

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

JANUARY 2006

ISSUE 412

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

COMMITTEE: **VERNON BROWN (CHAIRMAN); VICKY COOK (SECRETARY);**
PAT BROWN (TREASURER); ROG PEYTON (NEWSLETTER EDITOR);
TIM STOCK (PUBLICITY); JINNIE CRACKNELL & WILLIAM MCCABE;
NOVACON 35 CHAIRMAN: TONY BERRY

WEBSITE: www.bsfg.freesevers.com

EMAIL: bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk

Friday 13th January ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & AUCTION

A Happy New Year to all! January is traditionally our business meeting month plus our annual auction of books, magazines, videos, etc., at extremely low prices! PLEASE DONATE YOUR UNWANTED SF/FANTASY/HORROR /WESTERNS/ THRILLERS/ETC.

At this month's AGM the 2005 Committee will stand down and elections will be held to elect the 2006 Committee. All the present committee members are standing for re-election, if you are interested in standing for any of the posts please read the following 'Job Descriptions' and email the Committee for more information and details of current Committee activities.

GENERAL DUTIES (and a requirement)

To organise BSGF Meetings throughout the year.

To attend monthly Committee meetings in the City Centre, usually on the Tuesday evening of the week preceding the week in which the Group Meeting is held.

FEBRUARY 10th 2006 MEETING – Ian R MacLeod returns for another visit to the BSGF. Always entertaining, this local author is still selling far better in the USA than here in the UK. **BUY HIS BOOKS!!!**

To assist other Committee members in their duties as necessary.
To present a report at the AGM.
To have email access at home.

OFFICERS DUTIES

CHAIRMAN

To chair Committee meetings and present a report as necessary.
To chair Group Meetings, introduce and thank the Speaker.
To negotiate with hotels and other organisations on behalf of the Group.
To organise, prepare and supervise the annual Christmas Social.
To liaise with the Secretary in arranging the Committee meeting agenda.

SECRETARY

To communicate with Speakers on behalf of the Committee.
To communicate with other persons and organisations on behalf of the Committee.
To present a report at Committee meetings.
To take and circulate ASAP Minutes of Committee meetings.

TREASURER

To maintain the current BSFG Bank Account.
To attend Group Meetings, arriving early and ensuring that the Meeting room is prepared for Group use.
To collect admission money etc at Group Meetings.
To liaise with the Membership Secretary about collection of membership fees etc.
To present a detailed current Financial Report at Committee meetings.
To present an Annual Financial Report at the AGM.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (This post and the post of Secretary are held by one person)

To maintain BSFG Membership records.
To organise the collection of membership subscriptions, renewals etc.
To liaise with the Treasurer as necessary.
To present a report on current membership numbers at Committee meetings.

PUBLICITY OFFICER

To advertise the BSFG by all means possible.
To present a report at Committee meetings.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

To maintain contact with sources of potential information for the Group Newsletter.
To edit and produce master copy ready for printing.
To organise printing of the Newsletter, and to distribute it, to a specific timescale.
To liaise with book publishers for review copies.
To present a report at Committee meetings as necessary.

WEBSITE MANAGER

To maintain the BSFG Website to an agreed format and to update it as necessary.

To present a report at Committee meetings.

ORDINARY MEMBER

To take on specific special jobs as directed by the rest of the committee.

To contribute to the efficient functioning of the Committee.

So there you have it. Easy, really. All of the past year's committee are restanding for 2006 but how about standing against us? Pleeeease?

* * * * *

Unfortunately, the first pieces of news to come in during December were bad ones. The science fiction world lost two of it's very popular members... The following piece appeared on the net on Friday 9th December...

ROBERT SHECKLEY 1928-2005

SF writer Robert Sheckley died 9th December in Poughkeepsie, New York, at the age of 77. One of the field's great humorists, Sheckley was a prolific short story writer beginning in 1952 with titles including "Specialist", "Pilgrimage to Earth", "Warm", "The Prize of Peril", and "Seventh Victim", collected in volumes from UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS (1954) to IS THAT WHAT PEOPLE DO? (1984) and a five-volume set of COLLECTED STORIES (1991). His first novel, IMMORTALITY, INC. (1958), was followed by THE STATUS CIVILIZATION (1960), JOURNEY BEYOND TOMORROW (1962), MINDSWAP (1966), and several others. Sheckley served as fiction editor for Omni magazine from January 1980 through September 1981. In 2001, he was named Author Emeritus by the SFWA. He was awarded the Jupiter Award for "A Suppliant in Space" in 1974 and the Gallun Award in 1991. Sheckley was hospitalized earlier this year in Ukraine, then recovered sufficiently to return to the US, though he was unable to attend the World SF Convention in Glasgow where he'd been scheduled to be Guest of Honour.

