

Brum Group News

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

OCTOBER 2002 ISSUE 373

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+ Steve Jones & William McCabe

NOVACON 32 Chairman: Martin Tudor

Friday 11th OCTOBER

IAN EDGINTON

Comics writer & SF fan

Local SF fan Ian Edginton blames his downfall into an unemployable social reject on Dave Holmes and Rog Peyton. He discovered *Andromeda* 26 years ago and hasn't been the same since.

Ian now earns his living writing comics for the US, UK and European markets - classic comic mainstays such as *BATMAN*, *THE HULK*, the *X-MEN* and *SPIDER-MAN* as well as his own creations. He has been nominated for the prestigious Eisner Award in the US and an *EAGLE* Award in the UK. He has worked with film companies ranging from Paramount,

Lucasfilm and 20th Century Fox on such properties as *ALIEN*, *STAR WARS*, *PREDATOR*, *TERMINATOR* and most recently *PLANET OF THE APES*. His TV credits include *STAR TREK* and *XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS*.

Ian has just finished writing a 64-page sequel to H G Wells's *WAR OF THE WORLDS* and just had an on-line *STAR TREK* novella published by Pocket Books as part of the 'Starfleet Core of Engineers' line.

Ian's talk this month is titled, "I Sold My Soul to Science Fiction!".

RGP

November Meeting - will be our usual meeting where we pit our wits (or lack of) against the University SF Group. This year they have chosen a quiz, NOT a debate.

'DAN DARE' REVISITED

BY VERNON BROWN

I can clearly remember encountering Dan Dare and the EAGLE for the first time - it was in the early 50s, upstairs, front seat on a Midland Red bus in Stephenson Street, waiting to visit my uncle's farm in Wales. The story was part-way through "The Red Moon Mystery" and on my return I scoured the newsagents to get back issues right back to the start, after which I read EAGLE for years. Since then, of course, Dan Dare has passed into the language and cropped up everywhere from a wall painting in the Science Museum to a political cartoon strip. So I looked forward for over a year to the Channel 5 computer-generated version that is now being shown at 8.55am every Saturday.

Inevitably, I suppose, there are changes. Dan is now dark-haired and muscular, Sondar is about nine feet tall and his steps shake the earth, while Prof Peabody should now be called Prof Melonstorso and has a massive crush on Dan. However, Digby, Hank and Sir Hubert have not changed although the Mekon is more evil-looking than ever.

The storylines are an interesting mixture of EAGLE, BOY'S OWN and modern PC. The background era is pure EAGLE - mankind's first foray into space, sloping launch pads and all. But while a crash-landed spaceman is worshipped as a god by aliens, the blue Therons are no longer descendants of kidnapped Atlanteans but another green Treen race. And women's coats button

left-over-right and everyone salutes American-style.

One thing that does annoy me, though, is that the series contains a lot of inaccuracies. For example, Mars is in the Asteroid Belt (or vice versa) and there's a planet inside the Sun (and inhabited at that!). It's also internally inconsistent at times. Frank Hampson, the original 50s artist, was renowned for his accuracy; he used friends and relatives to pose to get angles right, had shelves of scale models and called on scientific advisors as necessary. In fact, legend has it that the Armed Forces took EAGLE to give them an up-to-date slant on things.

However, the programme is worth watching, video it if it is an awkward time for you. It's light viewing (no thinking required) without being stupid or full of gore as many such programmes are. This makes it a bit puzzling because it's probably not comic super-hero enough for today's youngsters, or serious/ traditional enough for SF fans who remember the era. I'm a bit surprised the producers have gambled £15 million on making it.

There's also something I noticed that makes me wonder whether the scriptwriters are enjoying a bit of fun. Dan's latest exploit is about an outpost on Pluto which I thought very reminiscent of a certain famous Foreign Legion novel: when one character says "It is a beau jest.", I was certain. And the logo of one of the firm's involved in making the series, appears in the background of one scene as a force-field antenna. I don't know how many of these sort of things I have missed but it will add to the fun of watching future

episodes. Overall verdict - not classic Dan Dare, not classic SF but worth watching. VB

Vernon's comments on items seen in METRO for Thursday, September 26th...

FAN-TASTIC

"Generally a word has to be used five times in five different places over five years to get into the Oxford English Dictionary."

So says spokeswoman Claire Turner. Which, although it seems a bit woolly to me means that another half dozen SF terms have been accepted into the ranks of the English language.

