. Call 0533-518178 for further details.

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).

11 NOV 1993 - 29 JAN 1994: *PETER PAN* adapted & directed by Anna Farthing at the MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Tickets on sale now £4.95 (£3.95 concessions) call 021 440 3838.

12-14 NOVEMBER 1993: ARMADACON V sf/fantasy con at the Astor Hotel, Elliot Street, The Hoe, Plymouth. Attending £20.00 (one day £10.00) to 4 Gleneagle Avenue, Mannamead, Plymouth, PL3 5HL (tel: 0752 267873).

19 NOVEMBER 1993: DEBATE: "This house believes that science fiction is a man's game." Proposer Mike Ibeji, Seconder Miss Elizabeth J Thacker (of the Birmingham University SF & F Society). Representatives of the Brum Group have not yet been selected.

If you would be interested in representing the BSFG in this debate please call Tony or Carol Morton on 0384-897206 before 8.00pm. As usual the meeting will be held at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street, 7.45pm for 8.00pm.

## BEER & SKITTLES

Finally, after only a year's worth of adverts in the newsletter, we have received enough enquiries about a Beer & Skittles evening to make the event viable. Unfortunately while we have been busy trying to drum up sufficient interest in the event the pub we were planning to use has changed hands. So if YOU know of a pub with a skittle alley that also does good food and good beer please contact HELENA BOWLES on (021) 558 7591 as soon as possible. If we can find a suitable, available venue we plan to hold the Beer & Skittles evening on Saturday, 27 November.

19-21 NOVEMBER 1993: MIDCON the longest established major games convention in this country, at the Royal Angus hotel, Birmingham (their eleventh year there). It will once again host the finals of the National Diplomacy Championship, sponsored by Gibsons Games. As well as a Subbuteo Tournament, the MidCon Quiz, and lots of games. (Last year's con included such games as 18xx, Civilisation, History of

the World, Conquest Europa, Britannia, Acquire, Railway Rivals, Republic of Rome, Speed Circuit, Modern Art, Axis & Allies and Quo Vadis?) Attending membership costs £10.00 to "MidCon", Brian Williams, 30 Rydding Lane, Millfields Estate, West Bromwich, B71 2HA.

22-27 NOVEMBER 1993: *THE INVISIBLE MAN* following a hugely successful run in the West End this sinister story of a tormented, twisted and transparent scientist will be retold at the Alexandra Theatre, Suffolk St., Birmingham. Tickets £6.00-£14.50, tel 633 3325.

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.

6 DEC 1993 - 29 JAN 1994: *THE SNOWMAN* the world premiere of a new stage presentation of Raymond Briggs' children's classic, specifically adapted for the Birmingham Repertory Theatre Company by Anthony Clark, featuring the original and extended score by Howard Blake. Call the Birmingham Rep Box Office on 021 236 6771.

17 DECEMBER 1993: BRUM GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY, 7.45pm for 8.00pm at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street.

21 JANUARY 1994: BSFG AGM & AUCTION, 7.45pm for 8.00pm at the Australian Bar, Hurst Street/Bromsgrove Street.

4-6 MARCH 1994: MASQUE III the third British costume convention, Shakis Victoria Hotel, Nottingham. Membership until 30 December 1993 is £20.00 attending, £5.00 supporting. Contact: c/o Mike Percival, 4 Ednaston Court, Yeldersley Lane, Ednaston, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 3BA.

25-27 MARCH 1994: TREK DWARF II combined STAR TREK/RED DWARF convention at the Holiday Inn, Leicester. Attending £30.00. Contact 47 Marsham, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5RN.

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 6 free, age 6-12 half-price. Contact: Alfons J Maes, Zandkapelweg 18, B-2200 Noorderwijk, Belgium.

27-30 MAY 1994: INCONCEIVABLE. Second 'humour' con from Octarine, Tudor Court Hotel, Draycott, near Derby. Attending £20.00 (£18.00 for members of Octarine or ZZ9, 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. The rates were 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, Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, Glasgow. Guests of honour Samuel R Delany, Gerry Anderson. Attending £50.00 until 30 September 1993, then £60.00 until 30 September 1994. Supporting and Junior (24.8.80) £15.00, Child (24.8.88) £5.00. Contact: Admail 336, Glasgow, G2 1BR, Scotland.

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.*

## REPORTS ON PREVIOUS MEETINGS

by Steve Jones

### JUNE - LOUISE COOPER

At our regular June meeting, Louise Cooper told us how she decided to become a writer at school after one of her stories gave a teacher nightmares. C.S. Lewis' "Narnia" books were a major influence on her early attempts, followed by Michael Moorcock's *STORMBRINGER. THE INITIATE*, first in the "Time-master" trilogy, was her first successful book.

Louise read us an extract from *THE INITIATE* in which the sorcerer Tarod faces death from a lethal drug and the machinations of the Gods. She confessed to a chaotic workstyle in which such things as regular times for writing played no part.

Finally Louise told us about the "Heirs of Tolkein" publicity tour she did with Rob Holdstock and Mike Jeffries. Highlights included being asked "Which of you is Tolkein?" and bring given a copy of *THE HOBBIT* to sign.

