

Brum Group News

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

MARCH 2003 ISSUE 378

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+ Steve Jones & William McCabe

NOVACON 33 Chairman: Martin Tudor

March Meeting (Friday 14th at 7.45pm)

CHRISTOPHER PRIEST

It's been a few years since Chris Priest visited the Brum Group - I remember it well because I missed it!!! I'd been forced, at the last moment, to change the dates of my holiday! Arline just didn't understand why I was so grumpy on the Friday evening....

For over 30 years Chris has entertained us with some of the best fiction around. Call it SF, call it fantasy, call it just plain Fiction - every novel is wonderfully entertaining. Chris has produced a body of work that (in my humble opinion) stands above the work of any other novelist since 1970. Just look at the titles - INDOCTRINAIRE, FUGUE FOR A DARKENING ISLAND, INVERTED WORLD (British SF Award winner), REAL-TIME WORLD, THE SPACE MACHINE (his homage to H G Wells), A DREAM OF WESSEX (an awesome novel), AN INFINITE SUMMER, THE AFFIRMATION, THE GLAMOUR, THE QUIET WOMAN, THE PRESTIGE (World Fantasy Award winner though Chris insists it is SF), THE EXTREMES, THE DREAM ARCHIPELAGO, THE SEPARATION plus numerous other novels written under closely-guarded pseudonyms - John Luther Novak (movie novelisation of EXISTENZ) and Colin Wedglock (movie novelisation of SHORT CIRCUIT) being the only two that

April Meeting - still to be finalised.

Chris hasn't quite managed to keep secret. To say that he has been unlucky with his publishers is an understatement. I've heard a lot of his stories over the years - maybe he'll let us into a few more at this meeting... RGP

OUR NEW MEETING PLACE

Currently we meet at The Old Joint Stock, ideally situated in the city centre, a few minutes walk from road, rail and Metro stations, in Temple Row overlooking St Philips Cathedral. It's in the upstairs room - through the pub on right hand side, right to the back corner and up the stairs. Our meeting room is opposite the top of the stairs, slightly to the left. But the doors should be open...

In February, our first regular meeting at our new venue proved to be popular, with the attendance one of the highest we've had in the last three years - though our speaker had a LOT to do with that. It was the first time I'd been to the Old Joint Stock and I was favourably impressed. Finding my way to the meeting room itself proved more difficult than I'd thought it would be, having left my map, instructions and compass at home! I was one of the first there and having reached the top of the stairs, was confronted by several doors. Eventually I tried to open the correct one...

It was certainly a HUGE improvement on the Britannia. RGP

<<Last month we ran a news item about Dave Hardy being on SKY AT NIGHT. Dave mentioned that not everything had gone as planned, so we asked him to write up his experiences...RGP>>

A HARD DAY'S SKY AT NIGHT

David A Hardy

At a 75th Anniversary of the British Interplanetary Society last year (no, I haven't been a member for that long - just 50!), Patrick Moore said to me, "How would you like to do a SKY AT NIGHT on space art?" I said, "Yes, of course - how would we do it?" "Entirely up to you. It would be under your control - you decide what pictures to use, what we talk about; just tell me what you want and we'll do it..."

(Sir) Patrick of course thought this was his own idea, but I have in fact been mentioning it at intervals for years, and he's always said, "Yes, good idea -- I'll mention it to my producer." But, as was so kindly pointed out on MIDLANDS TODAY on February 4th, it has taken 45 years to actually happen! Anyway, better late than never. However, a few weeks before we were due to record the programme his producer (a relatively new one; a young Scottish lady called Jane) informed me that Patrick wanted to include a very short interview with a *young* space artist, Tony Wilmot [correct spelling], together with a competition to paint a

Mars Base. Fine, except that this meant the BBC car which was to drive me down to Patrick's home would now have to go via Leicester to pick up Tony on its way to Selsey, Sussex. Not exactly *en route*.

