

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

JUNE 2008

ISSUE 441

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:

<http://www.birminghamsfgroup.org.uk/>

EMAIL:

bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk

Friday 13th June

ERIC BROWN



Born in West Yorkshire, England in 1960, Brown has lived in Australia, India, and Greece. He began writing when he was fifteen and sold his first short story to INTERZONE in 1986. His story "The Time-Lapsed Man" won the INTERZONE readers' poll for the most admired story of 1988. He has won the British Science Fiction Award twice for his short stories and has published over twenty books: SF novels, collections, books for teenagers and

July 11th – will see a welcome return to the Group by CHRISTOPHER PRIEST, author of the highly-acclaimed THE PRESTIGE along with many other award-winning novels. See SPECIAL NOTE inside.

younger children, as well as radio plays, articles and reviews. His latest books include the collection THRESHOLD SHIFT, the novella THE EXTRAORDINARY VOYAGE OF JULES VERNE, and the children's book CRAZY LOVE. He is married to the writer and mediaevalist Finn Sinclair, and has one daughter, Freya. He lives in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire.

This will be Eric's first talk to the Group though he has been to the Group as a member of the audience.

*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 doors open at 7.30pm and the meeting will commence at 8.00pm so please arrive early, get your drinks from the bar on the ground floor, and be seated in plenty of time.

HARRY HARRISON PRAISES RUSSIA AND CALLS USA FASCIST STATE

The following appeared in the Russian newspaper *Pravda* on May 26th...



Harry Harrison, a science fiction classic writer, became a special guest at the international congress of science fiction writers Eurocon-2008 in Moscow. In an interview with RBC daily the author of THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT said that the USA is gradually becoming a totalitarian state. The author praised Russia for its unusual interest in literature and criticized Russian science fiction for its lack of dynamics and a low level of literary techniques.

“The culture undergoes serious changes – these changes are not always progressive. Within several years of Bush’s rule the American democratic power has turned into the state of a fascist or Stalinist type – the president violates the Constitution, such key principles as freedom of speech and freedom of conscience,” the 83-year-old science fiction writer said in the interview.

“Moreover, the USA behaves absolutely undemocratically towards the world: the USA ignores interests of other countries and it does not even try to understand them. As a result, the USA is simply unaware of the situation in the world and thus it’s unaware of the course it takes. It is a vivid illustration of reversible social and cultural progress.”

However, the writer remains optimistic and reminds that “any totalitarian regime is doomed to collapse sooner or later, and the most difficult problems will be successfully solved sooner or later.” “Mankind has the saving mechanism of self-regulation – bad times cannot last long.” He said.

Harry Harrison was surprised with Russians’ extensive reading: “Within the same period of time a book of mine hardly sells in the USA, two and a half in the UK and ten books in Russia. Americans almost gave up reading at all: in your food stores I met saleswomen who are well up in science fiction. That’s why Russia has become more attractive for a science fiction writer.”

“The secret of a bestseller is the optimal correlation of ideas and action. Traditionally Russian fans pay more attention to the idea of a novel, while action is hardly developing with a poor plot and excessive scientific details – here the general accent on studying the applied sciences in the USSR comes into play. Books by American writers (mine as well) are full of action, which makes a book reader-friendly.”

ANALOG/ASIMOV’S READERS’ AWARDS 2007

Presented during the Nebula Awards weekend, but the news has only just filtered through!

ANALOG AWARDS

Best Novella: “Murder in Parliament Street” by Barry B Longyear

Best Novelette: “Questions Super Caelo et Mundo” by Michael F Flynn (whose acceptance speech was in Latin!)

Best Short Story: “The Astronaut” by Brian Plante

Best Fact Article: “The Ice Age That Wasn’t” by Richard A Lovett

Best Cover: April 2007 by David A Hardy <<Yay!! Go Dave Go!!!>>

ASIMOV’S AWARDS

Best Novella: “Recovering Apollo 8” by Kristine Kathryn Rusch

Best Novelette: “Dark Integers” by Greg Egan

Best Short Story: “Tideline” by Elizabeth Bear

Best Poem: “The Dimensional Rush of Relative Primes” by Bruce Boston

Best Cover Artist: Donato Giancola

SHIRLEY JACKSON AWARD NOMINEES

The nominees for the first Shirley Jackson Award <<yes, another one!>>, established to recognize outstanding achievement in the literature of psychological suspense, horror, and the dark fantastic, have been announced. The winners will be announced on July 20 at Readercon in Burlington, MA.

