

# BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

## BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

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ISSUE 426

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

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**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> MARCH**

# JUSTINA ROBSON

It's a mere eight years since Justina's first book, *SILVER SCREEN*, appeared. It was published to critical acclaim and was shortlisted for the Arthur C Clarke Award. Her second novel, *MAPPA MUNDI* followed in its footsteps, again being shortlisted for the Clarke Award. With her third novel, *NATURAL HISTORY*, in 2003, her career moved up another notch. The novel was runner-up in the John W Campbell Award and shortlisted for the British SF Award. A sequel, *LIVING NEXT DOOR TO THE GOD OF LOVE*, followed in 2005. It's on the final ballot of the 2006 Philip K Dick Award. *KEEPING IT REAL* appeared just under a year ago. It's the first book in the *Quantum Gravity* trilogy.

Justina's visit to the Brum Group was arranged to coincide with the publication of the second volume, *SELLING OUT*, but Gollancz have rescheduled publication for May.... Ain't that just typical!

So, six novels and a handful of short stories - the start of a very important writing career. Alien Online said of *NATURAL HISTORY* - "Robson's two previous books have been fascinating, but I feel she has really hit her stride here. It's space opera for adults, with all the imponderables, shades of

**APRIL 13th 2007 – SF author KEN MacLEOD, who was Guest of Honour at last year's Novacon, will be making his second visit to the Group**

grey and equivocal responses that implies. There are personal, political and alien imperatives at work, not all of which are obvious, while the story, ideas and characters meld in a much stronger way than in her two previous books. Throughout, from the Forged characters to the humans - and the ill-designed Forged, the failures who fetch and carry for humanity - there is a sense of description rather than creation in her writing which is worthy of the highest praise." Tanya Brown, writing in *STRANGE HORIZONS* said – "Robson's supreme strength as a writer of science fiction has always been her ability to create characters whose point of view offers a new perspective on the world in which they exist and act. In *LIVING NEXT-DOOR TO THE GOD OF LOVE*, she handles her characters' voices with confidence and wit, weaving together multiple stories to produce an elaborate whole that's somehow, finally, compacted into a simple seed, a timeless myth of death and resurrection."

This promises to be an extremely interesting meeting – and I have a feeling it won't be Justina's only visit to the Group. RGP

*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.*

## ***FEBRUARY MEETING – ROBERT HOLDSTOCK*** ***by Rog Peyton***

Well, what can one say about this meeting, except that it was one of the most enjoyable ever! You missed a Good One!

Rob and Sarah were driving up from London and set out at 12.30 after phoning me at about 11am to check what the weather was like here in Birmingham. There were light falls of snow intermittently but nothing that should prevent his trip. We arranged to meet outside the Thistle Hotel (the old Royal Angus). I was going to the Britannia to drop off all of Rob's books plus the review copies – 3 large bags – and then walk over to the Thistle. I booked a taxi to take me to the Britannia for 3.15pm.

That, folks, was the plan. But....

When the taxi picked me up, the driver confirmed that the roads were clear and there were still just only light flurries of snow. From Bartley Green, through Harborne to Highfield Road took about 25 minutes but the snow was getting somewhat thicker and started to stick. Ahead of us, we could see that the road to Five Ways was solid and we heard on the radio an announcement to avoid Broad Street. So the taxi driver turned off in order to get across the Hagley Road and get onto the Dudley Road. That was a BIG mistake. It continued snowing...and

it snowed...and it snowed... the traffic stopped moving and we sat for 45 minutes, trying to get across the Hagley Road.

Rob phoned at about 4.30pm to say they'd arrived at the Thistle, but where was I? Hah! I assured Rob I'd be there within 30-45 minutes. But in that time we only moved about 200 yards so I told Rob to go the restaurant and I'd hopefully see him there.

The taxi that had picked me up at 3.15 finally dropped me in New Street at exactly 7.45pm! Four and a half hours to do a little over 7 miles, sitting next to a taxi driver who wasn't in the mood for conversation. Fortunately, I was in a cab that charged by the mile. I *could* have been in a TOA black cab – they charge by the mile *and* by the time. It could have cost me well over £100!

When I got to the Britannia, I found a note pinned to the door of the meeting room, written by Rob, to say that he, Sarah and two members had moved the meeting to the bar.