Never mind. 23 January dawned fine and clear, the car arrived at 7.30am, and we reached our destination(s) safely, thanks to one of those in-car navigation devices which, in sexy female tones, say things like "At the next roundabout take the third exit". Setting up for the recording with a cameraman, a sound woman (person?), and a researcher called Jean (French style), who, as far as I could see hadn't had anything to do since I'd done all the research myself, we hit our first snag. Jane had visited me a few weeks earlier to see the images I had selected, for which I had contacted about a dozen artists by e-mail and received their images the same way. I had of course shown her these on my Mac, and she told me that Gary, the BBC chap who would actually later insert the pictures into the recording, also used Photoshop on a Mac. So I had saved the images in Photoshop format. But the usual procedure is for Patrick and his 'guest' (usually an astronomer of some repute in his special field) to sit in comfortable armchairs, with Jane's laptop, set up on a small table out of view of the cameras, showing the images they're talking about.

Problem: her laptop used Windows, and she had never even tried to use it to look at the CD of images that I had given to her. So when we inserted the CD it turned out that she had no program that would show them. OK, Plan B. I noticed that Patrick had a PC on his desk on the other side of the room, behind me but in his field of view. (He uses it only for the internet, and claims he can't type on it - he still uses his ancient Olivetti for writing). So I took a look at it, found that QuickTime was installed on it, and then PictureViewer, which would show the images on my CD. Yippee? Well - er - yes - except that I was supposed to be looking at Patrick, as one normally would in conversation, and to see the monitor I would have to swivel my head every time. Plan C? A bit of lateral thinking was required. "If we had a mirror, we could prop it up on those bookshelves and I'd be able to see the *reflection* of the monitor," I suggested. So they scoured the house, and eventually stripped a dressing table of its mirror. And it worked! Of course, I had to remember to say "The moon at top right", instead of "top left" as I saw it, but we managed. If you happened to notice my eyes occasionally flick to one side, now you know why. . .

Incidentally, and for the record, about 45 minutes of recorded material had to be edited down to about 18, so a *lot* ended up on the cutting-room floor, including most of the stuff on stars, galaxies and deep-space. This also led to Patrick appearing to say that "Neptune is of course the next planet" - after Saturn, despite the fact that my painting of the rings of Uranus was on the screen at the time.

DAH

THE BSFA AWARDS

The shortlist for the British Science Fiction Association Awards 2002 were announced February 1st.

BEST NOVEL:

EFFENDI - Jon Courtenay Grimwood (Earthlight)

LIGHT - M. John Harrison (Gollancz)

CASTLES MADE OF SAND - Gwyneth Jones (Gollancz)

THE SCAR - China Miéville (Macmillan)

THE SEPARATION - Christopher Priest (Scribner)

THE YEARS OF RICE AND SALT Kim Stanley Robinson (HarperCollins)

BEST SHORT FICTION:

"Singleton" - Greg Egan (Interzone 176)

"Coraline" - Neil Gaiman (Bloomsbury)

"Voice of Steel" - Sean McMullen (SciFiction)

"If Lions Could Speak" - Paul Park (Interzone 177)

"Router" - Charles Stross (Asimov's, September 2002)

"Five British Dinosaurs" by Michael Swanwick (Interzone 177)

BEST ARTWORK:

"Experiment 1" by Peter Gric (cover, The Third Alternative 31)

Cover of Interzone 179 by Dominic Harman (Interzone 179)

"My Name is Death" by Fraser Irving (page 1 of "Judge Death: My Name is Death", 2000AD Prog 1289, 1st May 2002)

Illustration for "The Routine" by Joachim Luetke (The Third Alternative 31)

"Obliquites" by Richard Marchand (cover, 'The Third Alternative' 32)

BEST RELATED PUBLICATION:

"The Interrogation" by Nick Gevers interviews Chris Priest (Interzone 183)

Introduction to MAPS: THE UNCOLLECTED STORIES OF JOHN SLADEK by David Langford (Big Engine)

"Mapping Mars" by Oliver Morton (Fourth Estate)

"The Timex Machine" by Lucius Shepard (www.electricstory.com reviews)

"Once There Was a Magazine" by Fred Smith (Becon Publications)

The awards (which are voted for by the BSFA membership and the attendees of the British Annual Science Fiction Convention, Eastercon) will be presented at the 2003 Eastercon, Seacon '03, which will take place in Hinckley, Leicestershire from 18th to 21st April 2003.

< HREF="HTTP: A www.seacon03.org.uk.

NEBULA AWARD NOMINEES

The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) has released the final ballot for this year's Nebula Awards. Winners will be announced at the Nebula Award banquet in Philadelphia, April 18–20, 2003.