### JUNE SPECIAL - HARRY HARRISON

At this special meeting Harry Harrison entertained us with his usual reams of anecdotes. It is impossible to summarise this sort of talk, but if the writing stops paying Harry has a promising career ahead of him as a stand-up comedian.

Harry's latest books are *THE TURING OPTION* and *THE HAMMER AND THE CROSS*, with *THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT SINGS THE BLUES* due out next March. The hardback may have a cassette of the songs with it!

*THE TURING OPTION* is a techno-thriller, co-authored by Marvin Minsky, the computer expert. It is set in 2020, with the main characters a robot and a computer-augmented human.

*THE HAMMER AND THE CROSS* came from a statement by Gore Vidal that "Christianity was one of the worst things that ever happened to Western civilisation". What if Alfred the Great had lost, and the Danes had overrun England instead of being converted to Christianity? The story is set a few years later in this now pagan England.

Finally, Harry promised to stop drinking - except of course for alcohol.

## JOPHAN REPORT #67

by Martin Tudor

The Brum Group's own Bernie Evans is delighted to announce she will be leaving the Midlands Electricity Board on 29 October, having finally negotiated her voluntary redundancy package and taken early retirement. Incredulous friends have been told her plans are to start cooking, doing the housework and becoming more active in fandom, at which point husband Mick succumbed to a prolonged fit of hysterical laughter.

The 1993 British Fantasy award winners announced at Fantasycon on 3 October were: Best Novel *DARK SISTER* by Graham Joyce; Best Semi-Prozine *PEEPING TOM*; Best Artist Jim Pitts; Lifetime Achievement Michael Moorcock.

The Christmas 1993 catalogue of *Encounters* book club launches a new look and name to emphasis the change of direction the club has been undergoing over the last few months. The *Fantasy & SF Book Club*, as it is now called, will be concentrating on bringing more fiction than ever before to its members.

The Editor's Choice in the Christmas edition offers a choice of David Gemmell's *DRUSS THE LEGEND* (club price £9.99) and *THE HAND OF CHAOS* by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman (club price £8.99). In the same catalogue members are offered William Gibson's *VIRTUAL LIGHT* (£10.99), *WARREN PEACE* by Bob Shaw (£9.99), David Gemmell's *LEGEND* graphic novel (£7.49), Piers Anthony's *HARPY THYME* (£10.99), Ian Watson's *LUCKY'S HARVEST* (£10.99), *THE PEACE WAR* and *MAROOINED IN REAL-TIME* by Vernor Vinge in one volume entitled *ACROSS REALTIME* (£9.99), *CALIBAN* by Isaac Asimov and Roger MacBride Allen (£9.99), Michael Crichton's *JURASSIC PARK* (£8.99) as well as numerous others. Of course, most of the above are Book Club editions in hardback.

Further information is available from the *Fantasy & SF Book Club*, Guild House, Farnsby Street, Swindon X, SN99 9XX.

Better late than never I have the full Hugo award winners: Andrew Porter's *SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE* scored a surprize victory in the 1993 Hugo Awards, ousting Charles Brown's *LOCUS* from the "best semi-prozine" category at the ceremony held in San Francisco's Moscone Convention Center on 5 September.

Although Brown, who has won 17 Hugos since 1971, received 183 first place votes against Porter's 167, he failed to get an immediate majority; by the time the other three nominees were dropped out and residual votes reallocated, Porter's total had grown to 274, beating Brown by one vote.

The shock announcement at ConFrancisco, the fifty-first world science fiction convention, may prove a turning point for the news coverage in *LOCUS*, which has previously ignored the existence of other newszines such as *SFC* and *CRITICAL WAVE*.

In the "best novel" category, the award was announced as a tie between Vernor Vinge's *A FIRE UPON THE DEEP*, published by Tor in the US and Millenium in the UK, and Connie Willis' *DOOMSDAY BOOK*, published by Bantam in the US and by NEL in the UK.

Again, the final result evolved as other nominees dropped out; Vinge initially led by 196 votes to 185, but the two books eventually drew with a total of 311. It is only the second time in the history of the Hugos that the "best novel" category has been split, the first being in 1966 between Roger Zelazny's *THIS IMMORTAL* (originally published in *FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION* as "...And Call Me Conrad") and Frank Herbert's *DUNE*. Willis had more singular success in the "best short story" category, however, with "Even the Queen", published by *ASIMOV'S* in April 1992.

In the following list, the winner(s) in each category are shown in bold type. A total of 397 nominating ballots were cast for the 1993 Hugo Awards, with "original art" the easiest category to get into, needing just nine nominations. The winners were decided by a total of 841 valid ballots, counted and verified by the Hugo administrators, David Bratman and Seth Goldberg, aided by a computer program developed by Jeffrey L Copeland.

**Best Novel** (40,000+ words): *A FIRE UPON THE DEEP*, Vernor Vinge; *DOOMSDAY BOOK*, Connie Willis; *CHINA MOUNTAIN ZHANG*, Maureen F McHugh; *RED MARS*, Kim Stanley Robinson; *STEEL BEACH*, John Varley. **Best Novella** (17,500-40,000 words): "Barnacle Bill the Spacer", Lucius Shepard; "Uh-Oh City", Jonathan Carroll; "The Territory", Bradley Denton; "Stopping at Slowyear", Frederik Pohl; "Protection", Maureen F McHugh.