Our New Zealand member, Mike, had travelled from Coventry by train without any problems. William had walked into the city (there's dedication for you!). Something I would have done had it not been for three large bags of bloody books! I really could have walked it quicker, saved my money and made a start to getting fit.

A message from Vernon revealed that he and Pat were unable to make it as the taxi firms were refusing to pick anyone up.

So it was Rob, Sarah, Mike, William and myself. A quick count of hands and the decision to stay in the bar was unanimous. But the hotel had no beer. Fortunately they'd changed their choice of red wine from a very mediocre simulated vinegar to a very quaffable potion. Rob and I got through three bottles between us and Rob and I finally left about midnight (everyone else had gone about 10pm). I don't remember going home.... But it was a damned fine evening. And Rob has agreed to visit us again later in the year. Can we meet in the bar again, please???

*RGP*

## ***THOSE CRAZY BOOK TITLES – Robert Day***

Entries are now flooding in for the 2006 Diagram Prize for the Oddest Book Title of the Year. On 9 February, *The Bookseller* published a taster of the submissions:

TATTOOED MOUNTAIN WOMEN AND SPOON BOXES OF DAGHESTAN.

CHAIN AND ANCHOR MAKING IN THE BLACK COUNTRY.

INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY OF WOMEN'S INTIMATE APPAREL.

THE ESSENTIAL UNDERWATER GUIDE TO NORTH WALES, VOL.1. ("I'm still trying to figure out why there is so much essential underwater information about North Wales that it appears to require more than one volume...")

INSOMNIA; A CULTURAL HISTORY.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL SEAWEED SYMPOSIUM.

TRAFFIC AND CONGESTION IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

**MARCH QUIZ by Steve Green**

- 1 Name the acolyte of H P Lovecraft whose creations include ‘space detective’ John Carstairs.
- 2 Which two veteran enemies returned in the second season of the relaunched *Doctor Who*?
- 3 John Spartan, Joe Dredd: what’s the connection?
- 4 Which classic fantasy novel derived its title from constructions at Barad-Dur and Orthanc?
- 5 Name the only character to appear in all 52 episodes of *Blake’s 7*.
- 6 Which cigar-smoking fowl was “trapped on a world he never made”?
- 7 ‘Zarjaz’ is a familiar term on which planet?
- 8 In which 1971 Hammer movie does Ralph Bates mutate into Martine Beswick?
- 9 Whose tv production company is entitled Mutant Enemy?
- 10 Name the US actor who took his professional surname from one superhero and named his son after another.
- 11 Which short-lived US TV series offered a SF spin on *LA Law*?
- 12 Back in 1971, who hosted the first Novacon?

**ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUIZ**

- 1 Stormbringer.
- 2 Bob Shaw and Ian Watson both worked with Stanley Kubrick on the adaptation of Brian Aldiss’s “Supertoys Last All Summer Long” which eventually became A.I. taken over by Steven Spielberg following Kubrick’s death.
- 3 Japan.
- 4 CHILDREN OF GOD.
- 5 Brian Aldiss.
- 6 The Futurians.
- 7 Pern.
- 8 To accept a Hugo Award on behalf of the movie SUPERMAN.
- 9 Ken MacLeod.
- 10 Ted White.

Once again , the winner was our US member Wendell Wagner with 9 out of the 10 correct.. You win another pint, Wendell!!!

**NEWS IN BRIEF . . .**

.... SF author **Charles L Fontenay** died in a Memphis hospital on January 27, 2007. He published 3 SF novels in the late 1950s and early 1960s - TWICE UPON A TIME, REBELS OF THE RED PLANET, and THE DAY THE

