

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

NOVEMBER 2006

ISSUE 422

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& **HARRY HARRISON**

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FRIDAY 3RD NOVEMBER

THE QUIZ

It's been a few years since we had a competition with the Birmingham University group, but they now have a new Chairperson and have suggested we revive the association and hold another event together. And, who knows, it could become an annual event again.

In the past we've had quizzes and debates – this year we've elected to have a quiz. Two teams of four will compete for various prizes. The BSFG team, all having read SF continuously since the first SF magazine was published in 1926, has memorised the complete **ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION**. Between them they have read every SF book and magazine ever published. And if you think that means they'll wipe the floor with these youngsters barely out of nappies, you could be **VERY** wrong. With all that knowledge of the written word, they've never had a chance to watch movies or TV (well, OK, maybe the odd one) – some don't even own a TV set!

DECEMBER 1st - one week earlier than normal - THE CHRISTMAS SOCIAL - the ever-popular Skittles evening. Have you got your tickets? If not, GET THEM NOW - no tickets on the night!

So how will these youngsters stand a chance? Well, not having books to read, they've grown up having all these films and TV shows repeated week after week so that they know the complete dialogue of every SF show off by heart. They have the knitting patterns for their DR WHO scarf, they know the fleet numbers of every spaceship seen or referred to in STAR TREK. And I'm told that some of them can read as well, and have devoured the contents of, oh... at least three books each! This could give them a distinct advantage over the old fogies who think that DVD stands for Daily Valium Dosage.

Seriously though - which side will set the questions to make it completely fair? Well, that was a difficult one. So we decided that neither group would set the questions. And each team member will choose their own question. Puzzled? Intrigued?

Oh, this should be Fun – if it works! Come along and have a light-hearted evening. 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.

THE OCTOBER MEETING: JIM BURNS

By Dave Hardy

One of the requirements for a slideshow is a dark room. Unfortunately one of the requirements for writing notes is to be able to see. So I am now trying to decipher what I scribbled down by the reflected light from the screen! After having to postpone his planned visit to the Brum Group in June, Britain's best SF artist finally made it. However, to start with a little 'behind the scenes' information, the week before this meeting was filled by e-mails flying back and forth between Jim and myself, as we needed to make sure that his show would work OK on my Powerbook (laptop) and video projector. He even sent me a couple of CDs in advance to check. Anyway, on the night, as you will know if you were there (and if not, why not? You missed a treat.) all went smoothly.

After Vernon's introduction, during which a cute alien on a title slide announced "Greetings Brummie Earthlings!", followed by a sweet little bunny rabbit from a time before he painted science fiction, Jim started by showing a sequence of sketches and paintings of an exotic young woman with white hair for Heavy Metal, after which followed a whole series of original sketches and details from the piece, such as an ornate knife for which his daughter had posed, her hand holding a bread-knife. He then showed a series of increasing 'zooms' ending with the (mainly airbrushed) face and eyes, which he said were always the most important part to him. Next came a digital sequence in which an elaborate but

‘standard’ background left a central space, into which he could drop various scenes and subjects, for titles like ENDER’S GAME, STARTIDE RISING, THE ANUBIS GATES, COURTSHIP RITES and BLOOD MUSIC (fill in your own authors). This was followed by three pencil sketches of a young boy, for whom the model was apparently a real boy named Sebastian Snook! Then a photograph of this boy in the chosen pose, taken in Jim’s garden, and no fewer than eight stages, including pencil drawings and digital manipulations, which ended in the final cover image.

Next up was the artwork for Interaction, last year’s Worldcon in Glasgow, in which the committee had asked him to include the ‘Armadillo’ – the Convention Centre in which the Hugo Awards Ceremony was held - but shown as a giant spacecraft landing, followed by some preparatory sketches for this. Jim also kindly brought the original art for this, as well as a number of other pieces, for us to ogle. The next slide, slightly surprisingly, was a Frank Hampson illustration of Dan Dare, from the EAGLE comic, but Jim explained what an influence this had been on him as a boy, and how elements of Hampson’s spaceships still keep turning up in his own work! More pages from this, and from Captain Condor, followed, ending with the Mekon and one of Jim’s paintings for comparison, and then a close-up of Dan Dare alongside a photo of Jim in RAF uniform and cap. A remarkable resemblance!

