

BRUM GROUP NEWS

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The monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group

(Honorary Presidents: Brian W Aldiss and Harry Harrison)

Group Chairman - Tony Morton, Secretary - Anne Woodford, Treasurer - Alan Woodford,
Publicity Officer - Steve Jones, Newsletter Editor and Novacon 27 & 28 Chairman - Martin Tudor.

**THE SEPTEMBER MEETING
WILL BE AN INFORMAL
MEETING ON FRIDAY 12TH
SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM
7PM IN THE TOP FLOOR BAR
OF THE TAP & SPILE, GAS
STREET, BIRMINGHAM.
ADMITTANCE: FREE!**

THERE WILL BE A RAFFLE AND REVIEW COPIES ARE AVAILABLE AS USUAL. (PLEASE REFRAIN FROM SMOKING UNTIL 8.30PM WHEN THE BAR WILL BE OPENED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC.)

THIS ISSUE: The Chairman Speaks - Tony Morton responds to Steve Green's Surgical Strike; plus the 1997 Hugo Results - yes, Langford wins again!

The BSFG meets (informally) from 7pm in the Top Floor Bar of the Tap & Spile, Gas Street, Birmingham city centre on the second Friday off each month (unless otherwise notified). The annual subscription rates (which include 12 copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to formal meetings) are £15.00 per person, or £18.00 for 2 members at the same address. Cheques etc. should be made payable to "the Birmingham Science Fiction Group" and sent to: Alan Woodford, the Treasurer, 81 Harrold Road, Rowley Regis, Warley, West Midlands, B65 0RL. (e-mail enquiries via: bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk). Book reviews, review copies and other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to: Martin Tudor, Newsletter Editor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX (e-mail to martin@empties.demon.co.uk).

Colophon

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Text by Martin Tudor except where stated otherwise.

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Many thanks to ALAN & ANNE WOODFORD for producing the address labels; TONY MORTON for his piece; SFX, WHAT'S ON, LOCUS, the BBC, the Birmingham EVENING MAIL and STEVE GREEN for the news in the Jophan Report and Events Listing.

**A Word From The Chair
- Tony Morton**

In some ways I should have expected this - but not in such an unresponsive way. Yes, I was at the Eastercon referred to where Pete Weston continually talked (to anyone from/associated with Birmingham/West Midlands/BSFG) about how 'he' felt the Brum Group had had its day. At his room party both myself and Carol argued against his viewpoint, stating the social side of the group, recent guests and the need to keep it going because their ain't anything better or likely to replace it if it folded. He remained morose,

continually referring to 'the good old days' (whenever THEY were!). I left and enjoyed the 'Con. Of Steve Green, I heard nothing...

I was somewhat surprised when Martin passed me (Chairman after the AGM) Steve Green's fanzine/article "Railings". Why? Firstly, I hadn't realised he WAS a member of the Brum Group; secondly, I had heard no view from him in Liverpool and (as Martin said) he DIDN'T (have the nerve to?) send this 'fanzine' to any Committee members other than Martin.

Yes, the Committee would like members to be more involved, particularly like Mr Green when (and why) they chose NOT to renew membership. I also dislike his "anti-fannish" dig. Not everyone gets their jollies by being deeply involved in fandom - or even have the TIME. You, Steve, may get you kicks seeing you name as Fan Room Organiser in a 'con publication, but why rebuke others for 'only' attending? OK, at home the attendance at Brum Group meetings has dropped over the years, but with membership still over 50 it is (to quote Mr Tudor) "hardly dead". I agree with Martin - the problem is more a financial one: **room costs have substantially increased** since Birmingham got the 'International' buzz with the ICC, as well as some rooms disappearing for other uses (restaurants being the main one). Numerically we could (just) survive on current attendance if prices were still a tenner a night, but at fifty quid minimum it is not viable.

I also agree with David Hardy's point that a lack of a permanent venue hasn't helped,

but hope we've rectified this by meeting at the Tap and Spile in Gas Street (SECOND Friday).

Chris Murphy's view that "there's no substitute for the company of fellow fans" re-enforces the role of the Brum Group. Getting together to chat, gossip and swap views will always be better than E-mail or SFX. I suppose I'm saying the companionship of the Brum Group is as important as its fannish side.

Peter Coleborn raises old arguments. Yes, we have tried other venues - too remote for the majority of regular attendees/too expensive for regular meetings. On guests, I have always given them free reign to do what they wish. After all, they give up their time to come and talk to the Group, and if they prefer to read selected passages I feel it only a courtesy to let them. I have found many guests to be shy, retiring people; some unused to public speaking, they are after all writers rather than presenters. So sorry Peter, it's been tried. Outside of dragging people along or imposing penalties for non attendance (mm there's an idea!) what can you do?

Everyone has favourite books, favourite speakers; but I prefer to 'encourage' new writers to visit. I have two reasons for this: Firstly, they are unlikely to have been before and a new face as well as (sometimes) introducing authors to "fandom"; secondly, and probably more importantly, one of the aims of the Group is to "promote and encourage SF". How better than by new talent?

