

My 'prime directive' when selecting stories for *Aries 1* was that they should be thoroughly enjoyable, on whatever level the authors themselves chose: thus long exercises in which the author disappeared up his own navel received the cold shoulder, as did galaxy-busting space operas owing their plots to a quick viewing of *Star Wars*. I think that every story in the book satisfies — more than satisfies — this 'prime directive': you must be the one to judge whether or not I am correct.

One other thing that I was able to do with *Aries 1* was to include a few examples of that rarest of things: the funny sf story. Why funny sf has been so neglected — despite the labours of Harry Harrison,

Frederic Brown and a few other stalwarts — is a matter for conjecture: I suspect myself that it is because the publishers, rather than the public, don't understand it. Anyway, there are three tales in this anthology which had me rocking from side to side with laughter, and that can't be a bad thing.

So here is *Aries 1*, for better or for worse — better, I hope. I'm not boasting when I say that I think it is one of the best anthologies that I, as an sf reader, have come across for quite a while: the credit for that is due entirely to its contributors, who have made the book a joy to compile and, I trust, to read.



PICTURES by J.R.R. Tolkien

with foreword and notes by
Christopher Tolkien



This excellent collection is an almost complete record of J R R Tolkien's art and brings together all of the pictures (paintings, drawings and designs) which were published in a series of six calendars between 1973 and 1979. The book contains many of the original pen and ink drawings which were coloured for the calendars and a number which did not appear in the calendars at all — these include the picture of Hobbiton, The Doors of Durin, and a picture of Mirkwood.

Lovers of Tolkien and admirers of art will find this book a superb addition to their library. It is a hardback with gold blocking on front and spine and each book is individually boxed in a pull out slip case. Christopher Tolkien has written a foreword and provided detailed notes for each picture.

SFBC £11.25

Allen & Unwin £15.00

REF 6514

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CLIFFORD D SIMAK

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SPIDER and JEANNE ROBINSON

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CHELSEA QUINN YARBRO

False Dawn

Armed only with a crossbow, Thea heads towards Gold Lake, a legendary place of safety. Her precarious situation in a world of mutants and blood thirsty villains known as Pirates, is not helped by a chance encounter which leads to an uneasy alliance in an adventure of considerable power.

SFBC £4.15

Sidgwick & Jackson £5.50

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NEWS BULLETIN

SEACON REPORT

Between August 23-27 science fiction fans from all over the world came to Brighton for Seacon '79, the 37th World Science Fiction Convention and the third WorldCon to be held in Britain.

Perhaps it is evidence of the enormous increase in the popularity of science fiction that Seacon '79, held at the Metropole Hotel, on the Brighton sea-front, was attended by 3½ thousand people from twenty-two different countries.

In my opinion it was the best convention ever held in Britain. It was certainly the most successful. About four hundred professionals were present — almost every major British and American writer — and the five programme items which ran concurrently certainly benefitted from the variety of talent on hand. Among the most popular items on the programme were Bob Shaw's 'serious scientific lecture' entitled *Eau de Clone: Bizarre Biological Revelation*. As anyone familiar with Bob's Eastercon talks is very well aware, they are not 'serious scientific talks' but very funny ones. The audience were very appreciative and Bob was given a standing ovation.

Oxford don Tom Shippey gave one of his talks which are always of a high standard and most entertaining. R L Fanthorpe, who wrote most of the Badger Books sf titles, gave an entertaining talk on 'How to Write 150 sf Books in your spare time'; there were five performances of Theodore Sturgeon's *Some of Your Blood* by Ken Campbell's Science Fiction Theatre of Liverpool, and advance presentations with slides and film clips of *Star Wars II: The Empire Strikes Back* (followed by a question and answer period with Mark [Luke Skywalker] Hamill and *Star Wars* producer Gary Kurtz) and *Alien*.

The highlight of the convention, of course, was the award ceremony where the Hugo — the Science Fiction Achievement Award — was presented. The result awaited with most interest was that for Best Novel. Most of the audience seemed convinced that it would go to Anne McCaffrey for *The White Dragon*. It would have been a hat-trick for Annie, who had already received the Australian Ditmar Award and the Gandalf Award for the book. In the event the Hugo went to the Nebula winning *Dreamsnake* by Vonda McIntyre.

The Hugo for Best Dramatic Presentation was also eagerly awaited, perhaps more eagerly than usual because the British audience wanted *Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* to win. When the nominations were read out the audience broke into a spontaneous cheer for *Hitch Hikers*, but as expected the award went to *Superman — The Movie* and was accepted by old supie himself, Christopher Reeves.

Everything considered, Seacon '79 was a great success and the organisers must have worked extremely hard to get it all together. Congratulations — Britain, it's got to be in '83; I hope!