After some more photos of Jim as a pilot there were some non-SF covers, including one showing Winston Churchill. Then, at last, we started on a roughly chronological journey through Jim’s covers for SF books and magazines, from the first one that he thought was ‘OK’, and including both conventionally-painted and, later, digital works. As he showed these there were cries from the audience as they remembered their favourites. It was during this period – 1973 – that Jim had joined the Young Artists agency, and he mentioned, wryly, the influence of Chris Foss on all SF artists at this time, and how all publishers and agents wanted to find their own Foss clone. . .

Jim worked at first in gouache, later turning to oils and acrylics. He became known not just for his elaborate spaceships (usually more organic and smoothly curved, unlike Foss’s chunky and angular vehicles) but also for fantastic aliens and animals; and, of course, for heroic females, often being criticized for their scarcely-covered, globular breasts! (Like this was new in SF covers?) He worked with the publisher Pierrot, collaborating with Harry Harrison on the art books MECHANISMO and PLANET STORY, and with Malcolm Edwards and Rob Holdstock on TOUR OF THE UNIVERSE. It was as a result of this, and in particular one vehicle, that he worked with Ridley Scott on BLADERUNNER. Throughout all this, Jim showed many details and small sections of his work; he commented several times upon his obsession with detail, which meant that when painting traditionally he would often be showing, for instance, figures in the interior of a vessel through a window or porthole only half-an-inch across! Working digitally, as he did from the mid-90s, naturally makes this sort of technique much easier.

I can tell you (because I have the CD) that Jim showed a total of 411 slides. Now, the whole point of a ‘talk’ which is centred on slides is of course the images themselves. So, and since the Brum Group News is not printed in colour and doesn’t have 100 or so pages, there does not seem a lot of point in my listing all the covers that Jim showed, does there? He produced a lot of covers for Robert Silverberg (over 40): you name it, Jim did it. He did show several pieces which, for unknown reasons, were never actually published, though these could be added to the ‘stockpile’ and used, or parts of them used, in later work. Jim does use models – usually friends and family – when necessary, but increasingly he also uses ‘found material’: pictures from books, magazines, anywhere, which the use of a computer makes easier. He showed his covers for David Wingrove’s eight-part epic *Chung Kuo*, and for the *Venus Prime* series, based on Arthur C. Clarke short stories. Colin Greenland’s own black leather coat was used for *SEASONS OF PLENTY*, and was much coveted by his daughter who wore it as a model, and didn’t want to relinquish it!

Jim’s talk was full of personal anecdotes, which made the time fly; so much so that at 9.25 Vernon proposed a short break to fill our glasses. . . The show resumed at 9.40, peppered with names like Paul McAuley; Ian McDonald (artwork for one of his books, sent to the USA, was destroyed by accident); Robert Holdstock; an example of horror, for *THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND* by William Hope Hodgson; Keith Roberts; George R.R. Martin (for whose covers Jim used real wood veneers – later regretted); Isaac Asimov’s last published story, in which Jim showed Hari Seldon as Asimov himself (or vice versa); John Meaney; and Peter Hamilton, whose work Jim enjoys illustrating and on which Peter likes to provide a lot of input. One of the originals for Peter’s books was four feet long, in acrylics. Jim provided half-a-dozen digital sketches for *PANDORA’S STAR*.

Just before 10.30 (the longest talk on record?), Jim ended on a humorous, if somewhat horrific note, by showing us a photograph of: “US soldiers relaxing in Saddam Hussein’s town house in an upscale central Baghdad neighbourhood”. On the wall are several framed fantasy-type paintings (it is of course well known that works by or copied from Rowena Morrell were found), one of which is clearly copied from one of Jim’s. Jim then read out an item from *The Guardian*, in which Jonathan Jones wrote of the fantasy paintings found in Saddam’s home:

“They are from the universal cultural gutter. They look spraypainted, in a rampant hyperbolic style where all men are muscular, all women have giant breasts and missiles are giant cocks. These are art for the barely literate, or the barely sentient, dredged from some red-lit back alley of the brain.”

