

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

MAY 2006

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

COMMITTEE: **VERNON BROWN (CHAIRMAN); VICKY COOK (SECRETARY);**
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Friday 12th May

STORM CONSTANTINE

Storm Constantine became a published author way back in the late eighties through a lucky break showing her manuscript to a rep for Orbit books while in Andromeda Bookshop. That book was the first of the extremely popular *Wraeththu* series - THE ENCHANTMENTS OF FLESH AND SPIRIT. But when things didn't work out at Orbit, Storm moved onto Headline and soon found problems there also. After a couple more moves to other publishers, Storm decided to become a publisher herself. She formed Immanion Press and started reprinting the *Wraeththu* books in hardcover. She also commenced reprinting Freda Warrington's early books in their first hardcover editions.

Storm will be talking about Immanion Press and the problems of publishing in today's economic climate. And we're sure she'll be more than happy to discuss her writing as well.

Here is a unique chance to hear about the SF world from both sides – the writer's and the publisher's – from one person. Not to be missed! *RGP*

June 9th – Hugo Award-winning SF artist JIM BURNS will be talking to the Group and showing his work. Every effort will be made to check the equipment!

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.

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

Les Edwards – a different sort of meeting

by Chris Morgan

Definitely a different sort of meeting, with fantasy undertones. There was horror artist Les Edwards accompanied by his lovely wife Val. There was a sizeable audience (about 26 of us, including a contingent of British Fantasy Society members such as Mike Chinn and Dave Sutton). There was a DVD player, a projector and screen. There was Les's DVD crammed with his art. And it wouldn't work. The player turned a blind eye to the DVD.

At once, various technically-minded folk conferred. For the first time in living memory, Laurence didn't have his laptop with him. Les and Peter Coleborn rushed out to try and buy an up-to-date DVD player. Vernon's face went into its worried, on-edge expression (no jokes, please).

As it was after eight, no DVD players were to be had. Vernon was forced to announce that the formal meeting would be an informal meeting. The raffle (highlight of the evening) was won by Dave Sutton, who has a collection of his stories just published.

I asked Vernon whether those present would get free entry to the May meeting, or perhaps for June (another top artist) but I got a serious and constructive answer about costs incurred. (It was a joke, Vernon!)

In fact, everybody seemed to be enjoying themselves, chatting in small groups.

What I'd like to know is whether Rog Peyton, Mike Jones, Pete Weston and other regulars had some precog warning of technoproblems which made them stay away.

And finally, a few words about the hotel: the Britannia is sinking beneath waves of dilapidation, looking more like a bombsite each month. The one working lift decided, quite suddenly at 7.30, not to. Yvonne (en route to the meeting) was trapped for twenty minutes with a complete football team. Later, at about 10, as we were leaving, we found that a pane of glass in the revolving front door had shattered: a man-shaped hole but no man. The less-than-pleased Les Edwards was still in the meeting room at the time. Strange or what? *CM*

‘WHATEVER CAN.....’ by Vernon Brown

We know it as Sod’s First, the Americans as Finagle’s and it’s presumably known elsewhere under other names but whatever it’s called, the Law is as universal as gravity – “Whatever can go wrong, will”. This was demonstrated neatly and annoyingly at the April Meeting.

Over the years the BSFG has had its share of misfortunes with meetings, from speakers cancelling at the last minute on downwards but, generally speaking, things have run fairly smoothly. Unfortunately they can and do go wrong as they did for Les Edwards.

On the surface arranging a speaker appears quite simple, just ring them up, sort out a date and then make any necessary arrangements. The reality is different, particularly when they have to come a distance and hotel rooms, equipment etc., have to be sorted out, so to facilitate matters the Committee prepared a checklist of questions based on experience and commonsense to ask a prospective speaker.

But, just as one cannot imagine anything that one has not already experienced, so it is difficult to foresee problems of a type that are not known to exist. And no-one involved in arranging Les’s visit knew that all DVD players do not play all DVDs! So they arranged to borrow a player that has been used perfectly satisfactorily at a number of conventions only to discover on the night that it was incompatible with Les’s disc, leaving the Committee somewhat flummoxed. Hindsight is said to be a wonderful thing but it does imply that a better decision could have been made – we didn’t realise that there was one to be made.

