

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

APRIL 2015

ISSUE 523

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Friday 10th April ***Professor IAN*** ***STEWART***

This month's meeting we will welcome back a long time member of the BSFG to talk to us. Professor Ian Stewart is a mathematician, science fiction and science fact author as well as being an Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at the University of Warwick.

In addition to his well-regarded academic work of over 140 papers and over 80 books on mathematics, he has written over 20 "popular science" books explaining science and mathematics to the layperson. He



May 8th - To be confirmed

has also co-written two science fiction novels (with Dr Jack Cohen) entitled WHEELERS and HEAVEN. He has also collaborated with Dr Jack Cohen and Sir Terry Pratchett in producing the four *The Science of Discworld* books. He and Jack Cohen were made “Honorary Wizards of Unseen University” by Terry Pratchett in 1999 at the same time as the University of Warwick gave Sir Terry his honorary degree.

He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society and recipient of many awards and medals including the Michael Faraday Medal and only last month (March) he was the joint winner of the Lewis Thomas Prize for Writing about Science (awarded by Rockefeller University) which recognised scientists who have accomplished a significant literary achievement. In 1997 gave the Royal Institution Christmas lecture.

His previous visit in 2011 was a fascinating discussion on Alternate worlds and parallel universes and I am sure this time will be just as interesting. He will be talking to us about his latest work THE VEGETABLE CONNECTION which is to be published in the near future. 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

THE KITSCHIES 2014 AWARD WINNERS

The Kitschies reward “the year's most progressive, intelligent and entertaining works that contain elements of the speculative or fantastic”. The prizes were presented on 4th March in London.

Red Tentacle (Novel): GRASSHOPPER JUNGLE by Andrew Smith (Electric Monkey)

Golden Tentacle (Debut Novel): VIPER WINE by Hermione Eyre (Jonathan Cape)

Inky Tentacle (Cover Art): TIGERMAN by Nick Harkaway illustrated by Glenn O'Neill (William Heinemann)

Invisible Tentacle (Natively Digital Fiction): KENTUCKY ROUTE ZERO, ACT III by Cardboard Computer.

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 goodwined@yahoo.com

CONAN DOYLE CON - sent by Theresa Derwin

Join us for a day celebrating the works of Arthur Conan Doyle; from Challenger to Sherlock Holmes, from Lost World to Baker Street. Conan Doyle Con with special guest Dr Tom Ue, University of College London, who will be talking about the eponymous Professor Challenger. He will be joined by guests Rhys Hughes, Jan Edwards, Steve Lockley, Michael R Brush and S G Mullholland to name just a few, for a day of panels, readings, talks, two book launches (CHALLENGER UNBOUND and MYCROFT AND THE NECROMANCER) and lots of beer or wine in a relaxed pub setting. Tickets include 10% off any books bought on the day. The ticket also includes a 90 minute play on Sherlock Holmes by 'Don't Go into the Cellar' a fantastic Midlands based theatre company.

On 30th May, Birmingham. 12 - 6:30pm. The City Tavern, 38 Bishopgate Street. Cost: £15 at www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/conan-doyles-con-tickets-16295793156

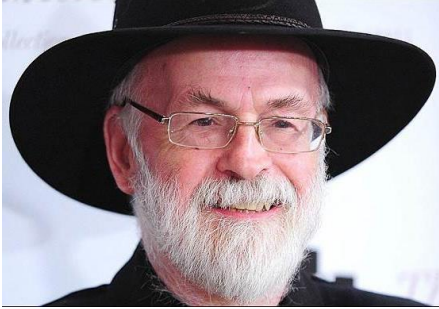
SCIENCE FICTION BOOKS - received from Solihull Oxfam Bookshop

I am writing from the Oxfam Books and Music Shop in Solihull Town Centre (9 Drury Lane) to let you know that we have recently received a large donation of Sci- Fi titles, mostly purchased from the much-missed Andromeda Bookshop. There are a large number of hardbacks by authors such as Mercedes Lackey, L E Modessit, and Laurell Hamilton all on sale at £2.99, together with a large number of paperbacks.

