

August 1998

Issue 323

BRUM GROUP NEWS

Price: FREE

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

Group Chair-Tony Morton, Secretary-Anne Woodford, Treasurer-Alan Woodford, Publicity Officer-Rog Peyton, Ordinary Member-Yvonne Rowse, Newsletter Editor-POST VACANT, Novacon 28 Chair-Martin Tudor, Novacon 29 Chair-Carol Morton.

ANNE GAY & STAN NICHOLLS

will address the BSFG on

Friday 14th August 1998, *

from 7.45pm, in the Lichfield Lounge, second floor, Britannia Hotel, New Street, (entrance in Union Passageway).

Drinks may be purchased from Harvey's Bar on the Mezzanine level and taken up to the Lichfield on the second floor.

Admittance: Members £3.00 (£2.00 Unwaged), Non-Members £4.00 (£3.00 Unwaged). (*Unwaged discounts are at the discretion of the Committee and will depend on satisfactory proof of status being produced.*)
*(*VB: the second Friday of the month.)*

***Forthcoming Meetings: 11 September PAT CADIGAN;
9 October PETER F HAMILTON; 13 November a SPECIAL
MEETING AT NOVACON 28 - Guest to be announced;
11 December BEER & SKITTLES at the Samson & Lion.***

The BSFG meets from 7pm in the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, (entrance in Union Passageway), on the second Friday of each month (unless otherwise notified). The annual subscription rates (which include 12 copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to formal meetings) are £15.00 per person, or £20.00 for 2 members at the same address. Cheques etc. should be made payable to "The Birmingham Science Fiction Group" and sent to: Alan Woodford, The Treasurer, 81 Harrold Road, Rowley Regis, Warley, West Mids, B65 0RL, (e-mail enquiries via: bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk). Book reviews, review copies and other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to: Newsletter Editor, c/o Anne Woodford, 81 Harrold Road, Fowley Regis, Warley, West Mids, B65 0RL, (or by e-mail to bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk).

Once again we proudly present the event of the year!!

CHRISTMAS MEETING

Friday 11 December

BEER & SKITTLES

at the

SAMSON and LION

Wordsley

Please let Carol Morton know as soon as possible how many tickets you want to attend the Christmas event. It is our usual second Friday and as in previous years includes a bar meal and transport.

Once the Committee have an idea of numbers - and who , we hope to book a coach to allow DROP OF people (reasonably) near home on the way home. Pick up points in the past were City Centre, Bearwood and Lye. A pick up time for this year will be decided later. Total cost is undecided as the pub are currently rewriting their menus due to the arrival of a new cook (don't worry Rog, the Balti's are still on!).

To secure a place a £5 deposit is required. This can either be given to Carol at any meeting, or a cheque, made out to "Birmingham Science Fiction Group" posted to 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, DY9 8SS.

If confirmation is required please let Carol know. Further details will be available once we finalise the event.

Our Guests

ANNE GAY's first novel, MIND-SAIL, was published in 1990, THE BROOCH OF AZURE MIDNIGHT and DANCING ON THE VOLCANO followed shortly after, with her most recent novel, TO BATHE IN LIGHTNING, appearing in 1995.

STAN NICHOLLS has written numerous tv tie-in books, film novelisations, biographies, graphic-novel adaptations. Best known for WORDSMITHS OF WONDER which featured 50 interviews with "writers of the fantastic", his most recent work was a biography of Gerry Anderson.

Anne and Stan will be discussing their involvement with LineOne's on-line SF magazine. (See Letters for further information.)

Colophon

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This issue was printed on the CRITICAL WAVE photocopier. For

details of WAVE's competitive prices contact Martin Tudor at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, WV13 1HX or by e-mail to martin@empties.demon.co.uk.

Many thanks to: ALAN & ANNE WOODFORD for producing the address labels and stamping the envelopes; YVONNE ROWSE for her book reviews; the letter writers for their contributions; STEVE GREEN for his column; thanks also to WHAT'S ON, the Andromeda web page, the BBC and the EXPRESS & STAR for the news in the Jophan Report and Events Listing.

Signing Sessions

Forthcoming signing sessions at Andromeda, 2-5 Suffolk Street. For confirmation and/or further details call 0121 643 1999:

12 AUG: CHRISTOPHER PRIEST SIGNING CANCELLED.

SEPT: Provisonally DAVID GEMMELL signing THE SWORD IN THE STORM (Bantam, £15.99)

NOV: Provisonally TERRY PRATCHETT.