To keep the BSFG going we do need a more active membership rather than what Chris Murphy refers to as "apathy and whinging criticism". I also would like to see more volunteers for Committee posts rather than "conscription". OK, I didn't stand for the post of Chairman due to personal commitments and time, but took on the role anyway to try to 'steady the boat'. In the future perhaps members willing to stand will consider the good of the group over more "personal glory" as has seemed the case in some years. I base this criticism on the fact that I built up a fairly good rapport with both publishers and authors during my last stint as Chairman but find attitudes somewhat different now. If this is "them", we must overcome it (the "they give up their time" argument), if it is from "us", we must change to accommodate others. Abrasive attitude or apathy? The Group loses with either. Politeness never hurts. This year has so far been difficult due to many factors, publication dates and author availability being uppermost; hence the recent 'informal' meetings. But at least they're regular and at the same venue.

The above is purely my own views - but as Chairman, I intended to respond to Steve Green's "fanzine" anyway. He's wrong for all the reasons Martin, David, Chris and Peter wrote in to state - by writing proving the "aliveness" of the Group. Others have made equally valid verbal comment. Basically, Steve Green is no longer a BSFG member. His choice. I am now Chairman. My choice.

[Further comments from members are invited and will be run in the

September newsletter. Letters should reach me, Martin Tudor, at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, WV13 1HX or e-mail to martin@empties.demon.co.uk by the 5th September 1997.]

**Jophan Report #107
by Martin Tudor**

Over 10,000 children voted for more than 700 different titles by phoning or emailing the BBC poll or voting at their local Waterstone's bookshop. The poll closed at midnight on 27th August after a month's voting, the results were as follows:

Under 16's Results

Roald Dahl featured seven times in the under 16's top ten books which were:

1. Roald Dahl - Matilda
2. Roald Dahl - Charlie and The Chocolate Factory
3. Roald Dahl - The BFG
4. J R R Tolkien - The Hobbit
5. A A Milne - Winnie The Pooh
6. Roald Dahl - James and The Giant Peach
7. Roald Dahl - The Witches
8. Roald Dahl - The Twits
9. Roald Dahl - George's Marvellous Medicine
10. Jacqueline Wilson - Double Act

Over 16's Results:

1. Kenneth Grahame - The Wind in The Willows
2. C S Lewis - The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe
3. A A Milne - Winnie The Pooh

4. J R R Tolkien - The Hobbit
5. Arthur Ransome - Swallows and Amazons
6. Frances Hodgson Burnett - The Secret Garden
7. Lewis Carroll - Alice in Wonderland
8. Roald Dahl - Charlie and The Chocolate Factory
9. Louisa M Alcott - Little Women
10. Roald Dahl - Matilda

Top Ten Overall Titles:

1. Roald Dahl - Matilda
2. Kenneth Grahame - The Wind In The Willows
3. C S Lewis - The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe
4. A A Milne - Winnie The Pooh
5. J R R Tolkien - The Hobbit
6. Roald Dahl - Charlie and The Chocolate Factory
7. Arthur Ransome - Swallows and Amazons
8. Roald Dahl - The BFG
9. Lewis Carroll - Alice in Wonderland
10. Frances Hodgson Burnett - The Secret Garden

Dodi Al Fayed, who tragically died in the same car crash as Diana Princess of Wales, was an exec producer on HOOK, and was involved with another PETER PAN-related project at the time of his death.

Werner Herzog's NOSFERATU is finally being released - legally - in the US. But only on laserdisk.

The forthcoming HERCULES / XENA cartoon spin-off will feature Lucy

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(XENA) Lawless singing. Let's hope that this time - unlike her recent appearance at a sports stadium - her top's up to the task.

The 1997 Hugo winners were presented at LoneStarCon2, the World Science Fiction Convention in San Antonio, Texas, on August 30th, 1997. The winners were:

Novel: Blue Mars, Kim Stanley Robinson (HarperCollins Voyager; Bantam Spectra); **Novella:** "Blood of the Dragon", George R. R. Martin (Asimov's Jul 1996); **Novellette:** "Bicycle Repairman", Bruce Sterling (Intersection; Asimov's Oct/Nov 1996); **Short Story:** "The Soul Selects Her Own Society...", Connie Willis (Asimov's Apr 1996, War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches); **Non-Fiction Book:** Time and Chance, L. Sprague de Camp (Grant); **Dramatic Presentation:** Babylon 5, "Severed Dreams" (Warner Bros., directed by David J. Eagle, written by J. Michael Straczynski, produced by John Copeland); **Professional Editor:** Gardner Dozois; **Professional Artist:** Bob Eggleton; **Semiprozine:** Locus, edited by Charles N Brown; **Fanzine:** Mimosa, edited by Dick & Nicki Lynch; **Fan Writer:** Dave Langford; **Fan Artist:** William Rotsler. **The John W. Campbell Award** (for best new writer): Michael A. Burstein.

The John W Campbell Memorial Award for best science fiction novel published in the US in 1996 was presented to Paul J McAuley's Fairyland at the Campbell Conference in Lawrence, Kansas, on 11th July.

