

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

OCTOBER 2005

ISSUE 409

HONORARY PRESIDENTS: **BRIAN W ALDISS, O.B.E.**
& **HARRY HARRISON**

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Friday 4th NOVEMBER

ALLEN ASHLEY

One of the most distinctive voices in modern literature, Allen Ashley has been published in dozens of books and magazines in the UK and USA. His work has appeared in publications such as *Interzone*, *Nemonymous*, *BBR*, *Dark Horizons*, *Chills*, *The Dream Zone*, *Space & Time*, *Peeping Tom*, *Front and Centre*, *Dementia 13*, *Mystique*, *Prism*, though it is with the TTA Press publications - *The Third Alternative*, *Zene* and *The Fix* - that Allen's name is most closely associated.

His ground-breaking debut novel *THE PLANET SUITE* (TTA Press, 1997) is a series of intricately linked stories about the planets of the Solar System and has been described by Brian Aldiss as 'The course for the future' and by Rhys Hughes as 'One of the best novels of the decade'.

At various stages of his fascinating career, Allen has been a performance poet, a singer/songwriter, a music critic and a football journalist.

Vicky Cook

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

**DECEMBER MEETING – The Christmas Social. PLEASE
NOTE YOU MUST HAVE A TICKET FOR THIS EVENT.
DEADLINE FOR BOOKING IS NOVEMBER 18th.**

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.

PHILIP PULLMAN vs C S LEWIS

Author Philip Pullman has attacked plans to turn *The Chronicles of Narnia* into a movie series, calling CS Lewis' books 'racist' and 'misogynistic'. *His Dark Materials* author Pullman said the 1950s stories were 'reactionary'. "If the Disney corporation wants to market this film as a great Christian story, they'll just have to tell lies about it," he told The Observer.

The first film in the series, *THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE*, is due to be released in December. It is the second and best-known novel in the seven-part *Narnia* book series. The £62m movie version is expected to be the first of five films, following the success of *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* movie trilogy and ongoing *Harry Potter* film adaptations.

Evangelical Christian groups in the US have backed the movie, seeing parallels between CS Lewis' tales and Bible stories.

"We believe that God will speak the gospel of Jesus Christ through this film," Lon Allison, director of Illinois' Billy Graham Centre, told the newspaper.

But Pullman said the *Narnia* books contained "a peevish blend of racist, misogynistic and reactionary prejudice" and "not a trace" of Christian charity. "It's not the presence of Christian doctrine I object to so much as the absence of Christian virtue," he added. "The highest virtue - we have on the authority of the New Testament itself - is love, and yet you find not a trace of that in the books."

Pullman's acclaimed *His Dark Materials* trilogy tells of a battle against the church and a fight to overthrow God.

Attacked by some Christian teachers and Catholic press as blasphemous, Pullman's trilogy is also being made into a series of movies.

Tolkien 2005 - Dave Corby

It is unlikely that many members of the Brum Group can have failed to notice that in August 2005 Aston University hosted the 'Tolkien 2005' conference. This was held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the complete British publication of *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*. As such the 5 day conference included an extremely wide variety of attractions, ranging from the scholarly (such as Rhona Beare's "Influence of Climate on Myth: Tolkien's Theory and Practice") through to the highly comedic ("The Reduced Silmarillion Company" and "Lord of the Goons") taking in auctions, art shows, retail events, the "Farmer Giles of Ham" stage performance by Shire Productions and even the

slightly questionable (Ian Hunter's "Tolkien Dirty: LOTR and Sexploitation Films", at which he showed a complete viewing of "Lord of the G-Strings" ...). So much was going on that the program guide runs to 72 pages!

The event attracted a large number of Tolkien enthusiasts (over 650, of which 50% came from overseas) and also incorporated 'Mythcon 36'. As such it was a great venue to meet fellow enthusiasts, even if the size was such that most acquaintances were only briefly contacted. Overall the intensity of the event was almost overwhelming (with 4 programme streams on both the Saturday and the Sunday, with room parties going on all Saturday night/Sunday morning). Aston proved to be a reasonably venue for an event of this size; some things were good (the standard of on-campus accommodation) and some things not so (lack of general hospitality arrangements), and as such many lessons will be learnt for future events.

