

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE FREE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

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HONORARY PRESIDENTS: BRIAN W ALDISS & HARRY HARRISON

COMMITTEE: VERNON BROWN (CHAIRMAN); VICKY COOK (SECRETARY);
PAT BROWN (TREASURER); ROG PEYTON (NEWSLETTER EDITOR);
TIM STOCK (PUBLICITY); STEVE JONES & WILLIAM MCCABE;
NOVACON 34 CHAIRMAN: MARTIN TUDOR

Friday April 16th

New local SF writer

MARTIN SKETCHLEY

This month's speaker is a new author having just published his very first novel titled THE AFFINITY TRAP. Martin Sketchley grew up in Tamworth, Staffordshire. Following a brief but passionate affair with music, he began writing behind a Tamworth market stall at the beginning of the 1990s, and sold his first short story to small-press magazine XENOS in 1994.

Having worked in retail and then catalogue publishing, he is now a freelance writer and editor. He lives in Birmingham with his wife, Rosaleen, and their two children.

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. 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). It will commence at 7.45pm so please arrive early, get your drinks from the bar and be seated in plenty of time.

RGP

* MAY MEETING - 14th May

* NOVACON 34 Guest of Honour Ian Watson will be talking to the
* Group.

SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY HALL OF FAME

Inductees in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame have been announced. Each year since 1996, four individuals have been honoured for their continued excellence and long-time contribution to the science fiction and fantasy field. The 2004 inductees are Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss. Posthumous inductees are E E 'Doc' Smith and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.

Hall of Fame Chairman, Robin Wayne Bailey, announced that both Aldiss and Harrison will be attending the ceremony, which will take place during the Campbell Conference in Lawrence, Kansas on July 9.

2004 is the final year for inductions in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame. After this year's ceremony, it will be renamed the Science Fiction Hall of Fame and incorporated into the Experience Science Fiction museum which is opening in Seattle in June.

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

The 2004 Campbell Conference will be held July 9-11. The conference provides a setting for the presentation of two other honours: the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for the best science fiction novel of the year; and the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award for the best short science fiction of the year.

Details of the conference and awards dinner are available at <http://www.ku.edu/~sfcenter/campbell-conference.htm>.

OUR CONGRATULATIONS TO BOTH BRIAN AND HARRY!

SCIENCE (FICTION) UPDATE - Vernon Brown

1) - Remember THE DEATH OF GRASS by John Christopher where scientists eliminated a viral disease of food cereals only to release a more virulent strain that attacked all grasses and caused civilisation to collapse? It appears that vaccinating exposed chickens in China against the current bird flu outbreak rather than killing them, creates an abnormal environment for the flu virus that allows it to evolve unpredictably. Currently it only spreads bird to bird or bird to human, which is fatal to the person (probably a relatively minor change - VB). Apocalypses anyone?

On almost the same theme, scientists have found monkey and ape disease viruses in the blood of a number of people who hunt and eat these animals. So it would seem that the evolution of HIV in this way was probably not a 'one-off', and that new human diseases may well similarly appear.

2) Time travel stories often have a problem with cause and effect relationships but current theoretical research has drilled, if not blown, a hole in the generally accepted idea that cause always precedes effect.

During the last few years physicists have moved entanglement from the realm of the theoretical to that of the practical. Entanglement occurs when two subatomic particles bump into one another; their properties, such as momentum and spin, become jointly held. So, if after they part something affects the quantum state of one, it will affect the quantum state of the other, no matter how far away it is. This happens instantaneously, i.e. infinitely faster than light. (Sorry Einstein!). Now entanglement seems to happen through time as well as space.