COMMISSION YOUR OWN SCULPTURE - sent via William McCabe

Tom Ellis - Curious Oddities. (Creature Design, illustration, workshops, prosthetics). Fancy commissioning your very own unique fantastical creature sculpture for your own home or business. All come with their own mythical story. Commissions start at £30. Contact tomellis55555@yahoo.co.uk. Or www.curiousoddities.carbonmade.com

SIR TERRY PRATCHETT - 1948 to 2015



Sir Terry Pratchett died peacefully at home on March 12th at the too young age of 66, after suffering from Posterior Cortical Atrophy, a rare form of Alzheimer's. He was most well-known as the creator of the much-loved *Discworld* series, of which there are around forty novels. His work was always full of wonderful characters, wit, humour,

a love of puns and twisted metaphors and a superb ability to puncture pomposity and political correctness. He was incredibly prolific and as well as the *Discworld* novels, some of the other books he wrote were the SF novels *THE DARK SIDE OF THE SUN* and *STRATA*. He also collaborated with Neil Gaiman on *GOOD OMENS*, with Stephen Baxter on *The Long Earth* SF series, and with Professor Ian Stewart and Dr Jack Cohen on *The Science of Discworld* series. As well as being popular (selling over 80 million copies) the quality of his writing won many awards including the Andre Norton, BSFA, Locus and World Fantasy Lifetime Achievement Award. He was awarded an OBE in 1998 and then a knighthood in 2009 for "services to literature". He donated approximately \$1million dollars to the Alzheimer's society shortly after his diagnosis and then became a patron. He is survived by his daughter, Rhianna and his wife, Lyn.

CG

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bookseller **Ted Ball** died in hospital on March 18th. He was the co-owner of London's Fantasy Centre, an SF bookshop. He opened the shop jointly with Dave Gibson in 1969 and it closed in 2009 The SFWA have announced that **Larry Niven** has been named as Damon Knight Grand Master. The award will be presented in June at the Nebula Awards weekend **Sasquan (Worldcon 2015)** has announced that astronaut Kjell Lindgren will be a guest. Astronauts and cosmonauts have appeared at previous Worldcons, but this will be a first as he will be participating remotely from orbit on the International Space Station Following the success of the *LEGENDS* anthology in 2013 (funds from which support the **David Gemmell Awards**) *LEGENDS 2* (Newcon Press) will be launched at this year's Gemmell Awards ceremony. This will take place in

August at the Nine Worlds Geek Fest in London **Sir Terry Pratchett** completed a final Discworld novel before he passed away. It features young witch, Tiffany Aching and is titled **THE SHEPHERD'S CROWN**. A date for publication is not yet available. The fourth novel in the *Long Earth* SF series (in collaboration with Stephen Baxter) will be published in June and is titled **THE LONG UTOPIA** **Hodderscape** will be holding its first open submission period from the 3rd August to the 16th August this year "looking for new voices in science fiction, fantasy and horror". More details will follow nearer the time On Sunday 5th April, **BBC Radio 3** at 6:45pm will broadcast a programme **MEMOIRS OF THE SPACEWOMEN** looking at three works by "neglected women SF writers". They will discuss **WHAT NOT** (1919) by Rose Macaulay, **THE LONG WAY BACK** (1954) by Margot Bennett and **MEMOIRS OF A SPACEWOMAN** (1962) by Naomi Mitchison The Independent online (30th March) features an article on "the **best female science fiction and fantasy authors** you should read now". Authors include VE Schwab, Kameron Hurley, Lucy Hounsom, Sarah Pinborough, Claire North, Justina Robson and Jen Williams. In a related article on the same day, SF author **Justina Robson** writes "**Women, give science fiction a chance**". (www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/justina-robson-give-science-fiction-a-chance-10092027.html) **Robert A Heinlein's THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS** is to be made into a film directed by Bryan Singer According to The Telegraph, Amazon has approached the UK government about the possibility of testing the use of unmanned drones for deliveries At the beginning of March, NASA Spacecraft *Dawn* became the first spacecraft to successfully make orbit around a **dwarf planet, Ceres**. It is at present behind the planet but data is expected to start arriving back on Earth in mid-April. The spacecraft had previously successfully orbited the asteroid, Vesta in 2011-2012. CG

NEW CINEMA FILM RELEASES

Listings should not be necessarily taken as recommendations. Release dates are subject to change. View at your own peril!

