

March 2000

Issue 342

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 Chair-Vernon Brown, Secretary-Dave Hardy, Treasurer-Alan Woodford, Publicity Officer-Martin Tudor, Ordinary Members-Anne Woodford & William McCabe, Newsletter Editor-Yvonne Rowse, Novacon 30 & 31 Chair-Tony Berry.

Graham Joyce

will speak to the BSFG on

Friday 10th March 2000



7.45pm for 8pm, in the Lichfield Lounge, second floor, Britannia Hotel, New Street, (entrance in Union Passageway). Drinks may be purchased from Harvey's Bar on the Mezzanine level and taken up to the Lichfield on the second floor. Admittance: Members £3.00 (£2.00 Unwaged), Non-Members £4.00 (£3.00 Unwaged). (*Discounts are at the discretion of the Committee and will depend on satisfactory proof of status being produced.*)

NEXT MONTH'S MEETING 14 APRIL 2000: ALISTAIR REYNOLDS on his first novel *Revelation Space* (Gollancz, £10.99) an epic work of "hard" sf!

This month's Speaker is: Graham Joyce

"Graham Joyce is one of the finest writers of supernatural thrillers in the world. He combines intelligence and style, a relish for a good story and a strong sense of humanity to produce books of unique quality." – Michael Moorcock.



In 1989, Graham Joyce quit an executive job and went to live in a beach shack on the Greek island of Lesbos with a colony of scorpions. (This later became the setting for his novel, *House of Lost Dreams*.)

He sold his first novel, *Dreamside* (1991), whilst still in Greece and travelled in the Middle East on the proceeds. *Dreamside* explores the phenomenon of lucid dreaming and concerned four characters haunted by

psychological experiments conducted whilst they were students.

This was followed by the award winning *Dark Sister* (1992), a novel of contemporary witchcraft, which examined the relationship between witchcraft and feminism.

His third novel, *House of Lost Dreams* (1993), analysed a disintegrating relationship against the backdrop of superstition and the supernatural.

In November 1994 Graham Joyce was Guest of Honour at the Birmingham SF Group's annual convention, Novacon 24, where he treated an astounded audience to a dramatic and entertaining exhibition of Greek dancing...



A prolific short story writer his work has appeared in *Interzone*, *New Worlds*, *Dark Voices* and various anthologies.

For *Requiem* (1995), he revisited Jerusalem and produced an atmospheric suspense story in modern Jerusalem, dealing with the roots of myth and the power of sexuality. "*Requiem is that rare joy, the perfect book that you didn't expect... I had despaired of ever reading a book this good again.*" – *Interzone*.

The Tooth Fairy (1996) represents something of a departure in that it dispensed with exotic settings. A rites of passage novel set in the

industrial Midlands, there is nonetheless an atmosphere of suspense and the supernatural. Critical acclaim included: "*In insightful, hugely entertaining and completely engrossing*" – *Time Out*.

Stormwatcher (1997) is set in France and was described as "*Brilliantly original*" by the *Sunday Times*.

The juvenile *The Web: Spiderbite* (1997) was published by Dolphin paperbacks in October 1997 (recently re-issued in an omnibus edition *The Web: 2027*). This was followed by *Separate Skins* (1998) with Mark Morris was published by Tanjen in October 1998.

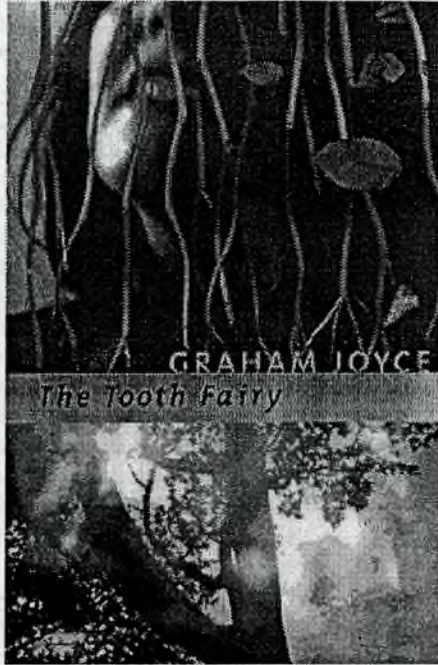
Indigo (1999), his most recent novel, is set in both Rome and Chicago, and details Jack Chambers' investigation into his recently deceased father's strange search for *Indigo* – the colour that doesn't really exist.