Theoretical research has shown that under certain conditions, if a property of a quantum particle, such as its polarisation, is measured and then measured again some time later, the second measurement can affect the first. So if spacial entanglement theory is now reality, how long before time entanglement theory moves likewise? VB

NEWS IN BRIEF

.... Well-known fan, con attendee and short story author **Peter T. Garratt**, age 54, died March 2nd. His half-brother, David Laing, reported that it occurred while Peter was having a meal with David's daughter, Natasha. Peter collapsed and was rushed to the Royal Sussex hospital where he was declared dead on arrival

Robert Wiener and **Gordon Van Gelder** report the death of SF artist **Mel Hunter**, 1927-2004, on February 20, of bone cancer. Hunter contributed dozens of magazine covers from 1953 through 1971, notably including a series of robot covers for F&SF, with a last appearing in May 2003 Horror author **Charles L. Grant** has been diagnosed with COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). As a result, and probably for the rest of his life, he will rely on bottled oxygen to live. A medical fund has been established to help with the cost of Grant's treatment

Old news now but **LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING** swept the Oscars winning a record 11 trophies, tying with **TITANIC** and **BEN HUR**.

Director **Peter Jackson** now intends to make **THE HOBBIT** but not for a few years yet. Apparently there is to be a legal battle with two companies claiming they own the rights! Congratulation to **Iain Banks** for winning the Italian *Italia* Award for Best Foreign novel with **INVERSIONS** written under his pseudonym

And congratulations to **Terry Pratchett** who is winning award after award for **THE WEE FREE MEN**. He has won 7 awards in the USA! The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America are pleased to announce that **Robert Silverberg** has received the Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award. Silverberg, a writer, editor, and past president of SFWA, has given many years of service to the organization in both elected and appointed positions. He will be recognized at the Nebula Awards (R) Ceremony April 17, 2004 in Seattle Washington

CONTINUUM SCIENCE FICTION is a new publication in the science fiction field. **CONTINUUM**, which is beginning on a three issue per year basis, will publish exciting, thought provoking short science fiction. Price is \$3.95 per issue or \$13 per year (3 issue subscription) and can be ordered online at

<http://www.continuumsciencefiction.com/index.htm> . They take PayPal. Written orders to Bill Rupp, PO Box 1390, Bonsall, CA 92003, USA **AMAZING STORIES** is to relaunch in July - see website www.paizo.com - more info next month **Christopher Eccleston** has been named as the ninth Doctor Who **Tanith Lee** is now writing lesbian sexual love stories under the name 'Esther Garber' Margaret Atwood finally sees the light and has admitted to writing two 'science fiction' novels. Will she live with the shame? RGP

A DRABBLE - 3rd in an irregular series...

Want to write a drabble? Each one must be exactly 100 words long (excluding the title)... Go on, you can do it! Brum Group members are invited to try their luck. There might even be a prize at the end of the year for the best one...!

DRABBLE WHO? by David A. Hardy

I had a Drabble in each of the first two books edited by David B. Wake and Rob Meades (1988 and 1990), but not in the third, which was devoted to Dr Who. So to make up for this, if belatedly (but what does that matter, when you're dealing with time travel?), here it is:

The Doctor, as Tom Baker, flung his scarf around his neck and strode into the Triassic swamp, slamming the Tardis door behind him. And came to an abrupt halt as his scarf caught tight in the door, causing the key to fly from his hand - into the gaping mouth of a Placodus. Sonic screwdriver! Darn -- left it inside. Hmm. . .

Baldrick appeared, as Tony Robinson. "Want this?" he chortled. "I excavated this during 'Time Team' and sneaked back during that Blackadder Special. But Chris Eccleston needn't think I'm handing it over when I get back. I always fancied being Dr Who!"



BOOK REVIEWS



(**REVIEWERS** please note:- all reviews should be emailed direct to me at rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk) Deadline for each issue is 14 days prior to the date of the monthly meeting. RGP

***JIGSAW MEN* by Gary Greenwood**

PS Publishing / Hardcover £25, Softcover £10

Reviewed by Steve Mazzy

Star rating: * * * * *

Once every now and again there comes along one of those books. One of the books that are the reason you keep reading. This for me is one of them.

In this alternate world both Doctor Frankenstein and his work from Mary Shelley's famous novel, and the Martian Invasion for H G Wells's WAR OF THE

WORLDS are part of history. When the First World War happened in this world it was vastly different, pitching as it did the Martian technology with the Heat Ray gun against replaceable soldiers - re-animated following death, often rebuilt from the recovered pieces of many fallen men strewn on the battlefield.

