

THE OUSFG NEWSLETTER

Early Michaelmas, 1986

Yes indeed, OUSFG is back in town. This newsletter sees us extending a friendly hello to all Freshers. Do join - come to the first library or discussion meeting. At such meetings you will meet some of the interesting and colourful characters who make up OUSFG. As newsletter editors it is absolutely not our business to write anything about OUSFG's illustrious committee. Because we're not that kind of society. No Sir. But, in fact, we are those sort of people. So here goes.

Maria Hamilton (President) BNC; Tel. 244374

Well-beloved by all, especially computer programmers. Won the election on such slogans as 'Maria - taking a stand on Women's dominance in OUSFG'. No, just kidding. Maria is a benevolent dictator and not a bit like Servalan. Except in one way...cute male Freshers in discussion meetings beware. Maria's eye may well fall upon you and the consequences may not be felt until the OUSFG banquet!!!

Max O'Conner (Secretary) St. Anne's. 60 Woodstock Rd. Rm. 12.

Max is the tall, hunky red-haired guy. He's a fitness freak, a leading figure in the British Cryogenics Society, and has been described as the 'guru of the New Right.' He will probably try to corrupt you and will very probably succeed.

Dave Bate (Treasurer) BNC; Tel. 244374.

Dave is the man to go to with your money. He's the tall, dark stranger. The one with the penetrating eyes which explains (?) his OUSFG alias, 'The Citrus Werewolf.' Also one of our resident Doctor Who experts.

Ivan Towlson (Librarian) New College. 12NB Rm. 3

It is Ivan's mercy you will be begging when your library books are overdue. Ivan employs interesting methods of retrieval of such books. Ivan is wanted by six planets in the Federation...Actually this is slander. Ivan's a regular book reviewer and a regular guy.

Rebecca Heddle (Committee member) St. Anne's. Tel. 514370

Becca is unmistakably recognizable by her famous squeak, brought on by reading too much Doug Adams. Becca is also an actress of some note, her roles having included such diversities as Benji House in Hitchhiker's (OUSFG, admittedly) play and the star of 'May Fever'.

Tim Adye (Committee Member) Tel. 251444

Tim is a nuclear physicist working as an undercover agent for a mad scientist who wishes to take over the world. The fact that he is a member of OUSFG blatantly proves this. Women don't be mistaken by his assumed shyness. He is, in fact, hatching a fiendish plot with Max to take over the Society. Enforced vegetarianism and libertarianism can be the only results of such a move.

Us (Editorial Staff) both Cats. Tel. 244374

We wish to remain quietly out of the limelight. Suffice it to say, however, that we are both astonishingly attractive, sparklingly witty and have staggeringly good taste. That should keep you searching for a while, heh, heh.

Book News

-David Gerrold; 'Starhunt' (originally 'Yesterday's Children') - reissue.

"Despite insulting reviews from almost everybody and an unfortunate history beginning with its rejection as a Star Trek script and ending with its republication in the dreaded Venture SF series, I still like this one. A nice story of an ancient ship with a tired ~~crew~~, war-shattered captain and fanatical first officer, who are set to patrol a sector where nothing can possibly happen. Then they pick up a 'bogey'..." (Neal Tringham)

-Keith Roberts; 'Kiteworld'

"Collection of linked stories set in a post-holocaust world where giant kites are flown constantly to keep out the demons from the radioactive wastelands. From the stories I've read, I'd rate it highly for characterisation but not too well for ingenuity. Most reviewers, however, drool to a positively unhealthy extent." (Neal)

-Barry Hughart; 'Bridge of Birds' (Corgi, £2.50)

"The blurb describes it as 'a haunting tale of ancient China, of beautiful handmaidens, venerable sages, magic, hilarity, heartbreak and the timeless power of love.' As a final kiss of death, it carries an Anne McCaffrey recommendation.

"Nauseated, you try to flee, but by accident you read the Caveat Occidens. Intrigued, you skim the first few chapters. A suspicion creeps over you - that this is the funniest and cleverest SF book to come onto the market for a long time. You read the rest of the book, and your suspicion is confirmed.

"Joint winner of the 1985 World Fantasy Award, and deservedly so." (Ivan Towlson)

-Ursula LeGuin; 'Always Coming Home.'

"This, her latest work, is out in hardback only so far, but will prove interesting to fans of her classic SF novels 'The Left Hand of Darkness' and 'The Dispossessed'. This latest work is very different from her old glories. It's not a novel, though it does contain narratives; it is a study of a post apocalyptic civilisation (situated in what was once Northern California), pieced together from a collection of stories, legends, poems and essays on the various aspects of its society. The work rests largely on the culture described, so opinions of the book and the culture must remain personal. Clearly it's a LeGuin Utopia, reminiscent of the anarchist society in 'The Dispossessed' and the native culture in her novella 'The Word for World is Forest', but I found it an unoriginal one. Too much seems to have been lifted from existing Amerindian and Aborigine cultures and too much of work is superfluous (recipes? The 'complete' edition of the work comes with a tape of the Valley's music!) In the end, I didn't believe it, for it is a world where technology's harmful effects have been neutralised, where twentieth century technology has no social impact whatsoever. If SF can be described as the literature of social and individual response to technology, this work is consciously un-SF. However, beneath the self-indulgence of this personal fantasy there is fascinating exploration of the key ideas and themes in her work as a whole. Worth looking at in the local library." (Phil Raines, EP)

1. Ine Phoenix (Walton Street)

11pm Fri 24 Oct - 'Sleeper' The Woody Allen wish-fulfilment classic which features a future in which smoking and cream-cakes are good for you and no home is complete without an Urgasmotron. Also features a tuxedoed CPU predecessor.