However Les was very good about the situation, as was Val, and they circulated all evening, chatting and, in Les’s case, signing innumerable books. Feedback from members on the night and since indicates that they enjoyed the Meeting so it was not a complete disaster and we still have Les’s presentation to look forward to if he doesn’t mind visiting us again.

The Committee has learnt from the evening, the checklist is in the process of being added to, so, short of *force majeure*, this particular type of problem won’t happen again. We would also like some help from you, the members, in case of certain future difficulties.

There are two possible situations where we may have no speaker ie.1) where we all turn up on the night and he/she doesn’t, and 2) when he/she cancels at a couple of days notice. In the first case we need something(s) to do that need no preparation or perhaps can be prepared on a sheet of paper and brought by the Committee to all Meetings in readiness; in the second case we need something(s) that can be prepared in advance and stored until needed. So if you have any ideas for either/both of these please email us – they can be in principle or detail – or see me at a Meeting. There will be a drink for each new feasible idea.

So my apologies to all concerned that the Meeting did not take place as advertised, it should not happen again. VB

HAVING A WINDY TIME IN GLASGOW by Rog Peyton

I missed all this – what a night to miss out on my regular visits to the Brum Group! Why wasn't I at the Group? I was packing books ready for the con.

It was all going to be so easy - the convention committee were organising transport to pick up each off the dealers' stock in one van travelling up the country at a fraction of the cost it would be if we each arranged our own (my costs would have been £350 - economically unsound on top of all the other costs). All confirmed to us at the end of January.

14 days before the con, on the Friday, just as I was about to order all the brand-new titles to be delivered direct to the hotel by the publishers, I received an email saying that arrangements for the transport had fallen apart and sorry, but we would have to make our own way there. Panic! I'd have to cancel my room and actually miss an Eastercon! The next day I received another email saying that the transport was on again – possibly. On Monday I was informed it was definitely off. On Tuesday evening I was informed that it was definitely on again. Definite!

So now I had just three days to work out my orders and get them to the publishers. The next day was April 5th – my birthday – and Arline and I had arranged to go out for the whole day. Nothing done about ordering books. That had to be done on Thursday and Friday, which I managed to complete by about 3pm on the Friday. I then realised I still had to pack all the books from my older stock by the following Tuesday night, deal with over 80 auctions ending on ebay that weekend, send out invoices and then pack the orders – all by Wednesday afternoon. So I was forced to miss the Brum Group. Everything did get packed in time – just. And all the ebay orders got dealt with.

I'd arranged to travel up to Glasgow by air with Pete and Eileen Weston but Eileen suddenly decided she wanted to go by car so Pete offered me a lift. We started off at 9.30am on Thursday morning and everything went well – we chatted non-stop – until we found the traffic slowing down and we noticed that the southbound lanes were empty. No traffic whatsoever. We ground to a halt about 11.30 and there we stayed for about 2 hours. Apparently a lorry had overturned, burst into flames and it was discovered that it was carrying 'dangerous goods'. So the whole motorway was closed off both ways. Poor Pete had been hoping to stop at the next services for a 'comfort break'. His plight was not helped by the car in the next lane to us. Husband and wife in the same predicament but they were fortunate to be towing a caravan and only had to nip in there.

Eventually the traffic started moving and we passed the site of the accident. The road had been completely resurfaced! After a break at the services for lunch we continued and arrived at the con hotel in Glasgow at about 4.45pm.

I made my way to the overflow hotel where I was staying – just two or three hundred yards, along the Clyde, across a large deserted car park. High winds came along the Clyde and battered me as I staggered along. I can't remember ever experiencing winds like that before, but it stayed that way for most of the weekend. I could look forward to a good bracing walk to the hotel after breakfast each morning!