In researching *Indigo* Graham Joyce spent several years trying to join The Indigo Society. Blocked at every turn, his persistence finally paid off when he was finally allowed to become a member of this elusive group, only to discover that the membership comprised less than a hundred people world-wide, most of whom have never met in person.

Dedicated to travel in search of evidence for the semi-mythical colour, many of the members are explorers, geographers or businessmen with the facility for frequent international travel.

The Indigo Society publishes newsletters and members' reports on searches made in remote parts of the world. Only one member claimed to have indisputable evidence of the colour Indigo (the existence of which is formally disputed by Science).

At the time Graham Joyce was permitted to join, The Indigo Society was in acrimonious internal dispute – and still is – over the



charismatic figure that claims to have found the missing colour. Similarly, the members remain in bitter disagreement over whether they should have helped with the writing of Graham Joyce's novel, *Indigo*.

His most recent book, *Foursight* (2000), features novellas from Joyce and three other authors and is due for release on 16 March (Gollancz, £16.99). Covering Leningrad, London, New York, Key West and all points in and far between, it features "four different visions, by four different authors, of the highs and lows of modern life".

Of Joyce's novella "Leningrad Nights" the critics said: "*Leningrad Nights is one of those works of fiction that seem to arrive unmediated from a space located at an oblique angle slightly above the earth's surface. Graham Joyce uses the novella's unique mixture of liberating length and liberating brevity to evoke a phantasmal, haunted version of Leningrad.*" -- PETER STRAUB. "*Hard, beautiful and thoroughly engaging, this novella explores the horror of the real, life at its extreme bending the mind to new realities and perceptions.*" -- MICHAEL ROWLEY, Waterstones. "*A superb piece of work*" -- PAUL BRAZIER Interzone. "*Not only extremely well done from an artistic point of view, it's also morally uplifting - a good story in both senses*" -- CHRIS GILMORE, Interzone.

The other novellas are "How the Other Half Lives" by James Lovegrove, "Andy Warhol's Dracula" by Kim Newman and "The Vaccinator" by Michael Marshall Smith.

Graham Joyce's interim jobs have included fitter's mate, Butlin's Redcoat, legal supernumerary, fruit picker and teacher. He has taught writing in maximum-security prisons and currently teaches Creative Writing as Writing Fellow at Nottingham Trent University.

Joyce, who lives in Leicester with his wife and daughter, is a three-time winner of the August Derleth Award (the British Fantasy Society Award for Best Novel) for *Dark Sister*, *Requiem* and *The Tooth Fairy*.

Guest Editor: Martin Tudor

Mrs Yvonne Rowse has decided to pop over to Seattle at a moments notice (don't *you* envy the jet-setting life of these Nova Award Winners?) to drop in on Corflu *the* fanzine fans con. Ex-editor Mr Martin Tudor has therefore been drafted in at *vast* expense (well have you seen the price of a pint in the Britannia?) to produce this month's newsletter - at one weeks notice...

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Please direct all complaints, moans, gripes and threats to Mrs Yvonne Rowse at the usual address.

Signing Sessions

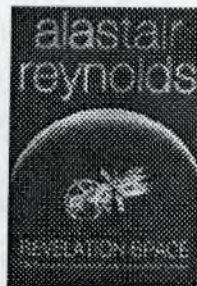
Forthcoming signing sessions at
Andromeda, 2-5 Suffolk Street.

For confirmation and/or further
details call 0121 643 1999.

