



BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

MAY 2013

ISSUE 500

HONORARY PRESIDENT: BRIAN W ALDISS, O.B.E.

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Friday 10th May **FREDA WARRINGTON**

A welcome and long overdue return visit to the BSFG by acclaimed and prize winning Fantasy author, Freda Warrington. Freda has 20 novels published as well as a number of short stories. She published her first novel, *A BLACKBIRD IN SILVER* in 1986 which was the start of the *Blackbird* series. Other series include *The Jewelfire Trilogy*, *Dark Cathedral* and the

June 14th - authors' agent IAN DRURY has worked in publishing for 20 years and represents Jaïne Fenn, Mark Lawrence and Mark Chadbourn etc.

acclaimed and mature *Blood Wine* series about vampires set amongst the battlefields of World War I (written before *Twilight* and certainly far superior to many of the offshoots of that bandwagon/fashion). Born and still living in Leicestershire, some of her books are set in or inspired by the county such as *The Aetherial Tales* series and her novel of Richard III, **THE COURT OF THE MIDNIGHT KING**. Freda's work has been nominated four times for the British Fantasy Society's Best Novel award for her novels (*Dark Cathedral*, *Pagan Moon*, *Dracula the Undead*, and *The Amber Citadel*) and has won awards for **DRACULA THE UNDEAD** (Dracula Society Award for Best Gothic Novel in 1997) and **ELFLAND** (The Romantic Times 2009 Award for Best Fantasy Novel). This year (2013) certainly seems to be a busy year with appearances as Fantasy Guest of Honour at Eastercon and at the World Fantasy Convention in Brighton. Her *Blood Wine* series is currently being reprinted by Titan Press and will conclude with a new novel, **THE DARK ARTS OF BLOOD** in 2014. Tor US are also printing her new novel, **GRAIL OF THE SUMMER STARS** (*Aetherial Tales*) and her Richard III novel should hopefully soon be available as an ebook. Further details can be found at her website www.fredawarrington.com CG

The meeting will take place in the conference room on the first floor of The Briar Rose Hotel, Bennetts Hill, off New Street.

The doors open at 7.30pm and the meeting will normally commence at 8.00pm so please arrive early, get your drinks from the bar on the ground floor, and be seated in plenty of time. The entrance fee for our January AGM is free and the August and December socials are ticket only events. All other meetings the entrance fee is £3.00 for members and £4 for non-members.

WELCOME TO THE 500TH NEWSLETTER by Carol Goodwin



Welcome to the 500th Newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group. The first newsletter was written in July 1971 and a copy of that newsletter is included with this mailing. Firstly, I must thank the many contributors who have made this issue possible with their articles, photographs, artwork and general help with the history of the newsletters. In particular, thank you to the previous newsletter editors who have kindly included photographs and descriptions of the trials and tribulations in their time as editors. Thank you also to William McCabe, Chris Morgan and David A Hardy for providing archive texts

and artwork. Also a particular vote of thanks is owed to David A Hardy who very kindly provided a new “Bhen” cartoon as the cover page for the 500th newsletter. I did my best to contact all previous newsletter editors but this was not always possible and is the only reason for their omission.

It was a very different world then – some of what SF was predicting has come true and some now seems very dated and unlikely. Looking back at July 1971 I found it interesting that this was the month in which John W Campbell passed away (an enormous influence on the SF field), it was only three years since the first moon landing and indeed Apollo 15 was landing on the moon that month (the first mission to use the Lunar Rover). Looking back over the changes in producing the newsletter it seems that the physical work and finding information is now easier. However the very availability of word processing and the internet technology now means that far more is expected. Whereas at the start the problem was finding enough information, now it is in trying to sift out the interesting bits from the flood that is available. As a relative newcomer I am only starting to appreciate the time and effort that previous newsletter editors put into producing a consistently high quality product and we should be grateful to all the people who over the decades have taken on that role. CG

LIST OF PAST NEWSLETTER EDITORS*

Peter Weston	1971
Vernon Brown	1972
Peter Weston	1972
Vernon Brown	1973 - 1977
Rog Peyton	1978
Steve Green	1979
Ian Warner	1979
Chris Morgan	1980 - 1981
Pauline Morgan	1982 - 1983
Eunice Pearson	1983
Graham Poole	1984
Eunice Pearson	1984
Martin Tudor	1985
Carol & Tony Morton	1986
Tony Morton	1987
David A Hardy	1988 - 1991
Martin Tudor	1991 - 1998
Yvonne Rowse	1999 - 2000
Martin Tudor	2000
Rog Peyton	2001 - 2012
Carol Goodwin	2012 - to present

**Based on data supplied by William McCabe. Apologies for any inaccuracies*

IAIN BANKS

By now, many of you will be aware of the very sad news that **Iain Banks** has announced he is suffering from terminal gall bladder cancer and is unlikely to live for more than a year. For those of you who have not seen it, I have reproduced his official announcement below. See also Robert Day's thoughts on Iain Banks in this newsletter

"I am officially Very Poorly.

After a couple of surgical procedures, I am gradually recovering from jaundice caused by a blocked bile duct, but that – it turns out – is the least of my problems. I first thought something might be wrong when I developed a sore back in late January, but put this down to the fact I'd started writing at the beginning of the month and so was crouched over a keyboard all day. When it hadn't gone away by mid-February, I went to my GP, who spotted that I had jaundice. Blood tests, an ultrasound scan and then a CT scan revealed the full extent of the grisly truth by the start of March.

I have cancer. It started in my gall bladder, has infected both lobes of my liver and probably also my pancreas and some lymph nodes, plus one tumour is massed around a group of major blood vessels in the same volume, effectively ruling out any chance of surgery to remove the tumours either in the short or long term. The bottom line, now, I'm afraid, is that as a late stage gall bladder cancer patient, I'm expected to live for 'several months' and it's extremely unlikely I'll live beyond a year. So it looks like my latest novel, **THE QUARRY**, will be my last.

As a result, I've withdrawn from all planned public engagements and I've asked my partner Adele if she will do me the honour of becoming my widow (sorry – but we find ghoulish humour helps). By the time this goes out we'll be married and on a short honeymoon. We intend to spend however much quality time I have left seeing friends and relations and visiting places that have meant a lot to us. Meanwhile my heroic publishers are doing all they can to bring the publication date of my new novel forward by as much as four months, to give me a better chance of being around when it hits the shelves.

There is a possibility that it might be worth undergoing a course of chemotherapy to extend the amount of time available. However that is still something we're balancing the pros and cons of, and anyway it is out of the question until my jaundice has further and significantly, reduced.

Lastly, I'd like to add that from my GP onwards, the professionalism of the medics involved – and the speed with which the resources of the NHS in Scotland have been deployed – has been exemplary, and the standard of care deeply impressive. We're all just sorry the outcome hasn't been more cheerful.

A website is being set up where friends, family and fans can leave messages for me and check on my progress. It should be up and running during this week and a link to it will be on my official website at www.iain-banks.net as soon as it's ready."

A message of condolence was sent on behalf of the BSFG and Iain Banks kindly replied thanking us for our kind thoughts.