I enjoyed myself immensely at everything I went to; the standards of the presentations were extremely high, and I even got an item or two in the auction! I met many new friends, and feedback I have heard from other attendees is overall positive. I am aware that a proposal has been put forward to have similar large conferences in the future, at large venues all over the world, such was the success of this year's event. Perhaps Birmingham has once again pioneered a tradition that may become an international phenomenon...

DC

FANTASYCON '05 - VICKY COOK

FantasyCon 05 was my first time, attending as well as running a convention, so new experiences all round. Tim and I arrived early to find 'men in suits' hogging the main function room – apparently there for the duration! Luckily, although booked till 5pm, they cleared off well before then, probably put off by us dressed in black, devil-clad t-shirts, specially designed for this year's event - even the hotel staff had to have one each! At their request!

Friday night kicked off at 6pm. I had to sit on registrations (the perks of being an organiser!) but I managed to make it to the quiz at 7pm – got a few of the easy ones though many were beyond me (Deanna Troi's sister...?) The four attending members of the Write Fantastic then trooped in and did a star turn, followed by Gail-Nina doing a fabulous illustrated presentation. Ramsey Campbell wrapped up the night with storytelling, but I had headed bed-wards (sad but true), too knackered from the stresses of the day to brave the early hours in the bar.

Saturday seemed to whiz by. After sorting out a few stropky all-nighters who had been told to vacate the bar at the early hour of 2am (!), the events were underway, with various Guest of Honour interviews, panels as well as the huge evening raffle – where I won pretty much zilch – rather unfair when people at the table next to us were winning everything! The three Guests of Honour – Simon Clark, Steve Erikson and Mark Chadbourn, were excellent and worked hard at everything they were on – panels, interviews and book signings.

During the afternoon, in conjunction with the main events, there were some one-to-one pitch appointments with various editors – Dot Lumley, Jo Fletcher and Sean Wright. Simon Clark also held a special workshop for a pre-booked few where he discussed the perils of writing and other such matters. It was generally agreed that this was very successful event and an idea to be worked with next year. The fact that we tried to use events based on media as well as books (for instance the Scriptwriting Improvisation, and the film show) caused much comment and seemed to please quite a few people.

A film show hosted by Martin Roberts from Purple Rage consisted of a few short films with interesting titles such as ‘Arousal!’ All were excellent, very professional and well-acted and directed. Martin also used the plasma screen in the dealers’ room to show some old awards footage, which worked well.

Most successful event attendance-wise seemed to be the book launch. Pete Crowther (PS Publishing) had kindly offered some bottles of wine for this event. Pretty much every dealer at the Con seemed to want to launch something, so we moved it from the bar into the dealers room, something which nobody minded despite the presence of alcohol so close to the books! We almost managed to clear the bar, an achievement in itself, though that might have been the promise of free booze... The event was excellent with several speeches made - the dealers made money, everyone got rather tipsy...success!

Sunday was quieter, with the AGM, banquet and awards and a couple of panels squeezed in. For the first time in living memory, neither Steve Jones nor Pete Crowther won anything (Andrew Hook managed to pip them both to the relevant awards). Graham Joyce, an excellent MC all weekend, did a cracking job and sent everyone into fits of laughter with his anecdotes. The Guests of Honour all gave excellent speeches, no doubt mindful of my warning to keep ‘em short but witty. The committee were pretty much all voted in for the same jobs next year, though Dave Sutton has taken over from Gary Couzens as Award administrator.

Soon it was time to pack up and depart. Some stalwarts were staying an extra night, but I decided since I lived only the other end of Birmingham, despite the 2hr bus journey, I should go see what had happened to the house all weekend. My first Con therefore and I’m tired, a bit hung-over but satisfied. Plenty of ideas for next year – it will be the big 30th birthday for FantasyCon, so watch this space!
VC

The winners of the **British Fantasy Awards** were announced at Fantasycon on October 2.