When this war concluded the two sides (Britain and Prussia) agreed as part of the cease-fire agreement to trade these technologies and henceforward became strong allies. The rest of the world though was angered by these two nations' deep reluctance to share this technology, and indeed in this Second World War, Britain and Prussia fought side by side.

Moving forward to the time of the tale, France is a divided country in a similar way to Germany in the latter half of the last century, complete with it's Parisian Wall. We even have a version of La Resistance, fighting a guerrilla war against the occupying forces controlling France.

The tale here centres on a police officer, a Detective Livingstone. He is ordered to investigate the disappearance of Danielle Trafalgar, the daughter of the Minister for the Judiciary. This investigation quickly leads into the seedy side of this world, the world of pornography and terrorism.

This is a wonderful tale, quite simply the best story I have read in months. This world so cleverly parallels the history of our own with subtle changes introduced due to the existence of the two famous SF devices as part of everyday life.

The way that there is a prejudice against the people re-animated by the Frankenstein method (the Jigsaw Men of the title) is so (unfortunately) understandable, and their involvement in the seedier aspects of civilisation so believable - these things just would happen.

This tale is at its heart a straight crime story, and a compelling one at that, made even more so for the world in which it is enacted. Right at the end there is a hint that we may at some point return to this universe for a second (and hopefully third) tale. I do so hope that this hint is realised - I want more.

Gary Greenwood obviously has a deep love of SF, he treats these two greats of SF history with great respect and in a highly original manner. This is great science fiction.

This is why I read SF.

SM

***KARLOFF'S CIRCUS* by Steve Aylett**

Gollancz / 128pgs / £9.99 / trade paperback

Reviewed by William McCabe

Star Rating: * * *

This is the fourth and, probably, last book of the *Accomplice* series. *Accomplice* is a small town that is totally cut off from the rest of the world (if there is a world out there for it to be cut off from) by natural features (an ocean, a desert, a swamp, a great chasm). It does have easy access to several levels of hell

through various inter-dimensional 'creepchannels'. These channels vary in size from the sort you have to crawl through to something that will take a railway train without trouble and generally at the same time. This probably explains the sequence early in this book where the circus arrives by train through an inter-dimensional portal that occupies the same space as the mouth of Rod Jayrod, master of the bizarre religion known as the Cannon Sect. Accomplice is a version of Trumpton by way of a William Burroughs trip or a Freddie Krueger nightmare. Demons walk the streets without drawing attention, surreal manifestations like the lobster-sized cockroaches that represent the corruption of the mayoral office infest the buildings.

The plot seems trivial. Each book in this series has just another variation on the same theme. The demon Sweeney uses some obscure artifice in an attempt at revenge on Barny Juno, but fails. Barny rescues another dangerous animal (this time it's a poisonous snake) from demonic clutches. The mayor struggles to keep control of the town although he knows the real power comes from the Conglomerate. Gregor manages to get out of one more scrape (a boxing match with a heavily armoured demon). "Oh, and someone stole the Moral Fibre again, the new rubber version."

Steve Aylett's strength isn't in his plots. There are usually several heavily twisted plotlines running through each story but these take a distant second place to the style and the imagination. This is grotesque comic fantasy that the likes of Rankin and Pratchett couldn't attempt. There are funny lines and set pieces (like the Zombie Trapeze act with catches going wrong because a participant's arm falls off) and a general tone that doesn't belong anywhere else. It takes some getting used to but it's worth the effort.

WAM

***MOTHERSHIP* by John Brosnan**

Gollancz / 280pgs / £10.99 trade paperback

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

Star rating: * *

The concept of the generation ship has a long history in the Science Fiction field. As societies aboard them evolve, problems will inevitably arise within the populations, providing endless possibilities to drive the plot along.

Urba is a generation ship, constructed to carry the entire population of our Solar System away from a dying sun. Sufficient clues are given in early pages for the reader to appreciate the setting even though the majority of the inhabitants do not. The Elite have arranged the world into discrete territories. Warfare is allowed, but anyone likely to set up an empire is severely curtailed. The Elite are definitely in control, until the Day of Wonder when power fails and Elite aircars fall out of the sky. It seems an ideal opportunity to get one's own back on the tyrants and hunt down anyone who might possibly be Elite.