BSFA AWARD WINNERS

On Sunday 31st March, the BSFA Awards ceremony took place at the 64th Eastercon in Bradford. Paul Cornell was the MC and was assisted by artist Anne Sudworth, author Freda Warrington, critic Edward James and author Stephen Baxter who presented Best Artwork, Best Non-Fiction, Best Short Fiction and Best Novel respectively

Best Novel: JACK GLASS by Adam Roberts (Gollancz)

Best Short Fiction: “Adrift on the Sea of Rains” by Ian Sales (Whippleshield Books)

Best Artwork: Blacksheep for the cover of Adam Roberts’s JACK GLASS (Gollancz)

Best Non-Fiction: THE WORLD SF BLOG, Chief Editor Lavie Tidhar

ARTHUR C CLARKE AWARD SHORTLIST

The Arthur C Clarke Award shortlist was also announced at EasterCon. From a longlist of over 80 novels the following were chosen. The winner will be announced on Wednesday 1st May at an exclusive award ceremony hosted by the Royal Society, London

NOD by Adrian Barnes (Bluemoose)

DARK EDEN by Chris Beckett (Corvus)

ANGELMAKER by Nick Harkaway (William Heinemann)

THE DOG STARS by Peter Heller (Headline)

INTRUSION by Ken MacLeod (Orbit)

2312 by Kim Stanley Robinson (Orbit)

HUGO AWARD NOMINATIONS (NOVELS)

The nominations were announced on the 30th March. The winners will be announced at the LoneStarCon3 (World Con) in September. A full list of all nominations is available at www.thehugoawards.org/hugo-history/2013-hugo-awards/

2312 by Kim Stanley Robinson

BLACKOUT by Mira Grant

CAPTAIN VORPATRIL’S ALLIANCE by Lois McMaster Bujold

REDSHIRTS: A NOVEL WITH THREE CODAS by John Scalzi

THRONE OF THE CRESCENT MOON by Saladin Ahmed

TERRY PRATCHETT PRIZE: “ANYWHERE BUT HERE, ANYWHEN BUT NOW” AWARD SHORTLIST

This prize was launched two years ago for previously unpublished novelists. The story must be “theoretically possible on some version of the past, present or future of a planet Earth”. The winner will be announced on the 31st May.

THE UNSPOKEN DEATH OF THE AMAZING FLYING BOY by Jean Burdett

BLOODLINE by Sophie Constable

THE HIVE by Alexander Maskill

THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS by Robin Pearson

A KILL IN THE MORNING by Graeme Shimmin

THE SHADOWS OF ANNWN by Catherine Whittle

NON-STOP (BRIAN ALDISS AND IAIN BANKS) BY ROBERT DAY

In a week that was notable for the passing of a famous (or infamous) woman, the BSFG was honoured by a visit from a famous man.

The Group's remaining Honorary President, Brian W. Aldiss, came to talk to us. He will be 88 this August, but his mind is (generally) still as sharp as ever

- and he is still the wit, raconteur and silver-tongued devil...

Given that we lost Harry Harrison, the other president, in the last year, Brian's visit was all the more important to us. He talked about a lot of things, but his main theme was one of what science fiction is about - dislocation, the effect of finding that the world is not as you thought it was. In the end, he said, that is the theme of all the best science fiction. After his talk, I had the chance to chat with him a little, and I was able to tell him that the first science fiction novel I read was his novel *REPORT ON PROBABILITY A*. This is a novel about an infinite series of observers in an infinite series of parallel universes, watching each other without understanding that they themselves were being watched. It is a weird, non-



linear narrative, and I read it at the age of 14 or so because my father brought it home from the library one Saturday in the mistaken belief that it was a Mills & Boon romance novel of the sort my mother enjoyed so much. He always selected Mum's Mills & Boons by their cover picture, and the cover of **REPORT ON PROBABILITY A** was a pastoral scene by the pre-Raphaelite Holman Hunt (which plays a part in the novel); and he mistook it for a romance. On realising it wasn't, he gave it to me.



I hardly understood a word of it; but I was so impressed that someone could even begin to think about writing a novel like it that I determined to look out for more. “That was weird,” I thought, “but there must be something really clever going on there. I wonder what else there is out there?” And I told Brian this much. “I didn’t understand it, but it was exciting!” I said – a perfect example of his ideas on dislocation. Just as the ancient Greeks looked on their drama as a vehicle for the cleansing of the psyche that they called catharsis, which they regarded as healthy, so I took to science fiction as a vehicle for keeping my world-view nimble on its feet. Science fiction isn’t just mere escapism; at root, it’s a

literature that always asks “What if...?”, and in a rapidly changing world, being able to look at change and embrace it is a distinct advantage.

Of course, in the past couple of weeks another science fiction author has been in the news, for a bad reason. The news of Iain Banks' diagnosis with terminal cancer put me in a state of shock for quite some time. It seems like only yesterday that I was asking him “You used to be an enfant terrible, now *The Guardian* is calling you an ‘elder statesman of British sf’ – when did that happen?”. Now we have to come to terms with his not being with us for much longer. I recently reviewed his newest science fiction novel, **THE HYDROGEN SONATA**, on LibraryThing, where I suggested that it perhaps wasn’t great Banks – the McGuffin of the plot was revealed early on and most of the story is a certain amount of running around with the central character being chased by various baddies because she Knows A Great Secret – but that in time we would regard it as a solid if unspectacular mid-series book in his stories of the Culture, his galactic

civilization. Instead, it will almost certainly be his last word on the subject. Iain Banks will probably turn out to be the Brian Aldiss of his generation, a writer who encompassed both mainstream and genre writing. Aldiss made sf respectable for the post-war British reader, and he played a major part in the “New Wave” promoted by Michael Moorcock and the writers who appeared in *New Worlds* in the 1960s. Together with J.G. Ballard, Aldiss made British SF into something new and cutting-edge; 25 years later, Banks was amongst a number of British writers who took sf tropes such as space opera and gave them a contemporary feel with dark humour, an off-the-wall approach and a well-honed political and social sensibility. We are lucky to have such people, and we must honour them whilst we can.

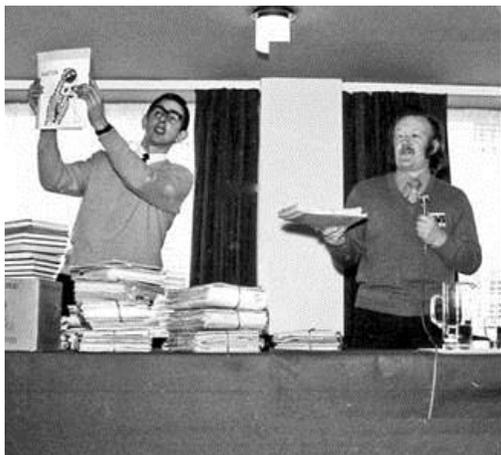
RD

(Photographs of Brian Aldiss and Iain Banks are courtesy of and copyright of Robert Day)

DOING THE NEWSLETTER BY PETER WESTON

Editor 1971- 1972

I remember that back in 1971 Sunday morning was Newsletter time. Not every Sunday of course, just once a month, when I'd hole-up in my little study in our new house at Kings Norton while Eileen cooked lunch, and I'd put a Gestetner stencil in my trusty old Olivetti and start to write something.



A 'period' picture from 1971, just three months before the BSFG was formed. It shows Rog and Peter Weston auctioning at the Worcester convention

What? You've never seen a 'Gestetner stencil'?

It's essentially a sheet of tissue paper covered in wax, and the keys chew holes in it through which, later, ink can pass. No fancy litho printing or cheap Xerox machines in those days!

I remember bright summer sunshine flooding through the window while I hammered away at the stencil in my typewriter (you must have seen a typewriter!). I'd fill a foolscap page (all right, I know, 'what's foolscap?'), then I'd start on a second page, just leaving four inches empty at the bottom.

What did I write about? Well,

the group had only been going a few months so I'd put in an enthusiastic report of the last meeting, and an even more enthusiastic report of what was coming next. The idea, you see, was for the Newsletter to go out a few days before the monthly meeting to remind people not to forget. Forty years later we're still doing the same thing. And they're still forgetting.

There'd be some convention news, of course, although there'd only been one convention per year until now. But that autumn Vernon's Aston SF group was going to run the first - experimental - Novacon, and we wanted Brum group members to come along. (By and large they didn't, although lots of 'outsiders' did; nothing changes). I'd add a few reviews of fanzines (don't ask!) and anything else that I thought might interest members, like news of SF films or TV programmes, new books, and so on. It took me nearly an hour.