<<And one week later I received a copy of the following message posted on the internet by Greg Pickersgill on Friday 16th December... - RGP>>

H KENNETH BULMER 1921-2005

Another man down. I just recently got an email from Mark Plummer forwarding a note from Erik Arthur, relaying the news that Ken Bulmer is dead.

Hardly surprising, as he's been in a nursing home for several years, and there never was any chance he'd be back on his feet, but its still a bad thing anyway. HKB was definitely a Right Guy, as a fan and a writer; not the greatest SF writer on the planet as he'd be the first to have said himself, but he did produce some work of genuine charm that was actually memorable, which is damned sight more than can be said of very many other authors.

He was a fan too, back in the days when it was a Proud and Lonely Thing, with a small but entertaining and readable bundle of fanwriting and fanzines to

his name, even unto including a real issue of NIRVANA in 1949, a fanzine that had become the stuff of legend even before a stencil was cut. He never did much fanwriting after the 1950s, but he did from time to time show up in such as ZENITH/SPECULATION, where he often had something to say that was quite outside what might have been expected from a self-confessed hack-writer. He may have written to order and by the length, but he actually knew a lot about what makes fiction work.

I'm slightly surprised, thinking about him now, about how much of his stuff sticks in my mind, especially from my earlier days of SF reading. Some of it just 'memorable' because it was new to me - like the space war stories in NEW WORLDS of the early Sixties, but there's also really good stuff that's worth going back to - some fine little pieces in SCIENCE FANTASY, for example, including a real favourite in the map country (S-F February 1961). Also in the frame for me is THE DEMONS, one of the first SF novels I ever read, way back in about 1965, which is memorable for more than just the bizarrely rodent-like photo of Ken on the back cover of the Compact edition.

And then there's the almost forgotten (except by me and Rog Peyton) short novel THE GOLDEN AGE, published under the pseudonym 'Rupert Clinton' in NEW WORLDS in 1961 - a really effective alternate worlds story that certainly deserved the book publication it never ever got.

It's a real shame that Ken sort of became the forgotten man of British SF and fandom - he really was a good all-rounder - not fantastically brilliant at any or everything, but a lot better than most. That sounds like damning with faint praise, but I'd be bloody happy if someone were to say that about me, and I think Ken, a realistic kind of guy, would have been delighted by the idea.

He was also, beyond all the above, a thoroughly decent fellow, and I wish I had had more sense and time to get to know him better when I had the chance. Too young and stupid though. *GP*

<<A bad month for the SF world indeed, so it was a little uplifting to receive this snippet of news from Dave Hardy he picked up from a newspaper report... - RGP>>

GIRLS POTTY OVER POTTER BROOMSTICK

A toy firm has axed a vibrating replica of Harry Potter's broomstick after mums complained their daughters spent too much time riding it. Makers Mattel advertised the battery-operated toy as having 'a grooved stick and handle for easy riding.' One mum in New Jersey, US, said, "What were they thinking of?" Another in Ohio told how her 12-year-old daughter played with the broomstick for hours. She said, "She likes its special effects. So does her 17-year-old sister."

A TALE OF CAUTION...

<<would-be authors beware! We've warned about vanity presses in the past. If you still think you can send a manuscript to an 'unknown' publisher or agent who wants YOU to pay their costs...read on... - RGP>>

On Monday, December 5, 2005, Martha Ivery, aka Kelly O'Donnell, dba Press-Tige Publishing, pleaded guilty to 15 counts of mail fraud and acts against the United States as a principal in a conspiracy; one count of improper use of an electronic access device (legalese for 'credit-card fraud not involving the mails'); and one count of false sworn testimony in a bankruptcy proceeding. Sentencing has been set for April 28, 2006.

A copy of the indictment is here. As usual with indictments of this sort, only a fraction of Ivery's fraud is included: just sixteen of her nearly 300 victims, \$55,000 of her 'take' of more than half a million dollars, and one of nine documentable instances of false sworn testimony before the bankruptcy trustee. Even so, it's worth reading, for a concise window into the way literary scams work.

