

# BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

## BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

MARCH 2008

ISSUE 438

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

COMMITTEE: **VERNON BROWN (CHAIRMAN);**  
**VICKY COOK (SECRETARY); PAT BROWN (TREASURER);**  
**ROG PEYTON (NEWSLETTER EDITOR); WILLIAM MCCABE;**  
**NOVACON 38 CHAIRMAN: HELENA BOWLES**

WEBSITE: [www.bsfg.freesevers.com](http://www.bsfg.freesevers.com)

EMAIL: [bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk)

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March

## ANDY SAWYER

### The Science Fiction Foundation



The Science Fiction Foundation Collection is the largest collection of material relating to Science Fiction in the European Community and one of the two or three most important outside the USA. It was established as the research library of the Science Fiction Foundation, created in 1970 by George Hay with Arthur C. Clarke and Ursula LeGuin as patrons. It has been built up over the years thanks to the generosity of writers, publishers and fans and is well established as the most important centre for study and research in science fiction within the UK.

Andy Sawyer is the resident full-time librarian for the collection and is also reviews editor of *FOUNDATION*, the critical journal of the SF Foundation. Those of you who go to conventions will doubtless already know Andy as he is usually at Eastercons and Novacons behind the sales tables of the SF Foundation. This is a unique opportunity to hear Andy talk about the Foundation and its journal.

*RGP*

**April 11th – fantasy author and classical music critic  
MICHAEL SCOTT ROHAN will be our speaker**

*The meeting will take place in **OUR NEW VENUE** - the conference room on the first floor of the Briar Rose Hotel, Bennetts Hill just off New Street. The entrance to the hotel is adjacent to Wetherspoon's on the right.*

*At the bottom of the ramp from New Street Station, turn left and walk up New Street. Bennetts Hill is the third road on the right.*

*The meeting will commence at 7.45pm so please arrive early, get your drinks from the bar on the ground floor, and be seated in plenty of time.*

## **KEN SLATER - 1917-2008**



It is with great sorrow we report the death of Ken Slater. Ken passed away in hospital from peritonitis on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> February, just a month after several BSFG members helped him celebrate his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. His daughter Susie was with him at the end. He slipped away peacefully with Susie holding his hand.

Ken started selling SF through mail order back in 1947. 60 years later, he was still selling books at Novacon 37 ably supported by his family.

His impact on science fiction and fandom in the UK was immense. Before the late-60s, the only place to obtain imports from the USA was through Ken's Fantast (Medway) Ltd. His catalogues were essential to any self-respecting SF fan. In those catalogues, he not only sold books but gave info on conventions, fanzines, etc., and generally publicised any fannish event completely free of charge.

He was a founder member of the British Science Fiction Association, a winner of the Doc Weir Award and has been guest of honour at several conventions. From 1953 to 1959 he was the resident book reviewer in NEBULA SF, the Scottish prozine.

When I first contacted fandom back in 1961, virtually the first thing I was told was "You must get Ken Slater's book catalogue." When I met Ken at my first convention in 1964 he was sitting in the tiny bookroom (he was the *\*only\** SF bookseller in those days) surrounded by copies of brand-new US import paperbacks. That was the moment I can quite honestly say that "Ken Slater changed my life." I had this dream of doing the same. It took me several years but soon I was doing exactly the same thing – selling books at conventions.

Now, Ken is no longer with us. The bookroom at conventions will never be the same again.

*RGP*

## ***LAST MONTH'S MEETING by Dave Corby***

The first speaker in the new venue in February was Roy Gray of INTERZONE magazine. Roy has a long history with INTERZONE and has a keen insight into many aspects of the magazine's history. INTERZONE, is, of course, Britain's best recognised SF magazines, now in its 25th year of publication.

At this meeting Roy talked us through his analysis of trends in submissions to the magazine, giving an insight into the levels of competition (and no small number of subliminal attempts to get the audience interested in the latest issues. Small wonder Roy is responsible for advertising and publicity for INTERZONE...). Roy's presentation was fairly academic and quite exhaustive. The audience could gain a clear impression of the kinds of story submitted by the kinds of people, with a particular eye to gender separation.

I like to try and challenge my own perceived generalisations in the hope of keeping a balanced view of the world, but Roy's statistics seemed to back up what I have noticed for a while; that SF is written primarily by men, horror primarily by women, and fantasy almost equally either way. It would be interesting to see this challenged more; I wonder if somehow the readership at large is somehow missing out on potential vistas of the imagination if fifty percent of the population largely avoids writing SF (or horror). Still, thanks to Roy for his illuminating observations.