Then came the fun part. I'd carefully wrap the first stencil around the rollers of my old Gestetner 260 duplicator (bought for £30 from an Indian in Southall) and pump in some ink. I'd turn the handle a few times and run a few crud-sheets before engaging 'automatic' and off it would go, ker-chunk, ker-chunk, ker-chunk, printing 100 or so copies of the front page onto sheets of paper thirteen inches long (that's foolscap). It was done in a couple of minutes then I'd change the stencil, let the pages dry then turn them over and print the reverse.

By now the smell of roast beef was starting to drift up the stairs so I had to get a move on! Fold each Newsletter three times, two staples in the bottom, scribble the address in the blank bit and add a two-penny-halfpenny stamp. Finished; just in time for lunch. I'd get them into the post-box before the 4.00pm Sunday collection and they'd arrive on the Tuesday morning.

Those were the days! I wonder if any of those old Newsletters of mine still survive, somewhere among Rog or Vernon's collections?

PW

(Photograph courtesy of and Peter Weston)

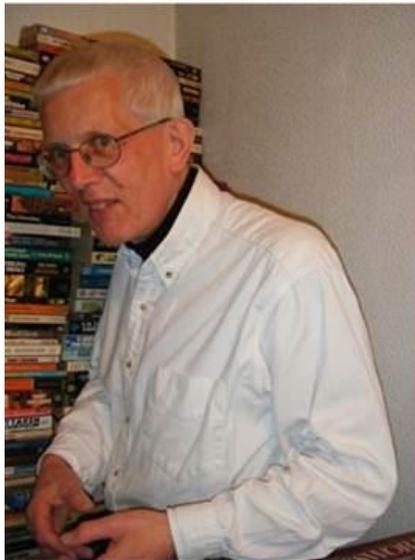
VERNON BROWN

Newsletter editor 1972 - 1977

Looking back some four decades is an interesting, daunting and somewhat masochistic task. Was I really that (relatively) young and keen?

Conventions, committees and parties; but as someone said at the time, Birmingham was the centre of the SF universe, or so it seemed.

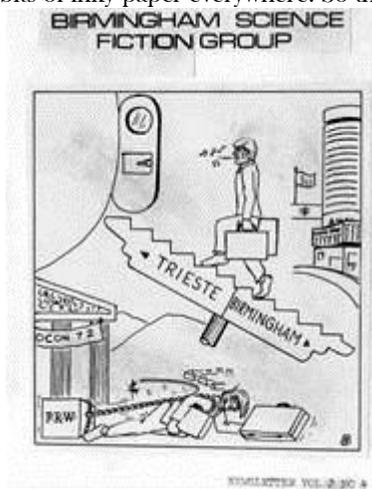
So it was that in May 1972, having stood down from my post as Treasurer at the AGM I returned to the committee as Newsletter editor, taking over from Pete Weston who remained as Chairman. I was probably bored with the inactivity and had great ideas for the newsletter which hitherto had been duplicated sheets, stapled in the top



left corner. But I would produce a booklet, magazine style.

To anyone reared with home computers, the internet and quick and easy printing the production methods involved in such a publication in those days would be unbearably tedious and out of the Ark. Typed or drawn material was received by mail or produced by the editor, cut to size and pasted onto an A4 sheet – the origin of the term “cut and paste”. This master document was transcribed into perforations in a waxed sheet which was then wrapped around a metal cylinder covered with ink soaked felt. This was rotated by hand or motor against a sheet of paper, the ink passed through the perforations and an image of the original master produced. After the requisite number had been printed the whole process was repeated for the other pages needed. Then each newsletter was collated and stapled. Each edition took me between seven and ten days to produce after I had assembled all the material, after which I had to hand address the envelopes and post them. It was laborious but the deadlines were looser and there was less competition from other SF oriented productions. Nowadays it’s physically easier and quicker but more is expected, particularly in the way of up to the minute news. It’s swings and roundabouts.

The first couple of newsletters were folded and stapled, much like the current ones but this was quite fiddly for a number of reasons so I decided to print on page sized paper. I had several hundred A4s cut to A5, put them in the paper tray beneath the cylinder ready to print and switched on. Calamity!! The paper was now so light that it stuck to the drum and was carried on round. Soon there were bits of inky paper everywhere. So thereafter I printed on A4 before cutting to A5.



The newsletter contained a variety of material including reports on meetings, puzzles, news and reviews with a topical cover by Group member Ray Bradbury. The one reproduced here from the original master refers to my attending the first Eurocon in Trieste, Italy, a long journey by plane, water taxi (Venice – smelly) and train. While there I was asked to bring back a trophy awarded to Pete Weston for his fanzine “*Speculation*”. It was made of pottery, large, fragile and cumbersome, and I nursemaided it all the way back across Europe before thankfully handing it over to him. A couple of weeks later he was showing it to someone and dropped it!

The magazine format ran for a dozen issues or so but eventually its production time became too much – I did have a job to do at Aston as well so the format reverted to A4, a much less time consuming task, a format it retained until I stood down at the 1978 AGM for the last time. VB

(Photograph (©Vernon Brown) and newsletter image courtesy of Vernon Brown)

STEVE GREEN

Newsletter editor 1979

It all began on Summer Row. Long before the late, ever-lamented Andromeda Books moved to more prestigious premises near the Alexandra Theatre, it stood next to a sizzly porn cinema at the arse-end of Birmingham's city centre. Arguably a far more appropriate Mecca for science fiction fans at a time



when there were probably no more than a half-dozen UK releases each month and videotape was the preserve of the significantly rich.

Anyhow, it was through my weekly trips into this hallowed emporium that I learned not only of the first convention I ever attended (Fantasycon III, 26-27 Feb 1977) but of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, which was due to meet eight days earlier, with Brian Aldiss as its guest speaker. How could any 16 year-old sf fan resist the temptation to meet such a distinguished luminary of the field?

I'm pretty sure it was at that meeting I first crossed paths with Peter Weston, just about to clinch the UK's bid to host the 1979 Worldcon; in current vampire parlance, Peter and Andromeda's Rog Peyton 'sired' me, which is a fancy way of saying two older men lured me into a cult I've yet to escape from (not that I wish to: I'd already flirted with those fandoms related to comics and *Doctor Who*, but sf fandom was the Real Deal).

Anyhow, it didn't take too long before I was one of the three co-editors on *Meta*, as yet the BSFG's only excursion into fanzine publishing, and then I joined Rog as his deputy on the monthly newsletter. A year or so later, I stepped into his (considerable) shoes as its editor. More recently, when Rog was back at the helm, I supplied him with a monthly quiz, although I'm sure he winced whenever the questions involved comics or movies.

They were fun times, and even though I've not been to a meeting in quite a while (the last was as a speaker, after my 2009 TAFF trip), the Brum Group retains a special place in my heart, as does its newsletter. Happy 500th! *SG*

Photograph © Steve Green

AND WHAT DID YOU THINK?

THE LETTER COLUMN OF 'BRUM GROUP NEWS

Anything to say about the Group, meetings or SF in general? Email your opinions or queries to me at goodwincd@yahoo.com

Letter of Comment by Rog Peyton

I was surprised to see that the Nebula Award nominations were not listed in #498 - just a link to a website. There are members of the BSFG who do not have a computer (true), who are interested in books and awards so just putting a link to a website for things like Award winners isn't very helpful. I always had a rule that if the information was relatively small I included it in the newsletter. I only used links to websites if the information was too large to reprint. Last month nor this month were any of the important awards mentioned. Only one VERY minor award listing was mentioned - and an award I'd never heard of. Why were the British SF Award, the Clarke nominations, etc., completely ignored? Also, why was news of the death of Paul Williams ignored? An important researcher in the SF community - even if one isn't fond of Philip K Dick's work! You may say that they will be in ANSIBLE next month but if we can get news to our members a month earlier, that's all to the good, surely?