OCEAN OVERFLOWED. Following his retirement in 1987, he published 20 books, including two collections, and the Kipton series of children's books .... The Toronto Public Library presented **Robert J. Sawyer** with the Celebrates Reading Award at the second annual Book Lover's Ball on Thursday, February 15, 2007. The annual award includes a cash prize of \$2,500 and a crystal sculpture .... World Horror Convention 2007 announced Thursday, January 25, that **Joe R. Lansdale** has been voted the winner of the 2007 Grand Master Award. The number of votes cast this year by members of the convention was the highest in the history of the seventeen-year-old award. Previous Grand Masters included Robert Bloch, Stephen King and Dean R. Koontz .... **Iain Banks** will be participating in an interview to air on the BBC's World Book Club Radio program on March 1 to discuss his novel The Wasp Factory. **Ursula Smith** is soliciting questions to ask Banks from fans. Questions can be mailed to Ms. Smith at worldbookclub@bbc.co.uk .... **Ann VanderMeer** has been named the new editor of Weird Tales. VanderMeer will assume the position starting with issue 347 in October 2007 .... THE PRESTIGE is on the final ballot for Best Film at the 33rd annual Saturn Awards. **Joan Bergin** is also up for an award for Best Costumes in the film. The book was, of course, written by **Christopher Priest** .... After an exhaustive search, NBC has chosen British actress **Michelle Ryan** for the lead role of Jamie Sommers in its upcoming BIONIC WOMAN pilot.. The network reported considering better-known stars, but ultimately went with someone who'll be a newcomer to most American viewers. Ryan is known in the UK for having spent five years on the long-running BBC serial EASTENDERS

*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*

***AIR by Geoff Ryman***

**Gollancz / 390pgs / £6.99 / paperback**

**Reviewed by Pauline Morgan**

**Star rating: \* \* \* \* \***

The one certainty about any book by Geoff Ryman, other than the quality of the writing, is that it will be unlike anything else he has ever published. AIR is an insidious type of science fiction. It takes the current trends in communication technology and asks the question, 'but what about...'

In a remote valley probably on the borders of China and somewhere like Tibet, is a village that does not have the internet. Because of the geography and climate the signals cannot be received. The villagers' lives do not have the

luxuries that we have come to expect but they are relatively content. Gradually, though, modern life is beginning to seep into their lives. Mae Chung, who has never been able to read or write, is the village's fashion expert. When one of the men is driving into the nearest town, she and her client go with him and Mae takes her friend to the best places to have their hair done, buy cosmetics or buy the latest dress. The Wings, who own several farms, are wealthy enough to own a television. Other villagers often collect in their courtyard to watch. It is a place for social gatherings.

Outside the valley, technology is improving and they have discovered how to download the kind of information normally found by surfing the net, directly into the human mind. The authorities plan a trial broadcast. Although forewarned, the test does not go smoothly for everyone. Mae's neighbour panics and is killed. Her elderly friend, Mrs Tung, who is visiting, dies of natural causes and Mae gets a web address. She also gets the ghost of Mrs Tung in her head. This is a problem as the old lady's memories have no concept of being dead and Mrs Tung keeps trying to take over Mae's mind. Also, Mae discovers that now information from everywhere can be obtained from the television. She is out of a job and has to adapt.

With the technology, and the information she absorbed during the test, Mae slowly finds a way of becoming an entrepreneur. She also finds, due to her access to Mrs Tung's memories, that the valley could become inundated by a flood. She begins to collect data but no-one else seems willing to take her warnings seriously.

This novel is an intriguing combination ideas. Mae is not only a Cassandra figure but she is also an example of what can be achieved without formal education but with the help of intelligent use of technology. It also looks at the resistance to change and how progress can come from unexpected directions. An excellent book. *PM*

## ***50 DEGREES BELOW* by Kim Stanley Robinson**

**Bantam / 405pgs / £6.99 / paperback**

**Reviewed by Vicky Cook**

**Star rating: \* \* \* \***

I have been reading a couple of apocalyptic books recently and quite enjoyed this one! It is a long novel about the stopping of the Gulf stream and general climate chaos that results, but never felt like the issues were being shoved down my throat. Climate change happens, whether through man or nature, and this is about the consequences and how mankind deals with it. Our main hero works for one of the many acronymic associations trying to work to fix climate chaos, and thus we get a good insight into government workings in relation to the environment and the usual cover-ups and intrigues there. Meanwhile his organisation want to act but of course diplomacy and discussions get in the way, until finally some impressive action can be taken. Meanwhile our hero moves out

of his flat and experiences nature and the locals first hand, and we get a marvellous insight into Washington DC.