April 15th: Alastair Reynolds will
be signing *Revelation Space*
(Gollancz, £10.99) at Andromeda.

**April 18th, 6pm: Guy Gavriel
Kaye** will be signing his new
hardback.

If anyone would like signed copies of any of David Gemmel's books
please contact Andromeda.



Forthcoming Events

10 MARCH 2000: BSFG meeting at the Britannia. Author
GRAHAM JOYCE will be speaking to the Group.

19 MARCH-29 APRIL 2000: FutureWorld the BBC's touring
exhibition of the way in which digital tv services will transform
communications technology. In the Gas Hall of the Birmingham
Museum & Art Gallery. For further details call 0121-303-2834/1966 or
check www.birmingham.gov.uk/bmag

23-25 MARCH 2000: Dazzle is "a brilliantly funny parody of Star
Trek" from the SOSage Factory at the Solihull Arts Complex Library
Theatre from 7.30pm each night, tickets are £7 (£5 concessions) from Bob
Kay on 0121-743-2648 or the Box Office on 0121-704-6962.

25-26 MARCH 2000: Memorabilia Europe's largest science fiction,
film, cult TV, pop and collectors' fair. Hall 9, NEC. Contact Made in
Heaven on 01899 221622 or NEC Booking Office 0121 767 4555.

27 MARCH-1 APRIL 2000: The Rocky Horror Show, the Alexandra
Theatre, tickets cost £13.50-£22.50, contact the Box Office on 0870-607-
7533.

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10-15 APRIL 2000: Ben Elton's GASPING at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre. Call the Box Office on 01902-429212.

14 APRIL 2000: BSFG meeting at the Britannia, a new writer ALISTAIR REYNOLDS will be speaking to the Group about *Revelation Space* (Gollancz, £10.99) his first novel. A work of "hard" SF on an epic scale!

21-24 APRIL: 2Kon, Eastercon at the Central Hotel, Glasgow with guests Guy Gavriel Kay, Deborah Turner Harris and Katherine Kutz. Reg £25, £20 unwaged; supp. £15. Contact 2Kon, 30 Wodburn Terrace, St Andrews, KY16 8BA. E-mail: 2kon@dcs.st-and.ac.uk
<http://www.theory.cs.st-and.ac.uk/2Kon>

12 MAY 2000: BSFG meeting at the Britannia, ANDY SALMON will deliver a talk entitled "From Kazakhstan to the Stars" (what Baikonur Cosmodrome is like to visit).

26-29 MAY: Plokta.Con, small con at the Holiday Inn, Leicester. GoH Ken MacLeod. Further information from 3 York St, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH, UK, or plokta.con@plokta.com.

9 JUNE 2000: BSFG meeting at the Britannia. Editor of the Earthlight line of books, JOHN JARROLD, will be speaking to the Group.

14 JULY 2000: BSFG meeting at the Britannia. ANDY LOUND from the Planetary Society will be speaking to the Group.

8-10 SEPTEMBER: FantasyCon 24, the annual convention of the British Fantasy Society at the Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. GoHs Storm Constantine, Stan Nicholls. Further information from 46 Oxford Rd, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT, UK or <http://www.herebedragons.co.uk/bfs/files/fc200reg4.jpg>

10-12 NOVEMBER 2000: NOVACON 30 at the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham. Guest of Honour Chris Priest, Special Guest Rog Peyton, Guest Artist David A Hardy. Attending membership costs £28.00 until Easter 2000, after which it may rise again. Contact: Steve Lawson, Registrations, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ or <http://www.cooky.demon.co.uk/n30/n30.html>

13-16 APRIL 2001: Paragon, Eastercon at the Norbreck Hotel in Blackpool with guests Michael Scott Rohan, Stephen Baxter, Lisanne Norman, and fan guests Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer. Membership currently £25 Attending, £15 Supporting, £12.50 Junior and £5 Child. Contact Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. Tel. 0114 281 1572. e-mail steve.paragon@keepsake-web.co.uk

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 yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.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.