Best

Rog

PS - Are you aware that your name on the masthead of the newsletter doesn't start with capitals?

Reply by Carol Goodwin:

Dear Rog,

Thank you for taking the time to send in a letter of comment. Firstly, with regard to the Nebula Award Nominations I had made a conscious decision not to include these as there were about 44 nominations (if all categories were included) which I felt was quite a long list. As you indicated in your letter, and indeed in an email when I was training, a long list of nominations (as distinct from the actual awards) was not usually printed in the newsletter to save space. I accept your point that not everyone has a computer although most libraries will offer free Internet access these days. That said, if there is a strong feedback from the membership that they wish to have the full or an abridged list of nominations included in the newsletter I am happy to listen and change the policy. Given your comments I have included in this issue a list of the newly nominated novels for the Hugo, with a web link for the other categories

Secondly, you may have noticed that the April newsletter arrived somewhat earlier than usual. Due to the long Easter weekend falling on the same dates that the newsletter would normally have been printed, the newsletter had to be produced a week earlier. This meant that it was submitted on March 24th for printing on March 25th. The only reason that the other items you mention were not included was that they occurred after this date (certainly not due to any bias on

my account) and could not therefore be included - Paul Williams' death (March 27th), the British SF Awards (31st March), the Clarke shortlist nominations (4th April). All three have been included in this issue.

With regard to the "minor award" you mention, I assume you mean "The Kitschies". This is a relatively young award which clearly some of the readers may not be familiar with. However it is a British Award for "intelligent" speculative fiction. Despite only existing for four years it seems to be well-regarded having featured in Locus, Ansible, SFX, The Guardian, the British Fantasy Society and BSFA websites etc. It also has some impressive finalists and winners including Lauren Beukes and China Mieville. I think it is important to make the readers aware of awards which reward good quality and especially ones which recognise British writing in particular. Again I am open to feedback.

I hope this answers your letter satisfactorily. If not, please contact me again.

Regards

Carol

PS Thanks for the heads up on the capitals - not very easy to spot in that particular font - now corrected.

SCIENCE FICTION IS MY LIFE by Dave Corby

My dad passed away after a short illness on 1st March 2013. Back when I was five years old my dad introduced me to his passion for Tolkien by reading the start of THE LORD OF THE RINGS to me. When I was seven I picked it up to read myself. Obviously, it was pretty informative to my young imagination - the idea that something so convincing and other than reality could exist, albeit in the mind's eye, has largely shaped my life since then.

Soon I stumbled across other speculative works in my local and school library. I was attracted to the covers of Asimov's *Foundation* trilogy, and my dual passion (for Fantasy and Science Fiction) was set. Back then it was all wonder, each new book offering something totally new and convincing.

When I was ten my brother bought me THE HOBBIT for Christmas, and the concept of book ownership (as opposed to libraries) opened up. Soon I would haunt the shelves in W. H. Smith on a Saturday morning, scrimping up the money for another *Dune* volume. But largely, my childhood was enthusing about SF or Fantasy in solitary manner (with one of two like-minded friends being the exception).

In 1991 I moved to York to study at the University, and suddenly was able to join a society of like-minded fans. Ah, the nights spent debating the works of Niven or McCaffrey with other undergraduates until the sun came up. And suddenly, I seemed fairly knowledgeable (at least compared with the other undergrads) so I ended up as president of the student SF&F. (This is also where I discovered role-playing, but that's a tale for another time).

After graduation I moved to Birmingham, and finally had the cash to really purchase books, such as Clute's SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPAEDIA and suddenly I realised how little I did in fact know! After starting up the Birmingham smial of the Tolkien Society (which I have been a member of on and

off since I was twelve) a kind member of the BSFG got in contact (thanks Steve!) and I signed up in short order.

Suddenly, I could make friends with folk whose knowledge of SF astounded me – Rog Peyton, Pete Weston and Vernon Brown literally expanded my mental landscape, while I discovered that Dave Hardy and Chris Morgan had written articles that inspired me back when I was still at school! I was amazed how warmly I was welcomed by these folk whom I was practically star-struck by... and my SF and fantasy education has come on in leaps and bounds ever since (not to mention my collection of books, for which my wife despairs). And now I have the honour to sit on the committee as P&P. And rest assured, it is indeed an honour to me to count myself as an associate of such august minds.

My dad studied at Aston back in the 60s, and I suspect missed the formation of the group by only a couple of years. I suspect he would have had a lot to talk to the group about. Thanks, Dad; I wouldn't be here without you. *DC*

I REMEMBER DAN MORGAN by Rog Peyton

It came as quite a shock to read in the last newsletter that Dan Morgan had passed away. Especially that he'd died in 2011 when I was sure that he'd had a letter in Peter Weston's fanzine only a few months ago. I hadn't had any contact with Dan since 1975 when he was Guest of Honour at Novacon 5. I was chairman of that convention and had chosen him as GoH as I'd met him at earlier conventions and got on extremely well with him. I'd also been a fan of his work for several years - the interplanetary adventure *THE UNINHIBITED* (1961) and the very untypical, satirical *THE RICHEST CORPSE IN SHOW BUSINESS* (1965) were the first books that impressed me in the mid-60s. A few years later he wrote the *Mind* series - novels of a telepathic super race - *THE NEW MINDS* (1969), *THE SEVERAL MINDS* (1969), *THE MIND TRAP* (1970) and *COUNTRY OF THE MIND* (1975). A fifth book in the series was written but was never published.

Don D'Amassa wrote in *TWENTIETH-CENTURY SCIENCE-FICTION AUTHORS*, "Although Dan Morgan is not the kind of author who attracts a devoted following, he is certainly underrated and generally overlooked. Most of his novels and short stories display sound storytelling ability, and all rely heavily on a fast-moving plot."

It was in the early 70s, after reading the first couple of the *Mind* series that I hunted out his very first novel from 1955, *CEE TEE MAN*. Imagine my shock on discovering that the plot is partly set in Birmingham. A great scene is where the protagonists are being chased by aliens along the length of New Street! I've never seen another copy of that book - I believe it is ultra rare. But it's well worth hunting for.

Other books followed - *THE HIGH DESTINY* was published the month he was GoH at Novacon 5. I remember reading the blurb on the dust jacket, starting "*THE HIGH DENSITY* is..." Yes, the kind of typo that easily gets past even the most careful editor. You didn't spot it? Look again - carefully. And,

of course, the Venturer 12 series written with John Kippax - THUNDER OF STARS (1968), SEED OF STARS (1972) and THE NEUTRAL STARS (1973).

THE CONCRETE HORIZON (1976) was his last published work. Dan was a tailor who had a month's holiday abroad every year during which he would write the bulk of a novel, leaving his business in the care of his manager. Unfortunately, he discovered that his manager wasn't opening the shop every day and was spending his days in the local pub. The business very nearly went under and Dan had to get rid of his manager and try to revive his business. He did succeed but writing and attending conventions came to an end. Informing me of this was the last time I heard from Dan. A good man and an excellent writer who should have had a higher profile than he did. And there should have been a collection of his more than three dozen short stories. RIP Dan. RGP

***BRUM GROUP NEWSLETTER: THE LITERARY YEARS:
Newsletter editors Chris Morgan (1980 & 1981) &
Pauline Morgan (1982 & 1983) written by Chris
Morgan***

I dare say every new editor of an existing fanzine has visions of a slicker and thicker colour monthly he or she wants to change it into. My innovation was book reviews and my vision was free books.

Of course, there were book reviews in earlier newsletters. From time to time members including Vernon Brown and Peter Weston had contributed reviews of newish books they particularly enjoyed (and had, in most cases, bought for themselves). I note my review of Ursula K. Le Guin's THE LATHE OF HEAVEN in May 1973 and of a proper review copy from Gollancz of THE DISPOSSESSED by the same author in September 1974. But in 1979 I began requesting publishers' review copies in earnest and Pauline & I would often contribute a page of brief reviews.