LOST RIVER - Release date April 10th. Teenager discovers road to a secret underwater town.

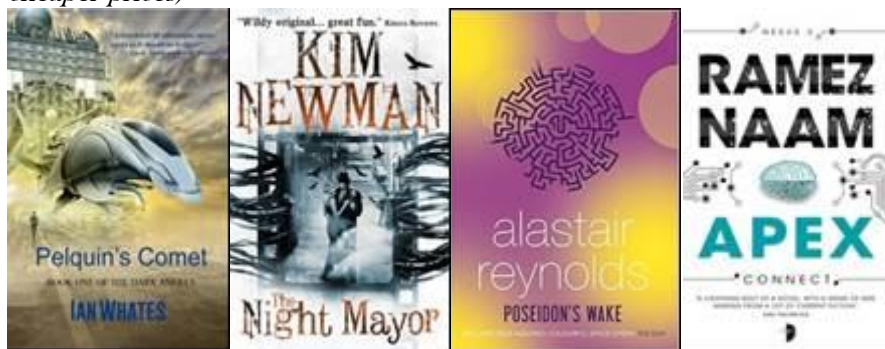
AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON - Release date April 24th. The superhero team must stop the villainous robot, Ultron from enacting his terrible plans.

MONSTERS: DARK CONTINENT - Release date May 1st (previously expected to be released November 2014). SF. Sequel to the 2010 film MONSTERS. "Infected Zones" of large alien creatures have spread to the Middle East.

UNFRIENDED - Release date May 1st. A group of online friends are haunted by a mysterious, supernatural force using their dead friend's account. CG

FORTHCOMING BOOKS

(NB Prices given are Recommended Retail Price and may be available at cheaper prices)



PELQUIN'S COMET by Ian Whates / Newcon Press / ? pgs / £12.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1907069789 / April 17th. SF. Freetraders race to claim a cache of alien technology. (NB Order via www.spacewitch.com)

THE NIGHT MAYOR by Kim Newman / Titan / 272 pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1781165669 / April 24th. SF. Re-issue of 1st novel (1990). Detective hunts infamous criminal in a virtual reality world.

POSEIDON'S WAKE (*Poseidon's Children 3*) by Alastair Reynolds / Gollancz / 608 pgs / £18.99 hardback / ISBN 978-0575090491 / April 30th. SF. Search for Faster than Light travel is hindered by saboteurs.

APEX (*Nexus 3*) by Ramez Naam / Angry Robot / 624 pgs / £16.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0857664006 / May 7th. SF. Global conflict between enhanced humans and ordinary humanity.



DREAMS OF SHREDS AND TATTERS by Amanda Downum / Solaris / 320 pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1781083260 / May 7th. Urban Fantasy. Heroine must confront the monstrous Yellow King to save her friend.

DAY SHIFT (Midnight Texas 2) by Charlaine Harris / Gollancz / 320 pgs / £18.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0575092884 / May 7th. Fantasy/Horror. In a town of secretive mysterious people, enigmatic Olivia is the only help for psychic Manfred.

THE BOOK OF PHOENIX by Nnedi Okorafor / Hodder & Stoughton / 240 pgs / £18.99 hardback / ISBN 978-1473617940 / May 7th. SF. Genetically engineered woman, Phoenix discovers everything she knows is a lie.

THE WATCHMAN OF ETERNITY by Paul Witcover / Bantam / 450 pgs / £18.99 hardback / ISBN 978-0593070765 / May 7th. Fantasy set in England and France at the time of the Jacobite rebellion.

