

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

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ISSUE 405

HONORARY PRESIDENTS: BRIAN W ALDISS & HARRY HARRISON

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Friday 10th June

FREDA WARRINGTON

Our guest this month will be fantasy author Freda Warrington who will be interviewed by Pauline Morgan. Freda will then answer questions from the audience. Freda HAS spoken to the Group in the past but it's been a few years so we welcome her back to the BSFG.

Freda's first book appeared nearly 20 years ago. A BLACKBIRD IN SILVER was published by NEL in January 1986 and was quickly followed by three more volumes in the 'Blackbird' sequence. She has written and had published a further fourteen novels including DRACULA, THE UNDEAD, a sequel to Bram Stoker's classic novel. She has been nominated for the British Fantasy Award for Best Novel on four occasions – DARK CATHEDRAL in 1996, PAGAN MOON and DRACULA, THE UNDEAD in 1997 and THE AMBER CITADEL in 1999.

Her latest book is COURT OF THE MIDNIGHT KING and she has also recently revised the 'Blackbird' books which are being published in hardcover by Storm Constantine's Immanion Press. RGP

JULY MEETING – we are pleased to welcome back our Honorary President HARRY HARRISON. This is an event you do NOT want to miss! BE THERE!

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.

...AND WHAT DID YOU THINK?

From member Steve Green... *"Like yourself, I found the BBC4 recreation somewhat of a damp squib, but I suspect your memory's playing tricks about the 1953 version's "wonderful ending". I checked the script, and Quatermass does indeed talk the creature's human residue into self-destruction, just as in the remake, although the latter seemed curiously devoid of sfx. Perhaps you're thinking of the Hammer movie, with its fiery finale in Westminster Abbey?"*

Nope! Sorry Steve, I never saw the Hammer movie so that 'wonderful ending' WAS the TV version. But maybe it wasn't so wonderful...what seemed like a terrifying, very realistic monster to my naive 11-year-old self was, according to Dave Hardy, just Nigel Kneale's hand wearing a special 'glove' made by his wife!! (Thanks for that, Dave. Another cherished childhood memory ruined...)

<<It's been a l-o-o-o-n-g time since BRUM GROUP NEWS ran a letter column. So maybe it's time to resurrect it. Got an opinion on something happening – or NOT happening in the SF/Fantasy world? Disagree with something you read in BGN? Anything to add? Email your opinions to me at rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk >>

SCIENCE MEETS SF VERNON BROWN

The sciences and technologies found in current SF books are usually not too *outré* and neither are their extrapolations, provided that the reader is prepared to exercise a certain suspension of belief. This may be difficult, as a biologist my particular *betes noires* are the man-sized insectoid aliens hailing from 1G planets, although at a push I may be able to rationalise their possibility, but most times it's not impossible.

SF films though are an entirely different kettle of fish, probably because, unlike books, they have a fairly short lifespan and the director has to grab and hold the audiences attention as quickly as possible. In the past this was often done with cheap horror type effects and advertised as such; remember the 1962 film 'adaptation' of THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS? Nowadays films tend to be gory and/or full of incredibly expensive special effects designed to sell as many spin-offs as possible but in both cases accuracy and plausibility, to say nothing of plotline, are lost in the quest for profit.

But things are set for improvement! Dr. Burns, a biochemist from Oxford University and Prof. Farley, a mathematician at Harvard University, have set up a consultancy in an effort to do away with the errors, misconceptions and plain daftness that Hollywood is so prone to produce.

“Its annoying how many films will include a ‘mad’ scientist” said Dr Burns, “ I’m interested in trying to get the science right and make scientists in films a bit more real.”

“We’re not science geeks complaining from the sidelines,” Prof Farley stated, “Film-makers ought to avoid situations that are ludicrously implausible. We want to help film-makers get the culture of science right, or at least not laughably wrong”.

Hollywood Math and Science Film Consultancy have already advised a number of films and, with TV and theatre in their sights, look set for a busy future. Which means that, with luck, we will hear fewer spaceships or lasers whistling through space, fewer parsecs and light-years used to measure time and more actors behaving like human beings.

HMSFC Information adapted from “The Daily Telegraph” 14th May 2005.