The February meeting also played host to the annual auction, held over from the AGM as it was. Thanks very much to all the folk who donated books (I bought a fair few) and apologies to the new member whom I outbid on the Wyndham short story compilation... anyone relatively new to the group should certainly attend the auction as it is a terrific source of out of print or classic volumes. Indeed, auctioneer Rog Peyton was heard to utter that the selection of lots this year was maybe the best collection of truly interesting, rare or just plain good books he had seen for many years.

All in all a great start to the Group's new residency. I look forward to many more meetings at The Briar Rose. DC

## ***NEBULA AWARD NOMINATIONS***

The Awards will be announced at the Nebula Awards Banquet to be held at the Omni Austin Hotel Downtown on April 26, 2008.

### **Novels:**

ODYSSEY – Jacl McDevitt (Ace)

THE ACCIDENTAL TIME MACHINE – Joe Haldeman (Ace)

THE YIDDISH POLICEMEN'S UNION – Michael Chabon (HarperCollins)

THE NEW MOON'S ARMS – Nalo Hopkinson (Warner)

RAGAMUFFIN – Tobias Buckell (Tor)

### **Novellas:**

“Kiosk” – Bruce Sterling (F&SF, Jan07)

“Memorare” – Gene Wolfe (F&SF, Apr07)

“Awakening” – Judith Berman (Black Gate 10, Spr07)

- “Stars Seen Through Stone” – Lucius Shepard (F&SF, Jul07)  
 “The Helper and His Hero” – Matt Hughes (F&SF, Feb07 & Mar07)  
 “Fountain of Age” – Nancy Kress (Asimov's, Jul07)

**Novelettes:**

- “The Fiddler of Bayou Teche” – Delia Sherman (COYOTE ROAD, TRICKSTER TALES, Viking Juvenile, Jul07).  
 “Pol Pot's Beautiful Daughter” – Geoff Ryman (F&SF, Nov06)  
 “The Evolution of Trickster Stories Among the Dogs Of North Park After the Change” – Kij Johnson (COYOTE ROAD, TRICKSTER TALES, Viking Juvenile, Jul07)  
 “Safeguard” – Nancy Kress (Asimov's, Jan07)  
 “The Children's Crusade” – Robin Wayne Bailey (HEROES IN TRAINING, DAW Sep07)  
 “The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate” – Ted Chiang (F&SF, Sep07)  
 “Child, Maiden, Mother, Crone” – Terry Bramlett (JIM BAEN'S UNIVERSE 7)

**Short Stories:**

- “Unique Chicken Goes In Reverse” – Andy Duncan (ECLIPSE 1:, Night Shade, Oct07)  
 “Titanium Mike Saves the Day” – David D Levine (F&SF, Apr07)  
 “Captive Girl” – Jennifer Pelland (HELIX: A SPECULATIVE FICTION QUARTERLY, Fall06 Issue #2)  
 “Always” – Karen Joy Fowler (Asimov's, apr/may07)  
 “Pride” – Mary Turzillo (FAST FORWARD 1, Pyr, February 2007)  
 “The Story of Love” – Vera Nazarian (SALT OF THE AIR, Prime Books, Sep06)

***THE 50 BEST SF MOVIES OF ALL TIME ???***

The American Film Institute has come up with a list of 50 SF films that it deems among the best ever; it will pick 10 as the best SF movies of all time for a TV special that will air on CBS in the USA in June.

The AFI defines ‘science fiction’ as a genre that marries a scientific or technological premise with imaginative speculation. It has selected the following 50 movies as contenders for the best, in alphabetical order (in the case of movies that have been made more than once, we've designated by date which version the AFI has selected):

A.I. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, ALIEN, ALTERED STATES, THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN, BACK TO THE FUTURE, THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS, BLADE RUNNER, CHILDREN OF MEN, A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND, COCOON, CONTACT, THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, DESTINATION MOON, E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL, ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND, FANTASTIC VOYAGE, THE FLY (1986), FORBIDDEN PLANET, FRANKENSTEIN (1931), THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN, INDEPENDENCE DAY, INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (1956), THE INVISIBLE MAN (1933), IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE, JURASSIC PARK, MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME, THE MATRIX, MEN IN BLACK, MINORITY REPORT, PLANET OF THE APES (1968), REPO MAN, ROBOCOP, ROLLERBALL (1975), SILENT RUNNING, SOYLENT GREEN, STAR TREK: THE WRATH OF KHAN, STAR WARS: EPISODE IV: A NEW HOPE, STARMAN, THE STEPFORD WIVES (1975), TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY, THEM!, THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD, THE TIME MACHINE (1960), TOTAL RECALL, TRON, 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, THE WAR OF THE WORLDS (1953), WESTWORLD.

