

Brum Group News

The *Free* Monthly Newsletter of the
**BIRMINGHAM
SCIENCE FICTION GROUP**

MAY 2002

ISSUE 368

Honorary Presidents:

BRIAN W ALDISS

HARRY HARRISON

Committee:

Vernon Brown (Chairman)

Vicky Cook (Secretary)

Pat Brown (Treasurer)

Rog Peyton (Newsletter Editor)

+ Steve Jones & William McCabe

NOVACON 32 Chairman: Martin Tudor

FRIDAY 10TH MAY

PETER WESTON

**THIS YEAR'S FAN GUEST OF HONOUR AT
HELICON, JERSEY, TALKS ABOUT
CONVENTIONS, AVOIDING GETTING
DRUNK, HUM-AND-SWAY SESSIONS
AND HOW TO BECOME
A SECRET MASTER OF FANDOM**

You thought you knew it all? Hah! No way. Peter Weston will introduce you to the part of being a science fiction fan that other fans don't reach.

Reportedly a robot built by the original Birmingham SF Group in the early 60s, he appeared almost overnight with no known history and immediately caused a storm in British fandom. This

man didn't take prisoners. Immediately seeing that British fanzines were full of every subject *except* science fiction he set out to Change the World. If you were a science fiction fan, you talked about SCIENCE FICTION, dammit! His fanzine ZENITH - later SPECULATION - became THE 'zine for all self-respecting SCIENCE

JUNE Meeting - Fantasy author Juliet E McKenna will be talking to the Group.

FICTION fans, containing articles by many famous SF authors such as Frederik Pohl and H Beam Piper among others. In the mid-sixties he wrote a fan column for the BSFA's official journal VECTOR under the pseudonym 'Malcolm Edwards', two full years before the REAL Malcolm Edwards entered British fandom. His foresight was extraordinary.

In 1971, along with Vernon Brown, Bob Rickard and myself, he organised the Eastercon in Worcester, with Anne McCaffrey as Guest of Honour. Three months later, Peter, Vernon and myself started the Birmingham SF Group that is still running now - 31 years on!

He went on to greater glory by being Chairman of a British WorldCon - not once, but twice! How did he manage all this activity? Had he cloned himself? Was there no end to this man's energy and enthusiasm?

But, sadly, there was. All positronic robots have to be recharged and the Weston Mark-PR model was no exception. Dropping out of fandom and the Brum Group after a 25-year plus stint, nothing was heard of him until he visited the Brum Group last year. News of his re-entry into fandom spread quickly and he was invited to be Fan Guest of Honour at this year's Eastercon in Jersey.

And now - fully recharged and ready to attain even greater heights - Peter is back and we welcome him to the Group to talk about his life in fandom, how he feels about his return and how he succeeded in shedding off the problems of rust.

RGP

The meeting will take place in the Lichfield room on the second floor of the Britannia Hotel, New Street (entrance in Union Passage almost opposite the Odeon). It will commence at 7.45pm so please arrive early, get your drinks from the bar and be seated in plenty of time.

At the bottom of the ramp from New Street Station, turn right, cross over the road and you'll find Union Passage about 20-30 yards along.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May 15 - Special Preview of **STAR WARS 2: ATTACK OF THE CLONES** at the USC cinema in the Arcadian Centre, Hurst Street. It will start at 11.40pm (20 minutes to midnight). Tickets are £4.50 each - £3.50 for students and children - and must be bought in advance. To ensure you get your ticket, book with Andy - on his mobile 07970 782686. Andy is also a member of the Birmingham University SF Group and will be making sure that members of both SF Groups are guaranteed tickets.

June 28-30 - the **SCIENCE FICTION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE** will be held at New Lanark, Scotland. Theme of the conference will be Utopias. Guests of Honour are Pat Cadigan, Paul McAuley and Ken MacLeod. Keynote speaker will be Andy Sawyer. Cost is £264.00 (all meals included) for SFRA and SFF members - see website for other fees, etc. Info from 22 Addington Road, Reading, RG1 5PT, UK. email: Farah Mendlesohn - farah@fm3.demon.co.uk

or Andrew Butler,
ambutler@enterprise.net
website: www.sfra.org/sfra2002.htm

August 9-11 - CONTEXXT (UNICON 20) at University of Gloucestershire, Oxon, UK. Guests of Honour: Keith Brooke and Ben Jeapes. Details from Nigel and Sabina Furlong, 17 Cow Lane, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7SZ, UK. email: contexxt@unicon.org.uk
website:
www.cix.co.uk/-bugshaw/uniconwin/

November 1-3 - NOVACON 32 - the Birmingham SF Group's very own convention will be held at the Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall, UK. Guest of Honour - Ian McDonald, author of *DESOLATION ROAD*, *ARES EXPRESS*, *CHAGA*, etc., etc. Cost of registration is £35 - send to NOVACON 32, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.
email: x15@zoom.co.uk

This is the one event that YOU should be attending! It is not too soon to register! Especially if you require a single room.

