

BRUM GROUP NEWS

January 1996

Issue 292

*The monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group
(Honorary Presidents: Brian W Aldiss, Harry Harrison & Bob Shaw)*

GROUP CHAIRMAN - CAROL MORTON, SECRETARY - ANNE WOODFORD, NEWSLETTER EDITOR - MARTIN TUDOR, TREASURER - STEVE JONES, PUBLICITY OFFICER - SARAH FREAKLEY, ORDINARY MEMBER - ALAN WOODFORD, NOVACON 25 CHAIRMAN - TONY MORTON, NOVACON 26 CHAIRMAN - CAROL MORTON.

Annual General Meeting and Auction 19th January 1996

7.45pm for 8pm

The AGM and Auction will be held in the upstairs Function Room of the Australian Bar, on the corner of Hurst Street and Bromsgrove Street in Birmingham city centre.

(NB: If you have received any unwanted Christmas presents, or have anything else you would like to donate, please bring it along to this meeting - all proceeds will go to the BSFG's funds.)

16th February 1996: ANDREW HARMAN, author of THE SORCERER'S APPENDIX and THE FROGS OF WAR, will be speaking to the Group, 7.45pm for 8pm, in the upstairs Function Room of the Australian Bar, corner of Hurst Street and Bromsgrove Street in Birmingham city centre.

The BSFG meets at 7.45pm on the 3rd Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) in the upstairs Function Room of the Australian Bar, corner of Hurst Street and Bromsgrove Street in Birmingham city centre. The annual subscription rates (which include twelve copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to meetings) are £10.00 per person, or £13.50 for 2 members at the same address. Cheques etc. should be made payable to "the Birmingham Science Fiction Group" and sent to the Treasurer, Steve Jones, c/o 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Mids., B66 4SH. Book reviews, review copies and other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to: Martin Tudor, Newsletter Editor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX (NB: change of address).

COLOPHON

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Personal opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the committee or the membership of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group.

All text by Martin Tudor except where stated otherwise. This issue was printed on the CRITICAL WAVE photocopier. For details of WAVE's competitive prices contact Martin Tudor at the editorial address on the cover.

Many thanks this issue to BERNIE EVANS for producing the address labels and transferring files; STAN ELING for the puzzle; STEVE GREEN and CRITICAL WAVE for the news.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

UNTIL 20 JANUARY 1996: TOAD OF TOAD HALL A A Milne's version of Kenneth Grahame's children's story **THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS**. Tickets from £7.00. The Mainhouse Birmingham Rep, Centenary Square, Birmingham. Box Office 0121 236 4455.

UNTIL 25 JANUARY 1996: THE DEVIL IS AN ASS, Ben Jonson's tale of devil worship, wife stealing, major business frauds and the strange appearance of a Spanish lady, as Hell is transported to 17th century London. At the Swan Theatre Stratford-upon-Avon. Call 01789-295623 for further details.

UNTIL 27 JANUARY 1996: FAUST PARTS I AND II, Swan Theatre Stratford-upon-Avon. Call 01789-295623 for further details.

UNTIL 3 FEBRUARY 1996: ARABIAN NIGHTS, "heroes and villains, magic lamps and jinnees, live music and puppets; all this and more in MAC's exciting Christmas production. **ARABIAN NIGHTS** is a glorious technicolour blend of five very different stories told in five very different ways but always with the same magical elements of fantasy and folklore. The stories are a mixture of the familiar - a Voyage of Sinbad, the original tale of Aladdin - and the

unfamiliar - fascinating fables from Algeria, Egypt and Syria. Live and lively music accompaniment will add a rhythmic touch as Western technology and World Music meet the Mid East." The show is adapted and directed by John Ginman and designed by Alison Drake. The Midlands Art Centre theatre, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, tickets £5.45. Call 0121-440-3838 for further details.

19 JANUARY 1996: BSFG AGM & AUCTION, 7.45 for 8pm in the upstairs room of the Australian Bar, corner of Hurst Street and Bromsgrove Street, Birmingham city centre. (NB: If you receive any unwanted Christmas presents, or have anything you would like to donate for the Auction, please bring them/it along to the meeting.

19-21 JANUARY 1996: HAROLD AND MAUDE directed by Hal Ashby, 1971. "Funeral-loving 19 year old Harold commits suicide every other day - hanging with distended tongue over the candle-lit dining table, splattering the bathroom mirror with aortic blood or merely setting himself alight with gasoline in the back garden - whilst his blue-rinsed, disapproving mother tries to match him with 'a nice girl'. And then he meets little old lady life-force, octogenaria Maude..." (ELECTRIC CINEMA PROGRAMME). Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121-643-7277 for further details.