The US Attorney's Office has issued a news release.

Between 1998 and 2003, Writer Beware received scores of complaints about Martha Ivery, a.k.a. Kelly O'Donnell. Ivery ran several fee-charging literary agencies (Kelly O'Donnell Literary Agency, Inc., O'Donnell Literary Services, Inc., Writers Information USAgency), as well as two vanity publishing operations (Press-Tige Publishing and New Millennium Publishing).

It was a soup-to-nuts operation: writers came in through one of the agencies (which charged 'marketing' fees and pressured clients to accept paid editing services) and were then passed on to one of the publishing companies (which charged several thousand dollars). The connection between the agencies and the publishers wasn't revealed; to further the deception, clients were encouraged to believe that the Kelly O'Donnell who ran the agencies and the Martha Ivery who ran the publishers were two different people.

Writers who paid fees to Ivery - whether for agenting, book doctoring, or publishing - frequently didn't receive the promised services. Manuscripts submitted for agenting were never sent to publishers, or were placed with vanity publishers (including the fraudulent Commonwealth Publishing, which paid kickbacks to agents who persuaded their clients to accept expensive vanity contracts). Promised editing was never completed or was poorly done. Books contracted for publication were never produced, or if produced, weren't marketed. In addition to whatever fees had been agreed upon, Ivery bombarded authors with demands for even more money for nonexistent services: publicity, warehousing, even a Press-Tige cruise (not surprisingly, the cruise was canceled and authors never got refunds).

Ivery was notable for her attempts to intimidate dissatisfied clients and people who attempted to expose her activities. Authors were told that she would 'blacklist' them so that publishers wouldn't look at their manuscripts. Writer Beware staff received death threats. She was also adept at fabricating outlandish excuses to explain her habitual nonperformance. For instance, in the aftermath of 9/11 she variously claimed to have been 'seriously burned' in the disaster, or to be in mourning for relatives who'd been killed. She had numerous heart attacks. She frequently got cancer. As both Martha and Kelly, she died several times. Of course, with so much to remember, once in a while she got her lies mixed up. One pesky author, shocked to learn of Martha's sudden and tragic death, was later somewhat taken aback to receive a call from her.

As a result of numerous author complaints (and lobbying by Writer Beware), a criminal investigation into Ivery's activities was launched by the FBI in 2001. Writer Beware assisted the case agent in the investigation, sharing documentation and contacting victims. Ultimately, more than 300 victims were identified. The take from Ivery's various activities approached half a million dollars.

Under pressure from the investigation and dogged by increasing public knowledge of her scammy, Ivery decided to fold the business. At her first bankruptcy hearing on July 26, 2002, Ivery testified under oath that all the authors listed on Schedule F of her bankruptcy petition had cancelled their contracts with Press-Tige. This was a lie; additionally, many authors' names were left off the creditors' list. She also admitted that her other publishing venture, New Millennium Publishing, had obtained contracts from Press-Tige, and that she was New Millennium's sole employee. 'Craig Roussan', supposedly editor-in-chief of New Millennium, was yet another manifestation of her mania for aliases. Ivery claimed she'd met the real Craig Roussan on the Internet, and paid him \$200 in cash for the right to use his name.

Ivery didn't provide any of the documentation that she was directed in writing to bring to the hearing. Ordered to present it at the second hearing, on August 20, 2002, she again failed to bring the material, and again perjured herself on a number of issues. She also admitted that much of the testimony she'd offered at the previous hearing was perjury - including the story about Craig Roussan, which, it turns out, was complete fabrication. The name was Ivery's own invention.

Meanwhile, the criminal investigation continued. On September 26, 2002, a federal search warrant was served on Ivery and the offices of Press-Tige. Many boxes of material were removed from the premises, though no arrest was made.

On December 18, 2003, the judge in the bankruptcy case signed an order to close administration of the estate, to abandon all property, and to return all authors' rights to them. All Press-Tige authors are fully released from any and all contracts, and may freely resubmit their work elsewhere.

Even after her bankruptcy declaration, Ivery continued to be active, sending release forms to Press-Tige authors, contacting authors to harass them and demand money, and soliciting business under a number of aliases, including O'Donnell Literary Services (Kelly O'Donnell), Creek Lane Literary Agency (Sheryl Montanye), and Joseph Wilson Associates.