Also presented was the Theodore Sturgeon Award for best short story, to Nancy Kress's "The Flowers of Aulit Prison" (Asimov's, Oct-Nov 1996). Andre Norton and Arthur C. Clarke were inducted into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame.

The Locus Awards for works published in 1996 were announced at Westercon in Seattle on 4th July. Awards were given to the winners in the following categories of the annual Locus poll and survey. Full results of the poll appear in the August issue of Locus (which is available from Andromeda bookshop in Birmingham). **BEST SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL:** Blue Mars, Kim Stanley Robinson; **BEST FANTASY NOVEL:** A Game of Thrones, George R.R. Martin; **BEST DARK FANTASY/HORROR NOVEL:** Desperation, Stephen King; **BEST FIRST NOVEL (tie):** Whiteout, Sage Walker and Reclamation, Sarah Zettel; **BEST NOVELLA:** Bellwether, Connie Willis; **BEST NOVELETTE:** "Mountain Ways", Ursula K. Le Guin; **BEST SHORT STORY:** "Gone", John Crowley; **BEST NON-FICTION:** Look at the Evidence, John Clute; **BEST ART BOOK:** Spectrum III: The Best in Contemporary Fantasy Art, Cathy Burnett, Arnie Fenner, & Jim Loehr, eds.; **BEST COLLECTION:** None So Blind, Joe Haldeman; **BEST ANTHOLOGY:** The Year's Best Science Fiction: Thirteenth Annual Collection, Gardner Dozois, ed.; **BEST ARTIST:** Michael Whelan; **BEST EDITOR:** Gardner Dozois; **BEST MAGAZINE:** Asimov's; **BEST BOOK PUBLISHER:** Tor.

Forthcoming Events

12 SEPTEMBER 1997: Informal meeting of the BSFG at the Tap & Spile Gas Street, Birmingham, from 7pm in the Top Floor Bar.

23-27 SEPTEMBER 1997: FROM A JACK TO A KING by Bob Carlton. From the creator of RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET another musical assault on the work of Shakespeare. Loosely based on Shakespeare's OTHER rock'n'roll masterpiece - MACBETH! The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham. Tickets £7.00-£20.50, call 0121 643 1231.

10-15 NOVEMBER 1997: Terry Pratchett's WYRD SISTERS adapted for the stage by Stephen Briggs. "This hilarious stage version of the phenomenally successful novel pits the three witches, Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg and Magrat Garlick, against the wicked duke and duchess. Any similarity to Shakespeare's MACBETH is purely intentional!" The Crescent Theatre, Brindleyplace, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tickets are £5.00 in advance and concessions, or £7.00 on the door. Call 0121-643-5858 (Monday- Friday 11am-4pm).

14-16 NOVEMBER 1997: NOVACON 27, the annual sf convention of the Brum Group, will be held at the Abbey Hotel, Great Malvern. Guest of Honour Peter F Hamilton. Special features include SF BLUES by Brian W Aldiss and The Comedy Revue by Dave

Hicks and Mike D Siddall. Attending membership £30.00 until 30 September when the price will rise. Supporting £10.50. Progress Report #3 and details of overflow hotels now available. Contact: Carol Morton, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, DY9 8SS.

11-13 SEPTEMBER 1998: FANTASY-CON 22, the convention of the British Fantasy Society. At the Albany Hotel, Birmingham, Guest of Honour Freda Warrington, with more guests to be announced. Contact: c/o BFS, 2 Harwood Street, Stockport, SK4 1JJ. (This is a temporary contact address pending the organiser's house move.)

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. Contact: Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Road, West Norwood, London, SE27 0SZ.

Although details are correct to the best of our knowledge, we advise readers to contact organisers 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 (e-mail martin@empties.demon.co.uk).

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.

**The *Birmingham* Science Fiction
Group's 27th annual convention is
being held in *Great Malvern* this year
- now *that's* a REALITY DYSFUNCTION!**

**Novacon 27, 14-16 November 1997 at the Abbey Hotel, Great
Malvern, featuring Peter F Hamilton as Guest of Honour.**

Attending membership £30.00 until 30th September.

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



Novacon 27 Membership Form

Date: 14-16 November 1997.

Venue: De Vere Abbey Hotel, Great Malvern.

Guest of Honour: Peter F Hamilton.

Attending membership costs £25.00 until 1st April 1997, then £30.00 until 30 September, after which it will rise again. Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to "Novacon 27" and sent with your completed form to: Carol Morton, 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS.

Membership I enclose £ for membership(s) of Novacon 27

Name: Phone No:

Address:

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.....

Badge Name(s) Please complete this section if you want a fannish name on your badge. We would prefer to use your real name for sending items through the post.

Name: Badge Name:

Name: Badge Name:

Gophers I am willing to volunteer as a gopher YES/NO
(please delete as applicable)

I will arrive at the con (specify time and day)

I have experience in/with (please specify)

.....

Book Room Please reserve me tables @ £15.00 each .

Art Show Please reserve me Art Board space in the Art Show

Queries, Suggestions, Ideas, Requests etc
We can only act on your ideas/problems if you tell us about them, so this is, what this section is for.