## **...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 [rgp@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:rgp@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk) >>

**THE NEW MEETING ROOM – Dave Corby** “The usual decrepit and run-down ruin at The Britannia has been miraculously replaced with the shiny, modern and thoroughly better-supplied-with-beer surroundings at the Briar Rose. I hope I can speak for the majority of the group in expressing approval; the new room, as well as helping to solve the problems with 2007's budget, was quite adequate and up to the job (especially the built-in projector). Thanks to Vernon and Pat for the effort in sorting it out.”

## **NEWS IN BRIEF . . .**

.... Comic book writer **Steve Gerber** (b.1947) died on February 10. Gerber is best known for creating the character *Howard the Duck* and also created *Omega the Unknown* .... Actor **Roy Scheider** (b.1932) died on February 10. Scheider first came to prominence with his portrayal of Martin Brody in *JAWS*. Scheider went on to play Heywood Floyd in 2010: *THE YEAR WE MADE CONTACT* and Captain Nathan Bridger in the television series *SeaQuest DSV*.... Actor **Barry Morse** (b.1918) died on February 2. Best known as Lt. Girard in the original television series *The Fugitive*, Morse also appeared in *The Twilight Zone*, *TekWar*, *Space: 1999*, *The Martian Chronicles*, and many other genre films and television shows .... **J G Ballard** has announced he was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2006. He recently completed his autobiography *MIRACLES OF LIFE*, due to be published later this year .... Multiple-award-winning SF/fantasy author **Michael Swanwick** told *SCI FI Wire* that his latest novel, *THE DRAGONS OF BABEL*, is not a sequel but is set in the same world as his novel *THE IRON DRAGON'S DAUGHTER* .... Nebula Award-winning SF author **Elizabeth Moon** says that her latest novel, *VICTORY CONDITIONS*, is the end of her *Vatta's War* series but not necessarily the end of stories set in that universe. It's possible she might write new stories including characters from the *Vatta's War* books but set during a different time in their lives. “Any of several ... could make an interesting book,” Moon said in an interview. The *Vatta's War* books are militaristic space-opera adventure novels about a young woman named Ky Vatta, who is the youngest child in a wealthy, powerful merchant family .... **Ken MacLeod** has handed in future thriller *THE NIGHT SESSIONS* to Orbit .... **Alastair Reynolds** has delivered *THE HOUSE OF SUNS* to Gollancz .... **Terry Pratchett's** *Discworld* series sees its 25th anniversary this year. His UK publishers Transworld and Random House Children's are planning major publicity campaigns – the largest ever mounted by the companies - to celebrate the anniversary. It will tie into the TV adaptation of *THE COLOUR OF MAGIC* and new editions of other *Discworld* books .... **Brandon Sanderson**, author of *ELANTRIS*, has been chosen to complete Robert Jordan's unfinished novel *A MEMORY OF LIGHT*, the 12th and final volume in the long-running *Wheel of Time* series .... **C S Lewis'** classic tale of *THE LION, THE WITCH*