2005 NEBULA AWARDS

Best Novel: PALADIN OF SOULS by Lois McMaster Bujold

Best Novella: "The Green Leopard Plague" by Walter Jon Williams

Best Novelette: "Basement Magic" by Ellen Klages

Best Short Story: "Coming to Terms" by Eileen Gunn

Best Script: THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING by Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens & Peter Jackson

LOCUS NOMINEES

Locus has released a list of the top five vote-getters in this year’s LOCUS poll. The winners will be announced at Westercon in Calgary during the weekend of July 1-4.

Best Science Fiction Novel

THE ALGEBRAIST - Iain M Banks

EASTERN STANDARD TRIBE - Cory Doctorow

FORTY SIGNS OF RAIN - Kim Stanley Robinson

THE CONFUSION and THE SYSTEM OF THE WORLD - Neal Stephenson

IRON SUNRISE - Charles Stross

Best Fantasy Novel

THE DARK TOWER: SONG OF SUSANNAH - Stephen King

IRON COUNCIL - China Miéville

GOING POSTAL - Terry Pratchett

THE FAMILY TRADE - Charles Stross

THE WIZARD KNIGHT - Gene Wolfe

Best First Novel

JONATHAN STRANGE & MR NORRELL - Susanna Clarke

THE COYOTE KINGS OF THE SPACE-AGE BACHELOR PAD - Minister Faust

TRASH, SEX, MAGIC - Jennifer Stevenson

THE YEAR OF OUR WAR - Steph Swainston

CITY OF PEARL - Karen Traviss

Best Young Adult Book

ABARAT: DAYS OF MAGIC, NIGHTS OF WAR - Clive Barker

THE FAERY REEL: TALES FROM THE TWILIGHT REALM - Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling, eds.

THE BLUE GIRL - Charles de Lint

GIFTS - Ursula K. Le Guin

A HAT FULL OF SKY - Terry Pratchett

Best Novella

Stephen Baxter, MAYFLOWER II; Bradley Denton, "Sergeant Chip"; Lucius Shepard, VIATOR; Charles Stross, "The Concrete Jungle"; Gene Wolfe, "Golden City Far"

Best Novelette

Stephen Baxter, "PeriAndry's Quest"; Peter S Beagle, "Quarry"; James Patrick Kelly, "Men are Trouble"; Kelly Link, "The Faery Handbag"; China Miéville, "Reports of Certain Events in London"; Jeff VanderMeer, "Three Days in a Border Town"

Best Short Story

Jeffrey Ford, "The Annals of Eelin-Ok"; Neil Gaiman, "Forbidden Brides of the Faceless Slaves in the Nameless House of the Night of Dread Desire"; China Miéville, "'Tis the Season"; Howard Waldrop, "The Wolf-man of Alcatraz"; Gene Wolfe, "Pulp Cover"

Best Magazine (*Locus excluded*)

ANALOG Science Fiction, Science Fact; ASIMOV'S Science Fiction; The Magazine of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION; REALMS OF FANTASY; SCI FICTION

Best Publisher

Ace; Baen; DAW; Del Rey; Tor

Best Anthology

THE LOCUS AWARDS: THIRTY YEARS OF THE BEST IN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY, Charles N. Brown & Jonathan Strahan, eds.

THE YEAR'S BEST FANTASY AND HORROR: SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL COLLECTION, Ellen Datlow, Kelly Link & Gavin Grant, eds.

THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION: TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL COLLECTION, Gardner Dozois, ed.

YEAR'S BEST SF 9, David G. Hartwell & Kathryn Cramer, eds.

BETWEEN WORLDS, Robert Silverberg, ed.

Best Collection

MOTHER AEGYPT AND OTHER STORIES, Kage Baker

THE COLLECTED SHORT FICTION OF C.J. CHERRYH, C.J. Cherryh

PHASES OF THE MOON: STORIES OF SIX DECADES, Robert Silverberg

THE JOHN VARLEY READER, John Varley

INNOCENTS ABOARD, Gene Wolfe

Best Editor

Ellen Datlow; Gardner Dozois; David G. Hartwell; Patrick Nielsen Hayden; Gordon Van Gelder

Best Artist

Kinuko Y. Craft; Bob Eggleton; Donato Giancola; Frank Kelly Freas; Michael Whelan

Best Non-Fiction

THE GERNSBACK DAYS: A STUDY OF THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN SCIENCE FICTION FROM 1911 TO 1936, Mike Ashley & Robert A.W. Lowndes
RAY BRADBURY: THE LIFE OF FICTION, Jonathan R. Eller & William F. Touponce
THE WAVE IN THE MIND: TALKS AND ESSAYS ON THE WRITER, THE READER, AND THE IMAGINATION, Ursula K. Le Guin
THE ANNOTATED BROTHERS GRIMM, Maria Tatar, ed.
DANCING NAKED: THE UNEXPURGATED WILLIAM TENN, William Tenn

