

June 2000

Issue 345

# BRUM GROUP NEWS

Price: FREE

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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, Newsletter & Publicity-Martin Tudor.

Ordinary Members-Anne Woodford & William McCabe, Novacon 30 & 31 Chairman-Tony Berry.

**This month's meeting is on 9<sup>th</sup> June,  
7.45pm for 8pm, in the Lichfield Lounge,  
second floor, Britannia Hotel, New Street,  
(entrance in Union Passageway).**

**Admittance: Non-Members £4, Members £3.  
Concessions for full-time students & unwaged.**

**This month's speaker is:**

**JOHN JARROLD**

JOHN JARROLD editor of Simon &  
Schuster's Earthlight imprint will answer your questions  
about the publishing industry.

**Next month's speaker is:**

**ANDY LOUND**

On 14<sup>th</sup> July Andy Lound from the Planetary  
Society will speak to the Group.

**More details of meetings  
on the back cover.**

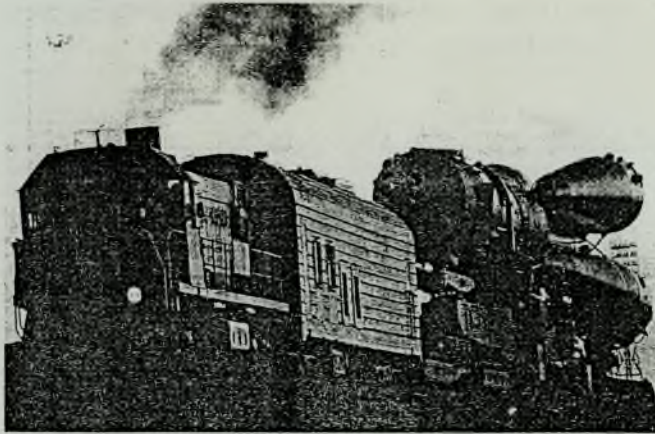
**This month's speaker is: JOHN JARROLD**

JOHN JARROLD editor of Simon & Schuster's Earthlight imprint will answer your questions about the publishing industry. - *MT*.

**Last Month's Meeting: A report of the May Group Meeting by Vernon Brown**

At our May meeting Andy Salmon, member of the Birmingham Astronomical Society and the Midlands Space Flight Society, spoke about his recent visit to Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, illustrating his talk with a variety of slides to give a very interesting insight into the current Russian space programme, although one of the most interesting things was that he had actually visited the place and taken photographs – before the CCCP broke up in the 90s it was illegal to take photographs of anything of possible military significance including crossroads, bridges and airports let alone a spaceport. He talked and answered questions for about an hour on the programme which has run into so many difficulties since the break-up that it has only kept going by becoming a commercial venture, very different from the Cold War in Space scenario depicted by so many sf stories in the 50s and 60s.

*BEJ.O.W: Steaming into Space: A steam train pulls a Soyuz TM rocket , into position at the Baikonur space centre.*



Andy showed us the cosmodrome set in the endless plains of Kazakhstan, now an independent country where Russia has to pay for the use of its facilities – even the electricity supply is sometimes cut off when bills are not paid. The soil is salty and covered with tough grass where its not marshy, so salty that service pipes have to be laid aboveground otherwise they would swiftly corrode. Here and there are desert tulips, flowers whose petals are triangular in shape and hinged to let them follow the sun and whose name is used for the similarly shaped and hinged gantries that support the spaceships on the launching pad. As in America these ships are assembled miles away before being transported to the pad although unlike the U.S. they are carried horizontally and then lifted into position. Another interesting detail is that their overall diameter is limited by the size of the railtrucks that carry them, which is dictated by the rail gauge which is based on the WWII German gauge used to transport V2 rockets.

Among other things that stick in my mind from the talk are the pictures of historic machines hidden in private museums, no Smithsonian Museum here; of mothballed half-finished space projects and of precision equipment lying outdoors, slowly rusting away. And the superstitions/rituals that have to be observed by cosmonauts; these are usually based on what Gagarin said or did on his historic spaceflight, including stopping the transport bus halfway to the field to let the suited-up spaceman wet the offside rear wheel, although women are exempt from this particular rite.