Forthcoming Events

14 AUGUST 1998: ANNE GAY & STAN NICHOLLS will discuss

14 AUGUST 1998: ANNE GAY & STAN NICHOLLS will discuss their new online sf club **LINEONE**. From 7.45pm in the Lichfield Lounge, 2nd floor of the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, (entrance in Union Passageway).

21-24 August 1998: THE WRAP PARTY to celebrate the conclusion of **BABYLON 5**, the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. Confirmed guests include: J Michael Straczynski, Harlan Ellison, Dr Jack Cohen, John Ridgeway, Bryan Talbot, Adam "Mojo" Lebowitz, John Matthews. Attending £75.00 (£80.00 on the door), to The Wrap Party, PO Box 505, Reading, RG1 7QZ.

28-31 AUGUST 1998: GATTACA directed Andrew Nichol, starring Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman, Jude Law, Gore Vidal. "In the 20th century you are your DNA. The genetically-engineered rule the world. Ethan Hawke, a human-born 'in-valid' who aspires to space travel, buys a new identity, accesses Gattaca Aerospace and meets Thurman who has her own guilty secrets. When a murder is committed, evidence points to an 'in-valid'...A visionary, intelligent, cautionary tale on genetic shenanigans, with a futuristic soundtrack by Micharell Nyman". Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham, 4.35pm and 8.30pm. Call 0121 643 7277.

11 SEPTEMBER 1998: PAT CADIGAN will address the BSFG on the publication of her latest work **TEA FROM AN EMPTY CUP**. From 7.45pm in the Lichfield Lounge, 2nd floor of the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, (entrance in Union Passageway).

11-13 SEPTEMBER 1998: FANTASYCON 22, the convention of the British Fantasy Society. At the Albany Hotel, Birmingham, Guest of Honour Freda Warrington, Jane Yolen and Master of Ceremonies Ramsey Campbell. Attending £55.00. Contact: 46 Oxford Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT, further details can be seen at: <http://www.geocities.com/soho/6859/>

9 OCTOBER 1998: PETER F HAMILTON will address the BSFG on the hardback publication of his short story collection, **A SECOND CHANCE AT EDEN (£17.99)**, and the paperback of **THE NEUTRON-IUM ALCHEMIST (£7.99)**. From 7.45pm in the Lichfield Lounge, 2nd floor of the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, (entrance in Union Passageway).

7-8 November 1998: Memorabilia, "Europe's largest SF, film, cult TV, pop and comic collectors fair". Hall 17, NEC. For further information call Made in Heaven 01899 221622 or tickets from box office on 0121 767 4555.

13-15 NOVEMBER 1998:
NOVACON 28, at the **Britannia Hotel**, **New Street**, **Birmingham**.
Guest of Honour Paul J McAuley.
Attending membership costs £32.00 until 1st November, after which time memberships may be paid for on the door at the rate of **£35.00**.
Contact: Carol Morton, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, DY9 8SS, (For further information check out <http://www.cooky.demon.co.uk/n28/n28.html>).

2-5 April 1999: RECONVENE, 50th **National British Convention**, **Adelphi Hotel**, **Liverpool**. **GoHs:** Peter S Beagle, John Clute, Jeff Noon. Attending **£25.00** to **Reconvene**, 3 **West Shrubbery**, **Redland**, **Bristol**, **BS6 6SZ**.

27 December 1999 - 2 January 2000: MILLENNIUM. 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. **Contact: Malcolm Reid**, 186 **Casewick Road**, **West Norwood**, **London**, **SE27 0SZ**.

Although details are correct to the best of our knowledge, we advise readers to contact organisers 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

If you know of any events which you think may be of interest to members of the BSFG please send details to the Editor (c/o Anne Woodford to the address on the cover).

If you have attended any events or seen any films or videos that you would like to recommend to other members (or warn them about) please feel free to write a report or review and send it to the editorial address.

The Jophan Report #117 by Martin Tudor

Steve Green reports that Birmingham comics fans now meet on the afternoon of the last Saturday of each month at the Old Fox on Hurst Street.

Nominations are now open for the GUFF (Going Under Fan Fund) race to decide who will represent Europe at the 1999 World SF Convention in Melbourne.

Nominations should be sent to the British Agent, Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London. N15 4JU, by 30 September 1998. Candidates need to supply a bond of £10 and a 100-word platform.