20 JANUARY 1996: SHREWSBURY P.B.F.A. BOOK FAIR, Music Hall, The Square, Shrewsbury, enquiries to Patty Lafferty on 01952-727598, or contact: Provincial Booksellers Fairs Association, 16 Melbourn Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7BZ.

21 JANUARY 1996: ROMANCE OF CINEMA talk by Dudley Warner, 3pm, tickets £2.00 (£1.00 concessionary), the Midlands Art Centre, Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham. Call 0121-440-3838 for further details.

22-25 JANUARY 1996: NIGHTWATCH directed by Ole Bornedal, horror movie set in a hospital mortuary, some nice black humourous touches. Showing at the Midlands Art Centre cinema, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Call 0121-440-3838 for further details.

26-28 JANUARY 1996: DESTINY TURNS ON THE RADIO directed by Jack Baran, 1995. "Quentin Tarantino takes on acting duties in this extremely quirky comedy thriller, playing Johnny Destiny, a mythical character who deals in the fate of a bunch of petty criminals adrift in Las Vegas, whose varied shenanigans achieve some kind of coherence as the police move in on them. Although it might be seen as another piece of film geek fun associated

with Tarantino, DESTINY TURNS ON THE RADIO is of an older tradition. Like Tom DiCillo's JOHNNY SUEDE (to name one of many) it is an arch exercise in the recycling of favourite iconography (in this case '50s roadside Americana with a smidgin of '70s Las Vegas kitsch) in the tranquilised B-movie format that so often passes for serious artistry in the American independent film ever since the inimitable success of Jim Jarmusch. Bizarre and often very funny." (ELECTRIC CINEMA PROGRAMME). Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121-643-7277 for further details.

26-28 JANUARY 1996: THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French with subtitles. An "inventive blend of dream, fairy tale and myth. Having had his infant brother abducted by a gang of Cyclops, strongman One sets off on a search that will unite him with feisty orphan Miette and lead him to the sea-rig laboratory inhabited by the evil Krank, his six cloned brothers, and Uncle Irwin, a sardonic brain floating in a fish tank..." (TIME OUT). Showing at the Warwick Arts Centre Cinema, Coventry. Call 01203-524524 for further details.

28-29 JANUARY 1996: CRUMB, directed by Terry Zwigoff, featuring Robert Crumb and Aline Kominsky. "In this fascinating and disturbing portrait, Robert Crumb, the graphic artist/cartoonist famous for 'Fritz the Cat' and 'Keep on Truckin'', comments that if he doesn't draw he feels 'cranky and suicidal'. Whilst a number of experts ponder (often unintentionally hilariously) on his significance and relevance to modern art. Crumb's seeming frankness and wry irony is counterpointed by visits to his brothers - Charles, a heavily sedated, housebound recluse who reads his collection of books over and over; and Max, a recovered sex offender and a bed of nails fanatic living in a San Francisco flophouse. The film makes it clear that the legacy of growing up in the Crumb household is a psychosexual minefield. What it also shows is that Robert's art has enabled him to escape - or at least manage - the self-destructive loathing of self and the world at large which has engulfed his brothers. This disquieting yet strangely moving film, reminiscent of the documentary film-making of the Maysles brothers, is highly recommended." (ELECTRIC CINEMA PROGRAMME). Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121-643-7277 for further details.

29 JANUARY - 3 FEBRUARY 1996: TELFORD BOOK FAIR outside Debenhams, Telford Shopping Centre, Shropshire, enquiries contact Patty Lafferty on 01952-727598, or contact: Provin-

cial Booksellers Fairs Association, 16 Melbourn Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7BZ.

30 JANUARY - 1 FEBRUARY 1996: LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE, directed by Jean Cocteau and Rene Clement, in French with subtitles. 'Re-released in a brand new and restored print, poet, painter and novelist Cocteau's 1946 masterpiece has been proclaimed one of the greatest fantasy films of all time, "adding farce, tragedy and trickery to the original ingredients of bestiality and love. Determined to destroy once and for all the idea that 'fuzziness is poetic', LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE boasts clear precise visual images, breath-taking special effects and overcoming restrictions of budget and post-war conditions, Cocteau's positively hallucinatory imagination, plus a few disembodied arms sticking up through pieces of furniture. Jean Marais suffered hours of make-up before each of his 'Beast' scenes: no wonder Beauty [Josette Day] seems a little disappointed when he turns into a romantic Prince Charming." (ELECTRIC CINEMA PROGRAMME). "To be one with his version of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST required faith, said Cocteau, 'the faith of childhood... one must believe implicitly from the beginning.' Possibly he under-rated the magic spell of his enchanting film, which works for all ages. Its success stems from the affecting simplicity of Cocteau's vision. Perhaps the most elegant of all filmed fairy tales." (NEW YORKER.) Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121-643-7277 for further details.