Best Art Book

THE PAINT IN MY BLOOD: ILLUSTRATION AND FINE ART – Allen M Clarke
SPECTRUM 11: THE BEST IN CONTEMPORARY FANTASTIC ART - Cathy & Arnie Fenner, eds.
THE ART OF DISCWORLD, TERRY PRATCHETT – Paul Kidby
FANTASTIC ART: THE BEST OF LUIS ROYO – Luis Royo
THE BEST OF GAHAN WILSON – Gahan Wilson

THE JUNE QUIZ – Rog Peyton

- 1 Under what name did Will F Jenkins write SF?
- 2 What other magazine did John W Campbell edit alongside ASTOUNDING SF in the 1940s?
- 3 Which comicstrip character had a sidekick named Digby?
- 4 Complete the title of 2005 book EARTH, AIR, FIRE AND...
- 5 Which author has written SF for 50 years without having a full-length novel published?
- 6 Which Hugo-winning novel of the 20th century has never been published in the UK?
- 7 How many novels did Alfred Bester write?
- 8 In which year was the first convention hosted in Birmingham?
- 9 Which SF movie starred Rock Hudson?
- 10 Who wrote the *Fionavar Tapestry* sequence?
- 11 Which author died September 2nd 1973?
- 12 JC and PN were responsible for which book?

ANSWERS TO MAY QUIZ IN ISSUE #404 (HEY! What's wrong with you? Here's poor Steve Green working out all these quizzses and NO-ONE sends in any answers!!! Surely someone knows a bit about SF....! Steve's given up and I've had to do the Quiz myself this month!)

1. Brum Group co-president Harry Harrison.
2. Martin Freeman, formerly Tim Canterbury in THE OFFICE.
3. Big Scab, which shared the Nova with Lisa Conesa's Zimri in 1974.
4. Robert A Heinlein.
5. Former *Star Trek* lead William Shatner.
6. Alastair Reynolds. Check out <www.novacon.org> for details.
7. The ever-bizarre Steve Aylett, hopefully a future Novacon guest.
8. HG Wells' THE WAR OF THE WORLDS; Steven Spielberg's version is

set in 2005, whilst the other uses the same Edwardian timeframe as the source material.

9. Sir Patrick Moore and the Brum Group's own David Hardy, for FUTURES: 50 YEARS IN SPACE (which has also been nominated for a Hugo Award, kudos it shares with Peter Weston's memoir WITH STARS IN MY EYES).
10. Mary Doria Russell.
11. David Tennant, most recently star of CASANOVA, who becomes the tenth Doctor next March.
12. Harry Warner Jr.

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

.... **Josef Nesvadba** (b.1926) died on April 26. Born in Prague, Nesvadba was a practicing psychiatrist who began writing science fiction stories in the 1950s and later turned to novels and plays Actor **Frank Gorshin**, (b.1934), best known to fans as The Riddler on the 1960s BATMAN television series, died on May 17 after a long struggle with lung cancer, emphysema and pneumonia Good news that **Robert Sheckley** has recovered sufficiently enough to be able to return to America. But there seems to be a problem over medical insurance – see <http://en.rian.ru/culture/20050527/40428770.html> The 2005 Arthur C Clarke Award was presented to **China Miéville** for the novel IRON COUNCIL on May 11. This year's prize included a cheque for £2005 **Gwyneth Jones's** LIFE won the 2005 Philip K Dick Award for original paperback published in the USA Congratulations to our long-time member **David A Hardy** who won the ANALOG Readers Award for Best Cover for his November piece The Sidewise Award nominations have been announced. The Sidewise Awards honor excellence in alternate history fiction. This year's awards will be presented at Interaction in Glasgow, Scotland. Short Form:- "The Ashbazu Effect" by **John McDaid**, "Five Guys Named Moe" by **Sean Klein**, "The Gladiator's War: A Dialogue" by **Lois Tilton**, "The Heloise Archive" by **L. Timmel Duchamp**, "Ministry of Space" by **Warren Ellis**, "Red Hands, Black Hands" by **Chris Roberson**. Long Form:- THE PLOT AGAINST AMERICA by **Philip Roth** Latest inductees to the Science Fiction Hall of Fame are **Philip K Dick** (Literature), **Chesley Bonestell** (Art), **Steven Spielberg** (Media) and **Ray Harryhausen** (Open Category) **Frederik Pohl** has delivered the manuscript PLATINUM POHL: THE COLLECTED BEST STORIES to Tor Books. It will include 230,000 words of fiction from 1949 through to the 1990s **Mary Gentle's** 1610: A SUNDIAL IN A GRAVE (Gollancz, 2003) has imaginatively been retitled for US publication – A SUNDIAL IN A GRAVE: 1610 Wired Magazine is sponsoring the NextFest, an exhibition of futuristic technology to be held at Chicago's Navy Pier from June 24-June 26. Among the many pieces displayed will be a robotic bust of science fiction author **Philip K. Dick** which can make eye contact and uses artificial intelligence and speech software to carry on complex conversations. Er, didn't someone tell me that Dick never looked anyone in the eye, always staring at a point just beyond their right shoulder?