In the kingdom of Capelia, the headstrong Prince Kendar decides to venture out on a self-imposed spying mission to find out what is happening in other areas. His father sends Jad, Kendar's childhood friend with him to keep him out of trouble. More by luck than judgement, they rescue an Elite woman, Alucia, from those who are killing Elite. Kendar falls instantly in love with her. Together they travel to the Citadel, the power centre of the Elite only to find that *Urba* has been invaded.

This is pure adventure fiction and is entirely plot driven with virtually no depth to the characters. For some readers, this will be enough. The more discerning reader will be dissatisfied. When Alucia explains the true situation, Jad instantly believes her even though he doesn't understand half of what she means about stars, planets and nuclear reactors, whereas Kendar thinks she is lying or mentally abnormal. Even in the face of evidence he still thinks it is an Elite trick, but as he loves her he is prepared to overlook it. Jad and Kendar are too much at opposite ends of the scale for their attitudes to be completely believable. For someone whose entire upbringing has been almost in a mediaeval framework, Jad is far too accepting of everything Alucia has to say, especially as her kind have always been regarded with suspicion.

Added to this, despite all the obstacles put in their way, they complete their mission comparatively easily. Jad, at one point, wonders why Alucia needs Kendar and himself tagging along. It is a good question, not fully answered, except to add interest to a plot that rushes past at a great rate. There are touches of humour but they are not enough to compensate for the lack of depth. PM

***SOLAR LOTTERY* by Philip K Dick**

Gollancz / 188pgs / £6.99 / paperback

Reviewed by Vicky Cook

Star rating: * * *

This is Dick's first published novel, and it is always interesting to read early works from authors who have been made more famous by their later novels.

This is an excellent story idea. The leader of the universe is elected by a random chance, by a lottery. When the bottle switches anybody at all can suddenly find themselves the 'Quizmaster'. However there is a downside to this: the secondary game played by the rivals of the leader (previous Quizmasters, for instance), who try to get back in power by assassinating him. Ted Bentley is reluctantly drawn into this world and its inner politics, and whilst striving to reach his ideals he has to work out what his priorities are and where his loyalties lie.

It is a fairly short novel which has a good pace with quite a lot of action. Unfortunately there is rather a lack of any real insight into the world created by the author, other than what is immediately relevant to the plot.

I did warm to the characters – though it took a while. Ted seems grumpy and disorientated, his confusion not helping the reader to sympathise much with

him. The girls are all (as well as topless) seemingly too perfect-looking – with the necessary twist beneath the surface. And the bad guys seem all too two-dimensional. If we were given more of an insight into their jobs and how they fitted into the world, this effect might have been reduced.

This is a fine SF story and an interesting insight into early Philip K Dick. Nothing spectacular but worth a read. VC

***DAMNATION ALLEY* by Roger Zelazny**

Gollancz / 157pgs / £9.99 / paperback

Reviewed by Vicky Cook

Star rating: * * *

Maybe this was not the best choice of book for me. I am not a fan of post-apocalyptic books/films, finding them all depressingly similar and pessimistic, and a bit of a bother to plough through. However I decided to give this one a go, attracted by the reputation of the author, and the rather, well, yellow appearance of the Gollancz book – from the ‘Collectors Edition’ series.

It does not take long to read – rather a relief after the 1000-page plus fantasy tomes I have been focusing on recently! It is about an ‘anti-hero’ called Hell Tanner, one of the last of the Hells Angels, after the nuclear wars that have left much of the Earth uninhabitable and the abode of some fearsomely mutated creatures and weather conditions. One of the two main centres of civilisation left, Boston, has been hit by a plague and is going to perish unless the state of California can send some antibiotics. Being a social outcast and very unpopular with the authorities, Hell is volunteered to undertake a journey beyond all journeys, unwillingly yet strangely compelled.