All details are correct to the best of our knowledge, we advise contacting organisers before travelling. Always enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope when writing to any of the above contact addresses.

Any information about forthcoming SF / Fantasy / Horror events are always welcome - please send to me at rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk, tell me about it in the shop or phone me at the shop on 0121 643 1999.

JOAN HARRISON

It is with great sorrow that we report the death, from cancer, of Joan Harrison - wife of our Honorary President Harry Harrison - on Sunday 21st April.

Joan was well-known to most Brum Group members, having been at many conventions including NOVACONS.

Joan was petite and great fun but with a look that could kill if you upset her. I will always remember one incident that happened in the mid-70s. I'd known Joan for several years but hadn't seen her for about 2-3 years. In that time I'd grown a beard. I was down in London at one of the old Tun meetings and about five or six of us were standing around when Joan and Harry arrived. Joan came up to the group and warmly greeted each fan with a hug and a kiss - except me. Obviously she hadn't recognised me, so I said "Don't I get a hug then?". She gave me that look and turned away - then slowly turned back as some hint of recognition hit her. She looked at me - "Rog?????" Then she threw her arms around me and I got my hug.

I didn't get to see Joan as often as I would have liked but I'll always remember her with great fondness. I'll miss her.

The committee have sent a card from the Group to Harry and their daughter Moira. RGP

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The best-known natural law after $e=mc^2$ is probably Sod's First - "If anything can go wrong it will!" and it has just operated again.

Last month the Committee initiated an advertising campaign. This month Alan Woodford had to resign due to pressure of work leaving us with a couple of problems.

Because Alan appears as a contact on our posers and cards, they are now outdated so please destroy any that we sent you for distribution. If you have put any up, please leave them for the time being and Alan will pass on any contacts for the next month or so. As soon as we get things sorted out we will send you some corrected posters and cards.

We now need another Membership Officer and Treasurer. Pat has volunteered to do the latter for the rest of the year but we still need someone to deal with memberships. The job is obviously important but its not too onerous - it will take, on average, some ten minutes a week plus attending committee meetings once a month in the City centre. Access to a computer is very useful but not absolutely necessary.

We also need one or two people who usually attend Group Meetings and who arrive early, to sell raffle tickets. Although a simple job its important - the Group's financial balance is on a knife-edge and the raffle brings in money that we really need.

If you are interested in any of the above posts/jobs, please contact me at the May or June meetings, or email Rog

at rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk or write to Alan at 2 Old Port Close, Tipton, West Midlands, DY4 7XN before the end of May. VB

ARTHUR C CLARKE AWARD 2002

Nominees for Best Novel are:-

PASHAZADE - Jon Courtney Grimwood
(Earthlight)

FALLEN DRAGON - Peter F Hamilton
(Macmillan)

BOLD AS LOVE - Gwyneth Jones
(Gollancz)

THE SECRET OF LIFE - Paul McAuley
(Voyager)

MAPPA MUNDI - Justina Robson
(Macmillan)

PASSAGE - Connie Willis
(Voyager)

The winner will be announced at the Science Museum, London on May 18th. The winner will receive a cheque for £2002 and an engraved bookend.

2002 NEBULA AWARD NOMINEES

Nominees for Best Novel are:

THE QUANTUM ROSE - Catherine Asaro
(Tor)

ETERNITY'S END - Jeffrey A Carver
(Tor)

MARS CROSSING - Geoffrey A Landis
(Tor)

A STORM OF SWORDS

- George R R Martin (Bantam)

THE COLLAPSIUM - Wil McCarthy
(Del Rey)

THE TOWER AT STONY WOOD

- Patricia A McKillip (Ace)

DECLARE - Tim Powers
(Subterranean Press/Morrow)

PASSAGE - Connie Willis
(Bantam)

THE 2002 HUGO AWARDS - NOMINEES

The nominees for Best Novel are:

THE CURSE OF CHALION

Lois McMaster Bujold (HarperCollins/Eos)