Erratum - in last month's "Forthcoming Books" I described THE ADJACENT by Christopher Priest as first paperback publication, based upon information on the Internet. I have since been reliably informed that this is not the case so apologies for the wrong information.

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 goodwinccd@yahoo.com

THE POETIC IMPOSSIBILITY TO MANAGE THE INFINITE, 7th February - 2nd May, Wolverhampton. Photographs of European Space Agency facilities and experiments. Wolverhampton Art Gallery. Free Admission. Lichfield Street, WV1 1DU. Tel: 01902 552055

POP IN SPACE: WE CHOOSE TO GO TO THE MOON, 21st February - 18th July, Wolverhampton. Exhibition of artists' responses to the Space Race during the Cold War. Wolverhampton Art Gallery. Free Admission. Address as above.



PETER BRETT Signing, 11th April, Birmingham. The author will be signing copies of his novel *THE SKULL THRONE* at Waterstones New Street from 12 noon. Free entry. Tel: 0121 631 4333

BLADE RUNNER: FINAL CUT screening, 17th - 21st April, Birmingham. Mac Centre. Price £7.50. www.macbirmingham.co.uk or 0121 446 3232.

MARK MILLAR opens new FORBIDDEN PLANET Megastore, 18th April, Birmingham. Mark Millar (creator/writer of *Wanted* and *Kick-Ass* comics and Creative consultant for Marvel movies) will open new expanded megastore. 1 - 2pm at 74 Bull Street, B4 6AD.

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).

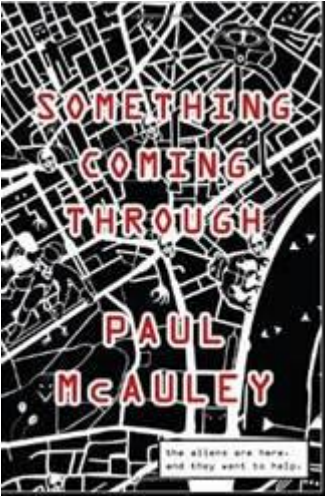
***SOMETHING COMING THROUGH* by Paul McAuley**
Gollancz / 384 pgs / £20 Hardcover, £14.99 enlarged paperback, £10.99 eBook / ISBN 978-1473203945

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

Themes in Science Fiction tend to go in cycles. It is not just new writers or those from mainstream literature who are venturing into the field, thinking they have invented something totally new (and haven't). In these cases, the book has to be exceptional for them to be excused the fact that they are ignorant of the history of the genre. When

experienced writers who have a deep grounding of their craft and knowledge of what has gone before, take up a theme that has lain by the wayside for a long time it is worth taking note. Then when several well established writers publish books with similar themes in a short space of time, you start looking for the source of the synchronicity. Sometimes there is a trigger, at other times it is not obvious.

Here the theme in question is the arrival of aliens who offer technological gifts without first stating what they want in return. In 1964, Murray Leinster gave us **THE GREKS BRING GIFTS** and later Arthur C. Clarke produced **CHILDHOOD'S END**. By this time we should have realised that it was likely to end in tears as the citizens of Ancient Troy found out when they dragged the wooden horse into their city. However free something appears, there is always a catch. Then at



the end of last year, Greg Bear published **WAR DOGS** (reviewed in Newsletter #520 - January 2015). Now we have Paul McAuley's **SOMETHING COMING THROUGH**. Both have aliens appearing on Earth (before the start of the novel) and offering advanced technology. In neither case do the human governments spurn the gifts. In the former, Earth forces become engaged in a war on Mars against other aliens, in the latter, humans are given the technology and access to fifteen planets that they can colonise. These planets have had previous tenants. There is a good trade in smuggling Elder artefacts to Earth. Some

of the artefacts are infected with eidolons, a kind of ghost that can alter the mind it interacts with.

