

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE *FREE* MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

OCTOBER 2010

ISSUE 469

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& **HARRY HARRISON**

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FRIDAY 18TH OCTOBER

ADAM ROBERTS

Adam Roberts was 'born two-thirds of the way through the last century' and educated 'at a rundown state school in Kent' and the ancient University of Aberdeen where he graduated with a degree in English and Classics. He is currently Professor of Nineteenth-Century Literature in the English department at Royal Holloway,

University of London where he teaches English Lit and Creative Writing. In his spare time he writes fiction and non-fiction.

But exactly who is Adam Roberts? Firstly, he is an SF writer - his first novel, *SALT*, was published by Gollancz in 2000 and has been followed by *ON* (2001), *STONE* (2002), *POLYSTOM* (2003), *THE SNOW* (2004), *GRADISIL*

November 5th – SF writer and critic **CHARLES STROSS**, author of *SINGULARITY SKY*, *IRON SUNRISE*, *GLASSHOUSE*, etc., will be talking to the Group.

(2006), LAND OF THE HEADLESS and SPLINTER (2007), SWIFTLY (2008) and YELLOW BLUE TIBIA (2009) which was a nominee for the BSFA Award and is shortlisted for the John W Campbell Award. His latest novel is NEW MODEL ARMY (2010) with BY LIGHT ALONE due to be published by Gollancz in August. 2 novellas have been published by PS Publishing – PARK POLAR (2002) and JUPITER MAGNIFIED (2003).

Another side of Adam's writing is I AM SCROOGE: A ZOMBIE STORY FOR CHRISTMAS (2009), a reworking of A CHRISTMAS CAROL described as 'a zombie-slashing gore-fest'.

But Adam has yet another side – a humorous one. He also writes as 'A R R R Roberts' – THE SODDIT (2003), THE SELLAMILLION (2004), THE VA DINCI COD (2005) and DOCTOR WHOM (2006). As 'The Robertski Brothers' he wrote THE McATRIX DERIDED (2004) and as 'A3R Roberts' he wrote STAR WARPED (2005).

Three sides to Adam? No, there's a fourth – two non-fiction books – THE PALGRAVE HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION and SCIENCE FICTION: THE NEW CRITICAL IDIOM (both 2005).

I also found a book titled THE WONGA COUP which isn't mentioned on his website bibliography. Five sides???. Or a completely different 'Adam Roberts'?

20-plus books in 10 years as well as holding down a 'proper job'! This is someone who is making a long overdue visit to Group. Find out how he covers all the above in under 2 hours. You have to be there!
RGP

THE 2010 HUGO AWARD WINNERS

The Hugo Awards were presented at Aussiecon 4 on September 5.

Best Novel: (tie): THE CITY & THE CITY by China Miéville; THE WINDUP GIRL by Paolo Bacigalupi

Best Novella: "Palimpsest" by Charles Stross

Best Novelette: "The Island" by Peter Watts

Best Short Story: "Bridesicle" by Will McIntosh

Best Related Work: THIS IS ME, JACK VANCE! (OR, MORE PROPERLY, THIS IS "I") by Jack Vance

Best Graphic Story: GIRL GENIUS, VOLUME 9: AGATHA HETERODYNE AND THE HEIRS OF THE STORM written by Kaja and Phil Foglio; art by Phil Foglio; colours by Cheyenne Wright

Best Dramatic Presentation – Long Form: MOON, screenplay by Nathan Parker; story by Duncan Jones; directed by Duncan Jones

Best Dramatic Presentation – Short Form: "Doctor Who: The Waters of Mars" written by Russell T Davies & Phil Ford; directed by Graeme Harper

Best Editor, Long Form: Patrick Nielsen Hayden

Best Editor, Short Form: Ellen Datlow

Best Professional Artist: Shaun Tan

Best Semiprozine: *Clarkesworld* edited by Neil Clarke, Sean Wallace, & Cheryl Morgan

Best Fan Writer: Frederik Pohl

Best Fanzine: *StarShipSofa*, edited by Tony C. Smith

Best Fan Artist: Brad W. Foster

The John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer: Seanan McGuire

THE BRITISH FANTASY AWARDS 2010

The British Fantasy Awards were presented on September 18 in Nottingham. **Best**

Novel: the August Derleth Fantasy Award: ONE by Conrad Williams

Best Novella: “The Language Of Dying” by Sarah Pinborough

Best Short Fiction: “What Happens When You Wake Up In the Night” by Michael Marshall Smith

Best Anthology: THE MAMMOTH BOOK OF BEST NEW HORROR 20 edited by Stephen Jones

Best Collection: LOVE SONGS FOR THE SHY AND CYNICAL by Robert Shearman

The PS Publishing Best Small Press Award: Telos Publishing, David Howe

Best Comic/Graphic Novel: WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE CAPE CRUSADER? by Neil Gaiman and Andy Kubert

Best Artist: Vincent Chong, for work including covers for THE WITNESSES ARE GONE and THE MAMMOTH BOOK OF BEST NEW HORROR 20