Novel

BALTIMORE by Mike Mignola and Christopher Golden

GENERATION LOSS by Elizabeth Hand

SHARP TEETH by Toby Barlow

THE TERROR by Dan Simmons

TOKYO YEAR ZERO by David Peace

Novella

- “12 Collections” by Zoran Zivkovic
“Illyria” by Elizabeth Hand
“The Mermaids” by Robert Edric
“Procession of the Black Sloth” by Laird Barron
“The Scalding Rooms” by Conrad Williams
“Vacancy” by Lucius Shepard

Novellette

- “The Forest” by Laird Barron
“The Janus Tree” by Glen Hirshberg
“The Swing” by Don Tumasonis
“The Tenth Muse” by William Browning Spencer
“Thumbprint” by Joe Hill

Short Story

- “Holiday” by M. Rickert
“The Monsters of Heaven” by Nathan Ballingrud
“A Murder of Crows” by Elizabeth Ziemka
“Something in the Mermaid Way” by Carrie Laben
“The Third Bear” by Jeff VanderMeer
“Unique Chicken Goes in Reverse” by Andy Duncan

Collection

- THE BONE KEY by Sarah Monette
THE ENTIRE PREDICAMENT by Lucy Corin
THE IMAGO SEQUENCE AND OTHER STORIES by Laird Barron
LIKE YOU'D UNDERSTAND, ANYWAY by Jim Shepard
OLD DEVIL MOON by Christopher Fowler

Anthology

- AT EASE WITH THE DEAD edited by Barbara and Christopher Roden
DARK DELICACIES 2 edited by Del Howison and Jeff Gelb
INFERNO edited by Ellen Datlow
LOGORRHEA edited by John Klima
WIZARDS edited by Jack Dann and Gardner Dozois

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

.... Author and fan **Robert Lynn Asprin** (b.1946) died suddenly in his home on May 22. Asprin founded the Dark Horde, which became the Dorsai Irregulars. He went on to create and edit the original *Thieves' World* series with then-wife **Lynn Abbey**. Asprin also wrote and co-wrote books in the *Myth-Adventure* series, the *Phule's Regiment* series, and several other novels. Asprin was scheduled to be the Guest of Honor at Marcon 42 that weekend Jerry Pournelle, 74, underwent radiation treatment for an inoperable brain tumour in March Congratulations to Brum Group member and co-founder **Peter Weston** for winning the FAAN Award for Best Fanzine at the US Corflu convention in Las



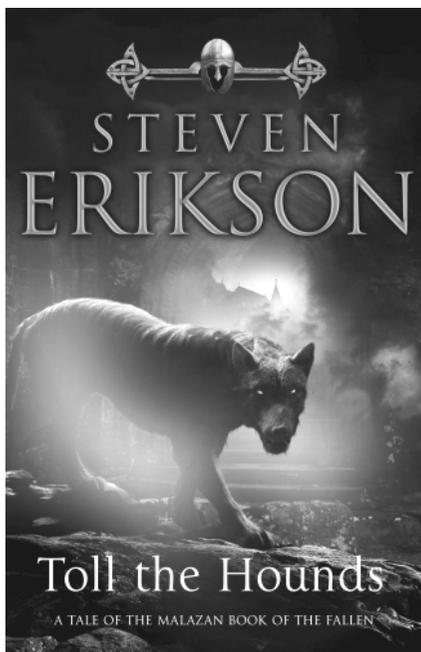
Meet Steven Erikson

WEDNESDAY 2ND JULY AT 6.30PM

Epic fantasy writer Steven Erikson makes a very welcome visit to Birmingham High St, to read from and sign the long-awaited Book 8 in the *Malazan* series:

TOLL THE HOUNDS

Tickets £3, redeemable against one copy of the promoted book on the night



Waterstone's, 24-26 High Street, Birmingham B4 7SL



If you are unable to attend, we can often reserve signed copies. Please contact the branch on 0121 633 4353 for details.

Signed copies cannot be guaranteed and may not carry dedications.