I didn't realise it was part of a trilogy until I read more about it, which impressed me as all too often sequels and trilogy second parts expect you to know the first part. Though now it makes a bit more sense that certain characters (Charlie and Anna) didn't seem that well drawn, and also a couple of events seemed to have happened 'before' the book. Scarily enough I read a lot more in the news after finishing this book which was quite reminiscent of the 'fiction' I had just read! Great bits about the animals from the zoo going feral and the Tibetan bits were good too – apparently the author has a fascination with Tibet. Bad ending however – very sudden, but again this can be a ploy to make you read the third part, which I find very annoying.

It is a long book and maybe a little editing was required to bring the book down to more manageable levels, but I got through this huge tome fairly quickly and was generally impressed, especially by the fact that for the most part the book stood alone from the trilogy. I would read more by this author. *VC*

### ***QUICKSILVER TWILIGHT by Stan Nicholls***

**Voyager / 441pgs / £14.99 / trade paperback**

**Reviewed by Pauline Morgan**

**Star rating: \* \* \* \***

A big problem of commenting on the third book in a trilogy is the danger of spoiling the first two in the series for those who have not yet discovered it. The two previous volumes, *QUICKSILVER RISING* and *QUICKSILVER ZENITH* introduce the reader to a world in which magic, like electricity in ours, is taken for granted. A network of magic conduits lies beneath the land ready to be drawn on. Everyone has glamours – some expensive, other cheap and tawdry. There are two empires in conflict with each other, both tyrannical in their own ways, and a resistance movement who wants to be out from under the yoke of both.

At the end of the second volume, the rebels were preparing to leave for an island where they intended to live in isolation and let the rest of the world fall in on itself. However, just before departure, a series of raids lead to the arrest, slaughter or dispersal of the rebels. In *QUICKSILVER TWILIGHT* all the threads salted through the previous two novels have to be pulled together and some kind of resolution reached.

There are a lot of important characters and Nichols has to decide whose story takes precedent, especially as they are now scattered. Reeth Caldason suffers from disturbing dreams and berserk rages. He has pledged to support the rebels in their struggle for freedom but also needs to find a way of living a normal life, especially as he has fallen in love with Serrah, one of the freedom fighters. In a lull between battles, the two of them, with Kutch, an apprentice sorcerer, head out to sea in search of the Clepsydra which is rumoured to be the Source of

magic and knowledge. Tanalvah is heavily pregnant and full of remorse. She betrayed her friends in the hope of saving her lover, who had already been sent to the galleys. Her shame is enhanced by the fact that her friends welcome her and smuggle her out to Diamond Isle where they intend to make a final stand against the combined Empires. To add complications to the plot, the flow of magic seems to be faltering. This is partly due to a new player in the field. Zerreiss is a charismatic Northerner who is moving steadily south at the head of an army. In whatever region he conquers, the magic dies.

The novel carries the plot from the previous two volumes well and resolves many of the situations set up within them. The biggest problem with the book is that there is too much being crammed into the one volume. Many of the strands are rich enough to have deserved being developed at greater length. This is a consequence of having so many significant characters scattered throughout the text. Often the strongest and most fascinating parts are almost throwaways. The floating cities and their mad prince are both a symptom of the underlying malaise of this world and a delightful diversion to the main thrust of the plot. On the down side, and probably due to the condensation of the overall story, Tanalvah's angst does get a little wearing.

While the series as a whole is worth reading, this volume will not stand alone and should only be read in its proper place in the sequence otherwise the relationships between the characters will not be fully understood.

### ***GRADISIL by Adam Roberts***

**Gollancz; / 456 pgs / £7.99 / paperback**

**Reviewed by Dave Hardy**

**Star rating: \* \* \***

This is certainly an unusual and original book. According to two other writers (Baxter and Grimwood) on the cover, it is 'very high concept', whatever that means. It starts in 2043, but the author makes it clear in the first few pages that this is not quite the universe as we know it. For instance, he states that after moving to America Wernher von Braun changed his name to von Brown (but not to Vernon? Sorry!), which to the best of my knowledge he never did. And apparently it is not necessary to use brute-force rockets to reach space, because you can simply fly up, changing from normal propulsion and wings as the atmosphere thins to using the Earth's magnetic field and magnetosphere, thanks to 'Elemag' coils wrapped around the wings and belly of a plane.