Klingons, warp drive, Jedi, the Force, the Dark Side and Tardis all appear in the new OED, the first for ten years. But the Hugo Award-winning *Harry Potter* novels' terminology will have to wait until the next edition, Muggle only appears as slang for a reefer. VB

A.I. MOVES ON

Mankind's old fears about being taken over or overthrown by his own creation will take another step towards realisation this month when Deep Fritz 7, an unbeaten electronic chess-player capable of analysing three million moves per second, plays world chess champion Vladimir Kramnik. In a match five years ago between another computer and a chess master, the computer won amid allegations of fraud, but this time there will be an undisputed winner. Could this be the thin end of the wedge that we fans have been reading about for years? VB

And on an item seen in NEW SCIENTIST for Saturday, September 28th...

SHADES OF 'JURASSIC PARK'

Archosaurs were ancient reptiles that gave rise to dinosaurs, alligators and birds among other animal groups before dying out some 240 million years ago. Now scientists have recreated some of their material.

Rhodopsins are a group of light-sensitive substances found in the eyes, each one being sensitive to a particular wavelength. Different species have different rhodopsins depending on their lifestyle.

The scientists studied the DNA sequences of the genes governing rhodopsin production in modern animals and then used the evolutionary relationships between these species to work back along the family tree to predict the most likely DNA sequence in the archosaurs gene. They then synthesized the sequence and used it to make the corresponding rhodopsin.

They were surprised to find that the rhodopsin functioned well at low light levels, suggesting that the animals had good night vision like mammals, rather than being just daylight types as had hitherto been thought. This implies that dinosaurs could have had the same, so there would be no respite for the stranded time-traveller at night.

JURASSIC PARK it ain't, yet, but it has potential. I remember a story about modifying a developing chicken egg to produce a dinosaur. Does anyone know one based on the above technique? VB

BRITISH FANTASY AWARDS

The 2002 British Fantasy Awards were announced on 21st September 2002 at the BFS Convention at Champagne Charlie's, London.

Best Novel

(The August Derleth Award)

Simon Clark, **THE NIGHT OF THE TRIFFIDS** (Hodder & Stoughton)

Best Collection

Paul Finch, **AFTERSHOCKS** (Ash Tree Press)

Best Anthology

Stephen Jones, ed., **THE MAMMOTH BOOK OF BEST NEW HORROR: VOLUME TWELVE** (Robinson)

Best Short Fiction

Simon Clark, **"Goblin City Lights"** (URBAN GOTHIC: LACUNA AND OTHER TRIPS)

Best Artist

Jim Burns

Best Small Press

PS Publishing

WORLD FANTASY AWARD NOMINATIONS

Best Novel

FROM THE DUST RETURNED

Ray Bradbury

THE CURSE OF CHALION

Lois McMaster Bujold

THE WOODEN SEA

Jonathan Carroll

THE ONION GIRL

Charles de Lint

AMERICAN GODS

Neil Gaiman

THE OTHER WIND

Ursula K LeGuin

BROWN HARVEST

Jay Russell

A full list in other categories appears in the September issue of LOCUS - its 500th issue!!!

WORLDCON 2005

The 2005 Worldcon will be held in Glasgow 4-8th August. Guests of Honour will be Greg Pickersgill, Christopher Priest, Robert Shekley, Lars Olov Strandberg and Jane Yolen. Write to "Interaction", 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S2 3HQ, UK. Membership is £75. Emails to info@interaction.worldcon.org.uk or visit their website:- www.interaction.worldcon.org.uk

LETTERS

From Robert Day in Coventry...

"Try this website. It has the most laughable instructions for avoiding alien abductions you'll ever see, which the writer claims were inspired by the writings of E.E. 'Doc' Smith!

It does, however, claim to be a 'serious' UFO site, but it contains some of the worst faked UFO pictures you'll ever see (no training in use of digital imaging software necessary) and a questionnaire "Have you ever been abducted by aliens?" which is actually a pretty good self-diagnosis tool for schizophrenia...

<http://www.stopabductions.com>

The only problem is that the site owner is going to think there's massive

interest in his rantings because of all the hits he's getting...

Also from Robert... a report seen on the internet... "Jodee Berry, a former 'Hooters' waitress, has sued the restaurant where she worked, claiming that her employers promised her a new Toyota for winning a beer sales contest in April. Berry, 26, believed she had won a new car, but she was blindfolded, taken to the parking lot and presented with a toy Yoda, the little green guy from STAR WARS."

As Robert says... "You couldn't make it up!"