Once I became editor I was more methodical, checking on forthcoming books and phoning up publicity departments when copies didn't arrive. Yes, Pauline & I had the pick of the books, but that's always been the perk of magazine editors--and it meant that we didn't have to rely on other people to read the books and post us (or fail to post us) their reviews. Gradually we cultivated other reviewers, so that the free books were spread out across the Brum Group. I even persuaded authors including John Brunner and Brian Stableford to contribute celebrity reviews. Various publishers were happy to see reviews of their SF titles, and the newsletter moved up from a 4-pager to an 8-pager.

This was over thirty years ago. The internet was just an SF writer's dream. Individuals didn't own their own computers. Even Vernon Brown was no more than middle-aged. In those remote days most paperbacks cost 95 pence and hardcovers were about £5 each.

I was hammering out the newsletter each month on an Olivetti manual typewriter, doing corrections with Tipp-ex. To maintain an even appearance, in one typeface, I typed everything (sometimes twice over, if things didn't quite fit the

page). I also canvassed cartoons and tried to make each double-page spread look inviting. It was a real cut-and-paste job, using a craft knife and glue. The original, which I took along to be reduced and photocopied at Prontaprint, was A3 size, consisting of A4 pages stuck together, assembled on the kitchen floor because we didn't have a table big enough. It was a huge amount of work.

Of course, I relied on advice and assistance. The ever-helpful Rog Peyton would give me details of the best-selling titles at Andromeda Bookshop each month, and he and others would phone up with snippets of news about SF authors and fans and conventions. There was a trickle of regular articles, film reviews and con reports contributed by group members including Dave Hardy, Vernon Brown, Peter Weston, Margaret Thorpe and Steve Green. It would be good to see more of this.

After a couple of years at the Newsletter coal-face I felt I'd had enough, though Pauline & I were persuaded (by the lack of any enthusiastic potential successors and the promise of all those free books flooding in) to carry on for a bit. I want to make it clear that Pauline helped me with the newsletter while I was editor and that there was no dramatic shift when she became editor in 1982, though she did contribute more articles. And I note an innovation in her 1982 issues when we used black & white photos for the first time. There's a dark-haired Vernon Brown, then BSFG Chairman, peering uncertainly from the June issue, followed by Alan Cash (Publicity) and Margaret Thorpe (Treasurer) in later months.

From January 1983 Pauline trained up Eunice Pearson to take over the editor's job, and handed over to her after a few months.

CM



NEWS IN BRIEF ...

.... Musician, author and editor **Paul S Williams** died on March 27th. As well as founding and editing music magazine *Crawdaddy* he was largely responsible (alongside Dick's literary agent, **Russ Galen**) for keeping **Philip K Dick's** name alive after his death, especially in the USA. He was a close friend of Philip K Dick, publishing the influential article "The True Stories of Philip K. Dick" in 1975. He was named his Literary Executor after his death. He founded and ran the Philip K Dick Society and published (via his own publishing company) the novel **CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST** - the first publication of a 1950's non-SF Dick novel. He also was an active promoter of **Theodore Sturgeon** and edited a twelve volume edition of his short stories (to be published as SF Gateway ebooks during 2013 and 2014). In 1995 (aged 47) he had a bad bicycle accident, resulting in a traumatic brain injury. This injury caused early onset Alzheimer's and

he was unable to work again Richard Griffiths: actor, age 65, reportedly from complications following heart surgery. As well as playing Vernon Dursley in five of the *Harry Potter* movies (2001-10), he appeared as a terrorist in SUPERMAN II (1980), Swelter in the TV adaptation of GORMENGHAST (2000) Hermann Goering in JACKBOOTS ON WHITEHALL (2010) and King George in PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: ON STRANGER TIDES (2011). He also provided the voice of Jeltz in THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY (2005) Author and editor **David B Silva** died at the age of 62. He was best known as editor of *The Horror Show* magazine which won a World Fantasy Award in 1988. He also wrote novels and short stories, several of which were nominated for Bram Stoker awards including winning story "The Calling" Actor **Richard LeParmentier** has died. He is best known for his portrayal of General Motti in STAR WARS, where he was strangled by Darth Vader after questioning the power of the Force. His other genre roles included a reporter in SUPERMAN II, Lt. Santino in WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT? and an episode of *Space: 1999* Horror/fantasy writer **Basil Copper** has died. Many of his works were published by August Derleth and Arkham House. Following Derleth's death, Copper edited Derleth's *Solar Pons* stories into a two volume omnibus. His 1975 collection, FROM EVIL'S PILLOW, was nominated for a World Fantasy Award. He also wrote detective series and non-fiction works on vampires and werewolves. In 2010, he received the inaugural lifetime achievement award of the World Horror Convention with fellow award-winner James Herbert. In 2008 PS Publishing brought out a biography/ bibliography BASIL COPPER: A LIFE IN BOOKS. They also published a two-volume set DARKNESS, MIST AND SHADOW (2010), and a restored version of THE CURSE OF THE FLEERS (2012) Actor Milo O'Shea has died. His genre credits include the role of Durand in BARBARELLA and an appearance in the THEATRE OF BLOOD ... Screenwriter **Don Payne** has died from bone cancer. He wrote the screenplays for THOR, FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER, and MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND. He also won four Emmy Awards for work on *The Simpsons* It has been announced that **Robert Silverberg** will be the Toastmaster at the Nebula Award ceremony to be held on May 17th - 19th **Jan van't Ent** won the **Doc Weir** Award at Eastercon. This is for a contribution to fandom that deserves public recognition **Terry Pratchett** and **Iain Banks** have been named as European Grandmasters in the Eurocon 2013 Awards. Honorary awards were also given to **Harry Harrison** (in memoriam) and Boris Strugatsky (in memoriam). Full details of all the awards are available at <http://scifiportal.eu/eurocon-2013-awards/> The results of the Westbound TransAtlantic Fan Fund (**TAFF**) Race to enable a fan to travel to the WorldCon in the USA have been announced.

Jim Mowatt was the winner. Commiserations to **Theresa Derwin** who remained dignified despite some nasty trollish comments from a few people Director Alex Cross (**REPO MAN** and **SID AND NANCY**) has successfully reached a \$100,000 target on Kickstarter to fund the making of a film of **Harry Harrison's BILL THE GALACTIC HERO** as a feature length film. CG

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRUM GROUP NEWS (OR, HOW I DRAGGED THE BRUM GROUP KICKING AND SCREAMING INTO THE DIGITAL AGE.)

By Dave Hardy – Newsletter Editor 1988 - 1991



During my time as a member of the Brum Group I have been Publicity Officer, Secretary, Chairman and Newsletter Editor. Although I joined the Brum Group in 1973, the earliest newsletters I can find are for 1979 (I was Chairman at that time), when it was edited by Ian Warner and Eddie Stachelski. Chris Morgan edited it during 1980 and '81, when it was taken over by Pauline Morgan. In 1983 Pauline took on Eunice Pearson as 'Assistant', and Eunice seems to have edited some issues by herself. (It's not easy to find this information, as there was no colophon in those days, or often even any names!) Graham Poole, previously Treasurer, became Editor for one year, 1984, and Martin Tudor took over in February 1985, again for a year. Then Carol and/or Tony Morton took the reins during 1986 and '87.

I took over the Newsletter from Tony and Carol Morton in February 1988. Until then it had been put together in time-honoured fashion using typed material and scissors. I produced it using a 'desktop publishing' program on my Atari ST 520 (with 512k of RAM Yes, 'K!'), and promptly re-named it the **BRUM GROUP NEWS**, with a bold, metallic graphic typeface, which was used for a while by Martin Tudor when he took over in 1991.