...AND WHAT DID YOU THINK?

THE LETTER COLUMN OF 'BRUM GROUP NEWS'

From non-member Steve Green

Vernon and Pat Brown have done us a great service with their expedition into the "Science of Aliens" exhibition currently resident at London's (so called) Science Museum. It may interest both of them to learn that Novacon 35 guest of honour Alastair Reynolds initially chose similarly half-arsed speculation as one of his bugbears for the "Room 101" we partnered.

Meanwhile, Rog, may I commend you upon yet another splendidly varied and informative newsletter, confidently matching the difficult balancing act which exemplified Martin Tudor's triumphant run as editor during the 1990s. The occasional convention reports and fannish gossip are an especial bonus; it would be great to see the Brum Group back at the core again (every member turning up to support Novacon 36 – the group's convention since 1972 - would be a good start).

<<Thank you for those kind words, Steve. I'm not sure what you mean by 'back at the core again' – wasn't aware that we'd been away. I heartily agree with your sentiments that every BSFG member should be attending NOVACON. Just like I think that every BGN contributor should be a member of the BSFG. How about rejoining Steve? – RGP>>

Anything to say about the Group, meetings or SF in general? Email your opinions to me at rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk >>

JANUARY QUIZ - Steve Green

- 01 In Susanna Clarke's award-winning novel JONATHAN STRANGE AND MR NORRELL, what is the profession of the eponymous rivals?
- 02 Who created the short-lived TV series *Firefly*?
- 03 As reported last issue, who's fanzine just won its fourth Nova Award?
- 04 Name the Polish author responsible for the "Pirx" and "Trurl-Klapaucius" story cycles, as well as the classic novel SOLARIS
- 05 Which STAR TREK star recorded a song dedicated to the hero of J R R Tolkien's THE HOBBIT?
- 06 Under what pseudonym was the novelist / editor Ramon Felipe San Juan Mario Silvio Enrico Heathcourt-Brace Sierra y Alvarez del Rey y de los Uerdes better known?

- 07 Where did the Martian war machines first land in H G Wells' THE WAR OF THE WORLDS?
- 08 Name the heroic pilot featured in the 1950s BBC radio series JOURNEY INTO SPACE.
- 09 Which actress' footsteps were followed by Jessica Lange, Linda Hamilton and Naomi Watts?
- 10 Which journalist / novelist charted the 1960s US space programme in THE RIGHT STUFF?
- 11 David, Cathy, Emma and Tara: name their partner.
- 12 In which British city was the first true SF convention held?

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUIZ

- 01 Brentford.
- 02 Michael Keaton, who'll be playing the Joker.
- 03 Richard Bachman. King's cover was blown shortly after the publication of the fifth 'Bachman' novel, THINNER (1984).
- 04 Tanith Lee.
- 05 *Torchwood* (an anagram of *Doctor Who*).
- 06 *Novae Terrae*, launched by Maurice K Hanson in 1936; the title was dusted off in 1946 by Ted Carnell for the landmark prozine *New Worlds*.
- 07 Mrs Lee Hawkins Garby, as she was credited in the 1928 incarnation for *Amazing Stories*; in 1958, when the abridged version appeared, her name had disappeared.
- 08 Commando Cody (not Commander, a common misremembrance).
- 09 David A Hardy, former Brum Group and Novacon chair.
- 10 Diane Martin, editor of the SF ('speculative feminism') fanzine *Aurora*.
- 11 "Killdozer".
- 12 Christopher Fowler, James Herbert and Fay Weldon have all worked in advertising.

Winner: Harry Hodson – 12 (FULL MARKS! CONGRATULATIONS!)