Vegas with his fanzine PROLAPSE, dedicated to unearthing our fannish past Alternate-history author **Robert Conroy**, whose novel **1945** is a finalist for this year's Sidewise Award, told SCI FI Wire that the book is based on a real historical coup that very nearly happened toward the end of World War II. "Immediately after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, [Japanese Emperor] Hirohito convinced the Japanese militarists to surrender, but there was a coup to prevent the surrender and commence a fight to the death," Conroy said in an interview. "The coup very nearly succeeded. In 1945 it does succeed." Conroy's next alternate history, **1942**, is scheduled for publication in March of next year. "It's a different twist on Pearl Harbor and what might have happened if the Japanese had pressed the attack as planned," he said. "It would have been catastrophic for the U.S. and the people of Hawaii. 'What ifs' about Pearl Harbor are numerous, but Random House feels, as do I, that this perspective is unique." Balticon has announced this year's winner of the Compton Crook/Stephen Tall Award for best first novel is **Mark L. Van Name**, for his book ONE JUMP AHEAD. The Compton Crook/Stephen Tall Award was founded in 1983 and includes a \$1,000 prize and two years as guest of honor at Balticon At **Simon & Schuster UK**, **Kate Lyall-Grant** has bought UK and Commonwealth rights to three new volumes in the *Dune* series - JESSICA OF DUNE, IRULAN OF DUNE and LETO OF DUNE, all written by **Brian Herbert** and **Kevin J Anderson**. <<This is less than two, maybe three years since S&S cancelled their Earthlight imprint and said they would not be publishing any more SF! - RGP>> Author **Stephanie Meyer** who gained a huge following with her bestselling *Twilight Saga* vampire novels, was named one of TIME magazine's '100 Most Influential People of 2008', with a laudatory write-up from Orson Scott Card. Now Meyer is poised to make the leap into adult books with SF novel THE HOST, released by Little, Brown in May. It has a first printing of 750,000 copies. Her three *Twilight Saga* novels have sold 7.5 million to date! Her most recent book, TWILIGHT, has won the 2008 Evergreen Teen Book Award **Waterstone's** is to publish the *Harry Potter* 'prequel' as part of its WHAT'S YOUR STORY? fundraising initiative for English PEN and Dyslexia Action. The 800-word story by **J K Rowling** is one of 13 'storycards' written by big name authors for the chain, including **Sebastian Faulks**, **Margaret Atwood**, **Nick Hornby**, **Doris Lessing** and **Axel Scheffler**. The original cards will be auctioned at Waterstone's Piccadilly, with the assistance of Sothebys, on Tuesday 10 June. The following day, all the cards will be available to read in the chain's windows and at Waterstones.com. In August, the chain will then publish a one-off book that will include the 13 stories as well as the best storycards written by members of the public. Copies of the £5.00 book can be pre-ordered online and in stores The first season of the classic 1960s SF television series **The Invaders** comes to DVD for the first time on May 27th from Paramount Home Entertainment Among the 150 people who won't see **INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL** this weekend: Russian Communist party members, who condemned the film as 'crude anti-Soviet

propaganda that distorted history' and called for it to be banned from Russian screens, the Reuters news service reported. **INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL** raked in an estimated \$4.5 million in midnight shows in the United States on May 22, its first day of release, Variety reported Columbia Pictures has acquired the rights from Scholastic Media to bring **R.L. Stine's** young-adult *Goosebumps* series to the big screen for the first time, Variety reported. The *Goosebumps* books have sold 300 million copies, second only to Scholastic's *Harry Potter* series ABC has given a series order to the time-travel drama **LIFE ON MARS**, the network confirmed during its upfront presentation for advertisers on May 13. An American adaptation of the popular BBC SF series of the same name, **LIFE ON MARS** will be executive-produced by **David E. Kelley**, who owns the rights to the show. It will star Irish actor **Jason O'Mara** (**RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION**) as a modern-day cop who is transported back to the 1970s **J J Abrams**, director of the recently wrapped *Star Trek* reboot movie, told SCI FI Wire that it felt illogical to him to give input to co-star **Leonard Nimoy** on how best to play Spock. Nimoy, of course, reprises his legendary role as the older version of the Vulcan character in a pivotal supporting performance in Abrams' film, which revisits the original series' characters and universe **George Clooney** will star in **MEN WHO STARE AT GOATS**, an adaptation of British journalist **Jon Ronson's** book, about the U.S. Army's First Earth Battalion, a unit that was to use paranormal powers. The title refers to the notion that one can kill a goat by staring at it. << Just imagine – a 2-hour movie of Clooney staring at a goat. I can't wait... I'm trembling with excitement already... - RGP>>.... *RGP*

BOOK REVIEWS

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

***HALTING STATE* by Charles Stross**

Orbit / 352pgs / £10.99 / trade paperback / ISBN: 978-1841496948

Reviewed by Phil Noyes

If Charles Stross is capable of writing a dull word, it can only have been on his tax return. I have to admit to being a fan, but enjoyed this book even more than I had expected - it is a real page turner. Suffice to say he is so willing to toss ideas out like firecrackers which others would spend a novella worth of space developing that he is in danger of his name becoming a verb to describe this.