Best Novel (*The August Derleth Fantasy Award*): THE DARK TOWER VII: THE DARK TOWER by Stephen King

Best Novella: “Breath” by Christopher Fowler

Best Short Story: “Black Static” by Paul Meloy

Best Collection: OUT OF HIS MIND by Stephen Gallagher

Best Anthology: THE ALSISO PROJECT edited by Andrew Hook

Best Artist: Les Edwards

Best Small Press: Elastic Press

Karl Edward Wagner Award for Special Achievement: Nigel Kneale,
creator of Quatermass

EXHIBIT QUESTIONS ALIEN LIFE-FORM

One of the biggest and most in-depth exhibitions asking whether alien life-forms exist is opening in London. Visitors to the Science Museum in west London will be able to interact with scientifically based creatures as part of 'The Science of Aliens' exhibit. The work of top scientists, who used the latest discoveries and scientific principles to imagine alien worlds and creatures, will also be on display.

It opened on October 14th for four months until it goes on an international tour. Children and adults alike can explore cutting-edge hands-on displays, chat with ET in the Communication Zone, or even text an alien from Earth. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/4340892.stm> for the full webpage.

<<extracted from their website by Vicky Cook>>

UNDISCOVERED AUTHORS

<<The following letter was received by our secretary and is reproduced below as received. - RGP>>

Dear Science Fiction Society,

I am writing to inform you about **Undiscovered Authors**, a nationwide writing competition run by **BookForce**, a London based publishing company. **Undiscovered Authors** is the UK's first national competition aimed at seeking out new literary talent on any subject, and is open to everyone aged 18 and over.

We are looking for people with **interesting insights, facts or stories** to convey, from a **fantasy science-fiction novel**, an **astronomy guide**, research into **Evolution**, understanding of the **Nuclear Age**, **Forensics**, a history of **influential Scientists**, **Dietetics**, a paper on **Biochemistry** etc. Through this competition we are hoping to expand individual's horizons by encouraging them to communicate their knowledge in the written form.

Entries can be on any subject matter, under the categories of **General Fiction**, **Non-Fiction** and **Academic**. The competition is launching in 16 different regions across the UK and Ireland with great financial rewards of **£1,000 per category** for each region. Three winners from each region will then be entered into a national final with winning prizes of **£10,000** for General Fiction, **£5,000** for Non Fiction and **£2,000** for Academic.

To enter the competition an online registration form must be completed, and a sample chapter and synopsis of the entrants work provided by the closing date of 31st December 2005. Entry to the competition is free.

Undiscovered Authors is designed to encourage anyone to become published to whatever level they may aspire.....they do say there's a book in each of us!

Please find more information online at 'www.undiscoveredauthors.co.uk', including details of mini opening page competitions at a location near you. If you need any more details please do not hesitate to contact me directly on 0207 529 3747 or 'natalie.matthews@bookforce.co.uk' and I would be happy to discuss the competition in more detail.

Yours Faithfully

Natalie Matthews ('Undiscovered Authors')

WAR OF THE WORLDS

Further to the article in last month's newsletter regarding the musical version of 'The War of the Worlds' at the NEC, we are arranging a Group trip to this event in April 2006. The NEC, Birmingham are hosting a musical version of War of the Worlds on 19th April next year (evening performance). Whether we go or not depends how many replies I get, and a decision will have to be made soon so that we have a better chance of getting good seats. The tickets are pricey - about £40 including booking fee, but there is a group discount available. Details such as travel to and from etc., will be sorted out later on. If anyone would like to go, please email me at 'aunico@hotmail.com' (Vicky Cook)

...AND WHAT DID YOU THINK?

THE LETTER COLUMN OF 'BRUM GROUP NEWS'

Anything to say about the Group, meetings or SF in general? Email your opinions to me at rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk >>

OCTOBER QUIZ - Steve Green

- 01 Which of Diana Wynne Jones' fantasy novels has just been adapted by acclaimed Japanese animator Hiya Miyazaki?
02. In the 2005 *Doctor Who* episode "Dalek", which other of the Timelord's foes makes a cameo appearance?
03. Which world-famous fantasy author was honoured in August at a conference in Birmingham?
04. Robert Silverberg's 1993 novel THE POSITRONIC MAN expands which Isaac Asimov novelette?
05. How are Melvin Frohike, Richard Langly and John Fitzgerald Byers better known?
06. Which former Novacon guest of honour is currently the Guardian's regular SF reviewer? (This year's guest of honour is Alastair Reynolds; full details appear elsewhere in this newsletter.)
07. Charles Stross' ACCELERON (2005) comprises nine linked short stories and novellas. How many have won Hugo Awards?