30 JANUARY - 1 FEBRUARY 1996: ORPHEE, directed by Jean Cocteau, in French with subtitles. Orphee (Jean Marais) is a poet who needs to renew himself. Desperate for inspiration, he follows an imperious young princess flanked by hunky militiamen on motorbikes. Her rubber-gloved hand leads through the looking-glass to a slow-motion night kingdom... "This sur-noir fantasy has more meanings than the Book of Revelations, and it grips like a bondage corset." (ELECTRIC CINEMA PROGRAMME). Showing at the Electric Cinema, Station Street, Birmingham. Call 0121-643-7277 for further details.

1 FEBRUARY 1996: "THE ASTRONOMICAL SUPERHIGHWAY" lecture by Stuart Williams, 7pm-10pm, Walsall Astronomical Society, Lecture Theatre, Sheffield School, Broadway, High Heath, Walsall. Contact: Stuart Williams on 01922-406411 for further information.

2 FEBRUARY 1996: VSC - VIDEO. Interested in watching new and old sci-fi cult tv telefantasy programmes? VSC is a local group, based in Brownhills, who have two private tv screening rooms and regularly show classics

such as STAR TREK, BABYLON 5, DR WHO, THE X FILES, THE PRISONER, KOLCHAK, EARTH 2 etc. Meetings, 7pm-11pm, at the Sportsman, Lichfield Road, Brownhills, Walsall, admission £1.00, alcohol available upstairs. Call 01543-372142 for details.

2 FEBRUARY 1996: WATERWORLD, directed by Kevin Reynolds, starring Kevin Costner and Dennis Hopper. Showing at the Warwick Arts Centre Cinema, Coventry. Call 01203-524524 for further details.

5-6 FEBRUARY 1996: THE GREAT DIVORCE the world premiere of Saltmine Theatre Company's production of this classic by C S Lewis. Demonstrating the author's formidable talent for fable telling and allegory, the characters find themselves in a bus which plies between Heaven and Hell - anyone, it seems, can make the journey from one to the other.... Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon. Call 01789-295623.

6 FEBRUARY 1996: THE BLACK LODGE, Birmingham's informal gathering of horror and dark fantasy fans, meet in the lounge of the Australian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham city centre, from 8.30pm. Copies of their newsletter, THE REGISTER, are available from 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 7LQ, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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12 FEBRUARY 1996: HANSEL AND GRETEL performed by the Welsh national Opera,

composed by Engelbert Humperdinck, sung in English. Accompanied by a five-piece chamber ensemble in a specially designed production. Solihull Arts Complex, Homer Road, Solihull. Call 0121-704-8335 for further details.

13 FEBRUARY 1996: THE COMPANY, 2020, LTD. World premiere of a new musical from Rex Pogsos and Graham Westcott, performed by the Young East Warwickshire Theatre (YEWTH). Set 25 years in the future: the government has been privatised, computer technology provides 24 hour entertainment and information and record keeping is stored in hologram form. The potential in technology is for fun, enlightenment, enquiry and ever faster data retrieval, but the potential in human nature is for mind control more sinister than ever before. Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, tickets £2-£6, call 01789-295623.

13-17 FEBRUARY 1996: Bram Stoker's DRACULA adapted by Jane Thornton and John Godber, presented by Hull Truck. At the Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry. Call 01203-524524 for further details.

14 FEBRUARY 1996: L'ATALANTE, directed by Jean Vigo, in French with subtitles. Special screening for Valentine's Day "this poetic, perceptive study of the trials and tribulations faced by a couple of newly weds living on a Seine barge merges realism, surrealism, comedy and romance to unforgettably, moving effect. Director Jean Vigo died at the tragically early age of 29, nevertheless, his influence has been enormous. A genuine masterpiece." (TIME OUT) Showing at the Warwick Arts Centre Cinema, Coventry. Call 01203-524524 for further details.

15 FEBRUARY 1996: GHOST IN THE SHELL, a big budget, state of the art, animation feature based on the best-selling manga comic strip by Masamune Shirow - directed by Mamoru Oshii, Japanese, subtitled. "Japan, 2029: society is dominated by the Net and crimes have become more sophisticated and more brutal. Kusanagi is an agent in Shell Squad, a team of agents dedicated to policing the information super-highway, who discovers that a notorious super-hacker, suspected of manipulation of the stock market, illegal data gathering and terrorist acts, has surfaced in Japan. Code-named Puppet Master, this super-agent takes over human beings in order to manipulate information from them." (WARWICK ARTS CENTRE PROGRAMME) Showing at the Warwick Arts Centre Cinema, Coventry. Call 01203-524524 for further details.

16 FEBRUARY 1996: ANDREW HARMAN, author of THE SORCERER'S APPENDIX, THE FROGS OF WAR etc, will be speaking to the BSGF, 7.45 for 8pm in

the upstairs room of the Australian Bar, corner of Hurst Street and Bromsgrove Street, Birmingham city centre.