YOUR TOP TEN LISTS...

Next time, maybe....

NEWS IN BRIEF

.... The SF world loses another two authors... **Lloyd Biggle Jr**, 79, died September 12th after a 20-year battle with leukemia and cancer. He was the author of **THE ANGRY ESPERS**, **ALL THE COLOURS OF DARKNESS**, **THE WORLD MENDERS**, **THE STILL SMALL VOICE OF TRUMPETS** and **MONUMENT** among others. In recent years he had concentrated more on mystery novels... **Robert L Forward**, 70, died of brain cancer on September 21st. He was the author of **DRAGON'S EGG**, *the Rocheworld* novels, **FLIGHT OF THE DRAGONFLY**, etc. The Sci-Fi Channel has cancelled a fifth season of **FARSCAPE** **Forrest J Ackerman's** collection of SF and movie memorabilia is being sold off on eBay in order to

raise money to pay legal costs. The Ackermansion is now empty - it once housed 300,000 items **SUPERMAN** star **Christopher Reeve**, who is paralysed from the neck down, blamed the Catholic church and President Bush for obstructing research that might free him from his wheelchair, the Reuters news service reported. Reeve told the British **GUARDIAN** newspaper that the Bush administration had caved in on the issue of embryonic stem-cell research after the Catholic church expressed opposition to cloning, Reuters reported. "If we'd had full government support, full government funding for aggressive research using embryonic stem cells from the moment they were first isolated, at the University of Wisconsin in the winter of 1998, I don't think it unreasonable to speculate that we might be in human trials by now," Reeve said. Reeve added that he was "angry and disappointed" that Bush had hampered developments in stem-cell research, which might have led to human trials aimed at rebuilding the nervous systems of quadriplegics Disney/Pixar's animated fantasy film **MONSTERS, INC.** sold over 5 million copies on DVD and VHS on the first day of release!!! "Harry Potter" author **J K Rowling** has announced she is pregnant - Harry (or Harriette) will be born next spring (Oh! Come ON - what else is she going to call it? Muggle?) fans of **Jack McDevitt** (and I know there are several in the Group) will be pleased to hear that a new novel, **CHINDI**, is out in hardcover from Ace. It's the 3rd novel featuring starship pilot Priscilla 'Hutch' Hutchins ... also pleased, will be fans

of **Robert Asprin** who is back with **SOMETHING M.Y.T.H. INC.** due in October from Tor in the US is **WHITE APPLES** by **Jonathan Carroll** Just when you thought you were safe from bondage - **John Norman** fans can now look forward to two new novels in the *Gor* series - the first books in 14 years. Books 26 and 27 are **WITNESS OF GOR** and **PRIZE OF GOR** **Peter Hamilton** has sold three novels 'in a major deal' to Del Rey in the US - stand-alone **MISSPENT YOUTH** and epic SF pair **PANDORA'S STAR** and **JUDAS UNLEASHED**. The first two have already been sold to his UK publisher Subterranean Press has issued **FIRST MEETINGS** by **Orson Scott Card** containing the original 1977 "Ender's Game" combined with two others, one, previously unpublished, features Ender's father as a child the reissue of **Ray Bradbury's FAHRENHEIT 451** is #1 bestselling SF paperback at both Barnes & Noble/B Dalton and Amazon.com while it is #2 on Walden/Borders (**THE HOBBIT** is their #1) Amazon's bestselling hardcover for August was **THE CROSSROADS OF TWILIGHT** by **Robert Jordan** - very surprising as the book is published in November and hadn't even been printed in August! **Roger Zelazny's** world of *Amber* lives on - **THE DAWN OF AMBER** by **John Gregory Betancourt** is out from ibooks - it's the first in a 'trolley' (presumably a misprint for trilogy!) Hope the proof-reading inside is of a better standard) and talking of books in threes, **DANGEROUS VISIONS** edited by Harlan Ellison is now available in

one volume with three different covers for the Special 35th Anniversary Editions. Hardcover and trade paperback. Wonder if **THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS** will appear on its 35th Anniversary of first announced publication???

RGP



BOOK REVIEWS



THE VISITOR

by *Sheri S Tepper*

Gollancz / 407pgs / £17.99 hcvr and £10.99 trade paperback

Reviewed by Lesley Mazey

Rating *****

Following a cataclysmic asteroid strike, most of the earth's population is wiped out. The few that remain, the Spared, struggle to rebuild society. They create a world where the Regime control everything by inflicting fear on the people, where 'Scientism' (any non-Regimic act) is considered heresy and the dying, sick and rebellious are 'bottled' - small amounts of their flesh placed into a bottle wall and the remainder destroyed.

