

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

AUGUST 2005

ISSUE 407

HONORARY PRESIDENTS: **BRIAN W ALDISS, O.B.E.**
& **HARRY HARRISON**

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FRIDAY 12TH AUGUST

HARRY HARRISON

As most of you are aware, Harry unfortunately had to cancel his visit last month due to the lack of trains on the day following terrorist action in London. Brighton station was closed completely making it impossible for Harry to travel.

As announced last month, to help celebrate this important event, we'll be providing a free cold buffet.

Harry's place was taken last month by our old friend Dr Jack Cohen who gave an excellent illustrated talk. Our thanks to Jack for helping us out at VERY short notice.

RGP

The meeting will take place in the Lichfield room on the second floor of the Britannia Hotel, New Street (entrance in Union Passage almost opposite the Odeon. At the bottom of the ramp from New Street Station, turn right, cross over the road and you'll find Union Passage about 20-30 yards along). It will commence at 7.45pm so please arrive early, get your drinks from the bar and be seated in plenty of time.

SEPTEMBER MEETING – JANE JOHNSON, SF/Fantasy editor at Voyager, will be talking to the Group. She is also author Jude Fisher, half of Gabriel King, and author of non-fiction books on Tolkien under her own name.

Brian Aldiss – 80 !

Happy birthday to our co-President Brian Aldiss who celebrates his 80th birthday on the 18th of August. We all hope you have a great day Brian.

LOCUS AWARDS

Best SF Novel: 'The Baroque Cycle' (THE CONFUSION and THE SYSTEM OF THE WORLD) by **Neal Stephenson**

Best Fantasy Novel: IRON COUNCIL by **China Miéville**

Best First Novel: JONATHAN STRANGE & MR. NORRELL by **Susanna Clarke**

Best YA Book: A HAT FULL OF SKY by **Terry Pratchett**

Best Novella: "Golden City Far" by **Gene Wolfe**

Best Novelette (tie): "Reports of Certain Events in London" by **China Miéville** & "The Faery Handbag" by **Kelly Link**

Best Short Story: "Forbidden Brides of the Faceless Slaves in the Nameless House of the Night of Dread Desire", **Neil Gaiman**

Best Anthology: THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION: TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL COLLECTION ed **Gardner Dozois**

Best Collection: THE JOHN VARLEY READER by **John Varley**

Best Non-Fiction Book: THE WAVE IN THE MIND by **Ursula K. LeGuin**

Editor: **Ellen Datlow**

Magazine: **The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction**

Book publisher: **Tor**

Artist: **Michael Whelan**

...AND WHAT DID YOU THINK?

From member Steve Green...

"Brian Aldiss seems to have conflated several SF films in his description of the 'latest' adaptation of Jack Finney's *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*.

There are three official versions (discounting assorted rip-offs over the past half-century), directed in turn by Don Siegel (1956), Philip Kaufman (1978) and Abel Ferrara (1993, with the title shortened to *BODY SNATCHERS*). A fourth is allegedly due next year, although it shows signs of having plummeted into production hell.

Donald Sutherland does indeed appear in the 1978 version, as a public health inspector who suspects a spore-borne disease is transforming the citizens of San Francisco, but it's the 1993 movie which shifts the setting to a USAF base and displays the military menace Brian alludes to in his letter.

Alternatively, perhaps Brian is thinking of the 1994 adaptation of Robert Heinlein's *THE PUPPET MASTERS* (dir. Stuart Orme), featuring Donald Sutherland as the chief of a secret intelligence organisation which finds itself battling with alien-controlled army officers. Unlike the 1958 rip-off *THE BRAIN EATERS*, the makers of which Heinlein reportedly considered suing, this is an undervalued SF thriller I'd seriously recommend to any Brum Group member.

So many films, so few plot variations: no wonder they all get confused."

And a reply from Brian...

"I'm sure Steve Green is correct. I saw two movies in Nantes at the Utopiales. It was late at night. I'd had a refreshing drink or two, and in one case I missed the opening titles. I'm a fan of Donald Sutherland, and so tend to see him in films where he was not actually present. I still think he was terrific in *JAWS*. And in *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*." All cheer - Brian

Anything to add? Email your opinions to me at

rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk >>

ANSWERS TO JULY QUIZ IN ISSUE #406

(No Quiz this month but it'll be back in September.)