Currently the UK fund stands at £1,092.07. Donations of money and material to auction is always welcome at the above address

The Dudley Museum & Art Gallery, St James's Road, Dudley is currently featuring the largest exhibition of original children's tv characters ever. Call 01384 815575 for further details of how you can see characters from the Herbs, Teletubbies, Captain Pugwash, Button Moon, etc.

The 1998 Hugo Awards were announced at the 56th World Science Fiction Convention in Baltimore on 7th August, during a ceremony hosted by Charles Sheffield. This year's winners are in bold and followed by the other nominees in that category:

Best Novel - Forever Peace by Joe Haldeman

Frameshift by Robert J. Sawyer (Tor); The Rise of Endymion by Dan Simmons (Bantam Spectra); Jack Faust by Michael Swanwick (Avon); City on Fire by Walter Jon Williams (HarperPrism).

Best Novella - "...Where Angels Fear to Tread" by Allen Steele (Asimov's October-November 1997).

"The Funeral March of the Marionettes" by Adam-Troy Castro (F&SF July 1997); "Ecopoeisis" by Geoffrey A. Landis (SF Age May 1997); "Loose Ends" by Paul Levinson (Analog May 1997); "Marrow" by Robert Reed (SF Age July 1997).

Best Novelette - "We Will Drink A Fish Together..." by Bill Johnson (Asimov's May 1997)

"Moon Six" by Stephen Baxter (SF Age March 1997); "Broken Symmetry" by Michael A. Burstein (Analog February 1997); "Three Hearings on the Existence of Snakes in the Human Bloodstream" by James Alan Gardner (Asimov's February 1997); "The Undiscovered" by William Sanders (Asimov's March 1997).

Best Short Story - "The 43 Antarean Dynasties" by Mike Resnick (Asimov's December 1997)

"Beluthahatchie" by Andy Duncan (Asimov's March 1997); "Standing Room Only" (second site)" by Karen Joy Fowler (Asimov's August 1997); "Itsy Bitsy Spider" by James Patrick Kelly (Asimov's June 1997); "The Hand You're Dealt" by Robert J. Sawyer (Free Space, Tor); "No Planets Strike" by Gene Wolfe (F&SF January 1997).

Best Non-Fiction/Related Book - The Encyclopedia of Fantasy by John Clute and John Grant (Orbit, St. Martin's Press)

Space Travel by Ben Bova with Anthony R. Lewis (Writer's Digest Books); Infinite Worlds by Vincent Di Fate (Penguin Studio); Reflections and Refractions by Robert Silverberg (Underwood Books); Spectrum IV: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art edited by Cathy Fenner & Arnie Fenner with Jim Loehr (Underwood Books).

Best Dramatic Presentation - Contact (Warner Bros./South Side Amusement Company) Directed by **Robert Zemeckis**.

The Fifth Element (Columbia Pictures/Gaumont) Directed by Luc Besson; Gattaca (Columbia Pictures Corporation/Jersey Films) Directed by Andrew M. Niccol; Men in Black (MacDonald-Parkes/Columbia Pictures Corporation/Amblin Entertainment) Directed by Barry Sonnenfeld; Starship Troopers (TriStar Pictures/Big Bug Pictures/Touchstone Pictures) Directed by Paul Verhoeven.

Best Professional Editor - Gardner Dozois (Asimov's)

Scott Edelman (SF Age); David G. Hartwell (Tor Books; Year's Best SF); Stanley Schmidt (Analog); Gordon Van Gelder (F&SF).

Best Professional Artist - Bob Eggleton

Jim Burns; Thomas Canty; David Cherry; Don Maitz; Michael Whelan.

Best Semiprozine - Locus edited by **Charles N. Brown**

Interzone edited by David Pringle; The New York Review of Science Fiction edited by Kathryn Cramer; Ariel Haméon; David G. Hartwell & Kevin Maroney; Science Fiction Chronicle edited by Andrew I. Porter; Speculations edited by Kent Brewster & Denise Lee.

Best Fanzine - Mimosa edited by **Nicki & Richard Lynch**

Ansible edited by Dave Langford; Attitude edited by Michael Abbott; John Dallman & Pam Wells; File 770 edited by Mike Glycer; Tangent edited by David Truesdale.