BEST NOVEL

AMERICAN GODS - Neil Gaiman (Morrow)
BONES OF THE EARTH - Michael Swanwick (Eos)
THE OTHER WIND - Ursula K LeGuin (Harcourt Brace)
PERDIDO STREET STATION - China Miéville (Del Rey)
PICOVERSE - Robert A Metzger (Ace)
SOLITAIRE - Kelley Eskridge (Eos)

BEST NOVELLA

“Bronte’s Egg” - Richard Chwedyk (F&SF Aug 2002)
“The Chief Designer” - Andy Duncan (Asimov’s Jun 2001)
“Magic’s Price” - Bud Sparhawk (Analog Mar 2001)
“The Political Officer” - Charles Coleman Finlay (F&SF Apr 2002)
“Sunday Night Yams at Minnie and Earl’s” - Adam-Troy Castro (Analog Jun 2001)

BEST NOVELETTE

“The Days Between” - Allen Steele (Asimov’s Mar 2001)
“The Ferryman’s Wife” - Richard Bowes (F&SF May 2001)
“Hell is the Absence of God” - Ted Chiang (STARLIGHT 3, Tor)
“Lobsters” - Charles Stross (Asimov’s Jun 2001)
“Madoma of the Maquiladora” - Gregory Frost (Asimov’s May 2002)
“The Pagodas of Ciboure” - M. Shayne Bell (THE GREEN MAN: TALES FROM THE MYTHIC FOREST, Viking)

BEST SHORT STORY

“Creation” - Jeffrey Ford (F&SF May 2002)
“Creature” - Carol Emshwiller (F&SF Oct/Nov 2001)
“Cut” - Megan Lindholm (Asimov’s May 2001)
“The Dog Said Bow-Wow” - Michael Swanwick (Asimov’s Oct/Nov 2001)
“Little Gods” - Tim Pratt (Strange Horizons 4 Feb 2002)
“Nothing Ever Happens in Rock City” - Jack McDevitt (Artemis Summer 2001)

BEST SCRIPT

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: “Once More with Feeling” - Joss Whedon
The Dead Zone: “Unreasonable Doubt” - Michael Taylor (created for TV by Michael and Shawn Piller, based on characters from the Stephen King novel)

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens & Peter Jackson (New Line Cinema)
Shrek, Ted Elliott, Terry Rossio, Joe Stillman, & Roger S.H. Schulman (DreamWorks)

SFWA's final ballot <<http://www.sfw.org/fiction/NebFinal2002.html>> listing includes links to online text and audio excerpts.

This year's ballot marks the first final-ballot Nebula nominations for China Miéville, Robert A. Metzger, Richard Chwedyk, Charles Coleman Finlay, Richard Bowes, Charles Stross, Gregory Frost, M. Shayne Bell, Carol Emshwiller, Tim Pratt, and all of the script nominees except for Joss Whedon.

VIDEO/DVD CLASSIFICATION

From Coventry member Robert Day comes this little piece...

I just acquired the classic SF film THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL on DVD. On the back of the case, there's a panel of colour-coded warnings for parents about the content of the film. They puzzled me, and they may puzzle you:

Language: None. (I don't remember it being performed by mutes. And you try miming "Klaatu barada nikto"...)

Sex/nudity: None. (True.)

Violence: Infrequent, mild. (Come off it. Klaatu gets shot. Dead. That's a strange definition of the word 'mild', even though he does get temporarily resurrected). And it gets better...

Other: Some mild threat. "If you spread your violence to the stars, we shall reduce your planet to a burnt-out cinder." I wouldn't like to see 20th Century Fox's idea of a stern warning if that's just a 'mild threat'.