01. Samuel R "Chip" Delany.
02. The Sons of the Bird.
03. Christian Slater, son of major league casting director Mary Jo Slater. He also popped up in the latest series of *Hitch-Hiker's Guide* on Radio 4, so I guess he's a bit of a science fiction fan.
04. GROUND ZERO MAN.
05. Birmingham.
06. Both have played *LOST IN SPACE* villain Dr Zachary Smith, Harris in the 1960s TV series and Oldman in the 1998 movie version.
07. The Dream Archipelago, which also appears in his novel *THE AFFIRMATION*.
08. John Wyndham.
09. It took place during the timeframe of the novel (the film was released in 1985).
10. George Bernard Shaw ("Back to Methuselah").
11. Robert E Howard, whose most successful protagonist was Conan the Barbarian.
12. Skybase (formerly Cloudbase; the change was presumably due to merchandising rights).

Congratulations to Harry Hodson who wins - again! – with 11 out of 12 correct answers

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

.... SF and TV writer, **Chris Bunch**, passed away on Monday, July 4, 2005 following extended illness. He was the author and co-author of over 30 novels Author **Evan Hunter** (b.1926) died on July 6 of cancer of the larynx. Although best known for his mysteries and screenplays as by '**Ed McBain**', Hunter also wrote SF novels early in his career – the most famous of which was TOMORROW AND TOMORROW as by '**Hunt Collins**'. He was born Salvatore Lombino, but changed his name in 1952 Packager **Byron Preiss** (b.1953) died on July 9 in a car accident while returning from synagogue. Through his Byron Preiss Visual Publications, Preiss assembled a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction titles, but until recently he was not a publisher. His recent foray into publishing, ebooks, has reprinted a lot of science fiction, as well as best of series for both fantasy and SF Comic artist **Jim Aparo** (b.1933) died on July 19. Aparo was considered one of the definitive BATMAN artists from the mid-1970s and also did work on AQUAMAN and the PHANTOM STRANGER. He began working at Charlton in the 1960s, but was brought to DC by Dick Giordano Actor **James Doohan** (b.1920), best known for playing Montgomery Scott on STAR TREK, died on July 20. Doohan got his start in the television show SPACE COMMAND in 1953. He has provided voice work for a variety of cartoons as well. Doohan is credited with creating the basic Klingon language for STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE. In recent years, he has suffered from Parkinson's Disease and Alzheimer's The winner of the John W. Campbell Award for best SF novel of 2004 is MARKET FORCES by **Richard Morgan**. The winner of the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award for best short science fiction in 2004 is "Sergeant Chip" by **Bradley Denton** Harry Potter and the Legal Injunction: After a store sold fifteen copies of HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE by accident, an injunction was placed on the purchasers, forbidding them to talk about, copy, or even read the books prior to Saturday, July 16. The judge who issued the injunction instructed the purchasers to return the books to the store, in return for which they would each receive their book with a book plate autographed by **J.K. Rowling** Scientists working at an ancient lake near Puebla, Mexico have discovered a series of human footprints believed to be more than 38,000 years old. Previous claims were that humans moved to North America only 11,000 years ago. The scientists, led by **Silvia Gonzalez** of Liverpool John Moores University in the UK discovered the prints in 2003 and spent two years applying standard methods for dating the prints, which remain in situ The NASA Deep Impact probe made contact with comet Tempel 1 on Sunday, July 3. The probe formed a crater on the comet's surface causing plumes of gas to be released. Scientists have not yet gotten visual confirmation of the crater because of dust released by the collision, but shadows indicate the crater was formed. In the aftermath of the collision, a Russian astrologer has filed a lawsuit claiming that NASA has ruined 'the natural balance of forces in the universe' and will deform her predictions. *RGP*



BOOK REVIEWS



(**REVIEWERS** please note:- all reviews should be emailed direct to me at rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk) Deadline for each issue is 14 days prior to the date of the monthly meeting. *RGP*

***SONG OF KALI* by Dan Simmons**

Gollancz / 311pgs / £7.99 / paperback

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

Star rating: * * * *

Originally published in 1985, this was Dan Simmons first published novel. Here it is reprinted under the Fantasy Masterworks banner. Perhaps it should be labelled horror. It is, however a fine and evocative book which gave a good indication of the quality Simmons continued to achieve in later books.