AMERICAN GODS

Neil Gaiman (Morrow)

PERDIDO STREET STATION

by China Miéville (Macmillan UK)

COSMONAUT KEEP

Ken MacLeod (Orbit UK)

PASSAGE

Connie Willis (Bantam)

THE CHRONOLITHS

Robert Charles Wilson (Tor)

JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD for BEST NEW WRITER OF 2000/2001

Tobias S. Buckell

(second year of eligibility)

Alexander C. Irvine

(second year of eligibility)

Wen Spencer

(first year of eligibility)

Jo Walton

(second year of eligibility)

Ken Wharton

(second year of eligibility)

NEWS IN BRIEF

.... **Kim Stanley Robinson's** new epic, **THE YEARS OF RICE AND SALT**, has been published as a HarperCollins general fiction title, not, as originally planned, in their 'Voyager' imprint. Apparently it was decided that this book is NOT science fiction and would therefore appeal to a much wider

audience. The novel is an alternate history of the last 600 years in which the Plague has wiped out the whole of Europe. Of course that's not science fiction!??? the **Philip K Dick Award** for best original paperback SF published in 2001 was awarded to **SHIP OF FOOLS** by **Richard Paul Russo** (Ace books, US) Five Star Books in the US have announced a new series edited by **Martin H Greenberg** focusing on shorter fiction, The first four titles were announced for March 2002 publication - **IMMERSION AND OTHER SHORT NOVELS** by **Gregory Benford**, **HUNTING THE SNARK AND OTHER SHORT NOVELS** by **Mike Resnick**, **BEHIND THE EYES OF DREAMERS AND OTHER SHORT NOVELS** by **Pamela Sargent** and **IN ANOTHER COUNTRY AND OTHER SHORT NOVELS** by **Robert Silverberg**. They are published mainly for the library market so may be difficult to get but **ANDROMEDA** will certainly be trying to get them in **Graham Joyce's** magnificent novel **THE TOOTH FAIRY** is being reissued by Earthlight, and Radar Pictures have optioned the novel for a movie with the screenplay to be written by Graham. His new novel, **THE FACTS OF LIFE**, has been sold to Gollancz **Fred Saberhagen** has sold a new *Berserker* novel **BERSERKER PRIME** to Tor **Robert Rankin** moves from Transworld/Doubleday to Gollancz. The first novel has been handed in - it's called **THE HOLLOW CHOCOLATE BUNNIES OF THE APOCALYPSE** **Meisha Merlin** are to publish an omnibus volume of the first two *Kedrigern* novels and six short stories

ANDROMEDA IS BACK!

Yes, ANDROMEDA is back and now open for business at its usual premises 2-5 Suffolk Street. The assets of the old company (Andromeda Book Co Ltd.) were bought for an undisclosed sum on April 19th by Boomclear Ltd who are based in Walsall and who also own DUNGEONS AND STARSHIPS in Digbeth. The shop opened the next day.

The new name is ANDROMEDA BOOKSHOPS LTD. I have been appointed manager and eventually all the staff will be re-employed. After three months closure, it will obviously take some time to get up to speed again. But new stock is now being ordered and the shelf-refilling will commence, hopefully, next week. About 40 boxes that had been stuck in New York have now arrived and are on the shelves. At present, it is not known if we will be staying in Suffolk Street. The lease ran out on April 19th but the new owners have obtained a short extension and are negotiating for a longer term.

Alternatively, we may be combined with DUNGEONS AND STARSHIPS in new, bigger premises in the City centre. It will be ironic if that happens as DUNGEONS AND STARSHIPS was started in ANDROMEDA's basement over 25 years ago!

Watch this space or visit our website for up-to-the-minute news - www.andromedabook.co.uk