The plot follows two different but overlapping strands. On Earth, Chloe Millar has a reputation for being able to spot the break-outs of aberrant behaviour caused by eidolons. She follows up a lead to a meeting of a burgeoning religious cult and finds Fahad, a youth who is obsessively drawing the same image, one that can be identified as an Elder site on Mangala, the planet where a bead in his sister's bracelet came from. Ada Monrange is a very powerful and wealthy woman who is interested in finding technology not supplied by the Jackaroo - the beneficent aliens. She arranges for Chloe and Fahad to be smuggled

onto Mangala to see what they can discover. This needs to be done without the Jackaroo knowing.

Meanwhile, on Mangala, policeman Vic Gayle has a murder to solve. The corpse has been shot with what appears to be a ray-gun (source and technology unknown). There were two killings some time previously using the same method but he was unable to find the evidence that his chief suspect was guilty. The trail of incidents and bodies lead him in the same direction that Chloe and Fahad are travelling.

The story is cleverly told with enough time separation between the two strands so that although the reader is playing catch-up they are ultimately able to complete the picture before the characters do. There are always coincidences in a novel such as this but without them there would be no complexity to the plot. Paul McAuley has finesse in his writing which is why I prefer this over the Greg Bear. *PM*

(Review copy kindly donated by Gollancz)

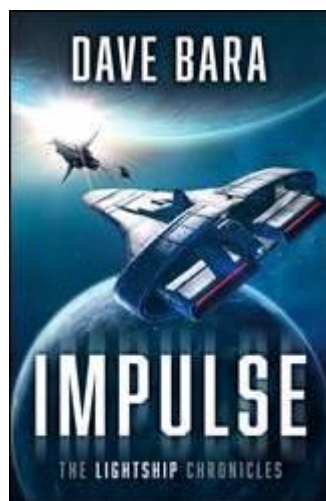
***IMPULSE* by Dave Bara**

Del Rey/ 372pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0091956417

Reviewed by Jim Pearce

IMPULSE is book one in *The Lightship Chronicles* and is set in a galaxy recovering from a civil war that finished a hundred and fifty years ago. This took place between the 'First' or 'Corporate' Empire and a group of secessionist planets that wanted to leave that Empire. A decade before the action described in this book 'the Historians' a 'Church' group arrived in Quantar and Carinthia, two planets that had been on opposite sides in the war. Offering the gift of lightships (interstellar craft) they persuaded these planets to join with Earth in a 'Union'.

Just before the book starts a lightship, the *Impulse* one of three existing lightships, has just returned badly damaged from an exploratory trip to a neighbouring star, Levant. Lt. Peter Cochrane, son of the Quantarian Grand Admiral is quickly pulled off his planned first trip in the new lightship *Starbound*,



promoted to the rank of lieutenant commander and transferred to the *Impulse*. The first problem to face him is that the *Impulse* is crewed by Carinthians and there is still some residual antagonism between them and Quantarans. After repair this ship is to return to Levant to investigate the circumstances of the attack. To further complicate things an historian accompanies all lightships and has overriding authority and access to technology that is not shared with the crews.

On return to the Levant system, the *Impulse* is attacked by both First Empire technology but also by something called 'Founder' technology. It appears that several hundred thousand years before the current period there was a human star empire that was destroyed by a mysterious enemy. Earth humans supposedly are the descendants of a lost colony of this empire. After surviving these attacks and while exploring this founder technology in one of the ship's shuttles, Peter and his friends are stranded when the Historian on the *Impulse* shanghaies the ship and leaves the star system via a wormhole. It turns out that there is a schism in the ranks of the Historians. Fortunately the Levant system rulers are friendly and before you know it Peter is engaged to its co-ruler.

As you may gather the plot and characterisation is rather convoluted. I'm sorry to say that I did not find either the technology or plot believable. In addition the actions of the main characters especially Peter's are, in my opinion, naïve, clumsy and do not meet the standards one would expect of persons in their position. A more experienced author may have produced a more satisfying tale.