AND THE WARDROBE has been voted the best children's book of all time by British readers. The popular fantasy novel, written in 1950, beat more modern favourites including the *Harry Potter* books to claim the top spot. Out of **J K Rowling**'s seven novels starring the boy wizard, HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE was the only one to make the top 50, clinching sixth spot. **Roald Dahl** was clearly the best loved author, with six books in the top 50. Fellow children's favourite **Enid Blyton** followed closely behind with five series on the list. Despite their prominence, **Eric Carle**'s THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR - rumoured to have sold one copy every minute since it was published in 1969 - took second place. **Enid Blyton**'s *Famous Five* series of 21 books, dating back to 1942, came in third, followed by **A A Milne**'s WINNIE THE POOH in fourth. The poll was based on a poll of 4,000 people aged 16 to 65 by the independent charity Booktrust .... One of seven copies of **J K Rowling**'s hand-written and illustrated leather-bound fairy tale book THE TALES OF BEEDLE THE BARD sold at Sotheby's auction for £1.95 million – about 40 times the expected selling price of £50,000. The mystery buyer was later revealed to be online bookseller Amazon.com .... **William Horwood**, who made his debut back in the early Nineties, taking us into the anthropomorphic world of *The Dunston Chronicles*, has signed with Peter Lavery at Macmillan for a quartet the publisher believes will be “one of the most magical and captivating fiction series of the next decade”. Hyddenworld finds the human race in crisis as a result of its careless exploitation of natural resources. It is “steeped in colourful mythology and ancient wisdom reaching back to the very beginnings of human awareness”. Horwood represented himself, winning ‘a substantial six-figure deal’; the first of the four novels is scheduled for 2009 .... **Ellen Asher** was named a Fellow of NESFA for her contributions to the field of science fiction as the long-time editor of the Science Fiction Book Club. The award was presented at Boskone the weekend of February 15. Also at Boskone, author **Charles Stross** received the Skylark Award for significant contribution to SF in the spirit of the writer **E E ‘Doc’ Smith** .... Some agents believe that the increase in discussion over e-royalties means publishers know that the arrival of an e-reader is imminent. The majority believe this will be **Kindle**, leading some publishers to express concerns over Amazon's possible monopoly, especially now it owns Audible. “The problem for publishers is that Amazon will control both the hardware and the books,” said one senior figure, “which means they can make money on one to subsidise the other. If they're going to charge £400 for the device, and just a couple of pounds for the books, that could have a de-stabilising effect on the market .... The British Academy of Film and Television Arts has announced its winners, the British equivalent of the Oscars. Genre work only won in two categories - Best Achievement in Special Visual Effects: THE GOLDEN COMPASS; Best Animated Feature: RATATOUILLE .... The heirs to **J R R Tolkien** and HarperCollins Publishers have filed a lawsuit against New Line Cinemas claiming New Line owes them a significant amount of money (estimated to be in excess of £150 million) from the profits of THE LORD OF

THE RINGS. J R R Tolkien had sold the rights in 1969 for £100,000 and a 7.5 percentage of royalties (less certain expenses). According to the Tolkien Trust, they haven't seen any money from the New Line trilogy. Peter Jackson, who directed the series, settled his own lawsuit against New Line in December, clearing the way for him to co-executive-produce films based on THE HOBBIT. The Tolkien trust seeks to terminate New Line's rights, which would bring THE HOBBIT to a halt .... A carmaker conflict has caused NBC to hire **Val Kilmer** to replace **Will Arnett** as the voice of K.I.T.T. on its *Knight Rider* TV movie/backdoor pilot. Arnett had already completed his part for the film. The problem is, Arnett had a contractual conflict of interest. For the better part of a decade, Arnett has done voice-over work for General Motors as the voice of GMC Trucks. NBC's new K.I.T.T., however, is a Ford Mustang. Ford isn't simply providing cars for Knight Rider: It's taking an active role in the marketing and branding of the telefilm. Ford's logo even appears all over NBC's on-air promos. Not surprisingly, when GM found out about the Ford connection, it asked Arnett to pull out. Knight Rider airs as a two-hour movie on Feb. 17 at 9 p.m. ET/PT. (NBC is owned by NBC Universal, which also owns SCIFI.COM) .... The official **Star Wars** Web site announced that a feature-film version of the computer-animated STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS will debut in 2008, followed by a television series in the fall. "I felt there were a lot more *Star Wars* stories left to tell," executive producer **George Lucas** said in a statement. "I was eager to start telling some of them through animation and, at the same time, push the art of animation forward." ....

RGP



## BOOK REVIEWS



(**REVIEWERS** please note:- all reviews should be emailed direct to me at [rgp@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:rgp@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk)) Deadline for each issue is 14 days prior to the date of the monthly meeting.

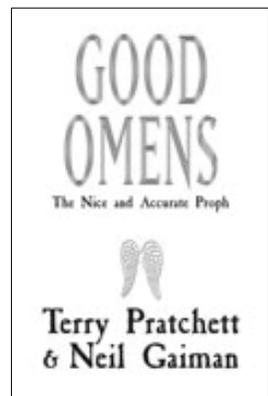
RGP

### ***GOOD OMENS* by Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett**

**Gollancz / 345 pages / £9.99 / hardback**

**Reviewed by Michael Jones**

Originally published in 1990, this tells of the arrival on Earth of the Antichrist in the form of a human baby who will grow to fulfil his part in bringing about the last war between the forces of Good and Evil, or Heaven and Hell if you prefer. The basis of the plot may at first sound familiar to anyone who remembers a certain film, but unfortunate incompetence on the part of the nuns charged with carrying out the substitution



results in the baby being given to the wrong family - in other words, lost. Consequently, when the battle lines are drawn up and the Four Bikers of the Apocalypse ride out, the War nearly goes ahead without Him - and because he has not been brought up in the proper knowledge of his destiny, he chooses to prevent it from happening, having arrived in the nick of time.