08. Name the giant worms featured in the TREMORS movie series (1990-2004) and its short-lived tv spin-off (2003).
09. Which famous superhero group was “together for the first time in one might magazine” in October 1961?
10. Who wrote the novel THE MAN WHO UPSET THE UNIVERSE ?
11. What links the horror movies FREAKS (1932), THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (1974) and WOLF CREEK (2005)?
12. As well as its monthly newsletter, the current Brum Group produced a fanzine in 1977. What was the title?

ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUIZ

01. A CLOCKWORK ORANGE by Anthony Burgess.
02. SERENITY.
03. Damon Knight.
04. J G Ballard.
05. Victor von Doom, aka Doctor Doom.
06. Samuel R Delany.
07. Robert Lionel Fanthorpe (aka Elton T Neef, Deutero Spartacus, etc).
08. Sarah Jane Smith, played by Elizabeth Sladen. There’s also a worrying rumour that she’ll be joined by the robot dog K-9.
09. Michael Moorcock, who eventually became the magazine’s editor from 1956-58.
10. BLIND VOICES.
11. Tiberius – they share his as their middle name.
12. The British Weird Fantasy Society (it later dropped the “Weird”).

RESULTS

Harry Hodson - 12 / William McCabe – 10 / Mike Chinn - 9

SUPPORT THE AUTHOR!

BSFG member Alan Cash has had his first SF novel published – as announced back at the August meeting. The novel is titled THE JANUS EFFECT. Alan will be giving a presentation at Hawthorn House Library, Handsworth Wood on 17th December between noon and 1.00pm. Hopefully, you’ll be there to support him. AND WILL THE PERSON WHO TOOK ‘THE JANUS EFFECT’ TO REVIEW, PLEASE GET THEIR REVIEW TO ME ASAP.

REDESIGNED WEBSITE

The Brum Group’s website has now been redesigned and updated by our webmistress Jinnie Cracknell. Please take a look at it and send any comments you have to Jinnie at ‘bsfgwebmistress@tiscali.co.uk’.

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

.... Author **Charles Harness** (b.1915) is reported to have died on September 20th. Harness’s works include THE PARADOX MEN, THE RING OF RITORNEL and THE ROSE. Harness worked as a patent attorney for more than thirty-five years, only publishing SF sporadically Actress **Constance**

Moore (b.1920) died in Los Angeles on September 16 of heart failure. Moore made her screen debut in 1937 and two years later appeared as Wilma Deering opposite Buster Crabbe in BUCK ROGERS. She reprised the role in 1953 in the film **Planet Outlaws** Fan **Giles Hart** (b.1950) was killed during the London terrorist bombings on July 7 while riding on a bus in Tavistock Square. Hart was scheduled to speak on the “Lesser Known Works of Lewis Carroll” later in the day. Following his death, Hart received the Knights Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland for his services to democracy. Hart had been a strong supporter of Solidarity in the 1980s. He was also the chairman of the H G Wells Society The 2005 Sunburst Award was presented to **Geoff Ryman** for his novel AIR. The Sunburst Award is given for Canadian Literature of the Fantastic and carries a Can\$1,000 prize and a medallion **Ursula K. LeGuin's** GIFTS will receive the PEN Center USA award for Children's Literature and a \$1,000 prize at a gala event at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in LA on November 9 The 2005 Norton Award, presented for extraordinary invention and creativity unhindered by the restraints of paltry reason, were given to **Jack Vance** for PORTS OF CALL and LURULU, and **Grania Davis** for her efforts to preserve the legacy of **Avram Davidson** and for her own writings This year's candidates for the Trans Atlantic Fan Fun (TAFF) have been announced. The winner will travel from Europe to North America to attend SF conventions, travel throughout the country and meet up with SF fans. This year's candidates are **Bridget Bradshaw**, ‘1/2r’**Arthur Cruttenden**, and **Mike ‘Sparks’ Rennie** **Orson Scott Card's** new pay-per-issue webzine, Intergalactic Medicine Show, ‘<http://www.intergalacticmedicineshow.com>’ has gone live with short stories from a number of authors, and Card promises a new *Ender's Game* story with every issue. Each issue (published quarterly) is US\$2.50 Google is being sued by a group of book publishers over plans to put millions of titles online. The Association of American Publishers, which includes firms such as Penguin, has filed a suit in New York claiming Google will infringe their copyrights. Google countered that the lawsuit was ‘short sighted’, claiming its idea will lift exposure and demand for books **Burt Rutan** and **Paul Allen** have donated SpaceShipOne, the first private craft to fly into space, to the Smithsonian Institution. The craft hangs in the main hall of the Air and Space Museum in Washington along side the Spirit of Saint Louis and the Bell X-1 in the Icons of Flight exhibit The same team of scientists who discovered 2003 UB313, a trans Neptunian object believed to be larger than Pluto, have now announced their subsequent discovery of a moon in orbit around the object. The scientists, who gave the original object the unofficial nickname Xena, have given a similarly unofficial nickname of Gabrielle, to the moon The popular character of Captain Jack (**John Barrowman**), who appeared in several episodes of the recent *Doctor Who*, will get his own show with the BBC picking up a 13 episode order of TORCHWOOD (an anagram of Doctor Who). The show will centre around a group of renegade investigators and will get its launch via the upcoming WHO Christmas special and second season. However, there will be no