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

.... Author **J N Williamson** (b.1932) died on December 8. Williamson, who also wrote as **Julian Shock**, was the editor of the MASQUES series of horror anthologies as well as the author of numerous novels and short stories. Williamson won the Balrog Award in 1985 for his editorial work on MASQUES and received a Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2003 **Harlan Ellison** is the 23rd SFWA Grand Master **Philip K Dick**'s last unpublished mainstream novel, VOICES FROM THE STREET has been bought by Tor in the USA Congratulations to **Vernon & Pat Brown** who celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary this month **Kevin J Anderson** will complete SLAN HUNTER, **A E van Vogt**'s unfinished sequel to the classic SLAN and will also write a new sequel to the *Null-A* books **Ray Bradbury**'s THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES: THE DEFINITIVE EDITION has sold to

Hill House. This 1000+ page book will include the author's preferred text of THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES plus 23 other Martian stories and fragments, and two unpublished screenplays of THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES by Bradbury The American Film Institute has announced its choice of the ten best films and television shows for 2005. In the film category, **Peter Jackson's KING KONG** was the only genre work represented. In the television category, **BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, LOST** and **VERONICA MARS** were selected Although many have long recognized **C S Lewis's** *Chronicles of Narnia* as a Christian allegory, Lewis's stepson, **Douglas Gresham**, recently stated "Churches in Britain and America are promoting the film as a Christian film, but it's not . . . and the *Narnia* books aren't Christian novels." However, a letter Lewis wrote to a fan in 1961 has offered the most direct indication of the series' allegorical basis. In the letter, Lewis wrote "The whole *Narnian* story is about Christ." <<well, someone please sort it out – I, for one, ain't going to watch a Christian movie – I tried Lewis's *Perelandra* series – if I want to be preached at, I'll go to a church. And that certainly ain't gonna happen, folks! – RGP>> Studio Ghibli will be adapting **Ursula K LeGuin's** *Earthsea Cycle* for release in July 2006. The anime film, entitled GEDO SENKI - TALES FROM EARTHSEA (RECORD OF THE GEDO WAR - TALES FROM EARTHSEA) will be directed by Goro Miyazaki **Maureen F McHugh's** collection **MOTHERS & OTHER MONSTERS**, published by Small Beer Press, is one of three finalists for the second annual Story Prize, a \$20,000 award for short fiction. The winner will be announced at the New School in Manhattan on January 25, 2006 Winners of the Grand Prix de l'Imaginaire, announced at the Utopiales Festival international de Science-Fiction in Nantes, France, include **Christopher Priest's** THE SEPARATION as best translated novel, **Jeffrey Ford's** "Exo-Skeleton Town" as best translated story and **Cornelia Funke's** INKHEART as best young adult novel With wildfires raging in parts of Texas, the town of Cross Plains, Texas, a community of about 1,000 people, lost fifty houses to the fire. Untouched, however, was the century-old house in which **Robert E Howard**, the creator of **Conan the Barbarian**, lived and committed suicide in 1936. Howard's home is now a museum to the author **John F Carr** has recently had published SIEGE OF TARR-HOSTIGOS, a further sequel to **H Beam Piper's** *Kalvan* series, following on from GREAT KINGS' WAR (new hardcover edition coming soon!) and KALVAN KINGMAKER (please contact me if you want to order any of these books) Several **Stephen King** stories are being adapted for a new TV anthology series, NIGHTMARES & DREAMSCAPES. An eight-episode series will air in the summer **William Shatner** has announced that he will be running an SF DVD-of-the-month club for an annual fee of \$47.99. Members will receive DVDs of science fiction and fantasy films **Shatner** describes as 'memorable and entertaining'. Some of the initial offerings will include GINGER SNAPS, IMMORTEL AD VITAM, and DRAGON STORM. For more information, see shatnerdvdclub.com. <<oh, now, please – come on folks. Has

anyone ever heard of those movies? Please, Steve or Vicky, tell me I'm missing out on wonderful movies and that Bill's taste in movies is so much better than his taste in breakfast cereals. How embarrassing... - RGP>> But wait – much more embarrassing is a report in the January LOCUS – “A TV station in Albuquerque reported the discovery of two huge interlocking circles containing diamond-shaped symbols etched into the ground in Northern New Mexico at a Scientology compound. Only visible from a very high altitude, the figure resembles crop circles <<oh, no! Not crop circles! Wow! – RGP>> and matches the logo of the Church of Spiritual Technology, the Scientology corporation that built a vault into the mesa in the 80s. The underground facility houses the works of **L Ron Hubbard**, inscribed onto stainless steel plates and encased into titanium, built to survive a nuclear blast or other catastrophe <<this, presumably was a reaction to all those copies of BATTLEFIELD EARTH I've destroyed at auctions over the years! – RGP>> While the facility is not secret, the TV station says Scientology officials tried to squelch the news story about the ground markings, adding to the intrigue <<Gosh! It could be true, then? – RGP>>. Rumour has it the circles also mark the location of the vault for the far-future return of church members from outer space.” <<And this, folks, also marks the spot where Father Christmas starts his annual delivery service! This is VERY worrying. Hubbard, obviously connected to the SF genre, and his ‘religion’, are how people perceive you and I, because we read SF. Please burn every Hubbard book you can find. Or tear it up. Or destroy it....Except that'll make his books so much rare. No, I change my mind – DON'T destroy his books – leave them to rot on the shelves of the charity bookshops... We certainly don't want them to be reprinted.– RGP>>