Best Fan Writer - Dave Langford

Bob Devney; Mike Glycer; Andy Hooper; Evelyn C. Leeper; Joseph T. Major.

Best Fan Artist - Joe Mayhew

Brad Foster; Ian Gunn; Teddy Harvia; Peggy Ranson.

John W. Campbell Award (not a Hugo, sponsored by Dell Magazines) - **Mary Doria Russell** (2nd year of eligibility)

Raphael Carter (2nd year of eligibility); Andy Duncan (2nd year of eligibility); Richard Garfinkle (2nd year of eligibility); Susan R. Matthews (2nd year of eligibility).

Further news from Bucconeer tells us that Philadelphia has won the bid to host the 2001 Worldcon beating Boston (is that the first time Bosytcon have lost?).

Or as they put it "The Philadelphia in 2001 Bid Committee and the Phanadelphia Corporation is thrilled to announce that Philadelphia will be hosting The Millenium Philcon. August 30 to September 3, 2001 at The Pennsylvania Convention Center

The Newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group

& Philadelphia Marriott Hotel, with Author Guest of Honor Greg Bear, Artist Guest of Honor Stephen Youll, Editor Guest of Honor Gardner Dozois, Fan Guest of Honor George Scithers, Toastmaster Esther Friesner.”

For further details contact: Philadelphia in 2001, Suite 2001, 402 Huntingdon Pike, Rockledge, PA 19046, USA (or send e-mail to PHIL2001@NETAXS.COM).

Letters

Ulrika O'Brien, North American TAFF Administrator,
uaobrien@UCI.EDU
22nd July 1998.

Nominations for the 1999 North America-to-Europe TAFF race have been extended to AUGUST 15, 1998. The selected candidate will travel from North America to the UK to attend Reconvene, the 50th British National Science Fiction Convention (Eastercon), held April 2-5, 1999, at the Britannia Adelphi, in Liverpool England.

Prospective North American candidates should ensure that their signed nominations (two from European nominators, and three from North American nominators) reach the North American Administrator (which is to say, me) by midnight on August 15, 1998. Prospective candidates should

also mail a 100-word platform statement, and a \$20 candidacy bond check directly to me, again by that same deadline.

The deadline is for receipt of nominations and candidacy platforms, please, not a postmark-by date.

Please send all nominations, checks, and statements to: Ulrika O'Brien
123 Melody Lane, #C, Costa Mesa,
CA 92627.

TAFF also gratefully accepts freely given donations of money or auction goods; such donations are the sole support the Fund has, and have sustained it for over forty years.

Please feel free to reproduce this announcement to disseminate it further, but please do reproduce it in its entirety. Thank you.

Nick Dudley-Williams, Powerhouse,
nickd.w@powerhousepr.com
31st July 1998.

On 11th August, the world famous paranormalist Uri Geller will team up with Internet service LineOne and invite cameras into his house as part of a year long mind-reading competition.

It is the first time the public will be allowed such an intimate 24-hours-a-day insight into a celebrity's home.

A web camera, christened the "Uricam", has been positioned in Geller's living room and visitors to the LineOne site (www.urigeller.com/uricam/index.html) will be able to follow him as he goes about his daily routine. "It gives me the opportunity to suddenly go and communicate - both mentally and in reality - with people whenever I get inspired," Uri Geller said.

At 11.00am and 11.00pm on the 11th of each month throughout the year, Uri Geller will be live online. Anyone logged on at that precise time, will be able to try their hand at matching his awesome powers by attempting to read his mind and establish the image that he will be mentally transmitting. The image has already been drawn, and is locked in a safe at his house.

LineOne will be running a competition for the person who comes closest to guessing the image Uri has drawn (in the event of more than one entrant depicting the image exactly, there will be a draw.) The prize is a Citroen Saxo 1.1iX, handpainted and signed by Uri which makes the car one of a kind.

In addition, each month Uri will also invite visitors to try and read his mind for smaller, less detailed pictures to win signed copies of his new book 'Uri Geller's Little Book of Mind-Power' (Robson Books).

The competition will run for one year, and the overall winner of this original prize will be announced on LineOne during the total eclipse of the sun at exactly 11.11am on 11 August, 1999

Roscoe Report by Steve Green

As I write this final "Roscoe", comics fans across the planet are smashing their piggy banks in anticipation of the medium's latest major makeover: Marvel plans to relaunch both AMAZING SPIDER-MAN and its chief spin-off, PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN, in November.