The con itself turned out to be a lot better than many had expected. Not a great con by any means but enjoyable and profitable. I didn't get to see any programme items (nothing new there, then!) and I didn't get to meet any of the Guests except for M John Harrison and John Clute who did visit the book room

Saturday night almost turned into a nightmare. Eight of us had booked into the Russian restaurant and we'd ordered two cabs to take us there. I was in the first cab and as we pulled away from the hotel, we saw Pete and Eileen and two others climbing into the second cab. We arrived at the restaurant, got seated, read the menu – but no sign of the other four. They turned up nearly 40 minutes later. Apparently, after getting into their cab, Pete asked the driver to take them to the Russian restaurant in Argyll Street. The driver immediately braked and switched off the engine, refusing to move and insisting there was no Russian restaurant in Argyll Street. Pete insisted there was, quoted two or three landmark buildings within 50 yards of the restaurant and asked the driver to drop them off at any of them. No way. So Pete went back in the hotel and booked another cab. Cabs kept coming and each time Pete asked if it was their cab, was told no. Eventually they got a cab and as it pulled away, saw their original cab hidden away round a corner – presumably the driver was telling all his mates to avoid the people wanting to go to the Russian restaurant. Pete never discovered what sinister agenda existed between the cab driver and the restaurant. He obviously knew it but refused to take anyone there.

One of the guests at the con was a bra and corset designer and apparently her talk was the most well-attended programme item of the weekend. Many young ladies had come prepared and the weekend was filled with much cleavage and heaving bosoms. Oh, this never happened when I was young....

There was only one downside to the con for me. That was the art auction. I'd noticed that the programme book simply stated a time and 'Art Auction'. No details, no auctioneer named... Of course, I should have guessed – no-one had arranged anything! I was asked if I'd be auctioneer late on Saturday afternoon. The auction was at noon on Sunday and I found myself in a tiny overheated room which seated just 24 people. Within five minutes of the auction starting, my throat was dry, my lips started cracking and the heat just got worse as more people tried to cram themselves into that tiny room.

At the end of the con I had to fly back to Brum. I booked my ticket less than 24 hours before the flight. Cost - £1.00. Plus £25.60 airport taxes. Pretty good, huh? Then I got a taxi from the airport to Bartley Green - £28. Would have been cheaper if the cab driver hadn't insisted on going all the way into

Birmingham and back out again through Harborne. Said it was the most direct route. Not a good weekend with taxi drivers.

But, a pleasant enough con and I'm glad I went.

RGP

THE BSFA AWARDS

Novel: AIR by Geoff Ryman

Short Fiction: "Magic for Beginners" by Kelly Link

Artwork: Pawel Lewandowski for the cover of INTERZONE #200

Non-Fiction: SOUNDINGS by Gary K. Wolfe

Doc Weir Award: Steve Lawson

Richard Evans Award: Pat Cadigan

...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 >>

ANSWERS TO APRIL QUIZ

- 01 In Edgar Rice Burroughs' novels, Mars is known as Barsoom.
- 02 HMS Camden Lock features in the BBC sitcom *Hyperdrive*.
- 03 Harry Harrison, Brian Aldiss and the late Bob Shaw were all appointed honorary presidents of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, a role Bob also filled for the former Solihull Science Fiction Group.
- 04 David Langford was the real author of the ufology spoof *An Account of a Meeting with Denizens of Another World* (1979), part of which was lifted as fact into Whitley Strieber's *Majestic* (1989).
- 05 Vincent D'Onofrio portrayed Robert E Howard, creator of Conan and King Kull, in *The Whole Wide World*, based upon a memoir by his friend Novalyne Price.
- 06 The cover for *Amazing Stories #1* was painted by Frank R Paul.
- 07 James Blish, Greg Bear, Mack Reynolds, Joe Haldeman and Vonda McIntyre have all written novels set in the *Star Trek* universe.
- 08 The remakes of *Village of the Damned* and *Psycho* both used the original screenplays.
- 09 TV oddballs the Munsters lived at 1313 Mockingbird Lane. Al Lewis, who played Grandpa, died on 3 February, aged 82.
- 10 William Gibson's 1980s novels are key "cyberpunk" works.
- 11 Paul McGann, Michael Jayston, Sylvester McCoy and Richard E Grant have played various incarnations of the Doctor in TV, audio and animated versions of *Dr Who* (Jayston appeared in "Trial of a Timelord" as a potential future incarnation).
- 12 Charles N Brown founded the magazine *Locus* in 1968.