The reason for this new edition appears to be centred on an introduction comprising comments from the writers about each other and how they came to write it (except that it is strangely dated 2003). This is actually rather slight, although it was interesting to learn that Neil Gaiman had most influence on the opening, which is arguably the most typically Pratchett-ish, while Terry Pratchett is said to have had most influence on the end.

It is much more of a fun story than its ominous theme might suggest. There are some very amusing characters, including a demon and an angel who work together simply because they have no-one else of their own kind to associate with, an amazingly cack-handed Witchfinder Army and a weird occultist who possesses the only surviving copy of a book of prophecies written by an ancestor who makes Nostradamus look like a rank amateur. Plus the eleven-year-old Antichrist, who is about as normal as eleven-year-old boys ever get, and his school chums. They all come together in time for the end (or the End) and the world is saved, so a happy ending as well.

A collaboration between these two highly accomplished writers is an event unlikely to be repeated and should be savoured for that reason. That apart, any Terry Pratchett fan will like this book, but it can also be recommended to a wider audience.

*MJ*

***Terry Pratchett's HOGFATHER: The Illustrated Screenplay by Terry Pratchett and Vadim Jean***



***Illustrated by Stephen Player***

**Gollancz / 255 pages / £14.99 / paperback**

**Reviewed by Michael Jones**

This is of course, the screenplay of the television production of HOGFATHER first broadcast at Christmas (or Hogswatch) just over a year ago. It is profusely, as well as very attractively, illustrated, with both publicity stills and shots from the broadcast as well as concept drawings and the like to make a pleasing souvenir of what one may or may not

consider to have been a successful production. Plus its main raison d'être, a version of the script. I say a version because there are many differences from a previous edition of the book published a year ago and I am in fact by no means certain that either conforms exactly to the final broadcast.

Be that as it may, one wonders at whom this is actually aimed. It provides little, if anything, which could not be enjoyed to better effect by watching the TV movie, while on the other hand it cannot possibly serve as an effective alternative to the original book as a version to read. Perhaps the best way to use it would be to have it on one's lap while watching the TV, thereby hoping to enhance understanding and enjoyment - if you are sad enough!

But enough of that - the most useful purpose this review can serve is to let you know that such a book exists. A keen collector may choose to buy it as a souvenir and will probably not be disappointed. Someone more cynical might dismiss it as a money-making publicity exercise. *MJ*

## ***FUTURE NOIR - THE MAKING OF "BLADE RUNNER"***

***by Paul M Sammon***

**Gollancz / 588 pages / £16.99 /  
hardcover**

**Reviewed by William McCabe**

In 1980, when this film project began, Paul Sammon was a journalist working for CINEFANTASTIQUE magazine. The film already had Ridley Scott fresh from his success with ALIEN and Harrison Ford who, after the STAR WARS and INDIANA JONES, was one of the biggest earners in movies. Sammon kept coming back to the set and interviewing everyone involved time and time again. The interviews and reports formed the basis of many articles for film magazines over a period of years during the making and re-making of this film. In 1992 all of this was compiled into the first version of this book. At the end of last year a new version of the book was prepared for the 25th anniversary of the movie. New material was added including a long interview with Harrison Ford and here we have the result.

This is a detailed account of the making of the film BLADE RUNNER from it's early days and masses of script changes to the chaos at the end of filming and the various re-cuts of the movie. This is intended to tie in with the release of yet another version of the film (the 7th to date).

For a fan of the movie or a film student this is probably a really useful book. There's an awful lot about the inner workings of the creation of a movie and several of the ways that it can go disastrously wrong. There are stories of the conflicts with the original author and between the director and the producers.



There are stories of what was cut and why. This should be everything you ever wanted to know about **BLADE RUNNER**.

That said, the text is remarkably underplayed and uncritical. The stories that produced waves of enmity between the people involved seem really trivial here. The cuts and recuts that produce inconsistencies in the story are dismissed out of hand and even ignored. The writer believes that this movie is the best thing there is and seems to avoid anything against that. There is surprisingly little context here. Late in the book there is a list of films ‘influenced’ by **BLADE RUNNER** – there is no list of influences within the film.