But the tills will start ringing a month earlier, with the first issue of a 13-part miniseries by John Byrne, SPIDER-MAN, CHAPTER 1, which aims to dust off the very first Stan Lee / Steve Ditko adventures from 1962. Byrne, who previously revamped Marvel's THE FANTASTIC FOUR into a pastiche of its 1960s origins, was called in by rival publisher DC for the 1986 relaunch of its own flagship character, Superman, although the company found the effect of the MAN OF STEEL miniseries temporary: by 1992, it announced "The Death of Superman" (as if) in a bid to boost interest in the title.

Byrne will also draw AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, whilst the art on

PETER PARKER will be handled by John Romita Jr, son of one of the wallcrawler's most famous illustrators; both titles will be written by Howard Mackie.

Meanwhile, J M DeMatteis and Michael Zulli will collaborate on another November release, *WEBSPINNERS #1*, a new anthology series by various writers and artists.

Unabashed Plug Dept: those justifiably impressed by the duel Clarke/Tiptree Awards-winner *THE SPARROW* should make haste to Andromeda, where Rog Peyton has secured a limited (signed!) supply of Mary Doria Russell's sequel, *CHILDREN OF GOD*, on US import at £17.99. He's also hoping to get US hardbacks of *THE SPARROW* in the near future.

Forget all those SFX personality polls: there's only one way to gauge a star's standing, and that's by checking out how much fans are willing to lay out for their autographed portrait.

For instance, New York outlet Truly Unique Collectibles retails a signed 8"x10" of George Clooney in full *BATMAN* rig for \$50.00 (possibly a reflection of his recent off-the-cuff confession to "killing" the movie franchise), a pensive George Lucas (no doubt haunted by thoughts of paying a decent percentage to actors in the new *STAR WARS* trilogy) for a rather

more respectable \$75.00 or - top of the John Hancock League - Harrison Ford (as either Han Solo or Indy Jones) for a cool \$125.00. Hey, even Arnie can only demand \$110, whilst the pre-Borg cast members of *STAR TREK: VOYAGER* average under \$33.00 apiece; no wonder their pedestrian sojourn in the Gamma Quadrant is coming to a premature end.

(Stephen King, incidentally, runs out at \$50.00 - but for only half that amount, he'll probably play a cameo role in your next horror movie. Me, I'd stick with the photo.)

The Fantasy Amateur Press Association, which celebrated its sixty-first birthday in July, is on the look-out for new members. Founded by veteran fan and author Don Wollheim, FAPA's concept is unfannishly simple: members produce at least eight pages of material each year, spread across four quarterly mailings, sending 68 copies to the Official Editor (currently Las Vegas' own Ken Forman); he collates 65 bundles containing one of everything and distributes these back to the membership (the three spare are held back in case of postal hiccoughs).

The annual fee is US\$15.00, which covers postage and administration (no easy task: the Fenruary mailing contained 40 fanzines, totalling 372 pages), and membership is open to anyone who's either edited a fanzine or

had material published in two separate fanzines (reviews in BRUM GROUP NEWS would count as one). Current FAPAns include authors Bob Silverberg and Gordon Eklund, sf historian A Langley Searles and fanzine editors Robert Lichtman (TRAPDOOR) and Andy Hooper (APAK).

For further information, drop Ken a line at 7215 Nordic Lights Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89119-0335, USA (kforman@wizard.com). Tell him Roscoe sent you.

Book Reviews

GREEN EYES by Lucius Shepard
Millennium, pb, 275pp, £5.99,
Star Rating: *****
Reviewed by Yvonne Rowse.

This is an astonishingly good book. It gripped my imagination and emotions and gave me sleepless nights for weeks. I reached page 136 in one sitting, went to bed and had to get up to seal the book between a couple of heavy and powerful hardbacks to keep things from crawling out of it. For months after that the green eye on the spine stared at me menacingly whenever the clothes pile was inadvertently removed from it. I was only able to finish reading the book recently on the assurance that it wouldn't frighten me to gibbering.

The book begins, "...I did not see my first "Zombie" until my second day at Tulane when Ezawa permitted me to witness an interview." The project infects the brains of recently dead corpses with bacteria from dirt taken from old slave graveyards. The subjects, under the influence of a sexually attractive "therapist", remember a new personality and history. As the bacteria increase the subject's eyes become phosphorescent green, his senses sharpen, he becomes more sexually aroused and at the height of arousal he dies. This second lifetime typically lasts about an hour.