I introduced a cover illustration (dropped a year later in favour of details of the current month's speaker or programme), interior illo's and column headers, a regular cartoon from Tim Groome, Letter columns (which at times became quite animated), a regular report of last month's meeting (usually written by myself), a New Member spot, etc., as well as the usual reviews. There was of course no e-mail in those days, and most members didn't even have a computer, so all contributions (when there were any) had to be re-typed manually.

To a very large extent, the BGN became the closest equivalent to my own fanzine, and generally I enjoyed doing it. But eventually, after my fourth year as Editor, I became rather disillusioned by the lack of contributions despite all my best efforts, and my final 'newsletter' in January 1991 took the form of a rather bitter one-A4-sheet containing all of the typos, poor spelling and grammar, bad layout and errors (including coffee-cup stains!) found in some other/older types of publication (but not ours, of course. . .) I handed it over to Martin Tudor, who did a sterling job until passing the baton to Rog Peyton in February 2001. Rog seemed to have taken it on permanently, despite trying several times to hand over the baton only to fail when there was no one else ready to receive it. Carol, after acting as his assistant for, I think, only one issue, did so well that she has now taken over, and she is doing a fine job. Thanks, Carol! Which brings us up to date. (I hope I haven't missed anyone; apologies if I have.) DAH
Photograph © David A Hardy

YVONNE ROWSE

Newsletter editor 1999 - 2000

It seems long ago and worlds away. The Brum Group was my entry into fandom. I'd been to an Eastercon and decided I must make an attempt to know someone before I went to my next convention and joined the Brum Group to find those people.

How did I go from there to chairing the Group for a year and editing the newsletter for two years? I have no recollection. I seemed to go from ingénue to tired old newsletter hack with no space in between.

Those years were the only ones when I have ever been up-to-speed with modern SF because only a few people (other than the ever reliable Pauline) seemed to get round to reading and reviewing and we often had more books than willing readers. Of course there were never many takers for the third book of the trilogy. There were some wonderful books came in though. It was a sheer joy to see what arrived at the house, even though I had to lug them in on the train every month.

The first time I ever reviewed a book for the newsletter, before I edited it, I agonised for an entire month and read it twice. Once I had my editing hat on that did not happen, although I tried to give good value. When I handed over the reins I had a couple of years where it was utterly wonderful to just read a book. Just read it. No review. These days I keep brief notes on what I have read, when and the very basic plot points and characters but I have no responsibility to anyone to be coherent or interesting and that is also a great relief.

The Brum Group has a long and splendid history and one always hopes not to let them down. I often thought I could do much better with the newsletter but there was a weight of history and expectation that stood in the way of innovation. That and a lack of time and energy. I have huge admiration for the job that Rog did over many years and I wish the current editor all the best with carrying on the tradition. YR

WE MADE IT! by Rog Peyton ***Newsletter editor 1971, 1978 and 2001 - 2012***

We made it! 500 newsletters! Hey, ain't that great, folks? Little did we think when I produced that first newsletter way back in 1971 - nearly 42 years ago - that we could ever reach this milestone. Heck, we had no idea that the BSFG would still be around. But it is and newsletter #500 is now (barring a catastrophe) in your hands.

Newsletter #1 (though un-numbered) - produced on the old foolscap size paper - was largely a report on our first meeting and was just two sides with some snippets of news added. After #1, our then-chairman Peter Weston decided he would do the newsletter as I didn't have the time - I'd just started *Andromeda* - and it continued more or less as a two-pager on foolscap paper. When we got to #16, Peter realised he would be away on holiday and asked me to produce that sixteenth issue - my second. I think I became the official newsletter editor somewhere around #30 by which time we had switched to the 'new' A4 size and it was sometimes a 4-pager. I was the person who produced the first newsletter in booklet format around issue #70 by which time the contents had grown to roughly twice as much. It has remained in that format right through to the present day.

Somewhere in the depths of my garage I have a complete set of newsletters which I had intended to pull out for reference purposes - and reprint #1 for your edification and delight - but it has been impossible due to the cold weather. I think I must have produced somewhere around 200 of the 500 issues but cannot think of one single humorous anecdote relating to the production of those issues - many annoying and frustrating ones but I won't bore you with those. To be quite honest, it's a solitary, lonely job editing and assembling all the reviews, news items and articles after being sent in by kind people - members and non-members - and trying to shoe-horn them or spread them into multiples of four pages. The fastest I ever produced a newsletter of more than eight pages was about 6 hours when everything fell into place on the first attempt. The longest was about four or five days - when if it could go wrong, it did go wrong. But don't ask me which those issues were now as my memory is getting worse by the - er, where was I going with this?

Seriously though, the most frustrating thing for any editor is the sometimes total lack of interest from the membership. Turn out what you think is a great issue and what happens? Nothing. If you want the newsletter to reach the #1000 milestone - and it's quite possible though I won't be around in another 42 years - get off your backsides and do a review, write an article or simply send the editor your views. Anything!!! Just don't do nothing! *Photo©Rog Peyton RGP*





BOOK REVIEWS

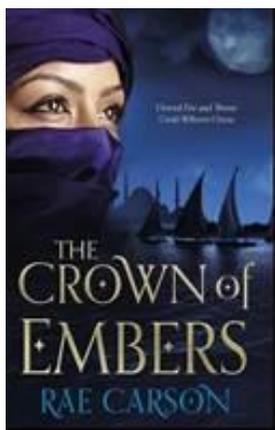


(REVIEWERS please note:- all reviews should be emailed direct to me at goodwinced@yahoo.com Deadline for each issue is 14 days prior to the date of the monthly meeting).

THE CROWN OF EMBERS by Rae Carson

Gollancz / 410 pgs / £16.99 trade paperback / ISBN: 978-0575099197

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.



In the distant past, when I started reading SF, there was no such thing as Young Adult fiction. Children's books were divided into age categories but after sixteen, you put away childish books and joined the adult library. If you were adult enough to leave school and get a job, you were old enough to read any book. At the same time, the subject matter was different. There was less gore, sex stopped at the bedroom door and there were taboos regarding what could and could not be written about. William Burroughs was positively scandalous and D.H. Lawrence's *LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER* became a renowned court case. Young people did not have emotional crises. Then the teenager was invented and attitudes changed. These days Young

Adult fiction is categorised by having protagonists in the sixteen to eighteen age group and who are beginning to explore their sexuality. Rae Carson writes in the YA category.

In the first volume of this trilogy, *FIRE AND THORNS*, seventeen year-old Elisa is married to the king of Joya d'Arena. She is a little too plump to be beautiful but she has one asset. She was born with a Godstone set in her navel. This turns cold when she is in danger. By the end of the first novel, her husband is dead and she has been proclaimed Queen, partly because she was able to rally the army and defeat her sorcerous enemies.

At the start of *THE CROWN OF EMBERS*, instead of building on her strengths she had reverted to being an indecisive adolescent, doubting her capabilities and allowing the members of the Quorum of advisers to use her as a doormat, taking decisions from her hands. She accepts the suggestion that she should marry and is pushed to see a number of suitors. Of them, the only one she has any liking for, Tristán, turns out to prefer male companionship. The man she really fancies is the commander of the Royal Guard, her late husband's best friend, Hector. After a couple of barely failed assassination attempts, the spark of the original Elise begins to resurface. To wrong-foot her enemies she announces that

she is going to the Southern part of her kingdom in order to assess whether Tristán would make a suitable consort. Her real reasons are two-fold, to draw her enemies away from the city of Brisadulce and to find out more about the powers of the Godstone.

Being a YA novel, Elise has to pass through a further ‘rite of passage’ during the course of the book. She has to begin to reassert her true adult personality and she has to experience all the angst adolescents are prey to in the presence of someone they are sexually drawn to. Here it is the realisation that a relationship with Hector is what she wants but might be politically inadvisable. (There is also the worry that he doesn’t actually like her but hangs around because of a sense of duty).