Book Reviews

INDIGO, Graham Joyce, Michael Joseph, pb, £9.99, 246pp.

Star Rating ****

Reviewed by Martin Tudor.

As you would expect from Graham Joyce this is a riveting tale of suspense, with superbly drawn characters and a wonderful all-pervading sense of menace.

Jack Chambers' father deserted his mother and himself when he was five. Now, as executor of his father's will, he must make arrangements to publish a strange book on his father's search for *Indigo*, the colour that doesn't really exist. (Well have you seen it? Oh yeah, describe it, point to it...)

Jack's beautiful half-sister Louise and a mysterious, but alluring woman in Rome who knew his father, both have their part to play in the puzzle. As Jack uncovers the secrets and lies that dominated his estranged father's life, he realises that the revelations could put his own life in danger.

This is a superb novel, riveting from the first page. There's a wonderful (very short) review that I read of this book which summed it up: *"It opens your eyes – not in the usual way of saying that – I mean it*

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actually makes you look at things in a new way, like the world has been rinsed for you" ("a reader from Glasgow" on amazon.co.uk). Yeah, that's it – after you've read *Indigo* see if you can ever put a pair of sunglasses on again without thinking of it!

The only reason I give it four rather than five stars is that it suffers from Joyce's usual problem – a weak ending. But *please* don't let that put you off! This ending is weak *only* in comparison with the strength of the rest of the story!

BSFG Web Site

If you have a moment to spare in front of your browser why not turn it to William McCabe's BSFG web site at <http://www.bsfg.freesevers.com/> Comments, suggestions and any help will be welcomed by William who can be contacted by e-mail at wam@wamccabe.freesever.co.uk

The Jophan Report #129 by Martin Tudor

Rob Hansen posted this to rec.arts.sf.fandom on 27th February: "I've just received a call from Chuck Connor informing me that British fan John D. Rickett died this morning. John discovered fandom in the late 1980s, late in life, but joined in enthusiastically. He produced the zine THE ARACHNO FILE for the apa PIECES OF EIGHT, became a regular at UK cons, and was a good friend to Vince Clarke. His was the name picked out of the hat at CORFLU UK so he became that con's GoH and gave an excellent speech. He hadn't been in fandom as long as many of us, but in our conversations he never failed to impress on me how much he loved this odd microcosm of ours. Farewell, John."

I can only add that John wrote for my fanzine EMPTIES and was a valued, and always entertaining, attendee at Novacon. He will be greatly missed.

The shortlist for the 2000 Arthur C. Clarke Award for the year's best SF novel published in Great Britain has been announced:

Manifold 1: Time, Stephen Baxter (Voyager)

The Bones of Time, Kathleen Ann Goonan (Voyager)

Silver Screen, Justina Robson (Macmillan)

Cryptonomicon, Neal Stephenson (Heinemann)

Distraction, Bruce Sterling (Millennium)

A Deepness in the Sky, Vernor Vinge (Millennium)

The judges this year are Claire Brialey and Gary Dalkin for the BSFA, Caroline Mullan and Kim Newman for the SF Foundation, and Doug Millard for the Science Museum. The administrator and chairman of the judges is Paul Kincaid. The award, an engraved bookend and £1,000, will be presented at a ceremony at the Science Museum in London on 17th May 2000.

Hong Kong action hero Donnie Yen, who plays the villain in the upcoming fourth Highlander movie, revealed a major plot spoiler to SFX Magazine. Yen, speaking from the Bucharest, Romania, set of the film, said he will wield the sword that undoes series hero Connor Macleod (Christopher Lambert).

Dwight Schultz (Barclay) and Marina Sirtis (Troi) will make another appearance as guest stars on Star Trek: Voyager, according to the TrekWeb fan site. They will show up in the episode "I, Zimmerman," which centres on the doctor played by Robert Picardo.