There is more, but I guess that puts us in our place. . .

Jim Burns is without doubt one of the most prolific, popular, and productive painters (and probably several more ‘p’s’) in our genre, but more importantly, he is the premier artist in our field. More power to his elbow, or at least to his painting hand.

DAH

THE CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

This years Social will again be held at The Selly Park Tavern, 592 Pershore Road, Selly Oak, where we have once again hired the Skittles Room for our own private use from 7.0pm till 11.00pm on Friday 1st December. To get there, take a 45 or 47 bus from Corporation Street. Ask for the Selly Park Tavern - its about 15 minutes ride. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE FROM THE USUAL SECOND FRIDAY.

Tickets are £10 each which covers the cost of the skittle alley and the food but not your drinks (we have our own bar). There will be prizes for individual games - you don't have to know how to play skittles because we have our own variants of the game, designed to give everyone a chance, none of which would be allowed at competition or any other level. There will be a free half hourly raffle and, to judge from past comments, a good time to be had by all.

The meal will be a buffet of a selection of sandwiches, sausage rolls ,quiche, chicken wings, pizza, salads, etc., plus a separate selection for vegetarians provided that this requirement is clearly stated when you order your ticket.

Send your name and address, stating whether you want the standard or vegetarian buffet, plus a cheque/postal order for the appropriate amount to Vicky Cook, Secretary, 5 Greenbank, Barnt Green, Birmingham B45 8DH as soon as possible and you will receive your tickets and further directions by post. Or hand them to Pat or Vernon at the November Group Meeting after the Quiz. **THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS MONDAY 20th NOVEMBER** because the Tavern needs food numbers that week. However, by that time NOVACON will have happened and there may not be any tickets left - numbers are restricted for safety reasons and we have reached that number every year previously and had to refuse latecomers..

REMEMBER THAT TICKETS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE ON THE NIGHT - GET THEM **NOW!** VB

TWENTY QUESTIONS – Rog Peyton

Email your answers to rgp@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk or snail mail to 19 Eves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham, B32 3QL. Answers to be with me by midnight, November 20th. The person with the most correct answers will be the winner. THE WINNER THIS MONTH WILL GET A FREE DRINK AT THE CHRISTMAS SOCIAL.

- 1 Who helped Arthur C Clarke write the sequels to RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA?
- 2 What does the 'K' stand for in Philip K Dick?
- 3 What was the first novel to win the Nebula Award?
- 4 Who wrote the novel CHRISTMAS EVE?

- 5 Which Novacon Guest of Honour has won the Prometheus Award three times?
- 6 Which novel was the basis for the movie PLANET OF THE APES?
- 7 Who played the title role in the movie THE POSTMAN?
- 8 NESFA stands for...?
- 9 What do Theodore Sturgeon, Richard Matheson, Robert Bloch, Norman Spinrad and Fredric Brown have in common?
- 10 What was the sequel to the TV show THE FLIPSIDE OF DOMINIC HYDE?
- 11 What number was The Prisoner?
- 12 Which Angel appeared in the movie adaptation of John Varley's MILLENNIUM?
- 13 What connects the numbers 933, 1716 and 2262?
- 14 Whose first published story was "Rock Diver"?
- 15 What was the alternate title of CHRONOCULES by D G Compton?
- 16 Who publishes the fanzine ANSIBLE?
- 17 Which novel won this year's Hugo Award?
- 18 Which SF author wrote a novel about The Rolling Stones?
- 19 Who writes about 'The Culture'?
- 20 Who has completed the novel VARIABLE STAR?

The above questions are a mixture of easy, moderate and difficult. It's quite possible that someone will win getting only 10 out of 20 questions correct. Go on, have a try! I predict that no-one will get all 20 correct. Go ahead, use the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SF – but certain answers cannot be found in there. Or any of the other standard reference books on SF.