From the start it paints a dark, claustrophobic picture of Calcutta. The streets are crowded, the people poor. Robert Luczak arrives with his Indian wife and small daughter at midnight. His visit is intended to be short. He expects to meet with and acquire a manuscript by a poet who was thought to have died eight years previously. Things do not go exactly as planned. He is taken to clandestine meetings in his effort to meet the poet, M. Das, and is told stories about the cult of Kali, the goddess of Destruction. The tales are horrific but could be the product of a fertile imagination. Luszac is sceptical. He is abducted. His experiences in captivity could be real or the result of hallucinations conjured by the drugs he is forced to drink. When he manages to escape he returns to his hotel to discover his daughter has been stolen. Then the real nightmare begins.

Like Luszac, the reader can take the fantastic elements as either reality, in the context of the story, or hallucination. The city, the events and the atmosphere are horrific whichever way you look at it. Without the label, this could easily have been a mainstream thriller. It is definitely a fine early novel of a master storyteller. *PM*

***RIVER OF GODS* by Ian McDonald**

Gollancz / 583 pages / £7.99 / paperback

Reviewed by Michael Jones

Star rating: * * * * *

I have not previously got on very well with Ian McDonald's work but this is different – a great big coruscating blockbuster of a novel, one of the best I have read for some time. It takes place in 2047 on the Indian sub-continent, now divided into twelve semi-independent nation-states, a setting which is as alien as

many a distant planet. Law and order is a tenuous concept at best, corruption is everywhere, but the central most important theme is that the proliferation of computer systems has led to the emergence of self-aware artificial intelligences which are trying to escape human control in order to pursue their own incomprehensible agendas.

The story is told from the alternating points-of-view of several disparate characters, one of whom becomes involved in the exploration of a strange object which has been discovered approaching the Earth from outside the solar system. Meanwhile, another makes the discovery that an A.I. is not merely generating CGI characters for the most popular soap on TV but is also providing CGI 'actors' to give them an off-screen persona. Eventually these and other narrative threads come together to provide a denouement which is as remarkable as it is unexpected.

New, inventive, wide-ranging and strange, this is by any criterion a first-rate novel. *MJ*

MIND'S EYE by Paul McAuley

Simon and Schuster / 422pgs / £12.99 / hardback.

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

Star rating: * * * *

If you put fifty people in a room and ask them to define science fiction, you will get fifty different suggestions. Ultimately, if both the questions, 'Is it fiction?' and 'Does it include science?' can be answered in the affirmative, then the writing in question is science fiction.

In his novel *WHOLE WIDE WORLD*. Paul McAuley took a concept that is already part of our daily lives, the internet, and extrapolated only a small way into the future to create a detective thriller that had all the excitement that readers of both science fiction and modern thrillers demand of their literature. In *MIND'S EYE*, McAuley is edging even closer to now. The US Army is still policing the situation in Iraq. The date could be anytime between last year and sometime in the next five. The political situation in the Middle East is relevant only in that it triggers the action of the novel and has a bearing on the direction the plot takes towards the end.

Alfie Flowers is a photographer but is the first to acknowledge that he is not as good as his father. Mick Flowers died somewhere in the Middle East soon after Alfie's tenth birthday. The year before this, Alfie's grandfather had died. After the funeral, Alfie had taken a roll of paper from a hidden compartment in his deck, along with a pouch of grey powder. Alfie presumes that he tasted some of the powder and looked at the image on the paper. He doesn't remember but since then he has suffered from epileptic fits. It has also made him sensitive to a certain type of pattern.

More than twenty years later, Alfie spots a piece of graffiti on a restaurant window that makes his mind tingle. The frame of the anti-American

image is a pattern of dots and dashes. Thinking that the artist, who signs himself Morph, could lead him to a solution to the problem that has dogged him since he looked at his grandfather's paper, he decides to track down Morph. He enlists his friend, Toby Brown to help. As a reporter, Toby can get publicity for Morph which might bring him out into the open.