Afterwards most of the Group stayed to chat with Andy and his friend/projectionist, also a spaceflight enthusiast, until well after 10pm to end a most enjoyable evening.

### **Forthcoming Events by Martin Tudor**

**Until 1 JULY 2000: Dan Dare 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition**, Atkinson Art Gallery, Lord Street, Southport, Merseyside, PR8 1DB. Admission £2, call 01772-700874 or 0151-934-2111 for further details. [*See Vernon Brown's report last issue below for further information.*]

**6 JUNE 2000: The Black Lodge**, informal discussion group for those interested (mainly) in horror/SF movies, meets at the Hoghead, Newhall Street, Birmingham city centre from 8pm on the first Tuesday of each month. Contact Steve Green on 0121-706-0108 for further details.

**9 JUNE 2000: BSFG meeting at the Britannia.** Editor of Simon & Schuster's Earthlight imprint, **JOHN JARROLD**, will be speaking to the Group.

**10 JUNE 2000: Symposium on the Profession of Science Fiction** at Birmingham's Gas Hall (part of the Art Gallery). Informal discussions on the state of the SF business today featuring Peter Hamilton (author), Rog Peyton (bookseller), John Jarrold ("Earthlight" editor) and David Pringle (INTERZONE editor), from 11am -4pm. This event is £5 to members of the Science Fiction Foundation (and will be followed by the SFF's AGM at 4pm), all others welcome at a cost of £20 (which gives membership of the SFF for a year, including three issues of FOUNDATION) or £20 + £5 for two people in the same household. Contact Edward James, Dept of History, University of Reading, Whiteknights, RG6 6AA (e-mail [E.F.James@reading.ac.uk](mailto:E.F.James@reading.ac.uk)).

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

**8 SEPTEMBER 2000: BSFG meeting at the Britannia.** **CHRIS MORGAN** 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](http://www.cooky_demon.co.uk/n30/n30.html)

**29 DEC 2000-1 JAN 2001: Hogmanaycon**, Central Hotel, Glasgow. GoHs: Spider & Jeanne Robinson, Sydney Jordan, Archie Roy, Vince Docherty, Oscar Schwighofer. Membership £35.00, contact: c/o 26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA; [john@gelsalba.demon.co.uk](mailto:john@gelsalba.demon.co.uk); [www.members.tripod.co.uk/Chris\\_Boyce/conpage.htm](http://www.members.tripod.co.uk/Chris_Boyce/conpage.htm)

**13-16 APRIL 2001: Paragon**, the British National SF (Easter)Con at Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley, with guests Michael Scott Rohan, Stephen Baxter, Lianne Norman, and fan guests Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer. Membership now £35 Attending, £15 Supporting, £17.50 Junior (12-16) and £15 Child (5-11), Infants free. Contact Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. Tel. 0114 281 1572. e-mail [steve.paragon@keepsake-web.co.uk](mailto:steve.paragon@keepsake-web.co.uk) or check the web site at [www.keepsake-web.co.uk/paragon](http://www.keepsake-web.co.uk/paragon)

**29 MARCH-1 APRIL 2002: Helicon 2**, the British National SF

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(Easter)Con, at Hotel de France, Jersey. Guests tba. Membership £30 Attending, £15 Supporting/Junior. Contact 33 Meyrick Drive, Wash Common, Berks., RG14 6SY.

*Although details are correct to the best of my knowledge, I 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 me, Martin Tudor, (e-mail empties@breathemail.net). 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 - MT.*

## **The Jophan Report #131 by Martin Tudor**

I am very sorry to have to report that Andromeda's Ray Gibberd died on 28<sup>th</sup> May. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Ray's funeral was at 10.30am Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June at the Robin Hood Crematorium. In lieu of flowers donations should be made to "The Ray Gibberd Fund", c/o Andomeda Bookshop, 2-5 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, B1 1LT.