Disme is alone. Her entire family lost in a series of bizarre circumstances, she is forced to live with her cruel and abusive stepmother and stepsister. Before being bottled, her father gave her a sacred book, the journal of Nell Latimer. Nell, a scientist, is an ancestor of Disme's and bravely left her husband and family to try and salvage something

of the post-apocalyptic world. Although the Regime insists that evil entities exist outside the cities, myths exist that tell of a group of beings that will save the planet and bring the world back into the light. But, where there is good there is usually evil and here this takes the form of a malevolent entity that sleeps deep in the Earth. However, it is beginning to stir.

At first appearances, this is a fantasy story. There is magic, mysterious creatures, a wicked step-mother and a heroine. Yet, very quickly it becomes obvious that this is, in reality, pure Science Fiction. We are led into a post-apocalyptic Earth society where the few, the Regime, exercise strict control over the Spared. They rule by fear. To be considered un-Regimic results, at least, in confinement in agony to a mechanical chair. At worst the dissident is bottled.

The story is told from two sides. There is the story of Nell Latimer, a scientist, who is directly involved in the attempt to salvage something of the world. She makes the difficult decision to leave her family and join a group of scientists in Omega site. Here they will store irradiated food, knowledge and genetic material. The scientists spend 96 years of each century asleep and are woken in shifts, for four years, to monitor the development of the world outside.

We are also told the story of Disme; a young woman who finds herself increasingly dissatisfied with the Regimic life. Reading Nell's journal she begins to feel drawn to a destiny that she cannot comprehend. She struggles to survive in this restrictive

society, trying to follow her own path without being denounced as an un-Regimic heretic.

I have long been a fan of Sheri Tepper's writing and, yet again, I have not been disappointed. The Visitor is possibly one of her best works to date. It is not an easy read but it is certainly worth the effort. The reader can feel the anguish of Nell as she leaves her husband and children to almost certain death and puts the good of the world above her own family.

Absolutely superb! LM

LOST IN A GOOD BOOK

by Jasper Fforde

NEL / 372p / £6.99 / pbk

Reviewed by Steve Mazey

Rating * * * * *

To give you an idea of what this book is about is rather simple. Due to the movement of certain county boundaries, one of the characters in this book now refers to himself (in order to be technically correct) as the 'Unitary Authority of Warrington Cat', but he does still smile a lot and occasionally vanish.

Like the first in the series this book is set in an alternate, and very surreal, 1985. Having defeated Acheron Hades in the first book, Thursday Next has returned to the Swindon Literatec Office and married Landen Parke-Laine. Life, though, is going to be anything but ordinary.

Having defeated Hades and altered the ending of JANE EYRE - most people thinking for the better - she finds she is a celebrity now, and is being used by the PR department to

show the positive side of Special Operations, and is reluctantly appearing on TV chat shows and meeting members of the public, but wants to draw the line at the thought of the Thursday Next Workout Video.

In addition to this circus she has to get on with her job, and is sent to investigate claims of a lost Shakespearean manuscript having been discovered in the previously uncatalogued library of one of England's noble houses.

Life seems to be back to normal until she discovers that her husband died thirty eight years earlier at the age of two years, and she is the only person with a memory of him. Enter the Goliath Corporation and their operative Mr Schitt-Hawse, half brother to the previous operative, Mr Jack Schitt, trapped in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" in the first book. They want him back and are willing to play dirty in order to get him.

There is such a lot going on in this book, and most of it is bizarre. From meeting various fictional characters, taking trips in various classics of literature, some fairly odd coincidences, migrations of re-engineered Woolly Mammoths and a political campaign - it's a wonder it all fits in this novel without seeming a complete incomprehensible mess. But the author has managed to blend all this into a compelling story, albeit a very strange, surreal story.

I am now just waiting for the third book. The only downer I found about the whole book came from its marketing. On the back of the book it's described as Fiction: General. On

Amazon it's listed as Crime, Thrillers & Mysteries. Well I'm not too sure here but a story involving an alternate Earth, various strange technologies including re-engineering of extinct species and the ability to psychically enter fictional worlds would to me classify this in fantasy or science fiction.