crossover of stories between the two shows. The on-again, off-again John Carter of Mars project, based on **Edgar Rice Burroughs'** series of novels about a civil war veteran who finds himself caught up with a princess on the planet Mars, has **Jon Favreau** attached to direct. The project has wandered in development hell for many years, but Favreau believes technology has come to the point that it can be made. Now all they need is a script...that's currently Ehren Kruger's (SCREAM 3) job

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

***OLYMPOS* by Dan Simmons**

Gollancz 690pgs / £10.99 / trade paperback

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

Star rating: * * * * *

Dan Simmons begins his tale in ILIUM and continues it in OLYMPOS. He uses the text of Homer as a starting point but by the start of the second book it is beginning to deviate considerably. The enactment of the Trojan Wars is a symptom of the problem that is escalating within the solar system. Superficially, Earth is a utopia: the million people still living there have an idyllic life, faxing themselves from one party to another. Orbiting above the planet are two orbital rings where they believe they are faxed for rejuvenation every twenty years, and after five rejuvenations will go permanently to paradise. One form of entertainment (reading and TV are things of the past) is the turin cloth. Placed over the face, it enables the viewer to live the Trojan Wars in real time. As might be expected, there are worms in paradise. Partly due to the activities of Harman and his friends in ILIUM, the *vornix*, who hitherto have been regarded as mute, harmless servants, begin a campaign of human extermination. No-one is safe anywhere.

Simmons is drawing on a number of sources for his inspiration. The Homeric Troy set on a terra-formed Mars with the gods at home on Mount Olympus provides an excellent vehicle for those posing as gods. They certainly have god-like powers even though these come from manipulating advanced technologies. Closer to Earth the Tempest is played out with not only Caliban but Prospero and Ariel having roles in the events.

Significant to the unravelling of the situation are the *moravecs*. These were biologically adapted centuries before to survive in the harsh environments of the outer solar system. Mahnmur is at home in the methane seas under the crust of

Europa and Orphu, his friend, is able to survive in hard vacuum. Mahnmut has a fascination for Shakespearean sonnets, so much so that his submersible is called *The Dark Lady*. Orphu has a predilection for the subtleties of Proust. They are sent to discover the source of the anomalies that have apparently changed Mars in an impossibly short space of time and the fluctuations in quantum fields that are in danger of destroying the whole system. It is by applying their knowledge of literature that the sense of the science is worked out. The book is extremely complex with the various disparate groups significantly affecting the others. There are so many different elements in the two books that it has taken an exceptional writer to visualise them and bring them together into a coherent whole. Simmons plays with literature, language, science and drama, winding them together into an exciting adventure. Take nothing here at face value. *PM*

***PROVENDER GLEED* by James Lovegrove**

Orion / 331 pages / £14.99 / trade paperback

Reviewed by William McCabe

Star Rating: * * * *

I wonder sometimes that people write science fiction. It's said that it's a declining market that doesn't make as much money as it used to. So why should someone write an SF novel when they'd probably make more from a regular thriller? This is a good case in point. As a thriller it has all the right moves: the plot moves fast enough and the characters are (mostly) solid and believable.