The story moves from 2043 to 2131, and is told from the perspective of various people, most of whom are related in some way to the original writer, Klara Gyoffery. Her father, who built the first Elemag vehicles, likens this form of propulsion to climbing the branches of the great mythical tree Yggdrasil, which reaches between Earth and Heaven. But he mispronounces it as 'Yggdrasil', and it is from this that the title comes: Gradisil is the name given to Klara's daughter, to whom, later, much of this book is devoted. Many people move into orbit using

this method, until they form a sort of community, living in ‘houses’ which are usually little more than two or more cylindrical tanks attached to each other, but rarely visible to each other, such is the vastness of this ‘territory’. However, many of these people are extremely wealthy, even multimillionaires, and naturally they do not pay taxes to any nation down below – the cause of much friction and bad feeling.

Klara’s father is murdered in orbit by an amoral woman called Kristin Janzen Kooistra, who also steals his house, and the earthbound police are not interested since it is beyond their jurisdiction. From then on, Klara’s story in Part One is mainly about her attempts to extract revenge for this.

In Part Two the story is split between several people: Gradisil herself, who becomes the charismatic leader of the anarchic Uplands; her rather ineffectual husband Paul Caunes; their two sons (though actually not his) Hope and Sol (for Solidarity), and an Army Lieutenant called Slater, who is based on a US orbital station called Fort Glenn. Here, Roberts introduces a mutated form of English in his text, though for me not a very logical one. It consists mainly of removing ‘ck’ in words like ‘suck’, making it ‘suk’, and ‘wh’ in ‘what’, becoming ‘wat’. But it often doesn’t work: how would you pronounce ‘baking up’? He goes a stage further in Part Three, in which words ending in ‘ing’, as in ‘beginning’, end with a new character: an ‘n’ with an inward-curving leg. There are a few other changes, too, but not sufficient for the way language changes in reality, and I found this quirk rather irritating. This section is concerned with sons Hope and Sol, now adult but very different, and what happens when they meet their father, Paul, whom they accuse of being responsible for their mother’s death after a ‘war’ between America and the Uplands, in which Gradisil had played a vital and pivotal part.

All in all, it is worth sticking with this book’s eccentricities, and I was almost surprised to find that by the end I had enjoyed it. *DAH*

## ***THE END OF HARRY POTTER by David Langford***

**Gollancz / 196pgs / £9.99 / hardcover**

**Reviewed by Pauline Morgan**

**Star rating: \* \* \* \***

J.K. Rowling’s creation of Harry Potter has been such a phenomenal success it is no wonder that there have been spin-offs in various forms. As the publication date (July 21st 2007) approaches for the seventh and final volume, speculation as to the content appears more and more frequently, especially on internet sites. Langford’s timely little book is carefully balanced. He begins from the base-line of what is actually in the previous six books and from interviews Rowling herself has given. He considers various aspects of the books, from the various spells to the naming of characters. He discusses her plot devices and the apparent errors that have crept in while acknowledging that clever writers can turn these to their advantage. Like a good stage magician, Rowling uses

misdirection to sneak the important plot elements past the reader. There is no reason to suppose she will not do the same in the last book.

Langford brings together themes and trends within the previous volumes to speculate on possible directions for book seven, dismissing, with reasons, some of the more fanciful ideas that have appeared in internet chat rooms. He includes a section on possible titles since at the time of the publication of this book that had not been announced. Those who have been keeping an eye on the series will now know that it will be called HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS.

The tone of the book is just right. It is not too erudite to put off the younger readers but at the same time has enough depth for the more serious speculator to take seriously. The tone is light and easy to read but does not denigrate a series that Langford knows well. This is a serious addition to a growing genre and even after book seven is published, will still have interesting and positive things to say about the writing of an international success story. *PM*

## ☺☺☺ FILM/TV ROUND-UP ☹☹☹ BY VICKY COOK

**PRIMEVAL, a new ITV 'Fantasy' series, starring Juliet Aubrey, Douglas Henshall, Hannah Sperritt among others (currently Saturdays 7.45pm)**



PRIMEVAL is a new show, three episodes in now out of six, being shown on ITV. It has been talked about as ITV's big-budget answer to DOCTOR WHO and TORCHWOOD so I thought I'd give it a go.