Universal Pictures have set a 30th June release date for its live action/animated movie The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle, based on the 1960s television series of the same name. Rocky stars Jason Alexander as Boris Badenov, Rene Russo as Natasha Fatale and Robert De Niro as Fearless Leader.

ABC will pay about \$30 million in a package deal for the exclusive broadcast rights to the feature films The Green Mile and Any Given Sunday. The movies will become available to ABC in time for the May 2002 sweeps.

John Carpenter is trying to sell a TV pitch based on his movies Escape From New York and Escape From L.A., according to some reports. It is said that the show would be a one-hour syndicated series that would explore the militaristic future world of the films.

Emmy-nominated actor Keith Hamilton Cobb (All My Children) joins the cast of the syndicated SF television series Gene Roddenberry's Andromeda. Kevin Sorbo (Hercules: The Legendary Journeys) stars in the show, which begins shooting in April.

Actor/rapper Ice Cube is developing and may star in a feature film

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version of the Acclaim video game *Shadow Man*, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Majel Barrett Roddenberry told *Mania* magazine that she thinks it's time for *Star Trek* to take a break after *Voyager*. "I hear that after the wrestling episode, the network may be doing a truck show. ... They're going to squeeze every last dime out of this franchise before they lose the viewers, and I get royalties, so I'm grateful to [executive producer] Rick Berman. I think it would serve *Star Trek's* best interest if it took a break and went off for a few years, but not the network's."

The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America has released the final ballot for the 1999 Nebula Awards. Winners will be announced during the Nebula Awards Weekend in New York City, 19-21 May 2000:

Novel

The Cassini Division, Ken MacLeod (Tor Jul 1999)

A Clash of Kings, George R.R. Martin (Bantam Spectra Feb 1998)

A Deepness in the Sky, Vernor Vinge (Tor Mar 1999)

Mission Child, Maureen F. McHugh (Avon Eos Dec 1998)

Mockingbird, Sean Stewart (Ace Aug 1998)

Parable of the Talents, Octavia E. Butler (Seven Stories Press Nov 1998)

Novella

"The Astronaut from Wyoming", Adam-Troy Castro & Jerry Oltion (Analog Aug 1999)

"The Executioners' Guild", Andy Duncan (Asimov's Aug 1999)

"Living Trust", L. Timmel Duchamp (Asimov's Feb 1999)

"Reality Check", Michael A. Burstein (Analog Nov 1999)

"Story of Your Life", Ted Chiang (Starlight 2)

"The Wedding Album", David Marusek (Asimov's Jun 1999)

Novelette

"Five Days in April", Brian A. Hopkins (Chiaroscuro [webzine] Jul 1999 [story link])

"Good Intentions", Stanley Schmidt & Jack McDevitt (F&SF Jun 1998)

"How to Make Unicorn Pie", Esther M. Friesner (F&SF Jan 1999)

"The Island in the Lake", Phyllis Eisenstein (F&SF Dec 1998)

"Mars Is No Place for Children", Mary Turzillo (SF Age May 1999)

"Taklamakan", Bruce Sterling (Asimov's Nov 1998)

Short story

"Ancient Engines", Michael Swanwick (Asimov's Jan 1999)

"Basil the Dog", Frances Sherwood (Atlantic Monthly Sep 1999 [link])

"The Cost of Doing Business", Leslie What (Amazing Stories Winter 1999)

"The Dead Boy at Your Window", Bruce Holland Rogers (The North

American Review Dec 1998)

"Flower Kiss", Constance Ash (Realms of Fantasy Aug 1998)

"Radiant Doors", Michael Swanwick (Asimov's Sep 1998) script

"The Devil's Arithmetic", Robert J. Avrech (based on the novel by Jane Yolen; Showtime Television 28 Mar 1999)

"The Iron Giant", Brad Bird & Tim McCanlies (based on the book by Ted Hughes; Warner Bros. Aug 1999)

"The Matrix", Larry & Andy Wachowski (Warner Bros. Mar 1999)

"The Sixth Sense", M. Night Shyamalan (Buena Vista Aug 1999)

This year's ballot is the first with the revived category for dramatic presentation, now called 'Best Script'. Final ballots will be mailed March 11, with a deadline of April 15. (SFWA News, from LOCUS Online.)