11pm Sat 25 Oct - 'A Nightmare on Elm Street' This was the most popular video rental movie for some time. A sequel is apparently on the way. Ulp.

2. ABC (George Street)

'Aliens' "For once the movie posters get it right. In 'Alien', Ridley Scott's original film, it was 'In Space No One Can Hear You Scream'. In 'Aliens', James Cameron's (of 'Terminator' fame) sequel, it's 'This Time It's War.' In other words, last time humanity was prey to a single alien nasty. Now Ripley and a squad of marines have come to exterminate the whole brood out of revenge.

"Scratch an SF film and under the surface it's often another film. 'Star Wars' without Trumbull's spaceships is 'Bambusters'. 'Alien' without the Giger-designed monster is 'Friday the 13th'. And 'Aliens' without the futuristic weaponry is 'Rambo'. The comparison is apt. In 'Alien', the audience felt the helplessness and vulnerability of the Nostramo crew, defenceless despite the technology that surrounded them. In 'Aliens', as in 'Rambo', we are not helpless - guns or not, our moral righteousness and guts will triumph over anything thrown at us. It's a tribute to the skill of the film-makers that we don't sneer at Ripley's determination as we did at Stallone, but cheer her. Partly that's due to 'Aliens' being a fine adventure film (though nowhere near as scary as 'Alien', in my opinion), partly to the strength of Sigourney Weaver's acting, but mainly, I fear, because our liberal consciences (those of us who have them) may squirm at Third World nationals getting blown away by stars-and-stripes jingoism, but not at inhuman nasties getting fried and mangled by so sympathetic a character as Ripley. It's a great film for anyone who believes there's an acceptable face to violence." (Phil Raines, EP)

'Foltergeist II - The Other Side' ABC - The Other Screen.

3. TV

EECL, 10:15pm, Mon 13 Oct. 'Soylent Green' Charlton Heston stars as the New York detective trying to solve a political murder in 2022, in which year 40 million people live in NY City. Authoritarian anarchy holds sway; mobs roam the streets; jobs are scarce; and natural food is scarcer still, except for members of the ruling clique. And the macquiff is - the murder of one of this group. The film has been praised for its capture of sweaty, claustrophobic urban decay. Also features Edward G. Robinson in his final role - the playing of which lends the picture its greatest distinction. If you miss it, don't despair, it will probably be shown at a video meeting.

Society News

1. Library meetings

On Sundays, at 8:15pm, in New College, New Building, St12 Rm3. Free coffee and biccies as you hunt through the society's collection. Then (at 9:15ish) we all wander off to St. John's bar for enlightened chunnering.

Suggestions box: On Ivan's door. If you're sure we don't already have the book you're suggesting, then write down the title and author, and initial your suggestions. Suggestions can be seconded (and thirded etc) by adding initials on the same line.

Stacks: Some of our less popular and, ah, less inspired books now live in cardboard boxes. They are still accessible, but you search at your own risk...

2. Discussion Meetings

Wednesdays, 8:15 Ch.Ch., Meadow Buildings, 6:12;

1st week: "Don't worry, I've got an adaptor" - Future Societies.

2nd week: 'John Wyndham'

More free coffee and cookies. Anyone can start off a discussion meeting - see a committee member if interested.

3. Speaker meeting

This 20 Nov (6th week). Alan Garner - 'Achilles in Atjira'. There will be more news about this in the next N/L.

4. Video Meeting

Mon 2nd Week, New College. Meet in Ivan's room (library) 8pm. Hopefully, something from the new 'Twilight Zone' series (not yet on British TV)

5. Games meetings

If anyone has any games/quizzes etc they'd like to share, please see committee.

6. Sphinx

Interested in writing for Sphinx or helping to bring out an issue? See Maria/Ivan/Neal Tringham (Exeter). Sphinx, for those who don't know is the society's fiction zine and compulsory reading (or we'll send the boys around (ie. Max)).

7. Rocky Horror

From Nov 3-8, Apollo. An OUSFG party will be going, so notify a committee member right away if you'd like to come along.

8. Newsletter

Send contributions to one of us, whenever you like. Film and book reviews always welcome.

Well, that concludes business for now. To all new readers -
if you join the society, this newsletter will become a regular occurrence.
If not, then goodbye forever.
Can you let that happen?

BE SEEING YOU!

Pita o David

If there is a cross next to your name, you are no longer a member (money please!).

Written, produced and edited by Pita Enriquez & David Harris (Catz)

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Inspired by Phil Raines, EP (Balliol)