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

***FIFTY DEGREES BELOW* by Kim Stanley Robinson**
HarperCollins / 520pgs / HarperCollins / £18.99 hardcover
Reviewed by Pauline Morgan
Star Rating: * * * * *

FORTY SIGNS OF RAIN was the start of a trilogy revolving around the implications of global warming. Robinson is researching at the cutting edge of knowledge and making uncannily predictions. For those of us that believe in global warming, we know that one of the symptoms is unusual weather patterns. Some of these generate storms. Storms can cause flooding. In FORTY SIGNS OF RAIN unusually severe storms hit the Eastern seaboard of America. Washington

is flooded. Robinson may have got the city wrong, but the chaos that he describes for Washington was mirrored this summer by scenes in New Orleans.

FIFTY DEGREES BELOW takes the situation a stage further. Due to the melting of the Arctic ice, the Gulf Stream has stalled. This is a vital part of our weather system. It carries warm water from the tropics northwards across the Atlantic, providing Britain with its temperate climate. Normally, when warm water meets cold Arctic water, the heavier warm water sinks, carrying the colder water with it and then moves south, forming a vast convection current. The melt water is less dense and floats on salt water. The increasing amount of it being produced forms a fresh water cap on the ocean preventing the warm current carrying it downwards. The convection current is stopped. Without the warm water moving north, the criteria for abrupt climate changes are met. Signs of abrupt climate changes have been found in geological records so it is not an impossible theory. It could take as little as three years. What this will mean is very cold winters in the Northern Hemisphere.

In the real world, the Gulf Stream is slowing down, and this winter has been predicted to be much colder than those we have seen in the last decade. In this novel, it happens. Washington is still the focus of disaster, though the rising sea levels are not forgotten. One project organised by the National Science Foundation is to try and restart the Gulf Stream by dumping an awful lot of salt into the sea at the point where it should be sinking.

The human characters are small, set against the power of the weather. Back in Washington, Frank Vanderval, an NSF worker, is homeless. The people he had been renting from have returned to reclaim their apartment. To begin with, he is not worried. He constructs a tree house in Rock Creek Park. In the beginning, this lifestyle is fun. Then winter sets in and the snows come. Frank is still content until the night the temperature drops to fifty degrees (Fahrenheit) below freezing and people start dying. Washington, though hard hit, does not suffer as badly as some places in Europe.

At the end of the book, you are left with the unsettling feeling that the conditions described are just around the corner; that if we do not act now, Robinson's predictions will become inevitable. If you have any doubts about the truth of global warming, read these books and ask yourself the question, do you want to run the risk of this future? Then, go and lobby your government. It may not be too late.

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:-

19th January - **Arthur C Clarke & Stephen Baxter** - *TIME'S EYE*

16th February – tba

NOVACON 36 – the BSFG’s own convention will again be held at the Quality Hotel, Walsall, Nr Birmingham. Guest of Honour will be Ken MacLeod. Other details to follow.

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

February 10th – SF/Fantasy author **Ian R MacLeod**

March 10th – SF author and SF historian **Brian Stableford**

April 7th – Horror/Fantasy artist **Les Edwards**

May 12th – Fantasy author **Storm Constantine**

June 9th – SF/Fantasy artist **Jim Burns**

Newsletter 412 copyright 2006 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.

LATE NEWS

Howard DeVore died 31st December after being admitted to hospital on December 18th with blood clots in the legs. ‘Big-Hearted’ Howard DeVore was one of the best known and best liked fans of all time. He was a SF reader and collector since at least the mid 30's. He'd been moved to a rehab facility and had been there about 15 hours and simply passed away. He was to be Fan Guest of Honour at the 2006 Worldcon.

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