NEWS IN BRIEF

.... Just a few days after the last newsletter was mailed, the NASA space Shuttle *Columbia* burnt up on re-entry. By now, you will all have heard and read the reports and tributes. Nothing else can be added. I'm sure that each and every member of the BSFG, whilst feeling deep sympathy for the families and friends of the astronauts, will wish and hope that space exploration will continue. There is a site at which members of the public may add their support by visiting <http://www.nyx.net/columbia> Randy Byers is the winner of the TAFF race. Randy will attend the 2003 Eastercon. More details are at <http://home.attbi.com/~vmgonzalez/taff.html> Guy and Rosy Lillian were the winners of the DUFF race and will attend the Australian national science fiction convention. More details are at <http://home.pacbell.net/jgelb/duff2k.html> According to LOCUS, David A Hardy is to appear on the UK *radio* program THE SKY AT NIGHT C J Cherryh's *Foreigner* trilogy just grew again - she's

signed a contract for volumes 7, 8 and 9 the new *Harry Potter* novel HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX has been delivered to the publishers. The biggest yet - it runs to 768 pages!!! Can these young unformed wrists carry such weight? It will be published June 21st and the print run will be a staggering 6.8 million copies split between FIVE printers! Apparently the previous volume HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE was the fastest selling book in publishing history, selling 3 million copies in 48 hours! The publishers immediately went into second printing with another 3 million Anne McCaffrey and son Todd have delivered the new *Pern* novel, THE UGLY DRAGON to Del Rey Though Stanislaw Lem earlier reported that he had no intention of seeing the Steve Soderbergh film version of his novel SOLARIS, Reuters reports that he did, and now states that in this version "Emotions have triumphed over intellect", while explaining the film's failure at US box offices by saying "Soderbergh has made a piece of ambitious, artistic cinema, which is a difficult nut to crack for mass audiences fed on Hollywood pulp." More remarks are on the English-language page of Lem's website, <http://www.cyberiad.info/english/main.htm> SFWA, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, has named Katherine MacLean this year's SFWA Author Emeritus. Formal presentation of the honor will occur during the Nebula Awards Weekend THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE, the slick, quarterly UK magazine featuring art, graphics, fiction, and features, is offering free copies of Issue 32 (while supplies last) to anybody sending their name and postal address to editor Andy Cox <<mailto:TTAPress@aol.com>> (mention Locus Online and Brum Group News). The issue has stories by Graham Joyce, John Grant, Brian Hodge, Joel Lane, and Tony Richards; interviews with Mark Chadbourn and Neil Gaiman; lots of artwork and a cover by Tony Marchand; and all the usual columns and reviews Katee Sackhoff will play a female Starbuck and Jamie Bamber will play Apollo in a four-hour BATTLESTAR GALACTICA original miniseries for the Sci-Fi Channel Poul Anderson's final(?) novel, FOR LOVE AND GLORY will be published in the US by Tor this month Donald Grant & Scribners are to release the final three volumes of Stephen King's *Dark Tower* series, starting November 2003 Ben Kingsley and Bill Paxton will star in the live-action film version of the UK television series THUNDERBIRDS (Somebody PLEASE tell me this is a spoof item!) A sequel is planned to STARSHIP TROOPERS - the movie, that is - NOT the novel. Different director, different scriptwriter apparently. But have THEY read Heinlein's novel? I doubt it DREAMER OF DUNE, an in-depth biography of Frank Herbert by his son Brian, will be published this month in the US by Tor the February LOCUS is the 2002 RECOMMENDED READING issue - I only just discovered that Andromeda is no longer selling it. If there are any among you who want to renew your supply of LOCUS, let me know at REPLAY BOOKS, 19 Eves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham, B32 3QL - replayer@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk - and I'll see if I can set up a regular supply.

RGP



BOOK REVIEWS



(REVIEWERS please note:- the flow of review copies from publishers has restarted and I believe Vernon has already arranged reviews for some of the books already received. 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.

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

DIAMOND DOGS, TURQUOISE DAYS by Alastair Reynolds

Gollancz / 231 pages / £6.99 / hardcover

Reviewed by Michael Jones

Rating * * * *

This modest book comprises two novellas set in the complex universe which contains most, if not all, of Reynolds' previous work.

The first, "Diamond Dogs", describes the attempted exploration of a mysterious artifact on an otherwise uninhabited planet. It takes the form of a series of rooms with mathematical puzzles of increasing difficulty to be solved before the door to the next will be opened, but getting one wrong or failing to solve it within a time limit, is penalised with a sudden burst of murderous violence. Eventually only three survive of the six who began and they return home changed and scarred. The acknowledged inspiration of this situation is the 1960 Algis Budrys novel ROGUE MOON and there is also a debt to the 1998 film CUBE.