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

.... **Wilson 'Bob' Tucker** (b. 1914) passed away October 6. He would have turned 92 in a few weeks. He was the author of 60 short stories and novels, including the Campbell Award winning THE YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN. **Damon Knight** called his novel, THE LONG, LOUD SILENCE, one of the 'perfect' novels in the genre. His many other honours included three Hugo Awards (two retro), the First Fandom Hall of Fame Award, E.E. Smith Memorial Award, Archon Hall of Fame Award - Grand Master, Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America Author Emeritus and was a 2003 inductee in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame. **John Clute**, in his INDEPENDENT obituary, described him as 'the most intelligent and articulate and sophisticated fan the American science-fiction community is ever likely to boast of'. More can be found at <http://www.sfw.org/news/2006/wtucker.htm> **Joe Haldeman** has handed in THE ACCIDENTAL TIME MACHINE to Ace Books **Brian Aldiss** delivered H.A.R.M. to Del Rey **Ian McDonald's** BRASYL has gone to Pyr Books THE COMPLEAT ENCHANTER by **L Sprague de Camp** and **Fletcher Pratt** has been resold to NESFA Press **Robert J Sawyer** has

sold his WWW trilogy – WAKE, WATCH and WONDER to Ace Books **Michael Moorcock**'s collection THE METATEMPORAL DETECTIVE has been sold to Pyr Books **Liz Williams** has joined the editorial team of INTERZONE Film rights for **Naomi Novik**'s Temeraire series sold to director **Peter Jackson**'s Wingnut Films. The series is about an alternate universe where the Napoleonic Wars are fought with the addition on the Allied side of a Dragon Air Force Winners of the 2005 Sidewise Award for Alternate History were: Best Long Form - THE SUMMER ISLES by **Ian R MacLeod**; Best Short Form - "Pericles the Tyrant" by **Lois Tilton** (Asimov's Oct-Nov 2005) LEARNING THE WORD by **Ken MacLeod** (Guest of Honour at this year's NOVACON! See back page) won the Prometheus Award for best Libertarian novel of 2005. This was his third win, having previously won in 1996 and 1998 The Israeli Geffen Awards winners were - Best Translated Science Fiction Book: SPIN by **Robert Charles Wilson** and Best Translated Fantasy Book: ANANSI BOYS by **Neil Gaiman**. Yes, they do read books over there when not bombing their neighbours The new **Michael Crichton** novel, NEXT, will be published simultaneously worldwide on 28th November by HarperCollins in hardcover, audio, large-print and e-book formats, with a first printing of 2 million copies. The author's latest theme is genetics "fast, furious and out of control... A world where nothing is as it seems..." This, apparently, is the type of thriller SF that the general public now reads. Who was it who said there's no hope for the human race? Maybe they just get what they deserve Vanishing Actor: Physicists unveil first invisibility cloak - **Peter Weiss**. It might not seem like much compared with Harry Potter's magic garment, but the first functional invisibility cloak has emerged from a North Carolina laboratory. See - <http://www.sciencenews.org/articles/20060715/bob9.asp> for the full story And one last item of pure fantasy --- L. Ron Hubbard Garners New Guinness Records. Guinness World Records has confirmed that **L. Ron Hubbard** is the worlds most published author, with 1,084 works published, exceeding the record previously held by **José Carlos Ryoki**, with 1,058. In addition, Guinness notes that Hubbard has surpassed his own records as most translated author with the addition of six more languages, to bring his total to 71. So Guinness have been conned by the Hubbard lot as well? No way did Hubbard write that much stuff. Only by counting all the re-titles in the English language (some books had four or more titles) AND all the different titles for the same pieces of work in foreign editions could you possibly get anywhere near that total. He only wrote 10 novels plus, possibly, the 10-volume *Mission Earth* series (if you believe that he did actually write them), plus a handful of short stories. But 1,084 !!! Perhaps they included all the Christmas cards he wrote