RGP

**ANDROMEDA BOOKSHOPS LTD
2-5 SUFFOLK STREET
BIRMINGHAM B1 1LT**

Tel: 0121 643 1999 Fax: 0121 643 2001

by **John Morressy**. Ace originally published all five (six?) *Kedrigern* novels in the 80s but something went terribly wrong. The first book sold extremely well. So did the second. By the time the third book was published, the first two were out of print. Book 2 was reprinted - but not Book 1! Without the first volume available, the sales dropped quickly. This type of thing is happening all too frequently with non-interested staff at publishers relying completely on computers Paramount have optioned film rights to the 8-book series *The Lost Regiment* by **William R Forstchen** There's a new *Hammer's Slammers* novel by **David Drake** due in July - *PAYING THE PIPER* will be a \$23.00 hardcover Ace books have repurchased the *Liaden Universe* series by **Sharon Lee** and **Steve Miller**. They originally published three of the series nearly 20 years ago. Since then, the series has attained cult status and a further five volumes (2 prequels and 3 sequels) have appeared in hardcover. Volume 1 - *LOCAL CUSTOM* - was published in March and Vol 2 - *SCOUT'S PROGRESS* appeared April 30th. The other volumes will appear at quarterly intervals **R A Lafferty** died in March, aged 87. His novels included *PAST MASTER*, *ARRIVE AT EASTERWINE* and *FOURTH MANSIONS* **Jack Williamson** celebrated his 94th birthday on April 29th **Dave Langford** has received NESFA's **Edward E Smith** Memorial 'Skylark' Award for Imaginative Fiction **Katherine Kurtz** has resold the original *Deryni* trilogy - *DERYNI RISING*, *DERYNI CHECKMATE* and *HIGH DERYNI* - to Ace. One wonders

what the Del Rey editors are thinking of, letting these books go. Yes, they're 30 years old but they have never been out of print until last year. They've sold steadily and have been good income for Del Rey. All three books will be revised to bring them in line with later books in the series. If you **ONLY** read SF I really can recommend this series - this is fantasy worth reading - all the 'magic' can easily be read as teleportation, etc., - good old science fiction themes! In June, Tor are about to prove that hardcovers of old paperbacks **DO** sell by issuing *A STAINLESS STEEL TRIO* by **Harry Harrison** - a hardcover omnibus of *STAINLESS STEEL RAT IS BORN*, *...GETS DRAFTED* and *...SINGS THE BLUES*. Plus hardcover editions of **L Sprague de Camp & Lin Carter's** *CONAN THE LIBERATOR* and **Gordon R Dickson's** *DORSAI SPIRIT* (presumably *SPIRIT OF DORSAI* and *LOST DORSAI*) Baen books are about to issue (in August) *MEDSHIP* by **Murray Leinster**. This will be (hopefully) the four Med Ship books in one volume. I say hopefully because over a decade ago Ace issued *THE COMPLETE MEDSHIP* and missed out one book! The four volumes are *DOCTOR TO THE STARS* (the missing volume!), *THIS WORLD IS TABOO*, *THE MUTANT WEAPON* and *S.O.S FROM THE STARS* a new *Beastmaster* novel - *BEASTMASTER'S ARK* from **Andre Norton** and **Lyn McConchie** will appear in hardcover from Tor in June I've been rather surprised by the rave reviews **Anne Rice** has been giving the new books by

Alice Borchardt over the past couple of years. She doesn't usually give her name to 'blurb raves'. While watching a programme on **Anne Rice** on the Biography Channel recently, I discovered that **Alice Borchardt** thinks a hell of a lot about **Anne Rice**. Apparently she's her sister.... Ooops.



BOOK REVIEWS



(**REVIEWERS** please note:- in future all reviews should be emailed direct to me at rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk) Deadline for each issue is the 1st of the month.

Well - I didn't expect this - no reviews! What's happened to everyone? Loads of books have been given out for review - not all of them have been reviewed. Admittedly during the last month there has been nothing given out but several reviewers have not given the reviews they promised. Come ON now! You know who you are - let's have those reviews for the next issue.

BRING AND BUY BOOKS

It's obviously time to remind you to bring along some books to the meeting so that you can sell or swap with other members. No-one has bought

anything to the group for some time - so let's have a concentrated effort this month. It's obviously not possible that you want to keep EVERY book you buy - surely there's a few items you just KNOW you'll never read again. So bring them along and make the time either side of the talk, a lot more interesting.

THE RAFFLE

Where would the Group be without the monthly raffle? We need more of your money so please make sure you buy your tickets at the door while you are paying your entrance fee. You only have to make one payment to the Treasurer instead of two. It'll hurt less - trust me!

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Thanks to Martin Tudor for news and info this month.

The **BRUM GROUP Website** address is www.bsfg.freesevers.com/ Contributions, ideas, etc. always welcome.

The Birmingham Science Fiction Group meets on the second Friday of each month at the Britannia Hotel, New Street. Membership is £16 per year per person (or £21 for two members living at the same address). This includes the 12 free issues of the Newsletter plus reduced entrance fee at each meeting. Cheques should be made payable to "The Birmingham Science Fiction Group" and sent to our Treasurer, Pat Brown, 106 Green Lanes, Wykle Green, Sutton Coldfield West Midlands, B73 5JH