And, surprise, surprise, Harry Hodson DIDN'T win this month but he did get an impressive 11 correct answers. This month's winner with an all-correct entry was MIKE CHINN. Well done, Mike. In third place with 10 correct answers was William McCabe.

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

.... Author and editor **Angus Wells** (b.1943) was killed in a house fire during the Easter weekend. He began publishing with STAR MAIDENS in 1977 under the pseudonym Ian Evans. The following year, he co-wrote RAVEN, SWORDMISTRESS OF CHAOS with **Robert Holdstock** as 'Richard Kirk', after which they took it in turns to write alternate books in the series. He is perhaps best known for his *Exiles* saga. Angus had visited the Brum Group on, I believe, a couple of occasions. It was Angus who, way back in the early 70s, started the Sphere SF Classics series and asked fandom in general for recommendations. I sent in my short list of half a dozen titles to find that Angus already had bought three of them the previous day. He then proceeded to buy my other three recommendations. He was the first person in publishing to take note of any of my recommendations and we stayed friends over the years. He will be missed **M.M. Buckner's** WAR SURF received this year's Philip K. Dick Award for original paperback, announced at Norwescon. A special citation was given to **Justina Robson** for her novel NATURAL HISTORY The Baltimore Science Fiction Society has renamed its annual award for high school students the **Jack L. Chalker** Young Writers Contest. Chalker, who died last year, was active in Baltimore science fiction and fandom GEODESICA: ASCENT by **Sean Williams & Shane Dix** won the Australian Ditmar Award for Best Novel

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

SHAMAN'S CROSSING by Robin Hobb

Book One of *The Soldier Son* Trilogy

HarperCollins / 533pgs / £12.99 / trade paperback

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

Star rating: * * *

Robin Hobb has made her reputation in writing large, complex fantasy novels. This is the first of her latest series and is set in a completely different world

from any of the others. She has taken the old concept that the first born son inherited, the second entered the army and the third entered the Church, and hardwired it into her society.

After a successful war, the king of Gernia elevated some of his soldier officers to the nobility, granting them land, titles and equal status with their elder brothers. In some areas, particularly the capital, this is an immediate recipe for tension. Nevare Burvelle, the second or soldier son of one of the new nobles, is the narrator of this volume. He grows up out in the countryside, well away from the politics of state. At one point, in order to teach Nevare the ways of the enemy, his father puts him into the hands a defeated native shaman. The shaman agrees to train the boy but has his own agenda. Although the results are not exactly what his father expected, Nevare does learn some useful survival skills but is also introduced to some of the native mysteries.

Later, Nevare is sent to the academy to learn the skills required of a cavalry officer. It is here that he discovers the penalties of being part of the new nobility. The life at the academy is not meant to be easy but he and the cadets from similar backgrounds find they are targeted for punishment more frequently than the old nobles sons.

The novel has limitations because it is being narrated by a youth who has never been involved in politics and has been brought up well away from them. The background to his situation is given to us in large chunks as he would have learnt as history in the school room. He is the butt of the situation rather than being in the centre of the intrigues. The section in the desert with the shaman is the most interesting part of the volume as it introduces the element of magic that doesn't come to the forefront of the action until much later. We are given hints that this episode in Nevare's life is important but until the end it's relevance is obscure.

It is unfortunate that much of this volume is spent within the academy as this is a very familiar plot element with all the stereotypes one would expect from a boarding school situation. The writing, though, is confident and mostly the reader is carried along by the plot. It does not, however, come up to the standard expected of a Hobb novel. *PM*

GRADISIL by Adam Roberts

Gollancz / 458 pages / £18.99 / Hardcover

Reviewed by Michael Jones

Star Rating: * * *

Adam Roberts is a Professor of English at the University of London and in the past six years has had several quite well-received SF novels published as well as a number of satirical parodies. In GRADISIL he has reverted to hard SF – space fiction though hardly Space Opera.