HALTING STATE is based in a near future setting (recognisably connected to our own world, in a newly independent Scotland) which features a bank robbery by a group of orcs with a dragon for firepower. Not that even this removes us from our own world (it all depends on where the bank is....) and the chapters alternate between the viewpoints of

three main protagonists, a police sergeant, a game developer and an accountant specialising in fraud investigation. Each of these have roots which give them much more depth, including civil partnership, family secrets, and an interest in swords, and they converge on what becomes a complex mess in which online gaming (the bank is situated in Avalon Four, online gamespace, and the items stolen include magical artifacts) and fraud lead on to attempted murder, spooks and then real bodies start to pile up.

The pace is unrelenting, and though the use of second person narrative is a little unexpected, total immersion is easy. As the strands weave, a series of unsettling revelations, including an all too real use of current technology for very different purposes than intended (how would you recruit to invisible conspiracies?), build to a gripping finale which reveals..... Well, I won't spoil this, but the conspiracy/cockup ratio is realistic. Along the way Stross gives you zombie mobs, vorpel blades and gun-toting ursines, only two of which are restricted to online action. None of this is written to require deep knowledge of how game design and accounting actually work, but it is clear from the cover quotes that even those having this knowledge (including John Carmack, creator of DOOM) find the book enthralling. There is also a peppering of humour which adds to the fun – the book is a standalone, and certainly makes a good job of it as a standout. Buy, enjoy, recommend, but you may be too wary to lend - can you really trust your friends to return it? PN



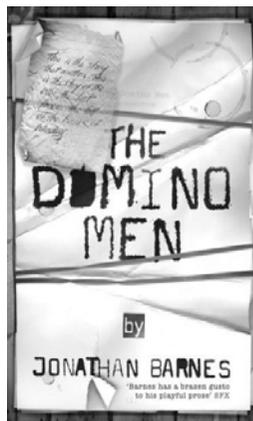
***THE DOMINO MEN* by Jonathan Barnes**

Gollancz / 282pgs / £18.99 / hardcover / ISBN: 978-0575079434

Gollancz / 282 pgs / £10.99 /trade pbk / ISBN: 978-0575082304

Reviewed by William McCabe

This is Barnes' second novel. It could be called a sequel to the first – THE SOMNAMBULIST - in that the characters of this title also appeared in that book. There are other links too. As before, this is set in the early years of the century but this time it's the 21st not the 20th. Once again, there's a secret organisation but, this time, it's seen from the inside not the outside and it's trying to prevent a disaster not cause one. There is also a sense of style in the characters. There are so many grotesques. There are Hawker and Boon, grown men dressed as schoolboys. They enjoy killing and do quite a lot of it. Strangely, they seem to be among the good guys this time around although it's hard to tell if they're really on anyone's side. There's Dedlock who's been living in a tank on one of the cars on the London Eye. He's been around for a century too. The most grotesque of all is Leviathan. It's been imprisoned inside someone for a century and is about to break out. When it does it will mean the end for all of London. Leviathan isn't really a character, more of a ... but that would give too much away.



There's no way of deciding whether this is SF or Fantasy. Certainly Leviathan has a lot of similarity with all of the demons that you'd find in horror movies and the method of containment is done through rituals rather than technology but it's hard to believe that a fantasy/horror story would produce something that had a true nature anything like that. At the same time, this is definitely someone's idea of comedy. It's not the simple sort that you'd find in Pratchett/Rankin/Holt and their clones. There's nothing that's laugh-out-loud funny either. Think of it more as an adult version of some of the more grotesque scenes in Roald Dahl's children's books with a layer of Dickens or Fielding on top.