Then there's this 'alternate world' thing. The idea is that sometime during the Renaissance several trading families took over effective control of the world and have been passing down that power along lines of primogeniture (first-born son) ever since. Technology is somehow changed - they still have airships, there's a secure tram system for the privileged and lower classes live in tower blocks. It all feels a bit hokey. I can't help but wonder why it was put in. I don't believe the history would hold up to scrutiny - think of how often the throne of any country has passed from father to son (many times it doesn't). This world does have elected governments but their members rely so much on the support of the 'Families' that they have little real power. Think of it as a more obvious version of corporate sponsorship. Apart from the odd item, this never really interferes with the plot.

The problem with reviewing this kind of thriller is that it's so easy to reveal too much of the plot. Provender Gleed is the grandson of the head of the most powerful family in England. Since he is the eldest son of the eldest son, he is being pressured to find a wife to continue the line. Then he is kidnapped.

Although we know from the start who the kidnappers are, we aren't told who is really behind it. Who is the 'inside man'? Maybe it's the actor cousin who is desperately short of money. Has he been paid off by a rival family?

The head of the Gleed family has hired 'Milner & Moore, Anagrammatic Detectives' to find his missing grandson. Do they really have a

chance of success? Why would anyone think they did? Are they just comic relief, or a chance for the writer to exercise his fascination with anagrams? Believe it or not, there is a good explanation.

Lovegrove has shown that he is capable of writing a good thriller but, on this showing, I wouldn't rate him on his 'science fiction'. *WAM*

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:-

20th Oct - Anthony Burgess - A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

17th Nov - Gregory Benford - BEYOND INFINITY

15th Dec - Sarah Zettel - A SORCEROR'S TREASON

19th Jan 2006 - tba

16th Feb - tba

The Fifth European Mars Society Conference (EMC5) FROM EARTH TO MARS November 4-6, 2005 Alexandra House Conference Centre, Wroughton, Swindon, England A weekend of guest talks, panels, debates, workshops and events featuring some of the world's leading experts in Mars exploration and featuring an opportunity to visit the Mars Society's newest Mars Analogue Research Station: Euro-MARS. Featured Guests: **Charles Cockell** - (BAS) Mars Polar Base; **Adam Hawkey** - (U of Wolverhampton) - Mobility on Mars; **Piero Messina** - (ESA) Aurora Exploration Programme; **Pat Norris** - (LogicaCMG) ExoMars Rover; **Jens Ormo** - Wearable Astrobiology Computer; **Robert Zubrin** - Options for Human Mars Missions.

To register for the conference, go to: <http://www.marssociety.co.uk/>

NEIL GAIMAN will be in town on the 11th November at 1pm-2pm, doing signings of his ANANSI BOYS at Forbidden Planet, Priory Queensway, Birmingham. To order signed copies contact FP on 0207 803 1900.

After that you can then carry on to....

***** 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

FILM SEASON – there will be a Science Fiction Film Season at the IMAX Cinema, Millennium Point from 11th November to 10th December. For details ring 0121 202 2222 or see ‘www.imax.ac’

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 OF THE BSFG

December 2nd, 7-11pm - Christmas Social Evening – Skittles, buffet, prizes.

If you have not bought your tickets yet there are a couple more application forms with this Newsletter. Please complete parts A & B and return the whole form (one per ticket required) to Vicky Cook, Social Info, 5 Greenbank, Barnt Green, Birmingham B45 8DH with your cheque/PO for £10. Details are on the form and in last month’s Newsletter - if you have mislaid the latter see Pat or Vernon at this month’s meeting or email us via the Group’s address. Tickets are selling well as usual, do not forget that we have a limit on numbers so get yours as soon as possible - the last minute will be too late!

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

February 10th - Ian R MacLeod

March 10th – Brian Stableford

Newsletter 410 copyright 2005 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 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