Science Fiction and Fantasy Female Writers (SF-FFW) has announced the creation of the Roots of Writing Award. The award recognizes seven of the most influential women in the field of science fiction and fantasy literature, including **Betty Ballantine, Madeleine L'Engle, Anne McCaffrey, Ursula K. Le Guin, Kate Wilhelm, Joanna Russ,** and the late **Andre Norton** **STAR WARS: REVENGE OF THE SITH** rang in a whopping \$50 million on its opening Thursday, a single-day record boosted by eagerly anticipated midnight showings, and its total receipts since then beat the four-day \$134.3 million opening of 2003's **THE MATRIX RELOADED**. The George Lucas film has also grossed \$144.7 million overseas for a total of \$303 million worldwide. RGP



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

***DYING INSIDE* by Robert Silverberg**

Gollancz / 199 pages / £6.99 / paperback

Reviewed by Dave Hardy

Star Rating: * * *

At the May meeting of the Brum Group, one of the topics under discussion was, in effect: “How do you define SF and fantasy, and what is the difference?” This book (first published in 1972) is an excellent example of how difficult this question can be. It’s marketed under Gollancz’s ‘SF Masterworks’ banner, so it must be SF, right? Well, it certainly isn’t fantasy, because there are no dragons, wizards or elves. But then again, there is no technology in it either; no spaceships, or robots, not even time travel or an alternat(iv)e world – no science, in fact. But it is about telepathy.

A very literate and well-written book, as one would expect from Silverberg, this is entirely about the life of one man, David Selig, who can read minds (sometimes), but not transmit. The author explores, in great detail, what this would be like. You wonder if a girl fancies you? Just enter her mind and find out how she sees you. You can make a fortune out of the money market by anticipating what others are going to buy or sell – as his one-time best friend Tom Nyquist, who also has the power, does. The difference is that Tom embraces, enjoys and uses his powers to his advantage, while David constantly agonises about them. Oh, often he does enjoy them, especially when he is younger (who wouldn’t!), but he finds one girl who is completely blank to him, which puzzles and worries him, and indeed he has several sexual relationships which eventually end in disaster. And, of course, as in the old adage, by eavesdropping you may learn more about how others see you than you really want to know. . .

The problem, and the reason for the title, is that as he approaches middle age, David's powers begin to become erratic, and fade. Since he has always felt an outsider, should he *welcome* 'becoming normal'? Judith has always hated him because he could enter her mind and know what she was thinking; would their relationship improve now? A very unusual book, and well worth reading, especially if you are looking for something different. *DAH*

***ANIMA* by M John Harrison**

Gollancz / 473 pages / £8.99 / paperback

Reviewed by Michael Jones

Star Rating: * * / * * *

Two novels, previously published five years apart, are here collected in one volume. They are described on the back cover as 'his two classic love stories', but apart from this somewhat tenuous thematic link they share little or nothing of incident, characters or even setting.

THE COURSE OF THE HEART purports to tell the story of three students who were led by an older man in some act – scientific experiment, secret ritual or arcane rite - that is never made clear what, which affects their future lives in unspecified ways. Two of them marry, then divorce, the woman dies of cancer while the man suffers a breakdown. Only the narrator seems able to keep his life in any sort of order, but he has forgotten where they all started from. One is left wondering what it has all been about.