Maybe the fact that it has a fairly high literary content must make it too serious a piece of literature for us in the SF-world. But that grievance aside, this is a wonderful book and you should enjoy it. *SM*

<<These reviews reprinted with permission from Steve Mazey's website...
<http://www.eternalnight.co.uk> - RGP >>

(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.



FILM ROUND-UP BY VICKY COOK



This seems to have become the year for SF in the cinema world. Apart from the big two, with STAR WARS and SPIDER-MAN both bringing in the big bucks, there are plenty of other choices if you tend to steer away from big-hype, popcorn candy. Philip K Dick is the in-thing at the moment, especially after the success of MINORITY REPORT. This film at first suffered the misfortune of being

compared to the rather incomparable BLADE RUNNER. But it is a worthy film in its own right.

Based on one of Dick's short stories, it features the talents of Spielberg and Tom Cruise. The director is in full intense mood, though as he has himself confessed, in *Empire*, he felt that he should maintain the rather light-hearted mood of a classic SF movie, as in giving the bald aliens mad wires coming out of their heads. Cruise does well, continuing the fine form he has been showing recently, and he is matched and nearly upstaged by the excellent Colin Farrell, who deserves to have a leading role in the near future. I really enjoyed the film and felt it was a good rendition of Dick's intense, claustrophobic style, with the usual Dick-sian themes of paranoia and futuristic crime-thriller scenarios. One to watch.

A less publicised and, rather unfortunately, slated film is IMPOSTOR (out on video shortly), another Dick adaptation. This falls into the category of being one of those films that is actually quite good, but one to which the critics have taken an intense dislike. Sadly a lot of good films, often SF or Fantasy ones, tend to have this happen to them, so they slip into obscurity at the cinema only to re-emerge as popular videos.

IMPOSTOR stars the inimitable Gary Sinise, who does a wonderful job as the top scientist who gets framed as an android spy, and finds the dogged agent Hathaway on his trail, determined to find out the truth and kill him before he blows up the Chancellor he is programmed to destroy. Thus comes the

usual paranoia theme, is he/isn't he, and if not who is? Nice little twists to the tale, downsides being the falling into cliché, with the token black rebel character and 2-Dimensional bad guy. Madeleine Stowe looks effectively distressed as Sinise's wife, but it is Gary who is the star. He departs from his usual introverted style for a far more physical role here, but still managed to bring a certain sense of pathos to the character, luring the audience into his web. I have not watched a film in ages where I have emoted so much for the character.

Other things on recently include MIIB - MEN IN BLACK 2. Yes it is a sequel, possibly not needed for the brilliant first film, but from what I see, it is equally funny, even if it loses some of the freshness and originality of the first film. The production team seems to have decided to add a few more special effects this time round, but unfortunately this does not a great film make, and MIIB will ever dwell in the shadow of its predecessor.

Nice to see the wonderfully inspired casting of Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones continuing, with Jones a bit more aware of his comic status this time round, and Smith continuing the loveable role of Agent J, sent to find the recently retired Agent K. The talking dog, Frank, returns and is probably the best thing in it, along with a wonderful locker microcosm joke sequence, which made up for any other shortcomings. I did enjoy it, but then I loved the first one and did not mind the repeated jokes and similar save-the-world storyline. Bit hit and miss then this one.

Out now and worth a look is SIGNS, starring Mel Gibson. About a family bearing up against possible end-of-the-world type stuff, it has had mixed reviews, some critics being less than complimentary about the ending, as well as the slow pace. To my mind they were over-harsh. The tension is built up nicely, which, along with a generally dreamy feeling to the whole thing, and clever use of camera shots and lighting, led to the out-of-this-world sense that is central to understanding this film. The family are facing the end of the world, like INDEPENDENCE DAY, but there we saw the whole world, the President etc. undergoing trauma, whereas here there is more of a microcosm effect with just one small family, in the same position as the rest of the world, but trapped in their house and unable to get help.

This is brilliantly conveyed, with excellent performances from Gibson and Phoenix, and surprisingly good roles for the kids too - Rory Culkin seeming to rise above his other more famous siblings in acting ability. Don't listen to those critics, this is a brilliant film, and the ending (watch out for the blatant copying from the Triffids film) is not all that bad - so much more was at issue here, with the characters, especially Gibson's lead, going through their life-changing experiences in more ways than one.

More to come, from the gossip: THII: RISE OF THE MACHINES is about to start filming, 11 years after the last one. An example of a film series to be left alone to its immortality? THII was indeed better than the first one, but I am doubtful as to the status of this latest

one. Back then Arnie had not made the duds he is renowned for now.

