

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

DECEMBER 2004

ISSUE 399

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 35 CHAIRMAN: TONY BERRY

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ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR?

Well, only you, the members, can make a decision on that. Have you enjoyed it? Do you think YOU could do a better job of running the Group? We haven't lost any members (except one who has moved away from the area) and we've actually gained a few new ones who seem keen. Will they stay the course?

The Christmas Social will already have occurred by the time you read this - if you remember, the meeting was bought forward one week to the 3rd and was tickets only. We sold 40 tickets for our Skittles evening so, if you left it to the last minute, then sorry you missed out. Next year BUY EARLY!

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A few words here about the January 2005 meeting (Jan 14th). This will be our Annual General Meeting where we hear, hopefully short, reports from each of the committee members and where you, the dear members, have a chance to whinge and do your Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde impersonations. You think I'm joking? I've known several instances where normally sensible, intelligent members, ask the most stupid questions or complain about the tiniest details that have absolutely NOTHING to do with the running of the Group. Of course, tell some members that

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: JANUARY 14th 2005 MEETING - This is our Annual General Meeting :
: where you can depose the committee and volunteer to help run :
: the Group... FOLLOWED BY AN AUCTION :
:
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this is the Annual General Meeting and they feel they HAVE to ask something or complain about something...

All we can say is that if you're not happy, then this will be the chance for you to volunteer. You can stand for Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, Newsletter Editor (please?), Publicity Officer or for one of the two Ordinary committee posts - one of which will be solely responsible for managing the Group's website.

Should anyone wish to volunteer, they must obtain a Proposer and Seconder. Help on that, including a detailed description of the functions of each committee post can be obtained from either our Chairman, Vernon Brown or from me (Rog Peyton), at the usual addresses.

We mentioned last month that there would be a proposed Amendment to the Constitution. That idea has been dropped on the advice of our Legal Officer, Tim Stannard. He reminded us that the committee can decide on what jobs the two Ordinary Members perform and that it is not necessary to have this as part of the Constitution. If we wish to formalise this, it could be incorporated into the Constitution at some time when we HAVE to revise it for other amendments.

THE AUCTION

The formal part of the AGM (hopefully not longer than 45mins) will be followed by an auction to raise money for the Group funds. So if you've got any unwanted books, magazines, fanzines, videos, CDs - well, ANYTHING, really. You donate it and I'll do my damndest to sell it for as much as I can squeeze out of your moth-infested wallets.

Now, come on members - each year it seems to be the same few souls who donate their unwanted treasures. This year, make sure YOU bring something....

WORLD FANTASY AND FANTASY ART AWARDS

The World Fantasy Awards were presented at World Fantasy Con in Tempe, Arizona during the final weekend of October.

Life Achievement: Stephen King and Gahan Wilson

Novel: TOOTH AND CLAW by Jo Walton

Novella: "A Crowd of Bone" by Greer Gilman

Short Fiction: "Don Ysidro" by Bruce Holland Rogers

Anthology: STRANGE TALES Rosalie Parker, ed.

Collection: BIBLIOMANCY by Elizabeth Hand

Artist: (tie) Donato Giancola and Jason Van Hollander

Special Award, Professional: Peter Crowther

Special Award, Non-Professional: Ray Russell & Rosalie Parker

The World Fantasy Art Awards were also presented in Tempe.

Best in Show: "Grand Conspiracy" by Janny Wurts

Best Color Picture: "Transcendence" by Don Maitz
Best 3D Piece: "Buckin' Tradition" by Heather Johnson

HOBBITS DISCOVERED!

"Scientists have discovered a race of proto-humans who stood about three feet tall on the Indonesian island of Flores. The race, which scientists refer to as Hobbits, lived as recently as 12,000 years ago, meaning that they lived with modern humans for about 38,000 years before becoming extinct. The original skeleton of *H. floresiensis* was a thirty year-old female who stood 1 meter and weighed 25 kilos. Flores was also home to Komodo dragons and stegodons (miniature elephants)."

Now, there! Haven't I been telling you for years that Hobbits really existed (and dragons!). Haven't I always said that the brilliant Mr Tolkien was far too clever for us mere mortals and that his wonderful novel *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* was based on fact! And discovered in Indonesia! The only country in the world where the penalty for masturbation is decapitation!!! Oh, THAT's why they're all short...

RGP

NEWS IN BRIEF

The 2004 Nova Awards were presented at Novacon 34 by Guest of Honour Ian Watson - Best Fanzine was Pete Young's *ZOO NATION*, Best Fanwriter was Claire Brialey and Best Fan Artist was Sue Mason. A complete repeat of last year's results. In addition, Martin Tudor presented the committee's occasional 'best fan' Nova to Ray Bradbury, who joked that he'd have taken more care designing the trophies this year if he'd known he was going to receive one of his own The Prix Aurora Awards were presented by the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association: Best Long-Form Work in English: *BLIND LAKE* by Robert Charles Wilson; Best Short-Form Work in English: "Scream Angel" by Douglas Smith; Best Work in English (Other): Julie E. Czerneda for editing *SPACE INC* US author Ray Bradbury received the National Medal of Arts on November 17th. At the same time, Madeleine L'Engle was awarded the National Humanities Medal. The awards were presented in the Oval Office by the old hobbit himself President George W Bush and Laura Bush.

RGP

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:-

16th December: subject is Justina Robson - *SILVER SCREEN*.

Future dates are 20th January & 17th February 2005.

INTERACTION: THE 2005 WORLDCON will be held in Glasgow next year, 4th to 8th August 2005. Guests of Honour are Greg Pickersgill, Christopher Priest, Robert Sheckley, Lars-Olof Strandberg and Jane Yolen. Full details, printable forms, etc., from their website <http://www.interaction.worldcon.org.uk/>

Snail mail address: INTERACTION, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ

FANTASYCON 05 has been booked for the 30 September - 2 October 2005, at the Quality Hotel, Walsall, near Birmingham. Further details to follow.

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

January 14th 2005- Annual General Meeting

February 11th - Party Time! It's celebration time. What are we celebrating? First correct answer from a non-committee member wins a prize!

March 12th - Peter F Hamilton

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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.

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