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

***GALACTIC NORTH* by Alastair Reynolds**

Gollancz / 343pgs / £9.99 / hardcover

Reviewed by Michael Jones

Star rating * * * * *

Here we have a collection of stories set in the universe of REVELATION SPACE. In an afterword the author offers a brief essay describing his interest in the writing of Future Histories, which are a not uncommon theme in SF, and this is his. The stories here, five previously published and three all-new, do not provide a full and continuous account of human history in the Revelation Space universe, but rather a series of snapshots, adding to and illuminating his previous works. In particular, there is some attention to the time when humankind is beginning to expand out from the Solar System. As such, the book would certainly provide a useful introduction to the series for a reader not yet familiar with it, as well as a supplement helpful to one who was.

Reynolds is a writer well and truly in the grand tradition of adventurous Space Opera, a worthy inheritor of the mantle previously worn by the likes of Heinlein, Clarke and others too numerous to mention. His imagination literally knows no bounds and his stories are replete with super-science, amazing technology and advanced cosmology.

And as if that were not enough, he is a highly accomplished practitioner of the craft of writing as well. It is hard to imagine how he could improve.

There is one thing I have noticed however. His previous books, especially in the *Revelation Space* series, have always had a significant touch of darkness about them, although that has usually been counterbalanced by the glowing excitement of the storytelling. At the shorter length of these stories the darkness holds sway much more strongly and sometimes develops further towards the frankly horrific. This is not necessarily a problem *per se*, but needs to be mentioned as part of conveying an overall impression of the work.

(Incidentally, the keen reader is promised another *Revelation Space* novel next year, and probably there are even more to come in the future.)

So, then, a terrific book, which has the potential to appeal equally to a reader already familiar with the universe in which it is set as well as one new to the scene. Very highly recommended, especially in view of the modest price.

MJ

😊😊😊😊 **FILM ROUND-UP** ☹️☹️☹️☹️

BY VICKY COOK

THE OLDIES AND...

WESTWORLD and FUTUREWORLD

(1973/1976) Michael Crichton / Richard T. Heffron

These films first came to my attention when mentioned in a BSFG meeting about a year ago, so I watched WESTWORLD to see what all the fuss was about. It features a 'futuristic' amusement park where people can choose to live in Roman World, Westworld or Medieval World, where they live in a kind of virtual reality, surrounded by other characters played by androids. They eat, sleep, fight, etc., as if the world was real. However, as tends to happen with anything involving robots, something goes wrong and the robots start to run amok...

It is clear to see the influences on such films as JURASSIC PARK (another 'theme park gone wrong', and by the same author!) and TERMINATOR. The bad guy of the film is a gunslinger robot, played by the excellent Yul Brynner (of MAGNIFICENT SEVEN fame, and famously spoofing his character in that film here), who stalks his victim in a way just like TERMINATOR years later, with fixed gaze and determined walk. The two heroes of the film are interesting in the way they develop – the hopeless naive newcomer (Richard Benjamin) really comes into himself during the course of the film as he learns how to evade the murderous robots.

FUTUREWORLD is set a few years later as the theme park (Delos) re-opens to the public. Two reporters (played by Peter Fonda and Blythe Danner) are among the first in, to report on the park. But they find themselves playing detective to uncover the sinister secret plot going on, to work out what exactly is going on behind the scenes at Delos.

This film suffers slightly from the sequel syndrome – the pacing and tension of the first film are gone – it has changed from a sinister SF movie into more of a detective story. The two leads are fair enough, but the script is not that great, and they always look slightly bemused. Yul Brynner features again, but in a gratuitous cameo, seemingly designed more to appeal to his fans than to feature him in any real sense. Still, I did enjoy the film, it plays on the idea again of 'a theme park gone wrong', and the sort of theme of a conspiracy featuring a big corporation rears its head too. The idea of shooting and using robots as you wish to, is played on lots too.

These two films play on the attraction of escapism – you can escape from the real world for a bit, shoot everyone to our hearts content (real people cannot die in this world) and play cowboys and Indians or whatever appeals. The plots are a little loop-hole – it is best to ignore any obvious errors in the thinking

behind the theme parks, and let the film carry you along. The suspense at the end of WESTWORLD is brilliant, as the gunslinger stalks his victim, and this is definitely the better overall of the two films. Both heartily recommended.