All proceeds from such donations, the £3,400 already raised (for Ray's treatment), and the ten boxes of auction material so far donated, will be distributed between the Hospice, which took care of Ray, Children with Leukaemia and Cancer Research.

Young wizard Harry Potter's big screen debut will be filmed in Britain this summer. The film about J K Rowling's character will be directed by Chris Columbus (who directed *Mrs Doubtfire*). Warner Brothers Pictures' decision to film *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in England over the next few months is a welcome boost for the British movie industry.

*Sorcerer's Stone* was the US title of the first book in the Potter series, which was published in the UK as *Philosopher's Stone*. It deals with the exploits of orphan Potter who inherits magical powers from his parents. He is summoned from his life as an unwanted foster child to become a student at Hogwarts, a boarding school for wizards.

Sue Mason has won the 2000 TAFF race from Europe to North America

Herewith the results of the TAFF 2000 Ballot. The figures were:

	Europe	North America
Tommy Ferguson	22	22
Sue Mason	88	52
Tobes Valois	30	4
Holdover Funds	1	2
No Preference	1	7
Total	142	87

This gives a total of:

Tommy Ferguson	44 votes
Sue Mason	140 votes
Tobes Valois	34 votes
Holdover Funds	3 votes
No preference	8 votes

Therefore, after the first round of counting, Sue Mason had more than 50% of votes cast on both sides of the Atlantic, so there was no need to proceed to a second round of counting. Sue Mason has won TAFF and will be attending Chicon in August - congratulations to Sue, commiserations to Tommy and Tobes.

Nominations have been announced for the 2000 Hugo awards, which will be presented at Chicon V, this year's Worldcon:

**Best Novel** (334 nominations for 183 novels)

*A Civil Campaign* by Lois McMaster Bujold (Baen)

*Cryptonomicon* by Neal Stephenson (Avon)

*Darwin's Radio* by Greg Bear (HarperCollins UK; Del Rey)

*A Deepness in the Sky* by Vernor Vinge (Tor)

*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J.K. Rowling (Bloomsbury; Arthur A. Levine/Scholastic Press)

**Best Novella** (191 nominations for 58 novellas)

"The Astronaut From Wyoming" by Adam-Troy Castro and Jerry Olton (Analog 7-8/99)

"Forty, Counting Down" by Harry Turtledove (Asimov's 12/99)

"Hunting the Snark" by Mike Resnick (Asimov's 12/99)

"Son Observe the Time" by Kage Baker (Asimov's 5/99)

"The Winds of Marble Arch" by Connie Willis (Asimov's 10-11/99)

**Best Novelette** (168 nominations for 130 novelettes, six nominees due to a tie)

"Border Guards" by Greg Egan (Interzone 10/99)

"The Chop Girl" by Ian R. MacLeod (Asimov's 12/99)

"Fossil Games" by Tom Purdom (Asimov's 2/99)

"The Secret History of the Ornithopter" by Jan Lars Jensen (F&SF 6/99)

"Stellar Harvest" by Eleanor Arnason (Asimov's 4/99)

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"1016 to 1" by James Patrick Kelly (Asimov's 6/99)

**Best Short Story** (189 nominations for 158 stories)

"Ancient Engines" by Michael Swanwick (Asimov's 2/99)

"Hothouse Flowers" by Mike Resnick (Asimov's 10-11/99)

"macs" by Terry Bisson (F&SF 10-11/99)

"Sarajevo" by Nick DiChario (F&SF 3/99)

"Scherzo with Tyrannosaur" by Michael Swanwick (Asimov's 7/99)

**Best Related Book** (167 nominations for 74 books)

*Minicon 34 Restaurant Guide* by Karen Cooper and Bruce Schneier  
(Rune Press)

*The Sandman: The Dream Hunters* by Neil Gaiman and Yoshitaka  
Amano (DC Comics/Vertigo)

*Science Fiction of the 20th Century* by Frank M. Robinson (Collectors  
Press)

*The Science of Discworld* by Terry Pratchett, Ian Stewart, and Jack  
Cohen (Ebury Press)