**Best Novelette** (7,500-17,500 words): "The Nutcracker Coup", Janet Kagan; "True Faces", Pat Cadigan; "In the Stone House", Barry N Malzberg; "Danny Goes to Mars", Pamela Sargent; "Suppose They Gave a Peace...", Susan Shwartz. **Best Short Story** (under 7,500 words): "Even the Queen", Connie Willis; "The

Winterberry"; Nicholas A DiChario ; "The Mountain to Mohammed", Nancy Kress ; "The Lotus and the Spear", Mike Resnick ; "The Arbitrary Placement of Walls", Martha Soukup.

**Best Non-Fiction Book** (a non-fiction work whose subject is the field of sf, fantasy or fendom): **A WEALTH OF FABLE: An Informal History of SF Fandom in the 50s**, Harry Warner Jr ; **ENTERPRISING WOMEN: TV FANDOM AND THE CREATION OF POPULAR MYTH**, Camille Bacon-Smith ; **THE COSTUMEMAKER'S ART**, ed. Thom Boswell ; **VIRGIL FINLAY'S WOMEN OF THE AGES ; MONAD #2**, ed. Damon Knight ; **LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE DEAF MAN**, Dave Langford, ed. Ben Yalow.

**Best Semiprozine** (a generally available non-professional publication, devoted to science fiction or fantasy, which had published four or more issues, at least one of them in 1992, and met at least two of the following criteria in 1992 - [a] had an average press run of at least 1,000 copies per issue, [b] paid its contributors or staff in other than copies of the publication, [c] provided at least half the income of any one person, [d] had at least 15% of its total space occupied by advertising, or [e] announced itself to be a "semiprozine"): **SF CHRONICLE ; THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF SF ; FULPHOUSE ; INTERZONE ; LOCUS**.

**Best Professional Editor** (the editor of a publication devoted to sf or fantasy, with an average press run of at least 10,000 copies per issue): **Gardner Dozois ; Ellen Datlow ; Beth Meacham ; Kristine Kathryn Rusch ; Stanley Schmidt**.

**Best Fanzine** (a generally available non-professional publication devoted to science fiction, fantasy or related subjects, which published four or more issues, at least one in 1992, and which does not qualify as a semiprozine): **MIMOSA ; FILE 770 ; FOSFAX ; LAN'S LANTERN ; STET**. **Best Fan Writer** (a person whose writing has been published in semiprozines, fanzines or generally available electronic media): **Dave Langford ; Mike Glycer ; Andy Hooper ; Harry Warner Jr ; Evelyn C Leeper**. This was the second successive Hugo for **MIMOSA**, edited by Dick and Nicki Lynch, and the eighth since 1985 for Dave Langford.

**Best Original Artwork**: **DINOTOPIA**, James Gurney ; **ARISTOI** (cover), Jim Burns ; **FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION** (Oct/Nov 1992, cover), Ron Walotsky ; **ILLUSION** (cover), Michael Whelan ; **ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE** (Nov 1992, cover), Michael Whelan ; Boris Vallejo declined his nomination in this category. **Best Professional Artist**: **Don Maitz ; Thomas Canty ; Bob Eggleton ; David A Cherry ; James Gurney ; Michael Whelan** declined his nomination in this category. **Best Fan Artist**

(an artist or cartoonist whose work appeared in semiprozines, fanzines, or was publically displayed in 1992): **Peggy Ranson ; Teddy Harvia ; Merle Insinga ; Linda Michaels ; Stu Shiffman ; Diane Harlan Stein**.

**Best Dramatic Presentation** (a production, in any medium, of dramatized sf or fantasy, which was publicly presented in its present dramatic form for the first time in 1992 ; individual episodes or programs in a series were eligible, but a series as a whole was not ; however, a sequence of instalments constituting a single dramatic unit may be considered to be a single programme): **"The Inner Light"**, an episode from the fifth season of **STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION ; ALADDIN ; ALIEN<sup>3</sup> ; BATMAN RETURNS ; BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA**. This is only the second time a tv series has won this category since the rules were changed in the 1960s to specify that a particular episode must be named ; the previous occasion was in 1967, when "City on the Edge of Forever" won it for the original **STAR TREK**.

The ConFrancisco committee had also intended to present a "Best Translator" Hugo, but this category was dropped from the final ballot due to lack of interest. A special committee award was presented to Takumi Shibano, however, "for building bridges between cultures and nations to advance science fiction and fantasy". The toastmaster was author Guy Gavriel Kay.

Although not actually a Hugo Award, the John W Campbell Award for the best new sf writer of 1991-92 was also presented during the Hugo ceremony to Laura Resnick. The other nominees were Barbara Delaplace, Nicholas A DiChario, Holly Lisle, Carrie Richerson and Michelle Sagara.

Bratman and Goldberg later issued a statement noting their regret that voting figures had decreased since 1992, but hoped the results of the "best novel", "best semiprozine" and "best fan artist" (decided by a margin of two votes) would persuade more fans to cast their votes in the 1994 ballot, the results of which will be announced at Canadian in Winnipeg next September.