The great failing of the book is in the pictures. The old version was a glossy coffee-table book with sharp images. This is a regular hardback with standard paper. There are many black and white pictures on these pages and most of them seem to be indistinguishable lumps of grey. There are suggestions that this will be fixed if there is a paperback edition of this book. There is a chapter of errors from the first edition – wouldn’t it have been better to just correct them?

The new boxed edition of the DVD is also available. This comes with multiple commentaries and a massive documentary. It is probably a better reference source on this subject. If you would rather have a book, then this is the best you’ll find.

*WAM*



***INTERZONE issue 214 Feb 2008***

**£3.75 / 64 pages**

**Reviewed by William McCabe**

INTERZONE isn’t the magazine it was when it started. It seems to have lost all of the literary pretensions and is now going for a younger market. It isn’t trying too hard to do so. There’s a Christopher Priest story that shows some signs of the old literary qualities. There’s a film review column that is either the worst of its kind I’ve ever seen or deliberately trying to alienate anyone who hasn’t spent a lifetime reading fantasy novels/comics. I would say that this is a magazine written for its subscribers that

doesn’t really care about anyone else.

The best part of the magazine is the fiction. All of the stories are fairly good although the Christopher Priest and the Award Winner aren’t really up to the rest.

There’s an interview with Iain Banks that’s just the usual “I’ve got a new book out” plug. There are pictures that seem to be backgrounds or characters from the stories. Some look like they’d be good in colour but aren’t so good in black and

white. None of them are anything special. There are book/DVD reviews and an old copy (December?) of *Ansible*.

So what does this magazine really need? It needs to sell the stories. They are its strong point and all that they give on the contents page is author and title. The image presented with the story doesn't really say anything about what's in it. They really need to put in a teaser for each and action rather than character/background pictures. If they're not going to go for colour on the inner pages, they should probably consider line drawings for illustration.

If they want to attract a younger market, they should try harder on the media product. There's no media news and the reviews are of product that has closed in the cinema or has just reached DVD. It should be possible to get interviews with relevant personalities if only by phone or email questionnaire. If they want to run a film review column they have to get reviews of films that won't hit the cinema until after the magazine is on the shelves. It should be possible to get some idea of what is coming to UK TV and – in some cases – review from internet versions.

*WAM*

## ***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:-**

13th March - *IDORU* by William Gibson

Future dates -17th April, 15th May, 12th June, 17th July

**ORBITAL (Eastercon)**, Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. 21-24 March 2008 Guests of Honour are **Neil Gaiman**, **China Mieville** and **Tanith Lee**. Fan Guest of Honour is **Rog Peyton**. £55 reg; £20 supp or junior (12-17), £5 child (5-11), £1 infant. Contact 8 Windmill Close, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 3AL. Credit card bookings: [www.orbital2008.org](http://www.orbital2008.org).

**THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASTIC FILMS**. 30<sup>th</sup> April to 4<sup>th</sup> May 2008, More details – go to <http://www.sci-fi-london.com/>

**DISCWORLD CONVENTION 2008**, Hilton Metropole Hotel, (NEC) Birmingham. 22nd-25th August 2008. Registration £55 (£36 concessions). Guests Terry Pratchett, Stephen Briggs, Diane Duane, Peter Morwood, Lionel Fanthorpe, Ian Stewart, Jack Cohen & others. [www.dwcon.org](http://www.dwcon.org)

**FANTASYCON 2008**, Britannia Hotel, 1 St James St. Nottingham. 19th-21st September 2008 Registration £50 (BFS members £40) to 31 March 08; then

£50 (£60). Supp or day rate £25. Contact 3 Tamworth Close, Lower Earley, Reading, RG6 4EQ. [www.fantasycon.org.uk](http://www.fantasycon.org.uk)

**NOVACON 38, Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall. 14-16 November 2008 Guest of Honour Ian R MacLeod. £36 reg, until Eastercon 2008. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. See [www.novacon38.org.uk](http://www.novacon38.org.uk) for more details**

*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](mailto:rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk)*

## ***FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG***

11th April - **Michael Scott Rohan**

9th May - tba

13th June - **Eric Brown**

**Photo of Ken Slater on page 2 copyright Peter Weston.**

**BRUM GROUP NEWS #438** copyright 2008 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