Planet of the Apes quintet

(?68-75-ish) - Franklin J. Schaffner etc

This is a classic series of films – every one has elements to be recommended in it, and none is a complete dud.

The first in the series is the original film, PLANET OF THE APES, in which Taylor (Charlton Heston) lands on a planet and gradually starts to realize that things are not all as they seem, with apes in charge and humans subordinate. This is far superior to the modern version which came out a couple of years ago, if only for the greater emotions shown in this older film (wonder, anger, awe, all shown by Heston to great effect). The scene at the end is one of the most famous movie sequences in history, but watching it for the first time in its proper context means it lost none of its intended power.

The next film is BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES following on from the first film as the underground survivors fight back against the apes. Things start to become more sinister now. A good film but I did not enjoy it as much as a couple of the others.

ESCAPE FROM... tells the tale of how the apes started their path to power as they travel back in time to when humans were the superior race, while CONQUEST OF... carries on this story as the apes (taking over from cats and dogs as pets) fight back against their masters. Intellectual and exciting, but again this was one of the weaker ones. I just got a bit bogged down by all the dark subject matter – not much light-heartedness here.

Everything gets more aggressive still in BATTLE FOR... where the apes battle each other as well.

It was interesting, in ESCAPE FROM..., to see the apes as the protagonists and the ones who capture the audience's affections, which is rather different to the two films preceding. The constant excellent imagery in the films appealed to me. For instance in the second film, BENEATH..., the mutant humans are dwelling in the ruins of New York City which becomes slowly apparent to the watcher as well as the characters. The third film introduces the idea of a circular time line, where the apes Cornelius and Zira go back in time to set the stage for the ape conquest of Earth. By the end of the fifth film we have got back to how things were at the start of the first film - apes in charge, humans defeated.

Using the same actor Roddy MacDowell, as Cornelius and then Caesar his son, who leads the ape rebellion, lends a continuity effect to the series. He does a terrific job in the series, keeping the audience's sympathies although he is destroying their race. I watched this series over a short space of time as I was

interested in how the story develops, and I would definitely recommend it. The first is the famous one but they all have interesting elements.

...THE NEWIES

I also recommend CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY and BROTHERS GRIMM, for a lighter frame of mind.

CHARLIE... has a darker element to it than you would think from the publicity, in fact it more resembles the book than the other versions out and about. Johnny Depp is a great actor-chameleon and plays the part fantastically well, and the film introduces a bit more background to his character which works ok, though maybe it pushes the point home a bit too much. The demise of the various children is handled well, with the sinister squirrels a particularly dominating feature. Some reviewers did not like the singing and dancing, but I did not feel this detracted from the film at all.

BROTHERS GRIMM has had some bad press, but again I would suggest this deserves a virwing. Heath Ledger is fast adding varied roles to his repertoire and here again he plays against type as the bookish, even nerdy brother while Matt Damon charges around playing the ladies' man. A good, fairly fast-paced adventure story as the brothers meet all sorts of strange characters. The ending tends to slow a bit more as the story starts to come together to form a coherent plot, but I enjoyed it more than I thought I would.

VC

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Central Library SF and Fantasy Reading Group meets on Thursdays at 5.45pm 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:-

November 16th - THE PHYSIOGNOMY by Jeffrey Ford

December 14th - THIGMOO by Eugene Byrne

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

December 1st – **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**

January 2007 – **Annual General Meeting**

February – tba

March – SF author **JUSTINA ROBSON**

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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.

YOUR LAST CHANCE!

NOVACON 36 – the BSFG’s own convention will again be held at the Quality Hotel, Walsall, Nr Birmingham – Nov 10th to 12th. Guest of Honour will be Ken MacLeod. Registrations are currently £33. Cheques to ‘Novacon 36’, Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. For further details look on the website or email: x15@zoom.co.uk Website: www.novacon.org It will be a great convention and you will only have yourself to blame if you miss it.

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