Best Non-Fiction: *Ansible* by David Langford

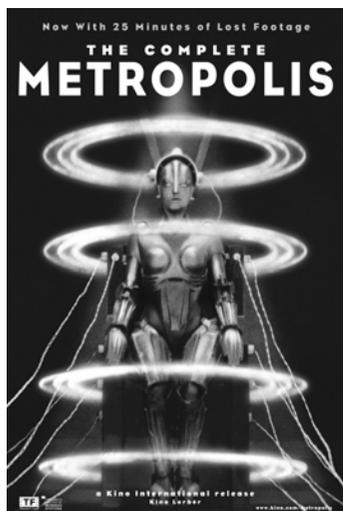
Best Magazine/Periodical: *Murky Depths* edited and published by Terry Martin

Best Television: *Doctor Who* by Russell T Davies

Best Film: LET THE RIGHT ONE IN directed by Tomas Alfredson

Best Newcomer – the Sydney J. Bounds Award: LIVING WITH GHOSTS by Kari Sperring

The British Fantasy Society Special Award: the Karl Edward Wagner Award: Robert Holdstock



EIGHTY THREE YEARS ON by Vernon Brown

In January 1927, Fritz Lang’s silent film masterpiece METROPOLIS premiered in Berlin. This was probably the only time that it has been seen in its entirety, approximately 150 minutes of visually astonishing film - until now. Because of financial problems, the film’s producers gave the distributors *carte blanche* with the way that they distributed it, a decision to be regretted because they immediately cut out great chunks, totalling about a fifth, to ‘suit the American taste’. This completely ruined the storyline and all versions since then have been recombinations of the remaining film in attempts to remedy matters.

But recently a more or less complete version of the original film, much degraded, was discovered

in a small museum in Buenos Aires. Months of patient restoration, comparison with existing versions and delving into records followed, until what is almost undoubtedly the original version has been assembled.

Pat and I went to see this restored version at the Electric Theatre in Station Street recently although unfortunately we did not find out about it until after the deadline for the last Newsletter. It was well worth the £12 each that it cost us – we don't go to the cinema very often so we had the expensive sofa seats with drinks service. It was easy to tell the bits from Buenos Aires because it had not been possible to eliminate all the graininess but because we have seen a number of other versions we noticed non BA material that we had not seen before – obviously scenes that did not fit into previous versions. It was an excellent production that held our attention, and that of the rest of the sell-out audience, for the full 150 minutes. I know that it's now available on DVD but it has to be seen on the large screen to be appreciated at its best.

I don't know where, or for how long, this film will be shown but if you have any interest at all in SF or films do not hesitate if you see it advertised. But there are two things to remember: the English subtitles are only shown for a few seconds so sit far enough back that you can see the whole screen easily; and don't drink before the film - there's no interval!

VB

SUPERMAN TO THE RESCUE! by Vernon Brown

A couple in America recently had fallen into such arrears with their mortgage that their bank was taking their house from them. Whilst clearing it in preparation to move out they found several boxes of odds and ends in the attic - and there they found a copy of *Action Comics* #1 that had cost 10 cents in 1938 and which introduced Superman to the world.

The comic, of which only about one hundred are known to exist, is in good condition and is estimated to fetch £1,500,000 at a forthcoming auction.

VB



NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

.... Author **Edwin Charles Tubb** (b. 1919) died on September 10. E. C. 'Ted' Tubb was best known for his *Dumarest Saga*, which ran for thirty-three volumes, and his *Cap Kennedy* series, written under the pseudonym Gregory Kern. He wrote six novels set in the world of SPACE: 1999 as well as several stand-alone novels and short stories starting in the early 1950s. Tubb was one of the co-founders of the British Science Fiction Association. A major dystopian novel *TO DREAM AGAIN* was accepted on the same day as the author died Author **Jennifer Rardin** (b. 1965) died suddenly on September 20. Rardin began publishing her *Jaz Parks* series of