Alfie is not the only one interested in Morph. Harriet Crowley is a secret service agent. She also recognises the pattern Morph is using. Her grandfather and Alfie's were colleagues and archaeologists. It was their excavations that originally uncovered the glyphs and recognised their significance. Harriet's father had used the information to involve people in a cult set-up that went drastically wrong. Harriet also knows that Carver Soborin and Rölf Most are looking for Morph. Having obtained information about the glyphs and the drug from Harriet's father they had tried to use them for commercial gain in Africa. The results had been horrific. Harriet wants to find Morph before they do and prevent them using them. She suspects they are looking for information to lead them to the original source.

To most people, the glyphs are just interesting patterns. To others, exposed to the drug they induce mental disturbances and can have psychological effects. Morph is using a fascination glyph which attracts attention to the cartoon it frames. After several deaths of people who have known Morph, Harriet and Alfie pool their resources. The trail takes them to the Kurdish region of Turkey, and then to Iraq.

This is a fast-paced thriller driven by the various needs of the characters. Though the science element is small, it is significant, being the cause of the situations all of them find themselves in. MIND'S EYE will appeal equally to those who enjoy the Indiana Jones kind of adventure, as well as those who value good literature and a well told story. PM

THE MATRIX DERIDED by robertski brothers

Gollancz / 300 pages / £5.99 / paperback

STAR WARPED by A3R Roberts

Gollancz / 384 pages / £7.99 / hardback

Reviewed by Michael Jones

(Note – with pages smaller than usual these books are much shorter than the page counts would suggest.)

I have put these two together because they are the same kind of thing. The contrived authorship conceals the identity of Adam Roberts, literary expert and writer of scholarly books as well as several well-received SF novels. These however are something else – parodies of well-known film series (obviously).

Both start reasonably well and straightforwardly, picking up on the basic storyline of THE MATRIX and STAR WARS respectively but introducing various satirical jokes and puns, especially with names, varying from amusing to

excruciating. For example, who could fail to either laugh or groan when reading of the pilot Hand Someman and his sidekick Masticatetobacco. (Well, I could actually.)

As the narratives progress however, they deviate farther and farther from the original as the author is unable to resist introducing his own take on the story. In the case of *THE MATRIX* this is not so bad and the eventual conclusion might be regarded by some as an improvement – certainly a simplification. With *STAR WARS*, on the other hand, he appears to lose the plot completely (in both senses) introducing an unjustified series of cultural and SF references – some much more obscure than others – and going off at a completely new tangent. This is not helped by his choice to present the segments of the saga in the order in which the films appeared, rather than in the order of internal chronology, which I would have thought the obvious thing to do. As a result, it becomes painfully obvious that it has ended in the middle (twice).

Also, one gains the impression that he ran out of steam, cramming the last three segments together into fewer pages than any one of the first three. This is true of *THE MATRIX* also, where the first film gets two-thirds of the book.

To my mind, the whole approach here is wrong. The most successful parodies present a completely new and original story ‘in the style of’ and work best at quite a short length, as evinced by, for example John Sladek and Dave Langford to name but two. Trying to follow the original storyline while at the same time reconstructing it so as to provide an enhanced basis for mockery does not work but merely leaves the reader trying to relate what is written here to what he already knows and the result is both disappointingly tedious and tediously disappointing.

If you feel you must read these, go ahead, but I would not particularly recommend that you do.

MJ

***BAND OF GYPSYS* by Gwyneth Jones**
Gollancz / 297pgs / £10.99 / trade paperback
Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.
Star rating: * * *

This is the fourth volume in the science fiction series following the leaders of the Counter-Cultural Revolution. After the collapse of the internet and the isolation of Britain by the rest of the world due to a virulent computer virus, the leaders of the Rock and Roll Reich emerged from the musicians at the Reading Festival. *BOLD AS LOVE* saw the rise of the Triumvirate – Ax Preston, Sage Pender and Fiorinda Slater. *CASTLES MADE OF SAND* (Book 2) saw Ax a hostage of drug dealers, Fiorinda held as a figurehead-of-state and a prisoner by her father, as Sage pursuing a higher Zen state. By the untangling at the end, the three had accepted their three-way sexual partnership. Abandoning the trauma of the events in Europe, *MIDNIGHT LAMP* saw them escaping to America.