17 FEBRUARY 1996: THE TIME WIZARD "performed" by the All Electric Puppet Theatre Company at Bloxwich Library Theatre, 2pm, tickets £4.00 (£3.00 concessionary). "Imagine a time long ago, a planet far away, a race of peaceable friendly folk harmlessly getting on with their lives all thanks to a beautiful crystal that provides energy and harmony and equilibrium. Suddenly - invaders, evil and bent on destruction arrive and seize control, forever trying to find the crystal. A visual feast of puppets, machines, lights, effects and sheer unadulterated magic with recorded narration by Jon Pertwee." Call 01922-653183 for details.

17 FEBRUARY 1996: MANGA Chris Malden explores the phenomena of Japanese sf animation known as Manga. She will illustrate her talk with clips from films and serials which will also include a full screening of the new feature GHOST IN THE SHELL (see above). The Warwick Arts Centre Cinema, Coventry from 11am to 4.30pm. Call 01203-524524 for further details, tickets £4.95 (£3.95 concessions).

20-21 FEBRUARY 1996: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHERETTES adapted by Forkbeard Fantasy from Poe's gothic horror of a not unsimilar title. "Deep in the subterranean studios of a crusty old picture palace called the Empire, ghosts of bygone celluloid starlets still lurk. They have been guarded for generations against tomb robbers from the National Film Archive by the House of Usherettes. Enter Forkbeard's bizarre world of wild, mechanical sets, cobwebbed Wurlitzers, shark-invested developing tanks and film spliced into live action to discover the truth behind the FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHERETTES. A hilarious celebration of 21 years of Forkbeard Fantasy and 100 years of cinema." (WARWICK ARTS CENTRE PROGRAMME.) At the Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry. Call 01203-524524 for further details.

23-25 FEBRUARY 1996: DISECTION the Intersection post-mortem con, Rutland Hotel, Sheffield. Attending £24.00 (£25.00 by credit card). Contact: Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

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1 MARCH 1996: VSC - VIDEO. Interested in watching new and old sci-fi cult tv tele-fantasy programmes? VSC is a local group, based in Brownhills, who have two private tv screening rooms and regularly show classics such as STAR TREK, BABYLON 5, DR WHO, THE X FILES, THE PRISONER, KOLCHAK, EARTH 2 etc. Meetings, 7pm-11pm, at the Sportsman, Lichfield Road, Brownhills, Walsall, admission £1.00, alcohol available upstairs. Call 01543-372142 for details.

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5-6 MARCH 1996: IT'S A WOMAN'S WORLD, world premiere of this new show by Michelle Dalley, performed by Stratford-upon-Avon High School. Set 100 years in the future with women now firmly in the dominant role. Men have become househusbands, staying at home, doing the housework, bringing up the children and catering to the breadwinners every need. Everything is going along smoothly, or is it? Suddenly, more men are being seen in the workplace, they don't just want menial jobs, some want careers! But they can only get as far as their female bosses will let them! Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Theatre, tickets £4-£9, call 01789-295623.

5-9 MARCH 1996: RICHARD O'BRIEN'S ROCKY HORROR SHOW, Birmingham Hippodrome. Call

0121-622-7486 for further details.

5-9 MARCH 1996: **THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO** "this new version of the daring and very funny story of the naughty boy whose nose grows and grows is presented by Nottingham Playhouse and Italy's brilliantly inventive children's theatre company, Teatro Kismet." (WARWICK ARTS CENTRE PROGRAMME.) A family show, performed in English, with live music, suitable for seven year olds and upwards. Each performance will include an opportunity for audiences to talk to the company members after the show. At the Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry. Call 01203-524524 for details.

8-30 March 1996: **DIVINE RIGHT** in the corridors of political power left and right are combining to form an influential republican movement. Meanwhile, the heir to the throne takes a radical decision, throwing the spotlight onto his son. It is the beginning of a new millennium and the young prince finds an unknown world as he goes to discover his country. Peter Whelan's play asks the question for how much longer will Britain remain a monarchy? Tickets £6.50-£15.50 (concessions available). The Mainhouse Birmingham Rep, Centenary Square, Birmingham. Box Office 0121 236 4455.

12-14 MARCH 1996: **THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE** by Robert Louis Stevenson, adapted by Robin Brooks, performed by the Empty Space Theatre Company. "Do you know the real story of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde? How one man's experiments led him to a terrifying end? Now the original and disturbing story with all its horror and excitement is brought to life, twisting a course of tantalising suspense in this famous psychological thriller. The dark side of human nature, lurking just below the surface is laid bare amid the fog and looming shadows of Victorian Edinburgh." Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Theatre, tickets £4-£10, call 01789-295623.