Jocundra Verret, the therapist involved in the first interview, is assigned to Donnell Harrison, a slow burner. The slow burners survive for much longer before the bacteria overwhelm them. Donnell's body had been a carnival worker, dead of alcohol poisoning at twenty-nine. His "zombie" personality is a poet. Other slow burners with similarly unprepossessing backgrounds, have produced important breakthroughs in their fields of interest. One has also discovered the ability to manipulate magnetic fields and is able to disable the video cameras constantly monitoring them.

Jocundra and Donnell escape from the project, hide out in the bayous where Donnell develops his talent for healing then enter the retinue of Otille Rigaud. Otille, a zombie obsessed woman, enables them to construct a

veve, a zombie symbol, in copper, which they hope, will retard the growth of the bacteria. While on the veve Donnell experiences life in the fantastic world he has written about in stories.

Donnell and Jocundra are surprisingly sympathetic characters. The love that grows between them comes to seem a tender and natural thing among all the perversions of wealth and the scientific research to which nothing is sacred or forbidden given sufficient money.

The foreboding and dread the book raised in me was achieved subtly and beautifully. "This time [his voice] had been full of potent menace, the voice of a spirit speaking through a cob-webbed throat, its whisper created by the straining and snapping of spider silk stretched apart by desiccated muscles." The descriptive language used likewise reinforces the perception of the diseased personalities, the inhumanity of the people responsible.

This is an exceptionally well written book which is still causing me to think about the ethics and morals of unrestrained research. It is a book I will read again (with less dread) and a book I would recommend. Lucius Shepard has been added to the list of authors whose books I will search out.

**THE UNEXPLAINED, stories of the paranormal, ed. Ric Alexander Orion, hb, 431pp, £17.99
Star Rating: ****
Reviewed by Yvonne Rowse.**

I wouldn't have picked this book out in a well-stocked bookshop. The cover is terrible. A cliched orange hand held up against a half spiral. Is it the last remaining part of a person sucked into a paranormal experience or a hand held up in warning? And were 'the unexplained' and its typeface chosen as a title to be reminiscent of the X-files? I'd have put it back on the shelf with a shudder and found something more to my taste but I would have missed a treat because of my prejudice against tacky covers.

Despite its cover (and a quote from the creator of the x-files) this is an intelligent and well-conceived book. Two stories were written especially for the book, some are reprints from magazines, some disinterred from obscurity, some reprinted from single author collections and two personal favourites of mine.

The book is split into five sections (or archives!). 'Supernatural mysteries' includes stories about a zombie, an elemental, a witch and a vampire. 'Psychic phenomena' and 'alien encounters' are self-explanatory. 'Time warps' has stories based on mythology, the lost continent, the little

people and the sasquatch. The book ends with 'urban legends'.

If I'd looked further than the orange hand I might have bought this book because it contained a LeGuin story, a Zelazny story, a Sturgeon story. I wouldn't have been tempted by the names Richard Laymon or Clive Barker. Not that I've got anything against them, I just don't read their type of fiction. However, I've got the LeGuin, the Zelazny and the Sturgeon stories in other books. The Barker story, in particular, was both horrible and powerful and well worth reading. What makes this book particularly interesting to me is that it's a cross-genre collection. Clive Barker's story is horror, Sturgeon's is SF, Zelazny's is fantasy. What was being said in the non-SF sections was also relevant, well written, and in some cases more surprising and powerful.

C. J. Cherryh's story about a woman able to see the future, Richard Laymon's story about a couple of policemen trying to stop a zombie, 'Unicom Variation' by Zelazny and Clive Barker's horror tale about the urban bogeyman are particularly good in their very different ways and LeGuin's 'The New Atlantis' would have been worth the cost of the book alone, or at least of the paperback.

So, look past the cover. This is a book well worth buying. In paperback.

The Rules

Please remember that reviews of books should reach the Newsletter Editor, c/o Anne Woodford, Secretary at, within ONE MONTH of your taking the book.

Please note that no one who owes THREE or more reviews will be allowed to have further review copies and no more than three review copies may be taken at one time.

The List of Shame

A number of people still owe reviews, please ensure that these, along with reviews of books picked up at the last two meetings are mailed to the Editor, c/o Anne Woodford by this month's meeting. The following list includes the name of the person, the title and author of the book and in brackets the month when the book was picked up for review:

Robert Jones: TIMESCAPE by Gregory Benford (2/97).