Here, there is an attempt to harness psychic magic into a weapon. The result is the rendering of fossil fuels unusable as a power source

At the start of *BAND OF GYPSYS*, the Triumvirate are found in Paris, but quickly return to Britain as the visible head of state. There are, however, conspiracies and political manoeuvring just out of sight. These people want the three of them on show, to keep the populace quiet, but contained.

The members of the Triumvirate are likeable characters and their problems are dealt with in a highly plausible way. This volume, however does not have the same zing as the previous three and it only really begins to wake up towards the end. Just as many second volumes of trilogies have the feeling of filling in between the setting up of the scenario in volume one, and the dénouement in volume three, this too, feels as if it is the linking volume before all hell is let loose in the next book. It is not bad, or badly written, it merely gives the impression of a stepping stone. There are more exciting things waiting on the other side of the river. PM

***IN MILTON LUMKY TERRITORY* by Philip K. Dick**

Gollancz / 213 pages / £7.99 / Paperback)

***MARY AND THE GIANT* by Philip K. Dick**

Gollancz / 232 pages / £7.99 / Paperback)

Reviewed by William McCabe

Star rating: * *

Philip K Dick was one of the best SF writers. He produced some of the most inventive material in the genre. He had a wicked sense of humour and generally threw in the odd unexpected twist before the end of any story. Sometime in the 50s he also wrote these mainstream novels. They remained unpublished until he died in the 80s. Where his SF was inventive, dark and comic, this is dull, grey and lifeless. This isn't an attempt at literature, it's mediocre 50s pulp fiction. This isn't even up to the likes of Harold Robbins let alone any literary writer of the period.

There isn't a great deal of difference between the two books. Themes recur, characters seem to be different versions of the same person, even large lumps of plot seem to be duplicated.

Our 'hero' (the strongest male character) has been travelling with his work for some years and is now settling down. He is buying all our part of a retail business. As a result of this he meets the 'heroine'. She is either a business partner or an employee. There is a relationship there that never really seems to work properly. She has a lot of trouble making decisions and sticking to them. This proves financially costly to him. There is also an age gap that keeps them apart. They seem to break up and things are settled in a final chapter that seems to be a clear break from the rest of the book.

In *IN MILTON LUMKY TERRITORY* our 'hero' is Bruce Stevens. He's been working as a buyer for a discount retail store in Reno driving up and

down the country looking for goods that can be bought cheaply and in large quantities. He meets Susan Faine who was his school teacher years before and now owns half of a secretarial agency and typewriter supplies shop. She is divorced with a young daughter and wants to take more time at home. She wants him to buy out her business partner and build up the retail side of the business so that, in a few years, she can just do some of the secretarial work from home. They are soon married but it isn't a terribly stable marriage. Then there are a lot of cheap typewriters that seem to be the way to make the retail business pay. Things are never that easy. Somewhere in all this is Milt Lumky - a seriously ill salesman who is the only one that can find the cut-rate typewriters and Peg Googer a one-night stand that Bruce kind-of regrets.

MARY & THE GIANT begins with the arrival of Joe Schilling. He's been in the music business for years and he wants to open up a small record shop in a small town and retire. Things are complicated when Mary Anne Reynolds applies for the job of assistant in the shop. As soon as he offers her the job she changes her mind because she thinks he's coming on to her. Their relationship is little more than a series of collisions. They have a dinner date. She works one day in the shop. They have a one-night stand. He rents her an apartment and they set about painting and decorating. The painting is never finished and she moves out without having spent a night there. She leaves town. In the background are Carleton Tweany a giant blues musician, various other downbeat would-be musicians and hangers on and an accidental death at a party.

It was once said that Phil Dick SF novels could never be filmed because too much of them were just people sitting around in rooms talking. Those stories had action sequences as well. These don't. These are just back catalogue mediocrities published to cash in on a famous name. WAM

THE LAST LIGHT OF THE SUN by Guy Gavriel Kay

Pocket Books / 497pgs / £ 7.99 / paperback

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

Star rating: * * *

Kay introduced us to his fantasy alternative history in SAILING TO SARANTIUM and followed it up in LORD OF EMPERORS. This is a world that has the same geography as ours but has two moons (one of them blue). The history of the planet has followed a similar path with the Rhodian Empire being the equivalent of our Roman one. Sarantium is synonymous with Byzantium with all its splendour. These two books were magnificently conceived and written, portraying a divided empire heading towards its demise as seen through the eyes of a mosaicist.