*Spectrum 6: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art* edited by Cathy and  
Arnie Fenner (Underwood)

**Best Dramatic Presentation** (304 nominations for 106 dramatic  
presentations)

*Being John Malkovich* (Single Cell Pictures/Gramercy  
Pictures/Propaganda Films) Directed by Spike Jonze; Written by Charlie  
Kaufman

*Galaxy Quest* (DreamWorks SKG) Directed by Dean Parisot; Story by  
David Howard; Screenplay by David Howard and Robert Gordon

*The Iron Giant* (Warner Bros. Animation) Directed by Brad Bird; Book  
by Ted Hughes; Screenplay by Brad Bird and Tim McCanlies

*The Matrix* (Village Roadshow Productions/Groucho II Film  
Partnership/Silver Pictures) Directed by Andy and Larry Wachowski;  
Written by Andy and Larry Wachowski

*The Sixth Sense* (Spyglass Entertainment/Hollywood Pictures) Directed  
by M. Night Shyamalan; Written by M. Night Shyamalan

**Best Professional Editor** (203 nominations for 66 editors)

Gardner Dozois (*Asimov's Science Fiction*)

David G. Hartwell (Tor/Forge; *Year's Best SF*)

Patrick Nielsen Hayden (Tor Books; *Starlight*)

Stanley Schmidt (*Analog Science Fiction and Fact*)

Gordon Van Gelder (St. Martin's Press; *Fantasy & Science Fiction*)

**Best Professional Artist** (196 nominations for 103 artists)

Jim Burns

Bob Eggleton

Donato Giancola

Don Maitz

Michael Whelan

**Best Semiprozine** (168 nominations for 38 semiprozines)

*Interzone* edited by David Pringle

*Locus* edited by Charles N. Brown

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* edited by Kathryn Cramer, Ariel Hamion, David G. Hartwell, and Kevin Maroney

*Science Fiction Chronicle* edited by Andrew I. Porter

*Speculations* edited by Kent Brewster

**Best Fanzine** (195 nominations for 94 fanzines)

*Ansible* edited by Dave Langford

*Challenger* edited by Guy H. Lillian III

*File 770* edited by Mike Glyer

*Mimosa* edited by Nicki and Richard Lynch

*Plokta* edited by Alison Scott, Steve Davies, and Mike Scott

**Best Fan Writer** (191 nominations for 147 fan writers)

Bob Devney

Mike Glyer

Dave Langford

Evelyn C. Leeper

Steven H Silver

**Best Fan Artist** (164 nominations for 101 fan artists)

Freddie Baer

Brad Foster

Teddy Harvia

Joe Mayhew

Tara Wayne

**John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer** (110 nominations for 72 writers) Sponsored by Dell Magazines.

Cory Doctorow (2nd year of eligibility)

Thomas Harlan (1st year)

Ellen Klages (2nd year)

Kristine Smith (1st year)

Shane Tourtellotte (2nd year)

Voting has now opened in the 2001 GUFF race, from Australia to the UK. The winner will attend Paragon, the 2001 Eastercon. It will be the first time a GUFF winner has attended Eastercon since 1984. The candidates are Eric Lindsay & Jean Weber and Damien Warman & Juliette Woods. Voting closes on 13 November 2000.

Paragon, the 2001 Eastercon, has relocated from Blackpool to the Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley in Leicestershire. The committee was unable to negotiate a satisfactory room rate with the planned venue



of Norbreck Castle, necessitating the move. (For further details see Forthcoming Events above.)