JTP

(Kindly donated by Del Rey)

***BÊTE* by Adam Roberts**

Gollancz / 267 pgs / £16.99 hardback / ISBN 978-0575127685

Reviewed by William McCabe

Adam Roberts is unusual among SF writers in that he doesn't seem to indulge in trilogies, series or even consistent sub-genre. He's been through the likes of space opera, steampunk, dystopia, and many other styles but never really settled on one. Whatever he tries, he's usually pretty good at it and this is no exception. It's not perfect but what is? It's fun, it's interesting, it has new ideas and reworks old ones.

This is the story of Graham Penhaligon in a near-future changing world. The changes have begun before the story starts. At the beginning Graham is delayed, briefly, in the slaughtering of one of his cows - he is a dairy farmer and trade isn't good- when the cow complains. This isn't any great surprise to Graham. He's been used to talking farm animals for a while. An animal rights organisation has been implanting animals with a computer chip that either gives the animals



the ability to speak for themselves or just provides a pre-programmed A.I. with an animal voice box. Which of these you believe tends to depend on which side of the animal rights debate you're on. With the slaughter of this cow, Graham becomes famous as the last person to slaughter a talking animal. When the court cases are done he becomes either a hero of the people or a war criminal. Again, depending on your point of view. The country passes a new law to recognise the rights of talking animals and the changes really begin. Someone creates a form of tank-grown meat that makes meat production by any other means virtually

redundant. Supposedly intelligent animals take over the countryside and human life moves into walled cities. Graham goes from struggling farmer to semi-legal travelling butcher to tramp in a few years. Just when he has got as low as he possibly could he starts getting messages from an animal leader called "The Lamb" who has a proposition for him.

The ethical issues covered and the science that goes along with it are pretty well done and make for a very interesting story. The great failing comes in Roberts' idea of humour. This seems to rely on the idea that dropping references to recent films etc. into the text is funny. I suppose there are a lot of people that like that sort of thing but, somehow, it never really worked for me. I suppose you can't have everything.

WM

(Review copy kindly donated by Gollancz)

GIVE ME THESE MOMENTS BACK BY Mike Chinn
Alchemy Press / 266 pgs / £9.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0992980962
Reviewed by Carol Goodwin

GIVE ME THESE MOMENTS BACK is an anthology of short stories by British Fantasy Award nominee, Mike Chinn who is also I believe a member of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group. This collection of eighteen stories covers a very wide range of subjects. Whilst most have a supernatural or horror theme, there are also a couple of contemporary stories and a couple which fall into the science fiction area.

The short story form is not everyone's cup of tea as the limited length does tend to expose any flaws in a writer's technique. With an experienced disciplined writer however they are a very effective method of storytelling. In this collection the author is excellent at establishing a sense of place and also atmosphere. The stories show a wide range of ideas and imagination. The story often arises from the location and is not using the lazy, standard tropes of many other writers.

I am not a fan of slasher-style horror and this collection demonstrates how unnecessary that is and how more disturbing it can be to leave some things to the readers' imaginations. Instead the stories develop from an initial disquiet, with incremental revelations which build to the final often nasty conclusion without complying with a superfluous obligation to go into graphic detail.

As with any collection of stories, there will always be some which appeal to a reader more than others. All I can do to give you a bit of a flavour of the book is to briefly describe a few of the stories. Those which I most enjoyed were "Welcome to the Hotel Marianas" which is clearly influenced by the old TV show *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (clearly acknowledged in the notes at the end of the book) but which takes a dark turn, "Harbour Lights" which looks at the disadvantaged in a Barsoomian-type society and my favourite, "Kami Ga Kikoemasu" about a Japanese whaling boat haunted by a spirit monster (with again nods to **MOBY DICK**). There were also a couple of stories which I



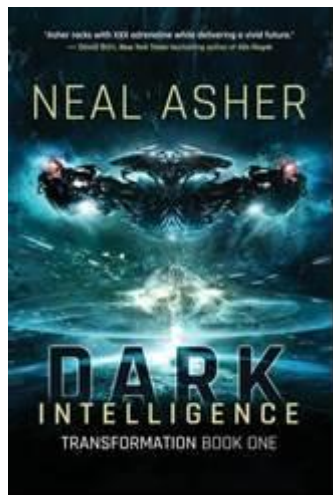
also did not like. I feel that the author writes women characters less well and their portrayal in two stories in particular (“Brindley’s Place” and “All Under Hatches Stowed”) made me personally uncomfortable. *CG* (Review copy kindly donated by *Alchemy Press*)