Nicholas Royle's first novel, **COUNTERPARTS**, was released by Barrington Books on 30 September. As well as marking Royle's debut as a novelist after more than 60 short stories, it's also the small press imprint's first novel, following the anthologies **THE SUN RISES RED** and **SUGAR SLEEP**.

**DARKLANDS**, the anthology which Royle edited and published two volumes of after industry disinterest, finally got a mass-

market edition on 7 October from New English Library, which may commission a further volume given favourable sales of the £4.99 paperback. Meanwhile, Royle features in *THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR STORIES*, *THE YEAR'S BEST FANTASY & HORROR* and *BEST NEW HORROR*, "the first time I've been in all three in the same year, and with three different stories."

*DRABBLE WHO*, the third fundraising anthology of 100-word stories, was published on 4 September, with Jon Pertwee, Sophie Aldred, Steve Gallagher and Nicholas Royle among the contributors. Copies cost £8.99 (plus 75p postage in the UK) from Becon Publications, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG.

As with previous volumes, all profits and royalties will be donated to the RNIB Talking Book Library. More than £2000 has been raised to date, enough to fund four talking books.

Virgin marks the thirtieth anniversary of *DOCTOR WHO* this November with the publication on 16 October of *DOCTOR WHO: TIME-FRAME* by David J Howe, a £15.99 hardback charting the tv show's history through news clippings, stills and book covers.

Howe is also the co-author with Mark Stammers and Stephen James Walker of *DOCTOR WHO: THE SIXTIES*, which was reissued by Virgin on 16 September, priced £9.99.

For those who worry about such matters, the American book dealer Barry R Levin has acknowledged the British BCA book club release of Isaac Asimov's *FORWARD THE FOUNDATION* as the true world first edition, appearing on 15 February; the Doubleday edition shipped to American stores on 5 March.

Meanwhile, he reports that author Harlan Ellison has solved the mystery of Doubleday's omission of the standard "first edition" notation from its copyright page. It appears Doubleday sold the rights to that "honour" to Easton Press, but Asimov was too ill to sign either the Easton contract or any of the sheets for its autographed edition. As a result, Easton abandoned its plans, but Doubleday neglected to reset its copyright page.

*GHOSTS & SCHOLARS* #16, due out just in time for the Ghost Story Society's convention this Halloween, will feature an unfinished and previously unpublished story by M R James, which ends abruptly after approximately 5000 words and - according to G&S editor Rosemary Pardoe - "is in some ways a forerunner to 'Mr

Humphreys and His Inheritance', but includes numerous extremely effective scenes never reproduced there or elsewhere".

Copies cost £2.50 (UK only; overseas copies are £2.70 or US\$5.00) from the Haunted Library, Flat One, 36 Hamilton Street, Hoole, Chester, CH2 3JQ.

Fans of Japanese animation should check out the latest issue of *CRITICAL WAVE* (#32, September 1993, £1.95 from me at 845 Alum Rock Road, Birmingham, B8 2AG) as it features extensive coverage of the animé phenomenon. It is also worthwhile picking up a copy of Helen McCarthy's *ANIMÉ! A BEGINNER'S GUIDE*, just published by Titan, price £6.99.

For make-up enthusiasts, Titan offers Mark Salisbury and Alan Hedgcock's *BEHIND THE MASK: SECRETS OF HOLLYWOOD'S MONSTER MAKERS* on 15 November, price £8.99. Sadly, Britain's leading small press journal on the subject, *FX*, has ceased publication following co-editor Ade Banton's relocation to the United States.

Nuclear holocausts provide the theme for the seventh of Steve Sneyd's "data dumps" covering the history of sf poetry; copies cost 30p from Hilltop Press, 4 Nowell Place, Almondsbury, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD5 8PB.

The Peterborough-based imprint Anchor Books seeks material for a volume of poetry inspired by sf films and telefantasy. For further information, send a reply-paid envelope to Helen McNally at Anchor Books, 1-2 Wainman Road, Woodston, Peterborough.

The Kent & Sussex Poetry Society's open poetry competition closes on 31 January, with a top prize of £300. Full details can be obtained from 8 Edward Street, Southborough, Kent, TN4 0HP.

The writer and illustrator Chico Kidd has abandoned plans for a second issue of his fiction magazine *PICATRIX*, but reports his decision was "due to lack of time rather than lack of interest. If it does appear, it will not be until late next year, as this year's small press project is my own fifth anthology."

*THE DOOMED PLANET*, the conclusion of L Ron Hubbard's epic 10-volume "Mission Earth" series, is now out in softback, priced £4.99. Hubbard, who died in 1986, also founded the controversial Scientology movement; his life is chronicled in Russell Miller's unauthorized biography *BARE-FACED MESSIAH*.

Ramsey Campbell, Jonathan Aycliffe, Michael Cox and Robert Westall will be among the guests of the Ghost Story Society's first convention, appropriately being held over the Halloween weekend of 30-31 October at the Chester Euromill Hotel.