ONE OF US is an ET-type caper, starring teenage favourite, Matthew Perry. TOMB RAIDER II is a definite uh-oh, with Angelina Jolie taking the title role again. Possibly more interesting is a remake of SOUND OF THUNDER, Ray Bradbury's short story, about a man going back in time and accidentally killing a butterfly...It will star Ben Kingsley.

Meanwhile Tom Cruise, clearly enjoying his run of SF movies, is said to be starring in an updated film version (read those words and shudder) of WAR OF THE WORLDS... VC

THE RAFFLE

Raffle tickets are available as soon as you get to the meeting. You do NOT have to wait until the break when someone twists your arm - do it voluntarily.

The Group needs your cash to pay visiting authors' expenses, the salubrious surroundings of our regular meeting room, etc. It's just a quid - not even the price of half a pint! And you could WIN this month's prize...

IMPORTANT NOTE

I HAVE DECIDED TO START UP SELLING BOOKS AGAIN - SECOND-HAND & REMAINDERS ONLY TO START WITH. I'LL BE SELLING ON EBAY AND LISTS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON HARD COPY AND BY EMAIL. Rog Peyton, 19 Eves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham B32 3QL and rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk

THE CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

Date: Friday 13th December 2002
Time: 7.30pm onwards (till approx. 11pm)
Place: The Lighthouse public house, Coombs Road, Halesowen
Cost: £10 per person
Programme: Meal, 9-pin skittles, prizes, a good time

OK, that's our side of things organised. All we need now is YOU, as soon as possible. If you have been to a Group Christmas Social before, you know what to expect. If you haven't, come along and find out

Getting there - we will all meet at the number 9 bus stop in Colmore Row at 6.30pm. The price is 95p. We will travel to Halesowen (about a 30 minute trip). At Halesowen we will get a taxi to the venue which should be under £1.50 each presuming 4 sharing a taxi.

What do we do when we get there? Essentially we play skittles - the original 9-pin manual game, not the 10-pin automatic type. It's a great fun evening - we play normal, left-handed, backwards, knockout and various other ways to make sure that even a novice can win one of our Prizes. We've yet to try it blindfolded but This Could Be The Year! Between games we chat and generally socialise. There are Prizes galore. About 8.30/8.45pm we have the meal and the whole evening finishes about 11pm. We have our own private room, a well-stocked bar with a choice of guest beers, loos, etc. What more do we need?

Well, we DO have to know how many are coming so that we can order the food and arrange a coach back to the city centre. During the Christmas period, coach companies will be fairly heavily booked so we need to book WELL in advance. **So we need to know by October 31st at the VERY latest.**

Meals. There are basket and balti available. Basket meals are scampi, chicken, vegetable lasagne or beefburger, all with chips and salad. **or** faggots, mushy peas and chips. The balti are chicken or vegetable with naan bread and salad. Please let us know your first and second choices when you buy your ticket.

When you buy your tickets please also let us know whether you will be making your own arrangements or whether you will need transport back to the city. The return transport is all included in the price of your ticket!

Please send your cheques made out to the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, together with your name and address (AND YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER), whether you want the coach back and your meal choices to Pat Brown, 106 Green Lanes, Wyld Green, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5JH, or pay Vernon at the October meeting. PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT ALL INFORMATION SENT.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Central Library SF and Fantasy Reading Group meets on Thursdays at 6pm to 7pm monthly, at the Central Library, Chamberlain Square, B3 3HQ. It's a small friendly group meeting to discuss SF & fantasy books. Contact person is Pam Gaffney on (0121) 303 3634. Future meetings and subjects are:-

Oct 17th - I, ROBOT by Isaac Asimov

Nov 14th - THE SUMMER TREE by Guy Gavriel Kay

Dec 12th - AUTOMATED ALICE by Jeff Noon.

October 19-20 - OCTOCON at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin, Ireland. Guest of Honour: China Mieville.

UK agent for the con is Dave Lally, 64 Richbourne Terrace, London SW8 1AX.

email: info@octocon.com

website: www.octocon.com/2002/index.php

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: xl5@zoom.co.uk **BOOK NOW!**

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

FUTURE MEETINGS

January 11th 2003 - the Annual General Meeting at which you will get your chance to air your views about the group and vote for next year's committee.

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Thanks to William McCabe, Martin Tudor and to LOCUS for news and info this month, not forgetting the named contributors in this issue.

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

ABOUT US...

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, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield West Midlands, B73 5JH