15 MARCH 1996: **BSFG MEETING**, 7.45pm for 8pm, venue and programme to be announced.

21-24 MARCH 1996: **YARNSPINNERS**, performed by Kaleidoscope Theatre, "encounters the world of faerie, as amidst wonder, richness, strangeness and an ever-present peril, the story of a quest for an everlasting thread unravels. It is a tale of times and tides long gone and for today. A tale of universal significance. Faeriefolk gather to tease and stir and to create a tapestry richly interwoven with drama, dance, music, mime, verse and imagery". Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, £4-£9, call 01789-295623.

23 MARCH 1996: **COMIC, CARD & SCI-FI MART** at

Carrs Lane Church Centre, beside Marks & Spencers in Birmingham city centre. Opens midday. For further information contact: Golden Orbit, 18 Oak Tree Way, Strensall, York, YO3 5TF.

26-30 MARCH 1996: **DR FAUSTUS**. Compass Theatre Company present Christopher Marlowe's epic tale. In return for 24 years of knowledge, power and pleasure, Faustus sells his soul to the devil, now the price must be paid. As the clock ticks toward midnight Faustus waits.... Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, £4-£9, call 01789-295623.

2 APRIL 1996: **THE BLACK LODGE**, Birmingham's informal gathering of horror and dark fantasy fans, meet in the lounge of the Australian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham city centre, from 8.30pm. Copies of their newsletter, **THE REGISTER**, are available from 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 7LQ, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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5-8 APRIL 1996: **EVOLUTION** 47th UK National Convention, the Radisson Edwardian Hotel at Heathrow. Guests of honour: Colin Greenland, Bryan Talbot, Jack Cohen. Attending £28.00, supporting £16.00. Contact: 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London, NW3 6PX.

6-8 APRIL 1996: **GENERATIONS II** the 30th birthday celebration of **STAR TREK** presented by Stargazer Productions International Ltd at the Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London. Guests: Leonard Nimoy (Spock), Roxanne Biggs-Dawson (Belanna Torres), Robert Picardo (Dr Zimmerman), Walter Koenig (Chekov), George Takei (Sulu), James Doohan (Scotty) - all subject to work commitments. (NB: Some guests may be appearing only once over the show days. Some guests have only agreed to a maximum one hour autograph session. Stargazer cannot guarantee that every attendee will obtain an autograph.) Some of the features of the day will include: "First class audio and visual display; specially designed laser display; galaxy class dealers room (with dealers from both sides of the Atlantic); behind the scenes slide and video presentations; charity auction with excellent collectables from the sci-fi genre; fancy dress competitions; and for the first time in

the UK - the Museum of Science Fiction, with original props, costumes and curiosities from your favourite sci-fi shows." Privileged seating £45.00 per day, Premiere £35.00, Premium £30.00, Standard £20.00 and Economy £10.00. A 10% discount scheme is available for attendees booking for all three days - this applies only to tickets purchased that are of the same type. All tickets are sold as non-refundable except in the case of cancellation of the event. Contact: Stargazer Productions International Ltd, 4 Aspenwood House, Ipsley Street, Redditch, B98 7AR.

6 APRIL 1996: GENERATIONS II THE PARTY at Le Palais, Hammersmith London, from 8.30pm "till very, very late". Stargazer Productions International Ltd are hosting a "stupendous party ... in attendance will be guests from the hit show STAR TREK along with other celebrities ... the theme of the evening will of course be STAR TREK in all its forms and fancy dress code will be observed ... the evening will entail a first class presentation of music hosted by Le Palais best Disc Jockeys, fancy dress competitions, promotional give aways, and lots, lots more ... the event will be covered by media from around the world". Tickets £12.50, which includes a "special gift pack only available at the party". "Several bars will be open along with food outlets". Contact: Stargazer Productions International Ltd, 4 Aspenwood House, Ipsley Street, Redditch, B98 7AR.

6 APRIL 1996: THE TIME WIZARD, presented by the All Electric Puppet Theatre, featuring the recorded voice of Jon Pertwee. "Join the Time Wizard along with a little man in a red hat, robots and a whole host of magical creatures in the race to save the precious sun diamond from a pack of evil rodents and their alien monster." Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, f3-f7, call 01789-295623.

19 APRIL 1996: BSFG MEETING, 7.45pm for 8pm, venue and programme to be announced.

27 APRIL 1996: COMIC, CARD & SCI-FI MART at Carrs Lane Church Centre, beside Marks & Spencers in Birmingham city centre. Opens midday. For further information contact: Golden Orbit, 18 Oak Tree Way, Strensall, York, YO3 5TF.

3 MAY 1996: VSC - VIDEO. Interested in watching new and old sci-fi cult tv telefantasy programmes? VSC is a local group, based in Brownhills, who have two private tv screening rooms and regularly show classics such as STAR TREK, BABYLON 5, DR WHO, THE X FILES, THE PRISONER, KOLCHAK, EARTH 2 etc. Meetings, 7pm-11pm, at the Sportsman, Lich-

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28 MAY - 1 JUNE 1996: THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA *ON ICE* at the Birmingham Hippodrome. Call 0121-622-7486 for further details.