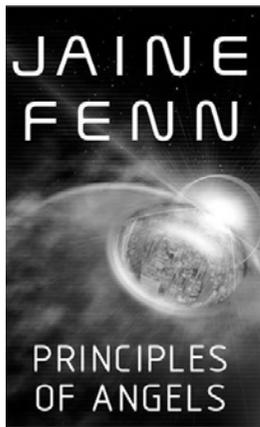
So on to the plot. Henry Lamb, one-time child comedy star and now civil service record clerk, is recruited into a branch of the secret service when his grandfather is hospitalised. It seems Grandpa was involved in something much bigger than just TV production. But, as an italicized voice tells us, Henry Lamb may not be telling the truth. A century earlier, Queen Victoria plotted to bring a creature called Leviathan to Earth but was thwarted by the Directorate - a secret organisation. Now certain members of the House of Windsor are involved in a plot to free Leviathan. WAM

***PRINCIPLES OF ANGELS* by Jaine Fenn**

Gollancz / 384pgs / £18.99 /hardcover / ISBN: 978-0575082915

Reviewed by Ian Allwyn

The Angels referred to in the novel's title are revered female assassins, sanctioned by the state, whose role is the assassination of public figures. Welcome then to Chesh City: Topside; an opulent city afloat two kilometres above the surface of a planet.



The Angels are key to the story which begins with the murder of the Angel Malia despite her revered untouchable status in the society. Her nephew Taro was both her servant and inadvertently brought home with him her killer. *PRINCIPLES OF ANGELS* is told in part from his perspective in the aftermath of the murder with his status revoked and he is forced into the city's underworld. Hiding within an underworld gang, Taro must survive, act as a spy for the much feared Minister who controls the Angels and, for his own purpose track down and avenge his aunt's murder.

Alternative chapters chart the progress of Elarn, an off-world singer of ancient choral works on an inter-planetary concert tour. Narrowly escaping being caught in the crossfire of an Angel's assassination on aristocrat, Salik Vidoran, they befriend each other. The story charts their progress as lovers whilst we learn that Elarn's choral tour serves as a front for a covert search for a past acquaintance. Taro and Elarn's separate paths merge as they face the threat to the survival of the entire city their actions uncover.

Rather than widescreen large space opera, the novel reads as a thriller, short and punchy with a clear prose and authentic characterisation. Whilst there is a strong sense of world building, it took me rather too long to appreciate that the city described was actually afloat, (although an earlier examination of the front cover would have helped me there). The city is portrayed as dark and foreboding and has a gothic vibe. Like all cities, Chesh City encompasses the vast array of society, from a wealthy upper class, to the criminal gangs within a large underclass. However, the actual cast of characters we follow is

relatively small which made the conspiracy thread to the novel reasonably straightforward to second guess, although these are minor quibbles. This is an enjoyable debut novel and I look forward to Fenn's future work. And yes, the Angels can fly. LA

DALEK I LOVED YOU by Nick Griffiths

Gollancz / 289 pages / £7.99 / paperback / ISBN: 978-0575082199

Reviewed by William McCabe

This book has nothing to do with the recent radio shows chronicling the life of a Dr. Who fan entitled DALEK I LOVE YOU and DALEK I LOVE YOU TOO. Neither they nor this have anything to do with the 80s synth pop group named Dalek I Love You either. This is the autobiography of Nick Griffiths, reviewer, journalist, and Dr. Who Fan. All of these terms are his own and he has probably been paid in all 3 capacities.

Other things about the author:- He is a Tottenham Hotspur Fan. He once worked in a record shop (Our Price). He makes lists of all kinds of things including his 10 favourite/least favourite... just about anything. He has heard of pop groups that most people haven't. He is not Nick Hornby

The last of these is probably most significant. Apart from the 'Dr. Who Fan' bit, this could just be someone trying to write a Nick Hornby knock-off. Maybe he's just trying to be Nick Hornby for Dr. Who Fans. I don't think he's very good at it and I even wonder about his status as a Dr. Who fan.

He first saw the show when Jon Pertwee starred and managed to stick with it until his parents sent him off to public school. At this point he watched the show only if not playing rugby that day. He doesn't really seem to like the show after Tom Baker leaves and probably didn't watch it that much until the McGann version by which time he is a regular writer for *Radio Times* on the subject. He has a lot of the videos and watches them often but no-one he knows likes it so he rarely does so in company. He collects all kinds of memorabilia including various toys from cereal packets in the mid 70s. His most expensive purchase was a sign that wasn't actually seen in the film WITHNAIL & I. He has been to Dr Who conventions but he gets paid to do so by *Radio Times* and spends all his time in the Green Room.