The FAAN Awards for the year 2000 were announced at Corflu in Seattle earlier this year, the full results were as follows:

**Best Fan Artist**

D. West - 56  
Stu Shiffman - 36  
Steve Stiles - 31  
Craig Smith - 31  
Sue Mason - 30  
Teddy Harvia - 19  
Ross Chamberlain - 17  
Brad Foster - 15  
Dan Steffan - 15  
Joe Mayhew - 10  
Bill Rotsler - 9  
Dave Hicks - 8  
Taral - 7  
Charlie Williams - 6  
Alexis Gilliland - 5  
G.A.K. - 5  
Steve Swartz - 5  
Sheryl Birkhead - 4  
Dave Carson - 3  
Donna Nasser - 3  
Brian Norris - 3  
S. Sanders - 3  
A. Mark - 1  
Ian Gunn - 1  
John Waible - 1  
Curt Erichson - 1

**Best Fan Writer**

Christina Lake - 38  
David Levine - 25  
Ted White - 17  
Dave Hicks - 15  
Yvonne Rowse - 15  
Claire Brialey - 13  
Arnie Katz - 11  
Lucy Huntzinger - 11  
Robert Lichtman - 11

Jo Walton - 11  
Mike Glycer - 10  
Debbi Kerr - 10  
Joyce Katz - 10  
Victor Gonzalez - 9  
Arthur Hlavaty - 8  
Maureen Kincaid-Speller - 7  
Alison Scott - 7  
Kate Yule - 7  
Lloyd Penney - 6  
Mark Plummer - 6  
Dale Speirs - 6  
C. M. Barkley - 5  
Alan Bonney - 5  
Evelyn Leeper - 5  
Joseph T. Major - 5  
Patrick Nielsen Hayden - 5  
Vicki Rosenzweig - 5  
Roger Tenner - 5  
Toni Weiskopf - 5  
Sheryl Birkhead - 3  
Lloyd Daub - 3  
Nick Givers - 3  
Andrew Hooper - 3  
Paul Kincaid - 3  
Dave Langford - 3  
Teresa Nielsen Hayden - 3  
Ulrika O'Brien - 3  
Curt Phillips - 3  
Ian Sorensen - 3  
Gene Stewart - 3  
Lise Eisenberg - 2  
Steve Becker - 1  
Tony Berry - 1  
Steve Davies - 1  
William Brieding - 1  
Aileen Forman - 1  
Chuch Harris - 1

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Charlotte Proctor - 1  
Nigel Richardson - 1  
Paul Williams - 1

**Best Letterhack**

Lloyd Penney - 29  
Howard Waldrop - 28  
Harry Warner Jr. - 28  
Gery Deindorfer - 21  
Robert Lichtman - 18  
Mae Strelkov - 18  
Joseph T. Major - 10  
Vicki Rosenzweig - 10  
Joseph Nicholas - 9  
Gene Stewart - 9  
D. West - 8  
Steve Jeffery - 7  
Lenny Bailes - 6  
C.M. Barkley - 6  
Ted White - 6  
Bernard Earp - 5  
Paul Kincaid - 5  
Colin Greenland - 4  
Jerry Kaufman - 4  
Lloyd Daub - 3  
Gordon Eklund - 3  
Linda Krawecka - 3  
Christina Lake - 3  
Jeanne Mealy - 3  
Murray Moore - 3  
Martin Morse Wooster - 3  
Bill Bowers - 1  
Marty Cantor - 1  
Tom Feller - 1  
Richard Geis - 1  
Andrew Hooper - 1  
Dave Langford - 1  
Curt Phillips - 1  
Dale Speirs - 1

**Best Fanzine**

*Trap Door* - 44  
*Bento* - 41

*Plokta* - 40  
*Never Quite Arriving* - 35  
*Banana Wings* - 22  
*Mainstream* - 17  
*Barmaid* - 16  
*Challenger* - 16  
*File 770* - 13  
*Did I say that out loud?* - 11  
*Crifanac* - 9  
*Quant Suff* - 8  
*Twink* - 7  
*Idiosyncrasy* - 6  
*Ethel the Aardvark* - 5  
*Chronicles of the Dawn Patrol 5*  
*Fandom Guardian* - 5  
*Nova Express* - 5  
*Crawdaddy!* - 4  
*Quipu* - 4  
*The Knarley Knews* - 3  
*MSFire* - 3  
*Opuntia* - 3  
*The Reluctant Famulus* - 3  
*Squib* - 3  
*Tangent* - 3  
*Devniad* - 1  
*Locus* - 1  
*Mimosa* - 1  
*Outworlds* - 1