His concept for this book is of a technology to ride into space on the lines of force of the Earth's magnetic field which spread from the poles like the

branches of a great tree – the Yggdrasil of Norse myth – which is the source of the names of both the book and one of its main characters. With this cheap and easy technology almost anybody can cobble up a space plane and drag some kind of container into space to form the basis of an orbiting house and soon ‘The Uplands’ has become the home of a collection of eccentrics, mavericks, misfits and outright criminals living entirely independently of the various nations down on the ground.

Of course, ground-based governments in general, the Americans in particular and especially the American military, hate all this, and the book mainly tells, through the eyes of four generations of Gradisil’s family, the story of how the Americans try to conquer the Uplands and how the Uplanders, led by Gradisil, resist and establish their freedom and independence. Over a period of nearly a century their personal stories are of sacrifice and revenge, much of it misdirected.

To a degree this is reminiscent of some of the best SF of the past, brought up to date and dealing with people and their emotions as much as with the hardware, if not more so. Unfortunately, Roberts has allowed his characters, mostly writing in the first person, altogether too much indulgence to describe their thoughts and feelings and much of this goes on far too long, particularly towards the end of the book. It had started reasonably and some of the technological and medical implications of this kind of space-dwelling had been well thought-out, but eventually I found myself losing interest and just wishing it would come to a conclusion.

In short then, interesting, perhaps even slightly memorable, but not a book I would want to return to again and again. Mf

EAT YOUR HEART OUT, STEPHEN SPIELBERG!
A review of Jeff Wayne's musical version of "The War of the Worlds" at the NEC Arena by Robert Day

It is now thirty years since Jeff Wayne's Musical version of THE WAR OF THE WORLDS became an iconic LP for a generation, whether SF fans - or even rock music fans - or not. In commemoration of this, a live musical touring version has been launched and is currently touring the UK. On Wednesday, 19th April it came to the NEC Arena, and played to a capacity crowd.

For anyone not familiar with this adaptation, Wayne put the narrator's voice to the late Richard Burton, with other roles taken by Justin Hayward, David Essex, Julie Covington and others. For this revival, Justin Hayward has been re-engaged. Other roles are taken by newer, younger performers. Much of the text of the narrator is familiar to us all from Wells' story; there are slight changes (for example, the narrator is not married, but has a sweetheart in London) but these do not detract in the main from the thrust of the narrative.

The chief change that the original LP made was to tack on a near-future

epilogue, where the first expedition to Mars is assumed to re-encounter the Martians; the stage version adds a prologue which makes the reasons for the Martian invasion clear. This might be considered by us in the know to be unnecessary: but having watched the recent Spielberg film in the vicinity of a family who neither knew the story nor understood it (!), it's perhaps not unreasonable to have a brief "info-dump" at the very beginning...

Performing THE WAR OF THE WORLDS live on stage demands some sort of dramatic presentation - and this show certainly provided it. Richard Burton makes his appearance from beyond the grave by means of an animatronic digital projection; the orchestra and band play in front of a large video screen on which is projected the events of the story in a mixture of rostrum images of the original artwork from the album, contemporary Victorian film, hand-held close-ups of the performers and newly-commissioned computer-generated images. As if this was not enough, part-way through the first half, a twenty-foot high Martian war machine descends to the stage and remains there for the remainder of the production. There are lighting effects and dry ice. And the whole thing, together with the music, makes a presentation ten times more exciting than the Spielberg film I mentioned above. I, for one, was thrilled by the sights and sounds, even though I knew the story and the musical version backwards.

Jeff Wayne's adaptation is not flawless. The first part, "The coming of the Martians", is fine. The second part, "Earth under the Martians", is a little less assured to start with; some of the passages are reminiscent of Dudley Simpson's incidental music for BLAKE'S SEVEN, of all things; and the parson in the wrecked church begins to grate with his ranting about the Martians being Signs of the Devil, to the point where it's a relief when the Martians finally drag him away. But these are minor objections, really.