At the start of this volume, Elise is shaping up to be a tiresome pawn in other people’s plans but the plot gradually becomes more engaging. The friendship between Elise and her maid, Mara, is nicely handled as Mara is able to guide Elise along her route to potential maturity in ways that none of the others do.

The book is typical of its genre. Some older readers may find the plot a touch simplistic but it will appeal to those fourteen to eighteen year-olds that it is aimed at. *PM*

***THE NARROWS* by James Brogden**

Snow Books / 365 pgs / £7.99 tradeback or £6.07

ebook / ISBN: 978-1907777592

Reviewed by Dave Corby

THE NARROWS is James Brogden’s first book. This novel is best described as an urban fantasy with some light horror influences, and pitched at the generally mature reader due to some of the more emotional themes. The novel is set very recognisably in Birmingham, which this reviewer found irresistible (the lead character, Andy Sumner, lives in a flat in Northfield, the same suburb that I am sat in writing this review). Despite my obvious relish for the setting I think the book stands effectively on its merits for a non Brummie reader.



Andy is a University drop-out without any real clear view of which way to take his life. Engaged to marry Laura, a professional and organised young woman, Andy is casting about for purpose, employed in a dead-end job at a video-games store in the Pallasades shopping centre. One day he discovers, quite by accident, an odd back-alley shortcut off the Smallbrook Queensway. Following this alternative route takes him through an overgrown courtyard that he is dimly aware there should not be space for behind the buildings. After finding himself thoroughly lost, not being able to retrace his steps, he pushes on through and finds himself some five miles from his starting point, despite only walking for maybe ten minutes.

And so Andy finds himself curiously able to access 'the narrows', shortcuts through forgotten parts of the city which narrow the distance between two points (hence the name). But he would not find his way without a guide, so it is fortuitous that coincidence (?) throws in his lot with Bex, a fully-fledged member of the narrow-folk who choose to live their entire lives outside of the bright lights of mainstream life and inhabit the narrows full time. Soon it becomes apparent that a sinister figure named Barber is closing off the narrows one by one, and is quite happy to slay anyone who gets in his way by use of sub-human Skavags who hunt down and rip apart their prey. Ultimately Andy will discover his mysterious past and the reasons why he has a special affinity for the narrows and join the fight against the inhuman Barber and his terrifying schemes.

Brogden clearly knows his setting backwards; the usage of recognisable Birmingham landmarks and features is both very clever and pleasingly correct. The author layers on top of this an almost Lovecraft like 'from the depths that man is not meant to know' paradigm. As the book progresses the narrows bloom out into layered multiple realities. Unlike Lovecraft, however, Brogden's text does not drip with mind unHINGING terror, but instead employs more comfortable fantasy tropes. The characters are easy to relate to, and many seem extremely believable every-day sorts. The moments of horror are mostly limited to the aforementioned skavags and certain other, darker creature called forth by unpleasant human sacrifice.

For a first novel this book is extremely accomplished. I have reviewed a number of first novels recently, and **THE NARROWS** does not seem to have so much in the way of rough edges or literary mistakes. In truth, I found some of Andy's decision slightly hard to justify (spoiler alert: would he really be so ready to drop his relationship with his fiancé?) and maybe Brogden intended for the atmosphere to be more sinister and less comfortable. It is stylistically fairly neutral, using fairly straight forward language throughout. But that level of comfort provides for a very engaging read. The novelty of reading a book set in my home town had worn off by the middle of the book, but I can happily report that the text continued to grip me to the end.

Therefore I have little reservation in recommending this book. Overall it is of surprisingly high quality. If you happen to be resident in Birmingham, this is almost a must read, if only for the novelty factor. Committed horror fans might find it a little light on their brand of fun, but I think that fantasy fans would find it an enjoyable change of pace. Given how accomplished and professional this first book is, I certainly think that Mr Brogden will be worth watching for future output.

DM

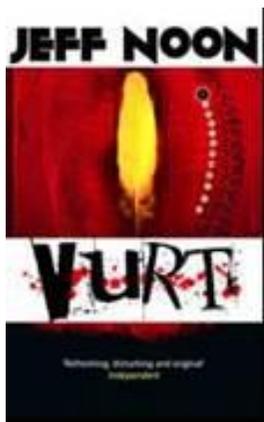
VURT by Jeff Noon

Tor / 376 pgs / £16.99 hardback (£6.99 Ebook) / ISBN 978-0230768802

Reviewed by Jim Pearce

VURT is a psychedelic cyber-punk SF novel set in a dystopian drug-fuelled grungy Manchester and first published twenty years ago winning the Arthur C. Clarke Award. Basically VURT chronicles a quest set in a world inhabited by

an eclectic mix of various species, that is: robos, shadowgirls (telepaths), dogboys/girls, pures (standard humans) and their various hybrids. In this story a Vurt is a both a virtual world which is akin to a computer/gamestation adventure set in a LSD dream. It is accessed by tickling the back of ones throat by a special type of feather. Some hints are provided as to the source/origin of Vurt. Another staple of this world is 'Vaz' a universal lubricant and fix-it with miraculous properties - where can I get some!



The main character (hero) Scribble is obsessed with rescuing his sister Desdemona who is trapped within one of the plethora of Vurt worlds in exchange for an alien blob. There are specific rules covering the exchange of persons and or objects between a Vurt world and reality. In pursuit of his objective Scribble and his friends (the Stash Riders) Beetle, Bridget, Mandy and Twinkle stumble from one outrageous situation to the next. All the time they are pursued by the police especially the 'Shecop' Murdock. Along the way they are aided and abetted by a rich cast of outrageous and exotic characters none more so than the enigmatic Vurt guru 'Game Cat'.

In addition to the original VURT novel the current edition, published on the 11th April 2013, contains 3 short stories set in the same world.

VURT is not normally a sub-genre of SF that I read but it is so well written with well-fleshed characters that it insidiously drew me in and would not let go. I was hooked, caring about what happened to the characters and had to finish this tale as quickly as possible. After experiencing VURT I can only conclude that Jeff Noon must have one of the most fevered and inventive imaginations possible and look forward to reading POLLEN, its sequel. *JTP*

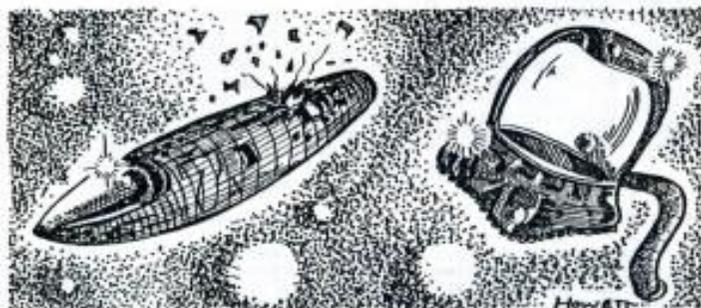
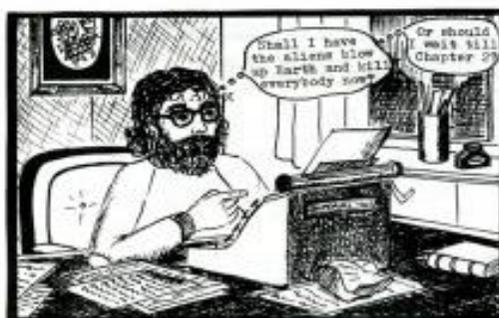
NEWSLETTER ARTWORK

No retrospective of the BSFG Newsletter would be complete without recognising the talented contributors of artwork and cartoons. Inclusion of photographs was not always possible, especially in the early days and cover illustrations and cartoons helped to fill the gap and provide some amusement. I apologise in advance if, as a relative newcomer to the BSFG, I have missed important people. I have tried to include a few examples of some of this artwork but space is limited. Hopefully if people are interested I will include some more examples in future newsletters. Or of course, anyone is always very welcome to contribute new artwork!