THE LAST LIGHT OF THE SUN is set about four hundred years later in what we would have regarded as the Dark Ages. The setting is effectively Britain of that period, but here called Anglcyn. To the west lies Cyngael. To the north and east lie the lands of the Erlings, many of whom are blood-thirsty

raiders. The country of Erlond to the west also gets a mention. The action begins in Cyngael when Ivarr Ragnarson leads a raid on the farmstead of Brynn ap Hywell, a 'clan chief' who killed his grandfather twenty five years previously. The attackers are driven off but not before one, Thorkel Einarson, is captured but who saves Brynn's wife from Ivarr's sneaky treachery. Thorkel had been on the raid with Ivarr's grandfather that gained him the sword that Ivarr wanted to retrieve from Brynn. This sword is the focus of all the events in the novel and is directly and indirectly responsible for the fates of the principle characters.

Ivarr is a bit of a stereotypical villain. He is deformed, scheming, manipulative and thoroughly unprincipled. When the direct attack of Brynnfel fails he hires the Jormsvik mercenaries (including Thorkel's son Bern), to attack Aeldred's lands, telling them it will be easy as Aeldred will not be at home and Esferth can be easily looted. He knows they will fail, but his plan is to force them to sail further west and attack Brynnfel, as the Erlings would not be able to honourably return home after a resounding defeat. Fortunately, not everything goes his way.

Kay is a brilliant story-teller but this is not up to his usual standard. It could have done with some careful editing. Facts about the characters and their backgrounds are repeated too often, often close together suggesting that he has not been given the time to check through the narrative and cut out the extraneous information. In places, incidental characters are introduced because in real life they would be there. Surely it is not necessary to give an account of how a chance encounter affected the rest of their lives? Kay has missed the opportunity to invoke the magic and the differences of his world to make this more than just another Dark Ages fantasy novel.

PM

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Central Library SF and Fantasy Reading Group meets on Thursdays at 5.30pm to 7pm monthly, in GP5 on the 5th Floor at the Central Library, Chamberlain Square, B3 3HQ. It's a small friendly group meeting to discuss SF & fantasy books. Contact person is Pam Gaffney on (0121) 303 3398.

Books to be discussed:-

18th August - **Peter Jurasik** - DIPLOMATIC ACT

15th Sept - **Mark Morris** - SECRET OF ANATOMY

20th Oct - **Tim Powers** - EARTHQUAKE WEATHER

Nov - **Robert J Sawyer** - FRAMESHIFT

Dec - **Sarah Zettel** - A SORCERER'S TREASON

FANTASYCON 05 has been booked for the 30 September - 2 October 2005, at the Quality Hotel, Walsall, near Birmingham. Guests of Honour: Steven Erikson, Simon Clark and Mark Chadbourn. For registrations and all other details please see

see www.britishfantasysociety.org.uk

or email fcon@britishfantasysociety.org.uk

*** * * NOVACON 35 * * ***

- the Brum Group's own convention, will again be held at the Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall over the weekend of 11th to 13th November. Guest of Honour is Alastair Reynolds. Cheques to 'Novacon 35', Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ Email: x15@zoom.co.uk Website: www.novacon.org

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

Any information about forthcoming SF / Fantasy / Horror events are always welcome - please send to me at rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG

September 10th - Jane Johnson/Jude Fisher/Gabriel King

October 14th - Peter Hamilton

November 4th - Storm Constantine (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE)

December 2nd - Christmas Social Evening - Skittles, buffet, prizes.

January 13th 2006 - Annual General Meeting / Auction of Books

February 10th - Ian R MacLeod

March 10th - Brian Stableford

Newsletter 407 copyright 2005 for Birmingham SF Group. Designed by Rog Peyton. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the committee or the general membership or, for that matter, the person giving the 'opinion'.

Thanks to all the named contributors in this issue and to William McCabe who sends me reams of news items every month which I sift through for the best/most entertaining items.

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 Secretary, 5 Greenbank, Barnt Green, Birmingham, B45 8DH