For full details, send a reply-paid envelope to Barbara and Christopher Roden at "Ashcroft", 2 Abbottsford Drive, Penyffordd, Chester, CH4 0JG (for fans of Sherlock Holmes fans, this is also the contact address for the Arthur Conan Doyle Society).

The success of the role-playing convention Furrycon '93 has prompted the organizers to run a fourth event next May at the Old Ship Hotel, Brighton.

Membership will cost £10.00 for gamers (rising to £12.00 after 30 September), £1.00 for non-gamers, payable to SFC Press at 42 Wynnendale Road, London, E18 1DX.

Interested in *STAR WARS*? Founded in 1984, the Moons of Yavin seeks active fans of George Lucas' sf trilogy to attend meetings, correspond and contribute to its bimonthly *STAR WARS* newsletter, *TELESPONDER*. For further details, send a reply-paid envelope to 34 Hammerton Road, Bottesford, Scunthorpe, DN17 2SB.

Meanwhile, the UK *STAR WARS* Fan Club runs its own quarterly newsletter and sends a selection of three colour prints to new members. For more information, send a reply-paid envelope to 8 Victoria Close, Thornbury, Bristol, Avon, BS12 1JE.

The second *TREK DWARF* convention will be held on 25-27 March 1994 at Leicester's Holiday Inn. Membership is £30.00, payable to 47 Marsham, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5RN.

For those who can't wait till March, a minicon for fans of *STAR TREK* and *RED DWARF* will be held at Peterborough's St John's Hall on 27 November; entry will cost £8.00 (etc.). A *STAR TREK* minicon was scheduled for the same venue on 28 August, with a guest appearance from the actor David Warner.

Meanwhile, the Peterborough SF Club plans to celebrate its eighteenth birthday in style next May, with an evening honouring local fantasy publishers Dedalus. For further details, write to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 ORB.

Vibraphone, the Sixth British Filk Convention, has announced the singers Tellis Kimberley and Tom Smith, plus filking comics creator Fox, as its guests of honour.

The event is being held at Brighton's Oak Hotel over the weekend of 4-6 February 1994. Attending membership is £22.00 (unwaged, £18.00), rising to £27.00 (£23.00) on 1 December, with supporting and children's membership fixed at £8.00; the room rate is £25.00 per person for twin/double rooms, £35.00 for singles. For further information, send a reply-paid envelope to 2 Duncan Gate, London Road, Bromley, London, BR1 3SG.

Corflu Nova (as in Northern VA), aka Corflu 11, will be held 20-22 May 1994, just across the Potomac from Washington, DC, in Arlington, Virginia, in the Crystal Gateway Marriott hotel.

A special feature of the con will be the revival of the Faan (Fanzine Activity Achievement) Awards. Further details from: Corflu Nova, c/o 4030 8th Street S., Arlington, VA 22204, USA.

Named after a short story by Arthur Gray, the Everlasting Club is a new amateur press association for ghost story fans, run by the Haunted Library's Rosemary Pardoe. Members agree to contribute at least 10 A4 pages (or reduced equivalent) of typescript per year, although there is no obligation on them to submit material to every monthly mailing.

Although there is no rule strictly prohibiting fiction, the thrust of the association is the discussion ("both scholarly and light-hearted") of the ghost story genre. Interested fans should send a reply-paid envelope to Rosemary Pardoe at the Haunted Library, Flat One, 36 Hamilton Street, Hoole, Chester, CH2 3JQ.

Wincon III has announced that rates for attending membership will rise from £20.00 to £23.00 after Novacon 23, and the supporting rates from £13.00 to £16.00, although the conversion cost will be fixed at £7.00.

Among the events will be a special screening of low-budget horror and science fiction videos; anyone interested in contributing material should contact Steve Green at 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7LQ.

Space Central is a new Tamworth-based group for Midlands *STAR TREK* fans; for details, call Lee Sansome on 0827-64911.

Transylvania '94, the second convention organized by the *ROCKY HORROR SHOW* club Timewarp, will be held on 29 October 1994 at the Hammersmith Novotel, London. Attending membership costs £20.00 until 31 December,



rising to £25.00 until 31 May and then to £30.00 (cheques should be accompanied by four reply-paid envelopes). For details of the convention or of Timewarp itself (which costs £7.50/year to join), write to 1 Elm Grove, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9HE.

A £30M remake of the classic sf thriller *THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT* is to lead off the relaunch of Hammer Studios, with filming due to begin in January, split between Los Angeles and London. The deal has been worked out between Roy Skeggs, the current owner, and the American group Warner Brothers.

Other plans include a 44-part anthology tv series, *HAUNTED HOUSE OF HAMMER*, a remake of *THE DEVIL RIDES OUT* and an original film project, *HIDEOUS WHISPERS*, to be directed by Richard Donner, linked into the deal via Donner/Shuler-Donner Productions.

Although there's no firm news yet of the mooted *SUPERMAN V*, Lorimar has brought the Man of Steel back to US television screens in *CLARK AND LOIS*; the series premiered on 9 September, with Dean Cain in the lead.

With *JURASSIC PARK* available on Sega Mega Drive since 6 September, and the Game Gear and Master System software due in October and November respectively, Ocean's working on an autumn release for its Nintendo SNES version.