DARK INTELLIGENCE by Neal Asher

Pan Macmillan Tor/ Hardback/ 471pgs/ £18.99/ ISBN 978-0-230-75072-2

Reviewed by Jim Pearce

DARK INTELLIGENCE is the first volume in the new *Transformation* series of novels by Neal Asher and is a very welcome return to his popular Polity universe. In it we meet again a number of characters that featured in some of his previous novels. These include Amistad, a scorpion war drone who through extensive upgrades to its AI systems has become the warden of a Polity protectorate planet, Masada. This is the home of the Weaver, the only sentient Gabbleduck (or Atheter), one of the previously thought to be extinct ancient



species who occupied the galaxy long before humans evolved. Much of the action in this book takes place there. Amistad had been given responsibility for the dark (evil) AI, Penny Royal, whom in the previous Polity novel **THE TECHNICIAN** it was believed he had rehabilitated by removing its eighth and evil state of consciousness, but is this true?

Penny Royal features strongly in this book and is feared and hunted by the other major characters for her past actions. Before capture by Amistad she was infamous for granting wishes, for a price, that not only met what was asked for but went far beyond. One thing though, Penny Royal always keeps her word.

The other major characters are:

- The newly resurrected human, Thorvald Spear who was killed by Penny Royal during the Polity vs (alien) Prador war which ended over a century before the start of this novel.

- Isobel Satomi who ran a successful crime syndicate in the Graveyard; the no man's land between the Prador kingdom and the Polity before negotiating with Penny Royal for more power.
- Sverl, a renegade Prador Captain Father, another of Penny Royal's customers, who hides from both the Polity and his King in the Graveyard.
- Blite, who is the owner and captain of a spaceship. He is duped into smuggling Penny Royal off Masada and chauffeuring her on her travels.

In addition there is a rich cast of supporting personnel.

In **DARK INTELLIGENCE** Neal Asher amply restates the excellence of his storytelling by skilfully entwining the story line of each of his characters into a very strong narrative that is set within a detailed and believable universe. This is an excellent book and an equally excellent start to a new series.

JTP

(Review copy kindly donated by Pan Macmillan Tor)

CONVENTIONS

EDGE-LIT, 11th July, Derby. Literary SF/Fantasy festival. Guest of Honour Samantha Shannon. Tickets £30 from 01332 290606 or www.derbyquad.co.uk/special-event/edge-lit-4

NINE WORLDS GEEKFEST, 7th - 9th August, London. Multi-media with strong literature strand. Guests of Honour tba. Tickets £95 (from April 1st) at <https://nineworlds.co.uk/>

BRISTOLCON, 26th September, Bristol. Guests of Honour Jasper Fforde, Jaine Fenn and Chris Moore. Doubletree Hotel. £20 (£25 from May 1st). Details at www.bristolcon.org

FANTASYCON, 23rd - 25th October, Nottingham. Guests of Honour are John Connolly, Jo Fletcher and Brandon Sanderson with Master of Ceremonies Juliet E McKenna. East Midlands Conference Centre & Orchard Hotel. Tickets £55 (non-members of BFS) from <http://fantasycon2015.org/> - price expected to increase on 1st April but new rate not available at present.

NOVACON 45, 13th - 15th November, Nottingham. Guests of Honour are Anne and Stan Nicholls. The Park Inn, Nottingham. Tickets £45. Details at www.novacon.org.uk

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG

May 8th - **tbc**

June 12th - SF author **Stephanie Saulter**

July 10th - author **Adrian Cole**

August 14th - **Summer Meal**

September 11th - **tbc**

October 9th - **tbc**

November 6th - author **Emma Newman**

December 4th - **Christmas Social**

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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