**Best New Fanzine Fan**

Yvonne Rowse - 65  
Arthur Aldridge - 28  
Curt Phillips - 21  
Alison Freebairn - 13  
Marianne Cain - 12  
Debbi Kerr - 12  
Tobes Valois - 12  
Lise Eisenberg - 10  
Karen Johnson - 7  
Andrew Murdock - 6  
Steve Jones - 6  
Doug Bell - 5  
Kestrel Bridges - 5

Randy Byers - 5  
Nancy Hathaway - 5  
Trinlay Khadro - 5  
Chris Sheehan - 5  
Stephen Dedman - 3  
E.B. Frohvet - 3

Brin Marie Laughlin - 3  
Anita Rowland - 3  
Allison Scott - 3  
Steve Becker - 1  
Aileen Forman - 1  
Hal Wagner - 1

Editor/Publisher Andrew I. Porter has sold *SFC* to Warren Lapine, whose DNA Publications already publishes and/or handles the business end of several small press SF/fantasy/horror magazines--*Aboriginal SF*, *Absolute Magnitude*, *Dreams of Decadence*, *Fantastic Stories* (formerly *Pirate Writings*), and *Weird Tales*. Porter remains with SFC as news editor.

The sale relieves Porter of many pressures of small press publishing, including such important and time-consuming business details as maintaining the mailing list and sending out renewal notices, dealing with a rising load of paperwork, soliciting and tracking advertising, and increasing the magazine's retail bookstore and subscription base. It will allow him to concentrate on some of the things he does best, including gathering, organising and writing the news.

Another goal of DNA's purchase is to ultimately increase the frequency from the current bimonthly back to monthly, and provide a wider base, with the other DNA magazines, for consumer-oriented advertising campaigns.

Warren Lapine published his first issue of *Harsh Mistress* (now *Absolute Magnitude*) in 1993, launching *Dreams of Decadence* in 1995. He acquired his first outside magazine, *Weird Tales*, in 1998.

Porter, a three-time Hugo Award winner - for *Algol* (later *Starship*) in 1974, and for *SFC* in 1993 and 1994 - started *SFC* in 1979, with several earlier proto-issues, as a counter to *Locus*, which began 1968 - just a month after the demise of Porter's own *SF Weekly*, an earlier news magazine, which started life in 1964 and morphed into a newszine in 1966.

Bruce Sterling's *Distraction* (Millennium) has won this year's Arthur C. Clarke Award, presented 17<sup>th</sup> May at the Science Museum in London. The award goes to the best science fiction novel published in Britain for the first time in the eligibility year (1999), and carries a prize of £1,000, donated by Arthur C. Clarke.

Sterling beat fellow shortlisted works: **Manifold 1: Time**, Stephen Baxter (*Voyager*), **The Bones of Time**, Kathleen Ann Goonan (*Voyager*), **Silver Screen**, Justina Robson (Macmillan), **Cryptonomicon**, Neal Stephenson (Heinemann), **A Deepness in the Sky**, Vernor Vinge

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(Millennium).

Sterling's novel was first published in 1998 in the US by Bantam Spectra; his next, *Zeitgeist*, is due from Bantam in October.

The 1999 Nebula Awards were presented at the 2000 Nebula Banquet, Saturday evening May 20th, in New York City:

### **Best Novel**

*Parable of the Talents*, Octavia E. Butler (Seven Stories)

### **Best Novella**

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

### **Best Novelette**

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

### **Best Short Story**

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

### **Best Script**

*The Sixth Sense*, M. Night Shyamalan (Buena Vista, August 1999).

The following awards, previously announced, were also presented: Grand Master Award to Brian W. Aldiss; Author Emeritus to Daniel Keyes; Service to SFWA Award to George Zebrowski & Pamela Sargent.