Steve Jones & Friends: THE RUINS OF AMBRAI by Melanie Rawn (3/97); MAGNIFICAT by Julian May (3/97); THE REALITY DYSFUNCTION by Peter F Hamilton (3/97); THE SANDMAN BOOK OF DREAMS ed Neil Gaiman & Ed Kramer (4/97); MILLENNIUM ed Douglas E Winter (6/97). THE DISCWORLD COMPANION by

Terry Pratchett & Stephen Briggs (6/97); BABYLON 5: TO DREAM IN THE CITY OF THE SORROWS by Kathryn M Drennan (7/97); THE FIFTH SACRED THING by Starhawk (9/97); THE PAVILLION OF FROZEN WOMEN by S P Somtow (9/97); WALKING TO MERCURY by Starhawk (10/97); JOVAH'S ANGEL by Sharon Shinn (10/97); 3001: THE FINAL ODYSSEY by Arthur C Clarke (11/97).

Adrian Middleton: ALIEN: RESURRECTION by A C Crispin (11/97); SERVANT OF THE BONES by Anne Rice (11/97).

Pauline Morgan: CYBER-KILLERS, ed Ric Alexander (6/98).

Carol Morton: SORCERIES ed. Katherine Kerr (2/97); RAGE OF A DEMON KING by Raymond E Feist (3/97); SORCERERS OF MAJIPOOR by Robert Silverberg (3/97); THE SEER KING by Chris Bunch (10/97); JACK FAUST by Michael Swanwick (10/97); MAGISTER by Jonathan Wylie (12/97).

Tony Morton: BARNACLE BILL THE SPACER AND OTHER STORIES by Lucius Shepard (3/98); TRACES by Stephen Baxter (4/98).

Yvonne Rowse: KIRINYA, Ian McDonald (6/98).

George Ternent c/o Dave Cox: MILLENNIUM: THE UNOFFICIAL COMPANION, VOLUME 2 by N E Gense (1/98).

Martin Tudor: THE PALADIN, Adam Nichols (5/98).

Farewell from the Editor - Martin Tudor

I am sorry to say that on the 21st July I tendered my resignation as Newsletter Editor after seven and a half years.

This was not an easy decision to reach, but ever-increasing personal pressures have meant that I am now finding it impossible to devote the amount of time and energy to the newsletter that such a project demands.

I am especially sorry to be forced to leave "mid-term" - if there was a viable alternative I would have chosen it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members and contributors who have helped me produce the newsletter since February 1991.

I wish my successor, whoever they may be, all the best and invite them to call on me for such help and/or advice as they feel I can offer.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that I will be able to attend many of the remaining meetings this year - although I will certainly be at the Special Meeting at Novacon. See you there.

All the best,

Martin Tudor.

Join NOVACON, Britain's longest-running regional SF convention, and meet Paul J McAuley in the Britannia Hotel, Birmingham, England over the weekend 13-15 November 1998.



"McAuley is part of a spearhead of writers who, for pure imagination, hipness, vision and fun, have made Britain the Memphis Sun Records of SF" - Mark Thomas, MAIL ON SUNDAY.

"Paul J McAuley is easily the equal of any big-name American science fiction writer in sheer narrative drive and ingenious future-making" - Kim Newman.

"Matches the best of his American rivals in zest and scope" - THE GUARDIAN.

Attending Membership only £32.00 until 1st November - please complete the form overleaf or, for further details, check out our web site at <http://www.cooky.demon.co.uk/novacon/n28.html>.

The Committee seek a

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Due to the resignation of the current postholder.

Duties include production, printing and posting of the newsletter every month in time for members to be notified of the forthcoming meeting.

Also :

To liaise with publishers to receive advance copies of new books, arrange to distribute these to reviewers and co-ordinate responses for publication in the newsletter.

To publish articles and events that meet the aims of the Group to further the advancement and enjoyment of Science Fiction.

To publish forthcoming meetings

If interested please contact the Secretary- Anne Woodford at any of the following contact points :

81 Harrold Road,
Rowley Regis,
Warley,
West Midlands, B65 0RL

Telephone 0121 532 1110

E-mail bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk

or talk to her or any other Committee member at this month's meeting.

This is an urgent request as the new incumbent will have to start immediately with the production of the September newsletter.