The second story, "Turquoise Days", is set on one of the water worlds of the Pattern Jugglers, a mysterious life-form which fills the oceans of its worlds with a biomass which stores information and may or may not be sentient. Heroine Naqi is part of a research team trying to reach an understanding of the Juggler mass on Turquoise but her work is interrupted by the attempt of a rogue faction to destroy the Jugglers, an attempt which will probably result in the destruction of the human presence on the planet.

Both stories are superbly written and grippingly narrated and I really enjoyed reading them, but both sort of just stop without being brought to a tidy conclusion, leaving me with a slight sense of dissatisfaction. Just like life, really.

But I can forgive a lot in view of that amazing price - a nicely presented hardcover for paperback money!

MJ

A PLAGUE OF ANGELS by Sheri S Tepper

Gollancz / 559 pgs / £6.99 / paperback

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

Rating * * * *

Every book that Sheri Tepper writes is different. While all have SF

themes, the approach is as likely to be near-future Earth as light-years away in time and place. A PLAGUE OF ANGELS is set in the far future in an area of the USA to the north of Mexico (Mesiko) and east of a mountain range. The population is sparse – the remnants of those left behind when most mankind departed the Earth many generations ago. In this strip of habitable land there are the low-tech farms scattered through the countryside supplying the Edges – walled townships where the rich still live with the luxury of electricity and other technology. The cities are largely lawless, gangs fight each other on the streets with ever more sophisticated weapons, and relax with designer drugs. Those that don't die in the street fighting may well succumb to the immune deficiency diseases that are endemic.

The plot involves Abasio, a farm boy who goes to the city and joins one of the gangs. He is haunted by a child he met on his way north and whom he meets again as a grown woman in an Archetypal Village. She is the village's Orphan and grows up amongst other archetypes from fairy tales and mythology such as Oracle, Hero, Fool, Bastard and Drowned Woman. To the south, in the Place of Power, Ellet sends out walkers (androids) to seek a girl child she believes has been hidden to spite her and who will be the guidance system for the shuttle that will take her to the space station to salvage weapons that her ancestors left behind. Abasio flees the city, and Orphan her village, and they travel towards the Place of Power.

It would be easy to witter on about destinies, and to do so would demean the skill and complexity of this novel. Tepper uses a number of approaches, that by themselves would seem old hat but instead weaves an excellent story full of surprises.

PM

EVOLUTION by Stephen Baxter

Gollancz / 585 pages / £18.99 hardcover / £12.99 trade paperback

Reviewed by Michael Jones

Rating * * *

In this huge novel, Baxter traces the course of human evolution from the time of the comet impact which eliminated the dinosaurs to a time in the almost unimaginably distant future when there will (may) be scarcely any life at all left on Earth. Not just 'The Ascent of Man' but 'The Descent of Man' also.

The progress of evolution is displayed in a series of vignettes, widely spaced at first but becoming closer together as the present day is approached, each portraying a significant developmental stage in the DNA strand which purports to tie them all together as the progenitors of humanity are shaped by their changing ecological environment and, in turn, contribute by their own activities to changing it. Baxter himself makes it clear that most of this is highly speculative, but it COULD have happened that way and he includes nothing significantly contrary to at least one of the various conflicting theories of evolution which are currently in favour. (Except, of course, for the parts of the story set in the future, which are SF pure and simple. Science Fiction or Science Fantasy - take your pick!) An

interesting detail of this process shows how the first emergence of modern man, some ten thousand years ago, already contained the seeds of his own future degeneration. In another stage of the story the latter days of a collapsing Roman civilisation are portrayed as displaying a number of alarming similarities to our own present-day situation.

Interesting for the most part, and never less than informative, this is nevertheless an unfortunately long book. In each of the 'vignettes' to which I have referred the author goes into all the detail necessary to get his point across as well as making a little story out of it and at times he is in danger of descending into textbook mode. The result is very heavy going and I found that I did best by reading at most a chapter or so a day rather than trying to get through more at a sitting, although the sections set around the present day and the graphically physical description of that comet impact sixty-five million years ago were more exciting. Incidentally, a partial echo of the latter is seen in the form of a catastrophic seismic eruption in 2031 which virtually brings about the end of civilisation as we know it - an event which some authorities say is already overdue.