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22-23 JUNE 1996: BABCOM '96 BABYLON 5 "event" presented by Stargazer Productions International Ltd at Le Palais, Hammersmith, London. Guests: Claudia Christian (Cmdr Ivanova), Jerry Doyle (Garibaldi), Andrea Thompson (Talia Winters), Richard Biggs (Dr Franklin), Mira Furlan (Ambassador Delenn), Peter Jurasik (Ambassador Londo) - all subject to work commitments. (NB: Some guests may be appearing only once over the show days. Some guests have only agreed to a maximum one hour autograph session. Stargazer cannot guarantee that every attendee will obtain an

autograph.) "Baboom '96 will have lots of extra attractions such as charity auction, lasers, video wall, behind the scenes specials, specialist merchandise and much more". There will be two price bands, with a 10% discount scheme for those attending both days in the same price band. For further information contact: Stargazer Productions International Ltd, 4 Aspenwood House, Ipsley Street, Redditch, B98 7AR.

2 JULY 1996: THE BLACK LODGE, Birmingham's informal gathering of horror and dark fantasy fans, meet in the lounge of the Australian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham city centre, from 8.30pm. Copies of their newsletter, THE REGISTER, are available from 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 7LQ, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

5 JULY 1996: VSC - VIDEO. Interested in watching new and old sci-fi cult tv telefantasy programmes? VSC is a local group, based in Brownhills, who have two private tv screening rooms and regularly show classics such as STAR TREK, BABYLON 5, DR WHO, THE X FILES, THE PRISONER, KOLCHAK, EARTH 2 etc. Meetings, 7pm-11pm, at the Sportsman, Lichfield Road, Brownhills, Walsall, admission £1.00, alcohol available upstairs. Call 01543-372142 for details.

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10-11 AUGUST 1996: DELTA QUADRANT STAR TREK convention at the Britannia Hotel, New Street,

Birmingham. Confirmed guests are Tim Gaskill of the Official STAR TREK Fan Club of the UK and Robert Hollocks of CIC Video, further guests to be announced. Attending membership £35.00 (6-14 year olds £25.00). Contact: Infinite Frontiers Conventions, PO Box 8966, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 5ST.

16 AUGUST 1996: BSFG MEETING, 7.45pm for 8pm, venue and programme to be announced.

29 AUGUST - 2 SEPTEMBER 1996: LACON III 54th World SF Convention, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim Hilton and Towers and Anaheim Marriott, California, USA. Guests: James White, Roger Corman, Elsie Wollheim, Connie Willis (Toastmaster), Takumi and Sachiko Shibano (Fan Guests of Honour). Attending \$110.00, Supporting \$35.00. Contact: c/o SCIFI, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409, USA.

3 SEPTEMBER 1996: THE BLACK LODGE, Birmingham's informal gathering of horror and dark fantasy fans, meet in the lounge of the Australian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham city centre, from 8.30pm. Copies of their newsletter, THE REGISTER, are available from 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 7LQ, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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18 OCTOBER 1996: BSGF MEETING, 7.45pm for 8pm, venue and programme to be announced.

18-20 OCTOBER 1996: MASQUE 4 "the fourth British Costume Convention for all creative people, fantasy, sf, historical... but above all lots of FUN. Talks, Shows, Competitions." The Moot House, West Bromwich, Junction 1 M5. Attending £25.00, Supporting £5.00, Day attendance £10.00, until 9 April then £30.00, £10.00 and £15.00 respectively. Contact: Alan Cash, 130 Hamstead Hall Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham, B20 1 JB.

1 NOVEMBER 1996: VSC - VIDEO. Interested in watching new and old sci-fi cult tv tele-fantasy programmes? VSC is a local group, based in Brownhills, who have two private tv screening rooms and regularly show classics such as STAR TREK, BABYLON 5, DR WHO, THE X FILES, THE PRISONER, KOLCHAK, EARTH 2 etc. Meetings, 7pm-11pm, at the Sportsman, Lichfield Road, Brownhills, Walsall, admission £1.00, alcohol available upstairs. Call 01543-372142 for details.

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8-10 NOVEMBER 1996: NOVACON 26 the Brum Group's own convention, Hotel Ibis, Ladywell Walk (off Hurst Street), Birmingham. Guest of Honour David Gemmell. Attending membership £25.00 until Easter 1996, supporting £10.50. Progress Report #1 and hotel booking forms now available. Contact: Tony Morton, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Mids., DY9 8SS.

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17 JANUARY 1997: BSGF AGM & AUCTION, 7.45pm for 8pm, venue to be announced.