Equally, not everything in the performance was perfect: the head projection of Richard Burton blocked the view slightly if you were sat on the same side of the stage as it; some of the sound balance and stereo separation were not perfect if you weren't sat directly in line with the stage. Justin Hayward is thirty years older, too, and perhaps the edge has gone from his performing voice. But these are trifling matters. Overall, the total effect was overwhelming and a fine night's entertainment. RD

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:-

18 May 2006 - no book, Guest Speaker **Alan Cash**

22 June 2006 - **Alan Cash - The Janus Effect**

20 July 2006 - tba

Make a date with J.R.R. Tolkien on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th May at Sarehole Mill in the area that inspired the author during his early childhood. The theme for this year's event is "The Shire" and marks the public launch of The Shire Country Park – renamed in recognition of Tolkien's love of nature and passion for the environment. Shire Productions will perform excerpts from *The Hobbit* in the new Performance Arena, which is also the location for watching the Re-enactment Societies and the Morris Dancers. This unique event now attracts 10,000 visitors and offers a weekend of fun and fantasy for all the family. 11 am – 5 pm Admission free both days. Info: 464 6633 www.birmingham.gov.uk

Next BFS Open Night will be held on 2nd June 2006 at the Devereux - 20 Devereux Court, Essex Street, The Strand, London, WC2R 3JJ. Entrance: FREE. Starts at 6.30pm. GoH: **Sean Wright** and **Allen Ashley** will be promoting Allen Ashley's "Urban Fantastic" book which, coincidentally, is published by Crowswing on the same day.

Nottingham Arts Theatre presents Terry Pratchett's GUARDS, GUARDS Adapted by Stephen Briggs. Monday 12th June - Vimes Value Night - Come in Costume and Get A Free Drink! Mon 12th - Sat 17th June 2006 at 7.30pm. Saturday Matinee at 2.30pm. Tickets - £8 (conc. £6.50) **BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW ON 0115 947 6096**

Fantasycon 2006 - Date: 22nd - 24th September 2006. Place: The Britannia Hotel, St James Street, Nottingham. GoHs: **Neil Gaiman, Juliet E. McKenna, Ramsey Campbell, Raymond E. Feist & Clive Barker**; with MC: **David J. Howe** For more information check out www.fantasycon.org.uk. For those of you who would prefer to make your booking via credit card, please email Debbie Bennett at fcon-admin@britishfantasysociety.org.uk ... this facility is by request only and will not be available on the main website. For any other queries email fcon@britishfantasysociety.org.uk Further information can be found at our new website, www.fantasycon.org.uk or email Vicky on fcon@britishfantasysociety.org.uk

Juliet E McKenna will be tutoring a residential creative writing course focusing on SF&F at the Castle of Park in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, from 1st to 7th October 2006. This week will cover key elements of writing strategy, and practical approaches. Group work will develop skills for exploring ideas on plot, character and world building while individual exercises will enable participants to relate the sessions to personal projects. For more details, visit www.castleofpark.net or www.julietemckenna.com

NOVACON 36 – the BSFG's own convention will again be held at the Quality Hotel, Walsall, Nr Birmingham. Guest of Honour will be **Ken MacLeod**.

Registrations are currently £33. Cheques to 'Novacon 36', 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

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG

June 9th – SF/Fantasy artist **Jim Burns**

July 14th – negotiations still pending

August 11th – **Social Evening** – a meal out at the Black Eagle, Hockley. We tried this two years ago and due to it's popularity we've decided to repeat.

September 8th – we'll be trying to get one of the Big Names visiting the area for Fantasycon, **Neil Gaiman or Raymond E Feist..**

October – tba

November 3rd – tba

December 1st – Christmas Social – details to be announced.

Newsletter 416 copyright 2006 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.

**STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS....STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS
AIR by Geoff Ryman wins the Arthur C Clarke Award!!!**

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