SIGNS OF LIFE manages to be more accessible and is a better book. The first-person narrator, Mick 'China' Rose, and a mate start a business dumping illegal medical waste. He meets and falls in love with Isobel and as their relationship flourishes so also does the company, becoming legitimate and successful. Then he loses Isobel to a business client who will help her to realise her childhood dreams of flight. The firm collapses in bankruptcy and Isobel returns but the renewal of their relationship cannot survive the changes in her and the book ends on an uncertain note with the best of China's life now behind him. He has lost Isobel, his mate and his business, but maybe he has found himself.

Both stories, but especially the first, are written in a curious, choppy style, flitting to-and-fro between various past and present narrative threads which sometimes makes it difficult to pin down the precise order of events or even to determine the time frame in which they are set. In THE COURSE OF THE HEART one encounters passages repeated almost word-for-word in different places, and I also felt I recognised bits taken from earlier short stories although I no longer have that book so I was unable to check it out. Harrison's writing here is at its best in passages of, at times, almost lyrical description, but the narratives are not strong and both stories suffer from this – the first one more so.

Harrison is not exclusively a Science Fiction writer and in ANIMA he is about as far from SF as he gets. It is worth reading as a work of 'Literature', but the true SF aficionado will find it of limited interest. *MJ*

WOKEN FURIES by Richard Morgan

Gollancz / 436 pages / £9.99 / hardcover

Reviewed by Michael Jones

Star rating: * * * *

The star of Morgan’s debut novel ALTERED CARBON, Takeshi Kovacs, is here returned for a third adventure, set this time on his native planet. He has returned there on a personal mission of vengeance but he soon finds himself entangled in a web of political intrigue in which the implacable enmity of a version of his own former self is far from the worst of his problems.

The reader will find the opening chapters are dense with information as the scene is set, and it doesn’t get any easier to follow. There develops a complex story of changing allegiances and shifting loyalties among an extensive cast of characters which includes some of Kovacs’ former friends – not all of whom are such good friends as he once thought. The twists and turns which ensue make the detective thrillers of the past – Raymond Chandler, for example – seem positively tame by comparison.

It derives heavily from the Cyberpunk school of writing, replete with advanced technology, advanced computer interfacing, advanced communication systems and advanced weaponry all thrown in and seasoned with a good deal of sex and violence, so something for everybody. Oh, and central to the plot is the possibility of anybody who can manage to arrange it having their personality and accumulated experience downloaded and transferred into a replacement body or ‘sleeve’: bought, borrowed, rented or stolen as the case may be.

It may sound like little more than a slam-bang action story, and to a large extent that is so. However, Morgan does manage to redeem himself with implicit commentary on the problems for society which will result from the availability of ‘re-sleeving’, which means virtual immortality for the fortunate few, as well as an in-passing commentary on the evils of oligarchic political systems where too much wealth is concentrated in too few hands. A good SF novel, therefore, in the best tradition of extrapolative fiction. *MJ*

 **FILM ROUND-UP** 
BY VICKY COOK

STAR WARS, REVENGE OF THE SITH, released May 19th 2005

This film is by far the best in the modern series. That goes without saying. As well as bringing all the storylines together, and setting the scene for the original trilogy, the acting suddenly improves, the settings and effects are better, Yoda gets to show off his Jedi skills again: the film just feels more enjoyable.

It starts with Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker rescuing the captured Palpatine. After this Anakin forms a bit of a friendship with the senator,

and finds that they seem to share views and political idealisms. However, as what Palpatine tells him goes against his strict Jedi training, he starts to get confused and starts to let his emotions get the better of him, especially as the nightmares become more frequent....

Most people, even if not fans of the *Star Wars* series, know what happens next, but what is interesting is to see the rendering of the tale, the destruction of the boy with such potential as he turns to the dark side merely out of love for his wife. We feel frustrated as Palpatine cleverly twists his mind so he thinks all Jedis are evil, and feel Obi-Wan's despair as he realises his protégé has become truly bitter and twisted. There is a lot of emotion in this film, which I found surprising when the end result was so well known already. This is helped by some outstanding acting moments (well, compared to the last couple of films in the series anyway...). The majority of the acting applause must go to Ewan McGregor as Obi-Wan, and Ian McDiarmid as the Chancellor Palpatine – who does a fascinating job as the politician turned emperor, who eventually gives himself up entirely to the 'Dark Side' and turns Anakin away from sanity and reason. Some of the other performances are a bit so-so – to be honest I felt Padme Amidala was a bit wasted – from the strong female character she was in the first of the trilogy, she is now reduced to a pregnant housewife waiting for her husband, and not at all picking up any clues that he might be going a bit astray just seems a little naïve considering what we know of her already. She has been queen and political negotiator for too long surely not to be able to pick up these obvious clues, but then they say love is blind... Her inevitable demise seems a little contrived as well, just an excuse to end up at the final result Yoda (although not strictly speaking an actor) does a cracking job as usual, showing off his superior Jedi skills again for the audience, yet with enough emoting to make him appeal. He has always been one of the most popular characters in the saga and with good reason.