This is certainly a book to admire and is an impressive addition to Baxter's *oeuvre*. However, I visualise few readers who, having read it once, would foreseeably read it again in its entirety, as they might, had it been at least a third shorter. MJ

***SIDESHOW* by Sheri S Tepper**

Gollancz / 482pgs / £6.99 / paperback

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

Rating * * *

Sometimes very small things can start a chain of thoughts or events. This butterfly effect is the start of this novel, originally published in 1992. The clue comes in the very first line - "Humanity was saved from certain destruction when, on their wedding night, Lek Korsyzczy informed his wife that their first child was to be a son." The children that are eventually born, are conjoined twins who share sufficient organs to make it impractical to separate them. As they are of indeterminate sex, one is brought up as a boy, the other as a girl so that they develop different personalities. It is this decision that leads them to end up in the far future on a planet called Elsewhere by falling through an Arbai door. These doors, spread throughout the galaxy by a now extinct race have appeared in some of Tepper's other novels.

Elsewhere is the home of all that remains of pure human stock. The people who fled here through Arbai doors are of what they call Hobbs Land Gods. These are explained to the populace as a fungus-like growth that enslaves people. Elsewhere is also the home to diversity. It is believed that only through diversity will the Great Question be answered - 'What is the destiny of Man?'. People are not permitted the freedom to move from area to area. Enforcers ensure this. But the

diverse cultures also include regimes of diverse cruelty. Danivon Lutz and Fringe Owldark are Enforcers sent to investigate manifestations of dragons in the interior and an imaginary god that seems to be coming corporate. The arrival of the twins gets them included in the party, because no-one knows what to do with them.

The twist and turns of the story hold the interest with plenty of surprises along the way. If you have never read any Tepper this would be a good place to start. *PM*

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...

SELLING YOUR WARES...

And don't forget that YOU can bring along your unwanted books, magazines, videos, etc., and sell them to other members - NO CHARGE, NO COMMISSION. Start rummaging through your collections - you KNOW you'll never read some of that stuff again

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:-

March 20th - FAUST AMONG EQUALS - Tom Holt (in Shakespeare Memorial Room)

April 18-21 2003 - SEACON 03 - 54th National British Easter Convention will be held at the Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley, West Midlands. Guests of Honour are Mary Gentle, Christopher Evans and Chris 'Fangorn' Baker. Contact address is SEACON 03, 8 The Orchard, Tonwell, Herts, SG12 OHR

email - membership@seacon03.org.uk

- info@seacon03.org.uk

- programme@seacon03.org.uk

Website: www.seacon03.org.uk

Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Broad Street, Birmingham (Box Office 0121 236 4455).

April 29-May 3 - Salman Rushdie's MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN will be performed by The Royal Shakespeare Company.

May 13-24 - George Orwell's ANIMAL FARM will be performed by the Northern Stage Ensemble.

< < Note: I was amazed to hear someone remark that this has NOTHING to do with SF - it was 'just another talking animal fantasy'!!!!

November 7-11 2003 - NOVACON 33 - the Birmingham SF Group's very own convention will be held at the Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall, UK. Guest of Honour -Jon Coutenay Grimwood, author of RED ROBE, PASHAZADE, etc.

Cost of registration is £35 - send to NOVACON 33, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.
email: x15@zoom.co.uk **BOOK NOW!**

November 15-16 2003 - The British Costume Convention (SF, Media and Historical) will be held in Leamington Spa. Registration is £35 until 6th October. Contact Alan Cash, 130 Hamstead Hill Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1JB

Website: www.britishcostumeconvention.org.uk

For other forthcoming events see in ANSIBLE - enclosed with this newsletter.

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

As at the time of writing, your 'new' committee are still negotiating with several speakers - nothing has actually been finalised yet. Hopefully, several meetings will have been finalised by next month.

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Newsletter 378 copyright 2003 for the Birmingham Science Fiction Group. Designed by Rog Peyton. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the committee or the general membership or, for that matter, the person giving their opinion.

Thanks to all the named contributors in this issue and to William McCabe who sends me reams of news items every month from which I sift through for the best/most entertaining items.

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. 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, Wyld Green, Sutton Coldfield West Midlands, B73 5JH