Meanwhile, Virgin taps into two successful film series with its November release of *ROBOCOP Vs PREDATOR* on Mega Drive.

Pirate copies of *JURASSIC PARK* were available on the US market within two weeks of its theatrical release; studio heads believe the tapes were made using a camcorder aimed at a cinema screen. Director Stephen Spielberg, meanwhile, was busy at the launch of the \$60M attraction *BACK TO THE FUTURE: THE RIDE*; also present were stars Michael J Fox and Mary Steenburgen.

Veteran telefantasy producer Gerry Anderson guested on the ITV children's show *THE PIG ATTRACTION* on 3 June, discussing his early puppet series. Anderson was joined by Christine Glanville, supervising puppeteer on such shows as *THUNDERBIRDS*, originally known as *INTERNATIONAL RESCUE*, and *CAPTAIN SCARLET*, which Glanville revealed had modelled its hero on Sean Connery.

First Independent releases Brett Leonard's director's cut of *THE LAWNMOWER MAN* on 25 October, with an additional 38 minutes

of footage; a boxed set will also be available, including a set of limited-edition colour prints. A widescreen version of the film will also be released this autumn.

Merryl Futerman has been placed in charge of publicity for HarperCollins' sf/fantasy lists; she succeeds Carole Jones, but the post appears to have been downgraded to a part-time position (Mondays and Tuesdays, on 081-741-7070 x4662).

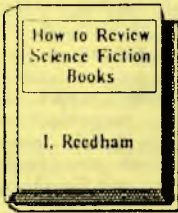
The poet Roger Woddis, who scripted "Hammer Into Anvil" for the tv series *THE PRISONER*, died in July, aged 76, whilst August saw the death of James Donald, Andrew Keir's co-star in the film version of *QUATERMASS AND THE PIT*, and Fred Gwynne, "Herman" in *THE MUNSTERS* and the necromancing neighbour in *PET SEMETARY*.

The horror writer Stephen Laws has added his support to politicians and journalists on the anti-violence bandwagon, calling on fellow authors to offer a more upbeat message in their books. "Optimistic horror," Laws explains in publicity material accompanying his novel *GIDEON*, "is fiction that addresses how people face up to their worst fears made real, and by drawing on inner resources are able to combat them."

Sally-Ann Melia has asked me to apologise on her behalf for the fact that she has failed to make it to the last couple of meetings. Unfortunately she's finding it a bit far to travel from her new address at 3 The Square, Broughton-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA20 6SF. She also mentioned that her interview with Simon Green appeared in July's *INTERZONE*.

Recently released from Paper Tiger at £12.95 (limpack) is *21st CENTURY VISIONS* by Derek Meddings and Sam Mitchell which describes and illustrates how Meddings produced the fantastic vehicles which appeared in such shows as *THUNDERBIRDS*, *STINGRAY*, *CAPTAIN SCARLET*, *FIREBALL XL4*, *SUPERCAR* and *UFO*. Also recently published by Paper Tiger was *HORRIPILATIONS: THE ART OF JK POTTER* again at £12.95 (limpack).

Two more titles from Paper Tiger, due to be published in the spring of 1994, are *MERMAIDS AND OTHER VISIONS* with text by Nigel Suckling and featuring the artwork of David Delamere (£12.95, limpack) and *THE ART OF DANNY FLYNN* which features Flynn's much acclaimed sf art and an introduction by Arthur C Clarke.



# Book Reviews

MURASAKI edited by Robert Silverberg  
Grafton, 290 pp, £5.99, "C" format

Reviewed by Steve Jones.

In 1985 Harlan Ellison edited *MEDEA*, a shared-world anthology set on a planet which had been worked out in great detail by a panel of scientists. *MURASAKI* is based on a similar idea from Robert Silverberg, but with an underlying story, which explains why it is subtitled "A Novel in Six Parts" rather than "A Shared-world Anthology". Poul Anderson and Frederick Pohl did the initial world design, and then invitations were sent out to every Nebula Award winner for stories, which seems a bit elitist but cuts down on the paperwork.

Anderson and Pohl wrote the original stories, and then passed it all to David Brin (whose section appears second) and then to Gregory Benford, Greg Bear and finally to Nancy Kress.

Murasaki is a red dwarf star about twenty light years from Earth. It was first investigated by a robot probe in 2216, and by a manned expedition in 2265. As all travel is at sublight speeds there has to be something pretty interesting about the destination to make it worth the expense and twenty-five years travel time. In the Murasaki system there are two life-bearing planets with a total of three sentient species.

"The Treasure of Chujo" by Frederick Pohl is about the first meeting with the enigmatic inhabitants of the desert world of Chujo. "Genji" by David Brin is an effective ecological fable set on the water world Genji, where the Irdizdu prove quite capable of making the same mistakes as humans. "Language" by Poul Anderson introduces the other sentient race on Genji, the aquatic carpet whales. "World Vast, World various" by Gregory Benford and "A Plague of Conscience" by Greg Bear are about genocide on Genji, and an apparent biological warfare attack on the humans by the Chujoans.