V/C

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.

Books to be discussed:-

23rd June - **Robert Holdstock** - MYTHAGO WOOD

21st July - **Diana Wynne-Jones** - YEAR OF THE GRIFFIN

18th August - **Peter Jurasik** - DIPLOMATIC ACT

15th Sept - **Mark Morris** - SECRET OF ANATOMY

20th Oct - **Tim Powers** - EARTHQUAKE WEATHER

Nov - **Robert J Sawyer** - FRAMESHIFT

Dec - **Sarah Zettel** - A SORCERER'S TREASON

DRACULA – Birmingham Rep has a World Premiere of Bram Stoker's classic running 7th to 11th June. If you're ready to be scared witless, then

**this new adaptation by Bryony Lavery is a must-see production for you! Bram Stoker's novel of gothic terror has been brought bang up to date, operating in a world of texting and downloads, and as he moves amongst characters from an old story, this very modern Dracula arouses our deepest psychological fears. Richard Bremner ('He Who Must Not Be Named' from Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone) plays Dracula and Colin Baker plays Van Helsing. Tickets are £11 - £22.75, with concessions available. BOX OFFICE: 0121 236 4455
Book Online: www.birmingham-rep.co.uk**

FARINGDON ARTS FESTIVAL runs every year in the Oxfordshire town of Faringdon, between Oxford and Swindon. In 2005, our dates are 4-10 July, and on Saturday 9th July we're playing host to three SF and fantasy authors. Running a half-day workshop on How To Write A Novel (£10 fee, limited to 20 places), is Juliet E. McKenna; talking about her work will be Gwyneth Jones; and headlining our literary strand, in a rare public appearance, will be Brian Aldiss. (Both authors admission free, and will not run at the same time as Juliet's workshop.) Our website is now <http://www.faringdonartsfestival.org/> For more information, or to book for Juliet's workshop, contact Paul Cornell at paulcornell@owlservice.freemove.co.uk

INTERACTION: THE 2005 WORLDCON will be held in Glasgow, 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

TOLKIEN 2005: THE RING GOES EVER ON is a 5-day conference celebrating 50 years of THE LORD OF THE RINGS, to be held at Aston University, Birmingham, from the 11th to 15th August 2005. All details on website <http://www.tolkiensociety.org/2005/>

FANTASYCON 05 has been booked for the 30 September - 2 October 2005, at the Quality Hotel, Walsall, near Birmingham. Guests of Honour: Steven Erikson, Simon Clark and Mark Chadbourn. Steven is the latest addition to the guestlist - hailing from Canada he had his first novella published by PS Publishing (BLOOD FOLLOWS) three years ago. They have now published two more (THE HEALTHY DEAD and THE DEVIL DELIVERED) with a fourth one (FISHIN' WITH GRANDMA MATCHIE) waiting in the wings. Events at the Con include interviews, banquet, panels, the Raffle, scriptwriting, pitch appointments, AGM and Awards, booklaunches by PS Publishing and Pendragon Press among others...plus more! Registrations are due to go up at the end of June, so get your money in now. For further details please see www.britishfantasysociety.org.uk or email fcon@britishfantasysociety.org.uk

*** * * NOVAcon 35 * * *** - the Brum Group's own convention, will again be held at the Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall over the weekend of 11th to 13th November. Guest of Honour is Alastair Reynolds. Cheques to 'Novacon 35', Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ Email: x15@zoom.co.uk Website: www.novacon.org

*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

July 8th - Harry Harrison

August 12th - tba - hopefully a US author staying on after Worldcon

September 10th - Jane Johnson/Jude Fisher/Gabriel King

October 14th – Peter Hamilton

November 4th – Storm Constantine (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE)

December 2nd - Christmas Social Evening – Skittles, buffet, prizes, etc.

January 13th 2006 – Annual General Meeting / Auction of Books

February 10th - Ian R MacLeod

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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 Secretary, 5 Greenbank, Barnt Green, Birmingham, B45 8DH