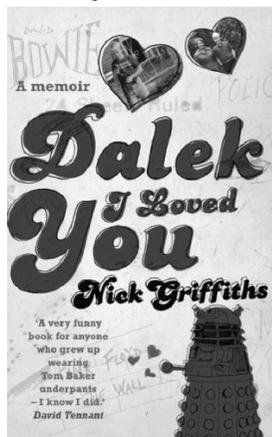
This would probably make a great present for a Dr Who Fan who doesn't pay too much attention and thinks Nick Hornby is so great that they'd settle for 3rd best. Other than that, disappointing. WAM

KITTY GOES TO WASHINGTON by Carrie Vaughn

Gollancz / 326pp / £6.99 / paperback / ISBN: 978-0575082670

Reviewed by Margaret Thorpe

A modern day world in which werewolves and vampires live alongside humans is the theme of this series of books by Carrie Vaughn. This one continues the story of Kitty Norville (now that's a great name for a werewolf; why not Connie or Molly?) as the second in the series, continuing the saga of Kitty, who has a phone-in radio show in



America. She is ordered to appear before a senate committee to determine the treatment of Weres and vampires in the US. Kitty soon finds out that several of the senators have other agendas - some including the elimination of all supernatural creatures like her. To make matters worse, Kitty isn't sure which side the local vampires are fighting for.

It's a fast paced entertaining read with well drawn characters, plenty of humour, and some clever plot twists. Not great literature, but I was interested enough to go out and buy the others in the series. MT

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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 contact addresses.

Any information about forthcoming SF / Fantasy / Horror events are always welcome - please send to me at rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.uk

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:-

12th June – **THE CHILDREN OF HURIN** by **J R R Tolkien**

Future dates - 24th July (note change), 21th August, 18th September

PHILIP K DICK! PKD-DAY 2 is on Saturday 14th June 2008 at Nottingham-Trent University, John Clare Lecture Theatre, Clifton Campus, Clifton Lane, Nottingham. For full details see <http://pkdday2atntu.webs.com/>

DAN DARE AND THE BIRTH OF HI-TECH BRITAIN is an exhibition about Britain in the years following World War II. It runs until September 2008 at the Science Museum, South Kensington, London. For more details see

http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/visitmuseum/galleries/dan_dare_and_the_birth_of_high-tech_britain.aspx

DISCOWORLD 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

ZOMBIECON! The creators of AliensStoleMyHandbag, DamnFineCon & TheyCameAndShavedUs, bring you the fourth part in the Weird-Assed-Weekend-Trilogy – ZOMBIECON !! 5th-7th September 2008 at the Quality Hotel, Walsall. ZombieCon promises to be two and half days and two long nights of all the Zombic related fun, frolics and sickness you can handle; consisting of demonstrations, workshops, talks, games, masquerade, and two discos. It offers the discerning connoisseur of all things undead and gory. Please send postal enquiries to ZombieCon, c/o Stefan Lancaster, 54 Bridge Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB82QP.

FANTASYCON 2008, Britannia Hotel, 1 St James St. Nottingham. 19th-21st September 2008. Registration is £60 (£50 for BFS members). Day rate is £25 Fri/Sun and £40 Sat.

Contact 5 Greenbank, Barnt Green, Birmingham. B45 8DH or email
membership@fantasycon.org.uk



Novacon 38 will be held at the Quality Hotel, Walsall, over the weekend of 14-16 November 2008; the guests are science fiction author Ian R MacLeod and the Brum Group's own Vernon Brown, who chaired the first Novacon back in 1971. Membership costs £38.00, payable to "Novacon 38" at 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ; registration forms can be downloaded from the convention website, www.novacon38.org.uk, along

with the first progress report.

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG

11th July – CHRISTOPHER PRIEST talking about the film THE PRESTIGE (which was based on his own novel), and on future projects.

8th August – Summer Social. A meal at the award-winning Black Eagle – we've done this for a few years now and it seems to be mainly the same attendees. So, £5 deposit to Vernon or Pat asap. If you haven't been to the Black Eagle before ask one of us for more details at this month's meeting. The full menu (with specials) is available – it is *not* a set meal – so you spend what you want to spend. Their website is www.blackeaglepub.co.uk

12th September – JAMES BARCLAY

10th October – Quiz against B'ham University SF Group

7th November – GRAHAM JOYCE (NOTE: One week earlier than usual)

6th December – Christmas Social – Skittles and buffet at the Selly Park Tavern. Tickets will be on sale in September.

January 2009 – Annual General Meeting and Auction

BRUM GROUP NEWS #441 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