14-17 FEBRUARY 1997: ATTITUDE: THE CONVENTION at the Abbey Hotel, Great Malvern. Attending £23.00. Contact: First Floor Flat, 14 Prittlewell Square, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 1DW.

28-31 MARCH 1997: INTERVENTION the 48th UK National SF Convention, Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Theme "communication". Guests Brian W Aldiss, David Langford, Jon Berg and Octavia Butler (NOT Robert Silverberg as previously announced). Attending £25.00, supporting £15.00, cheques (payable to "Intervention") should be sent to: 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants., PO10 7TS.

3-5 SEPTEMBER 1997: LONESTARCON 55th World SF Convention, San Antonio, Texas, USA. Attending was \$65.00. Contact: PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755-2277, USA.

27 DECEMBER 1999 - 2 JANUARY 2000: MILLENNIUM.

Venue to be announced, but definitely in Northern Europe (probably a BeNeLux country or UK), £3.00 (£10.00) per year, to be deducted from eventual membership fee (to be announced before 1997). Contact: Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Road, West Norwood, London, SE27 0SZ.

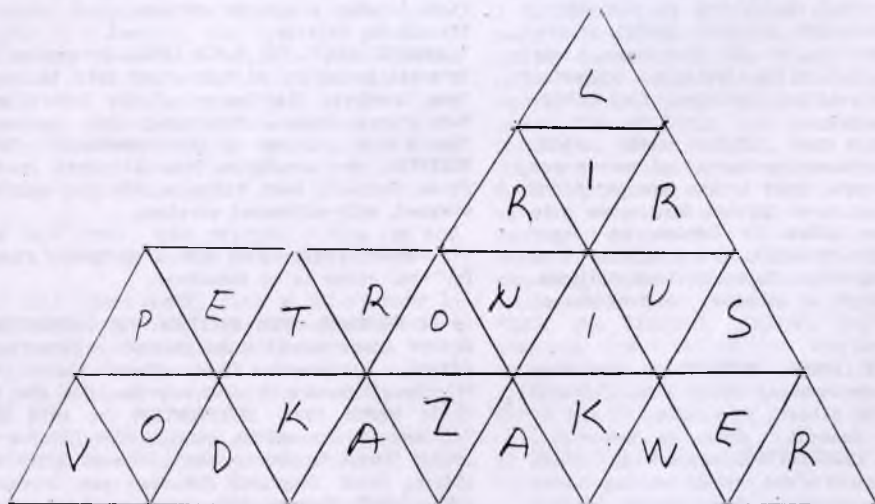
Although details are correct to the best of my knowledge, I advise readers to contact organizers prior to travelling. Always enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope when writing to any of the above contact addresses. Please mention the BRUM GROUP NEWS when replying to listings or advertisements.

If you know of any events which you think may be of interest to members of the BSFG please send details to the Editor.

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

CHRISTMAS PUZZLE: THE SOLUTION

When the large sphinx, published last issue, is made in the correct way it should look like the one below. The cat's name is PETRONIUS from THE DOOR INTO SUMMER. The dog's name is KAZAK from THE SIRENS OF TITAN. The letters which have not been used can be arranged to spell RIVERWORLD which is the answer. Unfortunately no entries were received.



JOPHAN REPORT #91

As you may already have heard, the Brum Group will soon be on the move again... When the manager of the Australian Bar, Carl, left on the 15th December not only did he fail to mention to us that he would be going he also failed to tell his replacement about us and our third-Friday bookings! Not that it matters much as the brewery have decided to convert the room we use into a restaurant!

The new manager says we are okay for the AGM on the 19th of January and "hopes" we can still use it for the February meeting but it is unlikely that the room will be available after that.

Our hard-working Chairman, Carol Morton, only discovered the above when she was checking the venue for a potential additional meeting in this month. Obviously that

has now had to be scrapped and last I heard she was desperately chasing around Birmingham city centre trying to find a better alternative than the Ivy Bush on the Hagley Road which wants £40.00 for the room!

Details of suggestions for potential city centre venues should be given to Carol Morton before the AGM, or the new Chairman after the AGM!

Radio 4 launched its "Journey into Space" season on Saturday 13 January with: THAT'S HISTORY: FORBIDDEN PLANETS, the first of a nine-part history of the solar system; THE FINAL FRONTIER, a six-part series on the conquest of space; STARWATCH with Heather Cooper talking to astronomers; STANZA ON STAGE a recital of poetry with a space theme; THE HITCH-HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY.

The first part of Joe Dunlop's four-part radio adaptation of H G Wells' FIRST MEN IN THE MOON will be broadcast, 10.00-10.30am, on Thursday 18 January. Featuring Donald Sinden as Professor Cavor and James Bolam as Bedford. This is followed, at 12.25pm, by Kevin Day's light-hearted "sci-fi" quiz, TO BOLDLY GO.