Finalists for the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award for best short science fiction in 1999:

"Dapple: A Hwarhath Historical Romance" by Eleanor Arnason (*Asimov's*, 9/99)

"The Window" by Judith Berman (*Asimov's*, 8/99)

"macs" by Terry Bisson (*F&SF*, 10-11/1999)

"Reality Check" by Michael A. Burstein (*Analog*, 11/99)

"The Giftie" by James Gunn (*Analog*, 9/99)

"Suicide Coast" by M. John Harrison (*F&SF*, 7/99)

"Five Days in April" by Brian Hopkins (*Chiaroscuro Ezine* [www.gothic.net/chiaroscuro/chizine/fivedays.htm](http://www.gothic.net/chiaroscuro/chizine/fivedays.htm), 7/99)

"The Chop Girl" by Ian R. MacLeod (*Asimov's*, 12/99)

"The Wedding Album," by David Marusek (*Asimov's*, 6/99)

"Once Upon a Matter Crushed" by Wil McCarthy (*SF Age*, 7/99)

"Winemaster" by Robert Reed (*F&SF*, 7/99)

"Everywhere" Geoff Ryman (*Interzone*, 2/99)

"Jennifer, Just Before Midnight" by William Sanders (*F&SF*, 8/99)

"Green Tea" by Richard Wadholm (*Asimov's*, 10-11/99)

"Daddy's World" by Walter Jon Williams (*Not of Woman Born*, Constance Ash, ed., *Roc*, 3/99)

James Gunn's story "The Giftie" was declared ineligible.

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For its first eight years, the award was selected by a committee of short-fiction experts headed by Orson Scott Card. Beginning in 1995, the award was selected by a committee composed of James Gunn, Frederik Pohl, and Judith Merrill; after the 1996 awards, Judith Merrill resigned and was replaced by Kij Johnson, the 1994 Sturgeon winner. The semi-finalists were chosen by a committee of some two dozen writers, editors, or reviewers of short SF. The committee was chaired by Dave Truesdale, editor and publisher of the short SF and fantasy review journal *Tangent*, and writer Christopher McKitterick.

This year the committee will also have input from Andros Sturgeon. The 1999 Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award will be presented at a banquet on July 7, 2000 in Lawrence, Kansas, in conjunction with the presentation of the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for Best Novel and the 2000 inductees to the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame.

Inductees in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame were announced at a ceremony held at ConQuesT 31 on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> May. Ted Poovey, Director of the Kansas City Science Fiction and Fantasy Society, announced that Poul Anderson and Gordon R. Dickson will be the 2000 inductees. William Tienken, Hall of Fame Registered Agent, announced that Theodore Sturgeon and Eric Frank Russell will be inducted posthumously.

The Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame was founded in 1996 by the Kansas City Science Fiction and Fantasy Society and the J. Wayne and Elsie M. Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction at the University of Kansas.

## **Plokta.Con by Yvonne Rowse**

With the Plokta cabal organising this I expected it to be a good convention (who would defy Alison Scott?) but it was even better than I expected.

To begin with the hotel was wonderful. I'd never had anything to do with the Holiday Inn chain before but if they all do breakfasts as good as this I will try to always stay in one. Breakfast started at 6.30am and finished at 11.30 and the buffet spread was splendid ranging from succulent fresh fruit salads through cooked to order kippers to standard cooked breakfasts. I'm told the waffles were especially good.

The programming was strong and involved practically everyone. I was on two panels to my horror but managed to hide behind Dave Hicks on one and Claire Brialey on the other. Actually, looking at the programme sheet I suspect the programme was better than this year's Eastercon. Amazing for a hundred person con.

Ken MacLeod was an exceptionally good GoH, being happy to fall into conversation with anyone and interesting as well. Ken must be one of the most accessible and fannish SF writers around. It was a pleasure to see him being honoured this way in a British con.