The good points about this were the strong characterisation and description which really brings to life what America is now like. The howling storms, the monstrous creatures that barely resemble what we know, the craters and soaring radioactive heat, all this is vividly described. Hell is portrayed exactly as he is, a nasty piece of work out to help nobody but himself. The characters he comes up against become alive as important parts of the story, instead of becoming part of the background overshadowed by a strong piece of characterisation as the lead character. This is impressive and not what I was expecting.

The bad points are possibly my own personal gripes. I found the setting in America a bit restrictive, though I could understand that as far as the story went, the characters, and therefore the reader, would not be able to go or see outside the setting. I would have liked to know however what the world was like outside, was it as badly hit, or was the war mainly fought in America. What was the sea like, as well? These and other questions constantly came to mind. Another problem for me was that I felt the impossible terrain, played up by the survivors as being suicidal to attempt, prove not to be too big a problem for Hell, who swans through the most fearsome of obstacles without a scratch, while his (deliberately nameless)

companions meet their predictable ends. This was a bit of a letdown for me, as I was looking forward to seeing exactly what those monsters and firestorms could do.

I was also unhappy with the ending, feeling it was a bit of a predictable comedown after such promise in the earlier parts of the book. But despite this, I did enjoy the book, it gave me something different to think about - would the world end up like this at all? And being a fan of seeing examples of nature taking control, I really appreciated the world Zelazny has drawn.

An entertaining read, in conclusion, though by no means perfect. VC

***DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH* by Robert Silverberg**

Gollancz / 213pgs / £6.99 / paperback

Reviewed by Vicky Cook

Star rating: * * * * *

This is a stunning book. In terms of mere beauty of description and vivid intensity it excels any book I have read, or certainly any I have read for a long time. It is full of sumptuous description of the gorgeous but wild planet of Belzagor. You can hear the creatures indigenous to it, smell the sickly sweet floral aromas, just picture it in your mind.

Our hero (for once a nice hero, not one of the currently fashionable two-dimensional unlikeable anti-heroes) has returned to Belzagor after eight years, bewitched by his memories of this peaceful planet. Eight years ago the planet was under humans' control. But their attempts to civilise it and its two sentient species ended in failure, and they 'relinquished' the planet, leaving about 100 people behind and the planet in peace. Now Edmund Gunderson is back to settle things, and prove (to himself or the nildoror?) that he is sorry for what happened.

The story really consists of Edmund revisiting the places he once frequented, and then making a long journey - ultimately to self-discovery. This journey, under the guise of him wanting to explore a part of the planet he never dared to go to, is obviously about far more than that, as on the way he sees the two species in ways he never thought possible, and finds some old friends so different to how he used to know them.

A strong sense of dreaminess haunts the book. The hero too often feels he can't comprehend what is going on, he feels drained, woozy, literally and emotionally. A recurrent theme of Silverberg's, this comes up again and again, as his characters are made to feel as if hallucinating. Even the central religion on the planet is based around a hallucinatory drug. This all helps us realise the planet, though very similar to Earth with its similar atmosphere and nildoror (very like our elephants), is actually a different planet, not built for humans, and with things there they can not begin to understand. This is an important process for Gunderson to go through. He, like the tourists and so many others, is patronising towards the alien culture he doesn't understand, and can't help but think of the elephant-like

nildoror as mere animals. Silverberg reminds us of what it is like to trespass and try to change another's territory and what problems can arise.

There is a lot to think about in this book, and I recommend it highly.

VC

😊😊😊😊 **FILM ROUND-UP** 😞😞😞😞
BY VICKY COOK & TIM STOCK

BIG FISH (dir: Tim Burton) starring Ewan McGregor, Jessica Lange, Albert Finney, Helena Bonham Carter.

I had been feeling a bit let down by my favourite director. Burton had last been seen producing the rather scarily formulaic re-make of PLANET OF THE APES (which I still think was an OK film if you don't consider who directed it, and worryingly bad if you do). So I needed to come and see something to reconfirm my feelings, and I was not let down.