It starts Douglas Henshall as Professor Nick Cutter who investigates a strange animal sighting and discovers that things are far weirder than first appeared, as he comes face to face with once-extinct animals which appear to be loose in the countryside and threatening the local residents. He goes off with his 'team' (student, lab scientist etc) to investigate in the nearby Forest of Dean and

discovers a tear in time which seems to be the root of all these local appearances.

So far we have had the introductory type episode, and a rather weak second episode building up the monsters and a little more of the storyline. There is a bit more to the plot involving Nick's wife who went missing several years ago (no mystery here, the first scene in the first episode clearly shown her being pursued by a dinosaur-type beast) but the question is, could she still be alive? They keep finding little clues such as handbags, strange messages from her.

Meanwhile there are various obscure creatures to gawp at in each episode – the second one was full of lovely giant spiders and a 15 foot long millipede.

I have been persevering with these, but they have been a bit of a slow grower. Part of the trouble is that it can't seem to decide whether it is for adults or children – the whole premise plays like an ITV children's serial, but it is in the 7.45pm evening slot, on a Saturday night so the top prime-time slot. The marketing has not particularly been aimed at kids either, with the slightly scary trailers and big posters everywhere, but with the inclusion of a former pop star in the cast (Hannah Sperritt), they will certainly be tuning in. There is sometimes rather irritatingly just not enough explanation for me, or if this is deliberate due to the early stages the series is in, then another complaint is that it's just action action, not many slow bits, not much of even a little science to explain away the weird bits and attract the attention of the average adult. There seem to be lots of inconsistencies in the second episode (apart from the tear through time in the first place!) which may annoy the more practically-minded viewer. The acting has left a little to be desired – again smacking slightly of the typically woodenly-acted children's serial.

However, I have heard that the third episode (which will have been aired by the time anyone reads this) shows a distinct improvement in terms of CGI and acting. I was horrified by the rubbish acting in the first episode of TORCHWOOD but stuck with it to find that it did improve and I quite enjoyed it, so I am happy to be patient with this one - it may be a slow burner. ITV really should stop comparing it to DOCTOR WHO though, let it score on its own merits. *VC*

## ***FORTHCOMING EVENTS***

**The Central Library SF and Fantasy Reading Group** meets on Thursdays at 5.45pm 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:-**

March 15th - Lucius Shepard - LIFE DURING WARTIME

April 9th    May 17th    June 14th    July 19th    (All to be announced)

**CONTEMPLATION** – the 2007 Eastercon will be held over the Easter weekend (6th to 9th April) in the beautiful, historic Chester - see the website at – <http://contemplation.conventions.org.uk/>

**FANTASYCON 2007** will be held over the weekend of September 21-23 at the Britannia Hotel, 1 St James Street, Nottingham. Guests of Honour are Steve Jones and Michael Marshall Smith. Full details from their website <http://www.fantasycon.org.uk/>

**NOVACON 37** – the Brum Group's own convention – will again be at the Quality Hotel, Bentley, Nr Walsall, W Mids. It's the weekend of 2-4 November

and the Guest of Honour is Charles Stross. Registrations are currently £35. Cheques to 'Novacon 37', Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ Email: x15@zoom.co.uk Website: www.novacon.org

**WAR OF THE WORLDS Returns** - Following a hugely successful and critically acclaimed sell-out UK tour in 2006, the award-winning Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of THE WAR OF THE WORLDS is set to head back to The NEC Arena in December 2007. For 2007, the production will be boasting a raft of exciting new features, including new innovative technology by Californian company EON Reality who will create a new Richard Burton 'head'. With 3D GGI photo-real holographic imagery it aims to take the replication even further than last year's tour and to set the bar for all theatrical technology in the future. Tickets now on sale priced at £39.50 plus booking and transaction fees.

*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 BSGF***

April 13th – SF author **KEN MacLEOD**

May 11th – SF/Fantasy editor **PETER LAVERY** (tbc)

Aug 10th – **Summer Social** – a meal at the Black Eagle

Sep 14th – the group of fantasy writers, **The Write Fantastic**, now numbering eight – **JAMES BARCLAY** and **DEBORAH MILLER** have joined since their last appearance - will be visiting us.

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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 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