As is traditional I didn't go to most of the panel items. The ones I caught were mainly fun and interesting. Dave Hicks was, as always, very funny, though without his partner in crime, Mike Siddell. I hope they'll both make it to Novacon this year. The 'How to be a Complete Bitch' panel was, according to Avedon Carol (?) not nearly bitchy enough. Although the panel was all women most of the truly bitchy remarks came from the men at the back (Ian Sorenson, Mike Abbott etc). There were four of us on the cleavage panel, but, as with the bitches panel, it was a small proportion of the talent available. Sue Mason demonstrated her corset, I talked about incubating ducklings in my cleavage and Claire Brialey discussed cleavage as extra purse/handbag.

The single best panel, in my opinion, was the 'Quick on the Draw' panel using the talents of Dave Hicks, Sue Mason and Steve Jeffery. The audience provided a selection of people, situations, places and activities to be mixed and matched to give an idea for a cartoon and the poor victims performed marvels by illustrating many of these sick ideas, for example, Tobes, as Pope, voting with his gonads whilst unicycling over a pit of crocodiles. The results have to be seen to be believed. Subscribe to Plokta now and you'll see them all over the next months.

The potential low spot of the convention was the rugby players who took over the public bar on Sunday night. Rude and obnoxious with only one working brain cell between the lot of them, they stripped off to show the world their attributes. Sadly, the world wasn't very interested. Lilian Edwards discussed internet law with one of them, Alison Scott tried to take a photo of another, but eventually they were all shivering outside looking in at us buying drinks from room service. I reflected how odd we are as a group. We drink large quantities of alcohol, at least on the level of rugby clubs, but manage to be civilised at all times and ignore some of the most insulting taunts thrown at us. Still, we all felt a little pleased to see them stagger off into the distance and leave us in peace.

Altogether then, a very good convention, with a lot of my friends there. In their different ways I have enjoyed all three conventions I've been to this year. I hope, finally, at Novacon, that *everyone* I'd like to see at a con turns up.

[<plokta.con> was held over the weekend 26-29<sup>th</sup> May 2000 at the Holiday Inn, Leicester. Guest of Honour was Ken MacLeod. - MT.]

## **8<sup>th</sup> December Meeting – Skittles Evening**

£10 per ticket, available at Group meetings or by post (cheques to “the Birmingham Science Fiction Group”) from Alan Woodford, The Treasurer, 2 Old Port Close, Tipton, West Midlands, DY9 7XN.

## **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](mailto:wam@wamccabe.freesever.co.uk) - MT.

## **An Apology or Two from Martin Tudor**

Not an auspicious start – I took over from Yvonne in May and the first newsletter was mailed late, now the second is being mailed even later... I'm afraid that both instances have been due to circumstances outside my control. Last month I had a sick computer (now *much* better), this month I have a sick body (not much better yet).

However before Vernon explodes I should mention that that the difference between the customary second class postage to members and the first class I've used in May and June have come from my own pocket.

Next month will be mailed on time – I hope.

## Brum Group Dates for your Diary

9 JUNE 2000: JOHN JARROLD, editor from Simon & Schuster.

14 JULY 2000: ANDY LOUND from the Planetary Society.

11 AUGUST 2000: To be announced.

8 SEPTEMBER 2000: CHRIS MORGAN.

13 OCTOBER 2000: To be announced.

10-12 NOVEMBER 2000: Special Meeting at Novacon 30.

8 DECEMBER 2000: SKITTLES EVENING at the Selly Park Tavern.

12 JANUARY 2000: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

## Brum Group Meeting Information

The **Brum Group** 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). We usually have a Speaker 8-9pm followed by an informal meeting until 10.30pm. Drinks may be purchased from Harvey's Bar on the Mezzanine and taken to our meeting room, usually the Lichfield on the second floor. Admission discounts are at the discretion of the committee and will depend on satisfactory proof of status being produced.

## Committee and Contacts

**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, 2 Old Port Close, Tipton, West Midlands, DY4 7XN (e-mail enquiries [bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk](mailto:bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk)). **Newsletter** Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, WV13 1HX (e-mail to [empties@breathemail.net](mailto:empties@breathemail.net)). **Web**: [www.bsfg.freesevers.com/](http://www.bsfg.freesevers.com/)

## Colophon

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