I was disappointed in the final story, "Birthing Pool" by Nancy Kress, because her explanation for what has been happening does not seem entirely consistent with the biology

presented earlier. Maybe they should have hired Jack Cohen to check it out. There are excellent line-drawings of some of the weirder creatures, with not a knee or elbow among them.

Finally, I found the type-face used in this book quite eye-straining (the A-format paperback has a friendlier type-face). In spite of this *MURASAKI* is quite an experience, and one which I can recommend to anyone.

A SHADOW ON THE SKIN by Keren Gilfoyle  
Headline, 534 pp, £5.99, p/b

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

This is Keren Gilfoyle's debut novel and is far better than many that masquerade as such. She has managed to avoid most of the pitfalls that some new writers fall into, producing a fantasy that is stylistically competent. It also has some of the qualities that characterise some first novels. It has the feel of being worked on long and lovingly, so much so that the spontaneity of prose that the best experienced writers have isn't there. Hopefully this will be cured in later work when she has less time to agonise over each scene and deadlines to meet.

The thrust of the story concerns the machinations of the Desaignhes family. In their heyday they had strong mental powers and could control others by the force of their will. They were tyrannical and wealthy. Now their abilities are waning due to inbreeding and only Halenne, the last of the Great Ones, recognises that the future of the family lies with the half-breeds which have normally been killed at birth. However, the three of the children of Gulióy Värinss and Sedriaan Desaignhes still survive. Nikleis and Bekhet have been brought up and corrupted by the Family but the youngest, Tobias, has been raised by his mother to deny his inheritance. Factors outside Halenne's control conspire to cause Tobias to flee with his mother back to her home country of Aparissa. Thus begins the chase that continues for most of the book during which Tobias' powers are awakened by an encounter with an energy creature called a litchfire which fuses with him for its own survival.

There are niggling things I dislike about the book. The main character, Tobias is a youth of nineteen but often he acts like a fourteen-year-old. This childish behaviour is fine for his sister Bekhet but does not sit so well on the character we are supposed to have most sympathy with. Also I felt that the litchfires were not alien enough and that the chase across country went on too long. I also wonder why the assumption is (by the

characters at least) that if you have supernatural powers you must, by definition, be evil. These however are my own prejudices and I will certainly look at her next novel with interest.

**INQUISITOR** by Ian Watson  
Boxtrees, 246 pp, £3.99, p/b

Reviewed by Steve Jones.

Warhammer 40,000 is a miniature figure wargame from Games Workshop. "So what", you may be asking, "is Ian Watson doing slumming in the murky world of game novelisations?". In the case of **INQUISITOR** he is doing a damned fine job.

In the far future a new Dark Age is sweeping the galaxy. Even the Epmaror, the most powerful psychic the human race has ever produced, is helpless to stop it. The "purity" of the Imperium is maintained across the light years by the Inquisitors. One Inquisitor, Jaq Draco, discovers a plot at the heart of the Imperium to control everyone with a monstrous psychic "hydra". The perpetrators claim this will save humanity by uniting it, but Draco is not so sure. With his companions Meh'lini the Assassin, Googol the Navigator and Grimm the Squat (!) he pursues the conspirators from the hiveworld of Stalinvast to the Eye of Terror, where the Laws of Nature are more like suggestions, and finally to Earth, the throne-world of the Emperor.

The fun in this book comes from the fact that every single character is a complete maniac, and none of them realise it. As Ian Watson said (quoting from Ansible): "These fictions have a certain integrity because, exactly as in the Warhammer game and books, humanity has throughout history been driven by mas psychoses based on power fantasies.". A stunned silence followed this statement, and then "Yes, but look on the bright side!".

**DANCERS AT THE END OF TIME** by Michael Moorcock  
Millennium, 537 pp, £14.99, h/b

Reviewed by Mick Evans.

Continuing Millennium's omnibus type re-issues of Moorcock's works, this volume, 7th in the series, contains *AN ALIEN HEAT*, *THE HOLLOW LANDS* and *THE END OF ALL SONGS*. Read consecutively, they do read as if they were one long novel, although on reflection I think I would have enjoyed them more had I read them separately, with an interval between each one. I became a little tired halfway through *THE END OF ALL SONGS*, which was a shame as this series impressed me greatly. Written between 1972 and 1976, the novels are

as fresh as vital today as they were then, with enduring ideas which are still turning up in recently written sf novels, such as John Varley's *TITAN*, in which technology is used to create fantasy worlds within worlds.

The main story revolves around Mrs Amelia Underwood and the highly decadent and yet naive Jherek Carnelian, who lives at the End of Time, where anything and everything is possible. Mrs Underwood has mysteriously been thrown forwards in time from Victorian England. Moorcock handles the characters quite superbly as Jherek falls hopelessly in love with Amelia, travels in a time machine to the Victorian era, and is chased by a bunch of very comical aliens, the "Lats". The whole book is very humorous, and Moorcock develops some quite hilarious scenarios around the main characters and events.

This is a delightful work, and is well worth investigating even if (perhaps especially if) you haven't previously been a fan of Moorcock's extensive catalogue of works.

**CALIBAN** by Roger MacBride Allen  
Millennium, 312 pp, £8.99, "C" format

Reviewed by Bernie Evans.