Pegasus in Space the long-awaited culmination of Anne McCaffrey's magnificent sequence, which began in *To Ride Pegasus* and *Pegasus in Flight*, will be published by Bantam Press in April, priced £16.99.

John Meaney, author of *To Hold Infinity*, has a spectacular new novel *Paradox* out from Bantam Press in June, priced £9.99.

Robert Rankin is eager to tell us all about the *Flying Saucers From Hell* in his latest work published by Doubleday in June, priced £16.99.

The controversial film *A Clockwork Orange* has been granted an 18 certificate and will remain uncut when it is shown in the UK for the first time in 27 years. The British Board of Film Classification decided the film, which has violent scenes of rape and robbery, was unlikely to inspire copycat behaviour.

The movie, to be shown this Spring, was classified "X" without cuts in 1971, but withdrawn by director Stanley Kubrick two years later after protests about its portrayal of violence.

(Many thanks to the following for the above news: BFS news site www.herebedragons.co.uk/bfs/news.htm; FTL ftlmagazine.com/; BFS News www.herebedragons.co.uk/bfs/index.htm; PNN www.plokta.com/pnn/; www.fandom.com; LINE ONE www.lineone.net/entertainment/index.html; BBC News Online; NASA www.nasa.gov/today/index.html; METRO MIDLANDS; Reuters; EXPRESS & STAR <http://www.westmidlands.com/>; BIRMINGHAM EVENING MAIL; WHAT'S ON; VARIETY www.variety.com/index.asp; Science Fiction News of the Week www.scifi.com/sfw/current_news.html; www.scifi.com; The Del Rey Internet Newsletter - to subscribe send a blank message to join-drin-dist@list.randomhouse.com).

BSFG Dates for your Diary

- 10 MARCH 2000: GRAHAM JOYCE.
24 MARCH 2000: Deadline for contributions for the April newsletter.
14 APRIL 2000: ALISTAIR REYNOLDS.
12 MAY 2000: ANDY SALMON - "From Kazakhstan to the Stars".
9 JUNE 2000: JOHN JARROLD.
14 JULY 2000: ANDY LOUND from the Planetary Society.
10-12 NOVEMBER 2000: NOVACON 30 - Guests Chris Priest, Rog Peyton and Dave Hardy.

Committee and Contacts

The BSFG meets from 7.45pm for 8pm in the Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, (entrance in Union Passageway), on the second Friday of each month (unless otherwise notified). **Group Chairman**, Vernon Brown, 106 Green Lanes, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5JH. **Membership** (which includes 12 copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to formal meetings) is £16.00 per person, or £21.00 for two at the same address. Cheques to "The Birmingham Science Fiction Group" and sent to: The Treasurer, Alan Woodford, 81 Harrold Road, Rowley Regis, Warley, B65 0RL, (e-mail enquiries via: bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk). **Newsletter Editor**, Yvonne Rowse call 01299-400750 for info or mail to Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpey, Worcs, DY12 1NP (or by e-mail to yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk). **Web**: www.bsfg.freesevers.com/

Colophon

Contents of this issue are copyright 2000 the BSFG, on behalf of contributors, to whom all rights revert on publication. Personal opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the committee or the membership of the BSFG. Text by Martin Tudor except where stated otherwise. Many thanks to: DAVE HARDY for the new BGN logo; ALAN WOODFORD for racing round with the envelopes; TIM GROOME for the cover illustration (first seen as the cover of the Novacon 24 Programme Book); Amazon.co.uk and <http://human.ntu.ac.uk/writing/gjoyce.html> for the photo of Graham Joyce and the cover illos. This was printed on the Critical Wave copier, for details of Wave's competitive prices contact Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, WV13 1HX, e-mail empties@breathemail.net.