Amongst the 40+ programmes which will be broadcast over the next few weeks are: HOUSEPROUD IN ZERO G an investigation into life on a spaceship; SPACE ACCESSORIES the paraphernalia of space travel; IN A FLAP Ray Gosling's investigation of UFO sightings in west Wales in 1977; BEAM ME UP, SCOTTY John Peel on space-age culture.

Radio 4 is broadcast on LW 198 kHz (1515m) and FM 94.4-94.6.

Enclosed with this newsletter you should find a copy of the 1996 TAFF ballot. As you can see the Brum Group's newsletter editor, Martin Tudor, is one of the two candidates standing for the opportunity to travel to the World SF Convention in Los Angeles this year. Your vote (in his favour, preferably) would be much appreciated. Completed ballots should reach the administrator, Abigail Frost, by midnight on 4 May 1996. Further information and ballot forms are available from Abigail, 95 Wilmot Street, London, E2 0BP.

Good news for fans of space opera this month sees the publication of Peter F Hamilton's THE REALITY DYSFUNCTION (Macmillan, £16.99) the first volume of the epic "Night's Dawn" trilogy, which he told us about when he spoke to the Group. Then in February we finally see the first volume of the long-awaited continuation of Dan Simmons' "Hyperion" series, ENDYMION, (Headline, £16.99).

BOOK REVIEWS

No Book Review column this month for the simple reason that NO book reviews have been received.

Please remember that reviews of books should reach: MARTIN TUDOR at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX, within ONE month of your taking the book. (NB: COA!)

The following people still owe reviews, please ensure that these are passed to MARTIN TUDOR at this month's meeting on Friday:

Dave Cox: HOT SKY AT MIDNIGHT by Robert Silverberg (May).

Bernie Evans: THE DEUS MACHINE by Pierre Ouellette (February); NIMBUS by Alexander Jablovkov (March).

Syron G Farrow: THE BAKER'S BOY by J V Jones (November); SPACE PRECINCT: DEMON WING by David Bischoff (November).

John Howes: THE WAR OF THE LORD'S VEIL by Adam Nichols (August).

Robert Jones: ANTICIPATIONS ed David Seed (July); THE BIRDS OF THE MOON by Michael Moorcock (August);

BEGGARS IN SPAIN by Nancy Kress (August); RHINEGOLD by Stephen Grundy (September); A HISTORY MAKER by Alasdair Gray (October); TRIPOINT by C J Cherryh (November).

Steve Jones/B'ham Uni: DRAGONCHARM by Graham Edwards (January); TALISMAN by Sam Lewis (January);

WARHAMMER: WOLF RIDERS ed David Pringle (March); MAGIC THE GATHERING: ARENA by William R Forstchen (November);

MAGIC THE GATHERING: WHISPERING WOODS by Clayton Emery (November); HARD CURVES THE FANTASY ART OF JULIE BELL (November).

William McCabe: A HISTORY MAKER by Alasdair Gray (November).

Adrian Middleton: DR WHO POSTER BOOK (November); DR WHO POSTCARD COLLECTION (November).

Carol Morton: WITCHES' BREW by Terry Brooks (May); RONAN THE BARBARIAN by James Bibby (May); BELGARATH

THE SORCERER by David & Leigh Eddings (July); ODDS AND GODS by Tom Holt (August); THE FEY: SACRIFICE by

Kristine Katherine Rusch (August); SACRED GROUND by Mercedes Lackey (September); STORM WARNING by Mercedes Lackey (September);

OJINN RUNNING by Tom Holt (September).

Tony Motton: HAWKMOON: ETERNAL CHAMPION Volume 3 (October).

James Robertson: BEGGARS IN SPAIN by Nancy Kress (September).

Richard Thomas: CIRCLE OF LIGHT by Martin Middleton (November).

NB: If you have already reviewed any books listed above against your name please accept my apologies and send me a replacement copy of your review. - Martin Tudor.

CONAN, GILGAMESH, BEOWULF, JASON,
MARATHON, HANNIBAL, ROBIN HOOD,
CHARLEMAGNE, ARTHUR, EXCALIBUR,
ALEXANDER, DRUSS, THE DRENAI,
SIPSTRASSI STONES, JON SHANNOU...

ALTERNATE WORLDS,
ALTERNATE HISTORIES:
THE LEGENDS LIVE ON

Novacon 26

Guest of Honour
David Gemmell

8-10 November 1996

at the Hotel Ibis, Ladywell Walk
(off Hurst Street), Birmingham.

Attending Membership:

£23.00 until 6 November 1995,
then £25.00 until Easter 1996.

Supporting Membership: £10.50.

Contact: Carol Morton, 14 Park Street,
Lye, Stourbridge, West Mids, DY9 8SS.