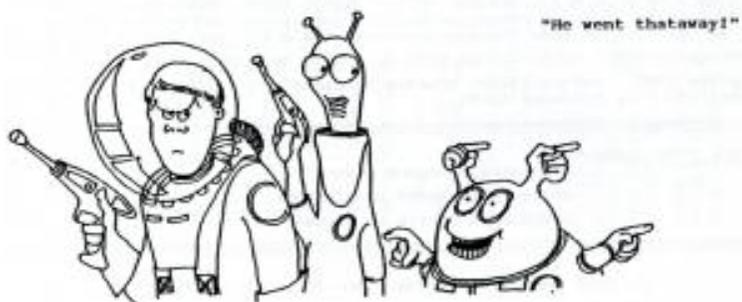


Dave
Wood

Di
Abbot



Dick Howett



John Dell



Euan Smith

NEW CINEMA FILM RELEASES

Listings should not be necessarily taken as recommendations. View at your own peril!

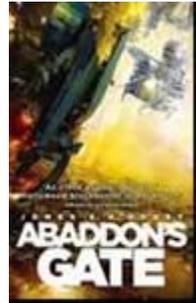
BYZANTIUM – Release date May 10th A mother and daughter vampire team cause havoc in an English seaside town. Directed by Neil Jordan

EPIC – Release date May 24th Animated fantasy where a teenager, shrunk to a tiny size, becomes involved in a war between good and evil

AFTER EARTH – Release date May 7th Father and son crash land on a future, devastated Earth. Starring Will Smith. Director M Knight Shymalan

MAN OF STEEL – Release date May 14th Latest *Superman* reboot.

FORTHCOMING BOOKS

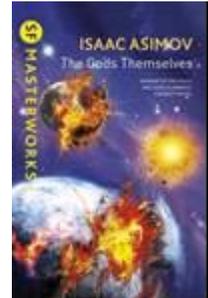
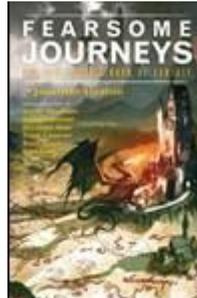
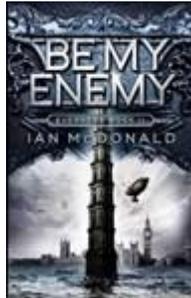


THE NEW WATCH by **Sergei Lukyanenko** / William Heinemann / 416 pgs / £16.99 hardcover / ISBN 978-0434022311 / May 2nd Russian fantasy of a “cold war” between Light and Dark, policed by the “watches”.

NOS4R2 by **Joe Hill** / Gollancz / 704 pgs / £18.99 hardcover / ISBN 978-0575130678 / May 30th Horror novel by Stephen King’s son about a Silver Wraith car

SKY DRAGONS: DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN by **Anne and Todd McCaffrey** / Del Rey / 400 pgs / £5.25 paperback / ISBN 978-0345500922 / June 1st First publication of Anne McCaffrey’s last novel, set on Pern. Xhinna must rebuild the decimated dragon population after a plague.

ABADDON’S GATE (Book 3 of The Expanse series) by **James S A Corey** / Orbit / 560 pgs / £13.99 hardcover / ISBN 978-1841499925 / June 4th An alien artefact has constructed a star gate near Uranus – is it opportunity or threat for humanity?



FINCHES OF MARS by **Brian Aldiss** / The Friday Project / 224 pgs / £14.99 hardcover / ISBN 978-0007478927 / June 6th His “final” SF novel now available in print. A new colony on Mars struggles as only stillborn children are born.

BE MY ENEMY (Everness Series 2) by **Ian McDonald** / Jo Fletcher Books / 320 pgs / £16.99 hardcover / ISBN 978-1780876689 / June 6th In a universe of many parallel worlds, Everett Singh must enter the quarantined original Earth to rescue his father.

FEARSOME JOURNEYS: THE NEW SOLARIS BOOK OF FANTASY by **Jonathan Strahan (editor)** / Solaris / 384 pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1781081198 / June 6th Anthology of Fantasy.

THE GODS THEMSELVES (SF Masterworks) by **Isaac Asimov** / Gollancz / 288 pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0575129054 / June 13th Re-issue of the classic. An exchange of energy form a parallel universe may turn the Sun into a supernova.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All details are correct to the best of our knowledge, we advise contacting organizers before travelling. Always enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope when writing to any of the contact addresses.

Any information about forthcoming SF/Fantasy/Horror events is always welcome - please send to Carol at goodwincd@yahoo.com

Middle Earth Weekend, 11th - 12th May, Hall Green. Held at Sarehole Mill, Cole Bank Road, Hall Green. Free entry (Parking £2). Details: www.facebook.com/MiddleEarthWeekend or www.middleearthweekend.org.uk

Freda Warrington signing, 11th May, London Freda Warrington will be signing copies of *A TASTE OF BLOOD WINE* at the Forbidden Planet London Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8JR from 4 - 5pm.

***Adventure Rocketship!* Anthology launch, 17th May, London** John Courtenay Grimwood and Lavie Tidhar launch a new science fiction anthology series mixing interviews, essays and fiction. Forbidden Planet London Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8JR from 6 - 7pm.

Brian Aldiss signing, 6th June, London Brian Aldiss will be signing copies of *FINCHES OF MARS* at the Forbidden Planet London Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8JR from 6 - 7pm.

CONVENTIONS

FUTURA, 15th June, Wolverhampton. One day SF convention at the Wolverhampton Light House. Guest of honour Ian R Macleod. More information at www.alexdavisevents.co.uk

EDGE-LIT 2, 13th July, Derby. Literary event considering Science fiction, fantasy and horror writing. Guests of Honour Mike Carey, Tricia Sullivan and Stan Nicholls. Venue is QUAD (Market Place, DE1 3AS). Tickets £25 Website www.derbyquad.co.uk/special-event/edge-lit-2 Phone: 01332 290 606

NINE WORLDS GEEKFEST, 9th - 11th August, Heathrow. New fan run “multi-themed mega convention”. Guests include Jaine Fenn, Ben Aaronovitch, Charles Stross, Stan Nicholls and Anne Gay. Kickstarter funded (closed on March 1st) so details of ticket pricing etc. to follow at <http://nineworlds.co.uk/>

WORLD FANTASY CON, 31st October - 3rd November, Brighton. Guests of Honour include Richard Matheson, Alan Lee, Brian Aldiss and Tessa Farmer with China Mieville as Master of Ceremonies. Numbers are limited to book early. Attending membership £125 at <http://wfc2013.org/howtojoin01.html>

LONCON 3 (WORLDCON 72), 14th - 18th August 2014, London. Held at ExCel exhibition centre. Guests of Honour include Iain M Banks, Chris Foss, and Robin Hobb. £95 Adult membership. See www.loncon3.org

NOVACON 43
8th – 10th NOVEMBER 2013
GUEST OF HONOUR
JO WALTON
Membership is £45 until Eastercon.
See www.novacon.org.uk for details

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG

June 14th - authors' agent **IAN DRURY**

July 12th - **RICHARD DENNING** on self-publishing

August 9th - **SUMMER SOCIAL** (new venue the Bull near Aston University)

September 13th - Loncon 3 (Worldcon 2014) chair **ALICE LAWSON**

October 11th - TBA

November 1st - TBA

December 6th - **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL** - Skittles and buffet

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ABOUT US... The Birmingham Science Fiction Group meets on the second Friday of each month. Membership is £16 per year per person (or £21 for two members living at the same address). This includes the 12 free issues of the Newsletter plus reduced entrance fee at each meeting. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Birmingham Science Fiction Group' and sent to our Membership Secretary, 10 Sylvan Avenue, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 2PG