BIG FISH bears rather a resemblance to SECONDHAND LIONS, as in old man tells tales (true or false) about his childhood, and it is up to the other characters (and audience) to work out if he is telling porkies. Another film this bears a strong resemblance to, with its flashbacks and strong tongue-in-cheek atmosphere, is PRINCESS BRIDE. Though in that latter film, the 'real' story interlapping the tale is not so strongly drawn - here Burton brings in the right amount of pathos to make the present-day stuff worth watching too, though nothing can beat the tall tales (or is it the truth) that Albert Finney tells of.

Basically it is about a father who after a long life is dying, though we are never told what of exactly. His son, after years of feeling resentful, decides to try to get to know his father, who has always seemed to hide away behind tales of magic and witches and big fish, tales that while wonderful in the telling, the straightforward son just cannot accept as truth. Thus through the father's stories, we too have to decide for ourselves what is true and what isn't.

This is a clever film. The stories are such that, even if partly fabricated, you can see what might be the truth behind them. And they are never too far-fetched to believe, they just might be true. I was slightly disappointed by the ending, as it seemed to give rather too many answers - it would have been nice to be kept partly guessing. And as it is the obligatory happy ending, it is almost too slushy. But let this not detract - it is a heart-warming, inspiring story, and Burton is back on form. Great performances from the leads - although the two main actors are so well known at times it is hard to be able to imagine one as the younger version of the other... Still despite its few and far between disadvantages this rates as one of the best films I have seen for the past few months.

VC

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Central Library SF and Fantasy Reading Group meets on Thursdays at 5.30pm to 7pm monthly, in GP5 on the 5th Floor 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 3398. Future meetings...

15th April - Sheri S Tepper's *BEAUTY* under discussion.

20th May

10th June

Borders Book Shop are also planning several readers groups. They may include SF, fantasy and horror (separate groups!). For details contact David Massey dmassey@bordersstores.com phone (0121) 616 1094, Borders, Bullring, Birmingham, B5 4BE

Bath Central Library, in association with the **British Fantasy Society**, are holding a special 'Fantasy Week', May 17-23rd. Guests confirmed are Katherine Roberts, Ramsey Campbell, Juliet McKenna, Mike Chinn and Ron Tiner. Katherine and Ramsey will be holding readings during the week, and there will be two workshops on the Saturday - a writing one hosted by Juliet, and a graphic novels item hosted by Mike and Ron. Both workshops cost £10, contact aunico@hotmail.com to book a place. For more information please see the website www.britishfantasysociety.org.uk, or email aunico@hotmail.com

A COMMONWEALTH OF SCIENCE FICTION, Liverpool Foresight Centre, Liverpool, UK (Thursday 5 to Sunday 8 August 2004). Guests of Honour: Damien Broderick, Jon Courtenay Grimwood and Nalo Hopkinson. (An Event Organised By the Science Fiction Foundation).

NOVACON 34 - the Birmingham SF Group's very own convention will again be held at the popular Quality Inn, Walsall. Guest of Honour is Ian Watson. Cost of registration is £35 - send to NOVACON 34, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

email: x15@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

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FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG

May 14th - SF author Ian Watson

June 11th - still to be organised

July 9th - SF/Comics artist Bryan Talbot (awaiting confirmation)

August 13th - Summer Social. We'll be going to the Black Eagle, Handsworth - just a short trip from Snow Hill on the Metro - for a convivial evening of food and drink. They have a selection of real ales and the food, while being traditional pub food, is excellent value at about £5 for a main course. But we have to book early - they are usually fully booked on a Friday or Saturday for nearly two months ahead. So we need to know who is coming and we need to know by the end of April!!!

September 10th - Peter Weston will be returning from being Fan Guest of Honour at this year's WorlCon. Peter has written a 130,000 word history of his life in SF fandom and it will be published at Worldcon. It contains a LOT of history of the Brum Group and many of you are mentioned in it! Peter will be talking about the book, the Worldcon and fandom and also signing copies of his book.

December - Christmas Social - Skittles at the Selly Park Tavern

January 8th 2005 - Annual General Meeting

March 12th - Peter F Hamilton

Newsletter 391 copyright 2004 for Birmingham SF 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 the '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
NEW! ----The email address is bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk ----- **NEW!**
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, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5JH