More years ago that I care to remember, Isaac Asimov formulated his Three Laws of Robotics. These Laws were the "what if" of all his robot tales that followed, and still count as a "what if" today, because we still don't have positronic robots incorporating these Laws in their make-up. It is a measure, therefore, of just how we have come to accept these as a given, instead of a "what if", that this new book, based on Asimov's ideas, is centred around the postulate that robots can be made *without* the Three Laws.

The eponymous Caliban is such a robot, intended to be a laboratory experiment but thrown out into the world by circumstance. As the tale progresses we are taken along with the main protagonists through the welter of political intrigue on the planet Inferno, through what can only be described as a lecture on the nature of physical dependence, and the dangers inherent in too much of it. But I'm making it sound boring, and it isn't. It's also an exciting adventure story, an intriguing detective story, and an insight into mental development. As we alternately fear and fear for, sympathise with and are struck with horror by, Caliban and his actions, Allen describes in detail the tortuous logical paths that became synonymous with Asimov's novels. He does this so well, and so convincingly, that at times one forgets that it isn't Asimov that one is reading.

I'm not sure that this is such a good idea from Allen's point of view. Perhaps his own character should have been more in evidence. As it is, he runs the risk of being labelled an Asimov clone. I have mixed feelings about this. There is enough scope at the end of the novel for a sequel or two, the new vistas opened up by removing the Three Laws point the way for many new ideas to be developed, and I would like to read them should Allen decide to write them. He is, however, a fine writer in his own right. Whichever way Allen goes in the future, all Asimov fans should read this, it's brilliant.

ALWAYS COMING HOME by Ursula Le Guin  
HarperCollins, 563 pp, £5.99, p/b  
Reviewed by Robert P Jones.

This is an extraordinary book, but one that makes great demands on its reader. Also on its reviewer, who has to give some idea of its richness, strangeness and complexity in a very short space. So here goes!

ALWAYS COMING HOME purports to be an academic description of a future civilisation named the Kesh, compiled by a scrupulous present-day anthropologist named Pandora. Living in the aftermath of a series of horrific industrial and military disasters, these people have reverted to a low-technology existence in nine large villages along the banks of a river in what used to be Northern California and, in what must be one of the most minutely detailed accounts of a future society ever attempted, Le Guin - herself the daughter of the distinguished anthropologist Alfred Kroeber - provides an astonishingly complete guide to their culture.

After reading the entire book (which includes many drawings, some musical examples and several maps whose detail is hard to make out in the new A format) one has been introduced to everything from Kesh mating ceremonies to Kesh cuisine. We learn about their cosmology, their language, their social organisation, their attitudes towards the arts and sciences, their methods of subsistence and much, much more.

Some readers indeed may think we get too much, and the book is probably a bit padded. Yet Le Guin does not necessarily expect ALWAYS COMING HOME to be read in a conventional way but constantly invites you to make your own choices. There is a central narrative concerning the time spent by the young woman, Stone Telling, with the Kesh's violent, male-dominated neighbours the Condor, but it is not presented continuously, being surrounded by many other stories, poems and fragments of plays.

For all her distinction as a writer, Le Guin has never been particularly interested in characterisation and that deficiency is sometimes evident here. What she does so superbly is convey the texture of remote settings, the intricate pattern of life across an entire community. Her love of Amerindian culture and of the Californian landscape lend the book an intensity and luminosity that are often very moving, whilst at the same time largely avoiding sentimentality.

This is an unusually attractive and convincing piece of Utopian fiction. A mainly masterly achievement from a talent that has done a great deal to raise the standing of sf as a genre. Though it will not appeal to all tastes, only a fool or a cynic would dismiss it out of hand.

SPEAK NO EVIL by Philip Caveney  
Headline, 308 pp, £4.99, p/b  
Reviewed by Bernie Evans.

Tom Prince presents a late night show on local radio, which he spices up with phone calls from the sad and lonely people who comprise his audience. One of these calls is about to change his life for ever, as the caller announces that he has just killed a woman, and is even now standing over her body. As the plot unfolds it becomes evident that the killer's ultimate prey is Tom himself, that these other victims are simply the means to an end.

Mainly a detective story with some horror added as extra spice, mostly fairly tasteful, if horror can ever be described as such, but somewhat over the top in at least one scene, this could have been a good example of its type. But the cracks in the plot are papered over so ineptly, and some of the set pieces are so contrived, that it is really just another detective story with added horror. Fine if you have an hour or so to kill on a train, but otherwise not recommended.

We welcome a new reviewer to these pages this month, Robert P Jones. Quite an impressive debut Robert, thanks, keep up the good work. I see most of you are using computers to write your reviews. I mentioned a couple of months ago, I can now accept your reviews on disc, Amstrad 3" discs in either LocoScript or ASCII if a different word processor is used, and also 3 1/2" discs, ASCII only, provided they are DD discs, formatted to 720K, and that the reviews are in the "Root Directory". Hard copy needed as well, to be on the safe side. As no-one took the hint last time I'll rephrase it here. IF YOU'RE USING A COMPUTER, PLEASE HELP ME OUT AND LET ME HAVE YOUR REVIEWS ON A DISC!, THANKYOU - Bernie Evans.