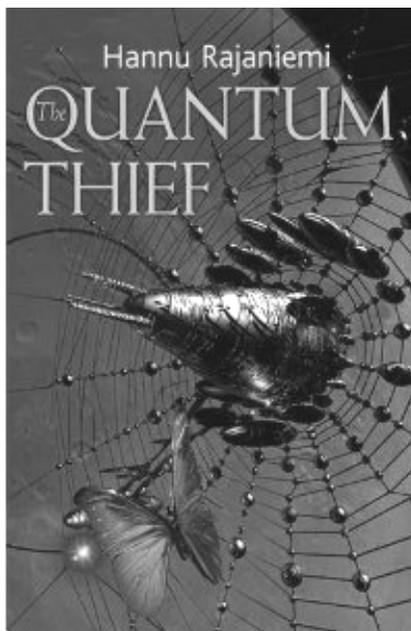
urban fantasy novels in 2007 with ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY. She has followed her debut novel with five more in the same series **F. Gwynplaine MacIntyre's** brother has announced that the remains found after the fire in MacIntyre's Brooklyn apartment on June 25 have been positively identified through DNA testing Chicago has won the right to his the 2012 Worldcon, to be called **Chicon 7**. The 70th Worldcon will be held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago from August 30-September 3, 2012 HarperCollins has announced at Aussiecon 4 that it will be combining its US, UK, and Australian science fiction imprints into a single global imprint. Previously published in the US as Eos and in the UK and Australia as Voyager, the move of all three groups to **Harper Voyager** will allow a strong global publishing platform **Hal Hall**, who has served as curator of the Science Fiction and Fanzine collection at Texas A&M since 1978 retired on August 30. Hall built the collection to more than 46,000 items. He will be succeeded by **Catherine Coke**, who is also an SF fan **U**, the first opera to be written in Klingon, debuted in The Hague, The Netherlands in a three night run on September 10 at the Zeebelt Theatre. The opera will play in Frankfurt later in September. **U** was written by Floris Schoenfeld and Marc Okrand and tells the story of Kahless the Unforgettable, the first Klingon emperor RGP



BOOK REVIEWS



(**REVIEWERS** please note:- all reviews should be emailed direct to me at rog [dot] peyton [at] btinternet [dot] com) **Deadline for each issue is 14 days prior to the date of the monthly meeting.**



THE QUANTUM THIEF by ***Hannu Rajaniemi***

Gollancz / 330pgs / Hardback £18.99 ISBN: 978-0575088870 / Trade Paperback £12.99 ISBN: 978-0575088887

Reviewed by Michael Jones

Rajaniemi is a Finnish scientist living and working in the UK and has had a number of short stories published. This is the first fruit of a three book deal landed on the basis of a 24-page sample.

It seems initially a strange and difficult book to get into. It opens with a professional thief, Jean le Flambeur, held in a strange glass prison where he is repeatedly pitted in competition against various entities - frequently replicas of himself - with death (and subsequent revival) as the penalty for losing. This is intended to lead to his eventual redemption. Then he is rescued by

a woman from the outer solar system in a sentient spidership who takes him to Mars, where he had lived before under a different identity. Here he will be expected to pay for his rescue by committing a final crime.

It gradually becomes apparent that life in ‘the moving city of the Oubliette’ is rooted in an elaborate computer system referred to as exomemory which stores all data – the environment, senses, thoughts, everything. Individual personalities can be downloaded into reprinted bodies and can exchange memories with each other through encrypted channels. They are allowed time in these bodies on the basis of time spent downloaded into construction and maintenance machines and the like; can be resurrected if they die, and can return with new bodies and new identities. On the other hand, murder can be committed by scrambling the exomemory record of an individual, thus completely excising his or her personality.

One way of looking at this book is as a description of a future of amazing possibilities, a futuristic setting where personalities, bodies and memories are digital, changeable and fluid. This setup leads to new ways of looking at such issues as self-identity, individuality, personal privacy and even death. In fact, the reader is led into a maze where nothing is as it seems and it is almost impossible to determine what (or who) is real and what is not. At the same time, it is a story on a classic theme, a conflict between a thief and a detective, but in the kind of setting first created by William Gibson and progressed by the likes of Neal Stephenson and Greg Egan.

Whether it merits the fervent enthusiasm with which it has been greeted in some circles may in my view be debatable. There are a lot of advanced ideas to understand, some of which are only partially explained, if at all, so that a great deal is demanded of the reader. Nevertheless it is certainly an extraordinary piece of technical SF. *Mj*



FOR THE WIN by Cory Doctorow

HarperVoyager / 475pgs / £14.99

hardcover ISBN: 978-0007352012

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan

The genius of Doctorow’s writing is the way that he can convincingly inhabit the world of the game-obsessed youngster. For most kids of today, having a job where you would be paid to play computer games all day would be some kind of heaven. In this near future world, they can do just that. On-line games are big business and experienced players are needed. If only it were that simple...

Leonard is a sixteen-year-old American. He calls himself Wei-Dong and hangs out in cyberspace with a gang of Chinese players. His father is not happy and tries to send him to a military school. Leonard runs away and gets a poorly paid job playing games. Mala and her army earn enough to get a better deal in the

slums of Mumbai. One of their tasks is to help paying customers get their avatars up to higher levels where the in-game rewards are greater. They and Matthew's gang in China are also gold-farmers. There are players out there who will pay real money to have virtual items credited to their in-game characters. The gold-farmers get them, their bosses sell them. It is big business. It is a commodity market. Real fortunes can be made or lost. The players like Mala and Matthew work in sweat-shop conditions.

Then they are approached, during battle, by Big Sister Nor, who plays out of Hong Kong. She wants better pay and conditions for the workers. She proposes a Trade Union, the IWWWW,

Much of the novel is the struggle to unionise the workers and get recognition. This is a realistic, gritty and at times, bloody novel. Just as the original workers' unions had to fight for survival, so do these characters. Game-playing is not always fun.

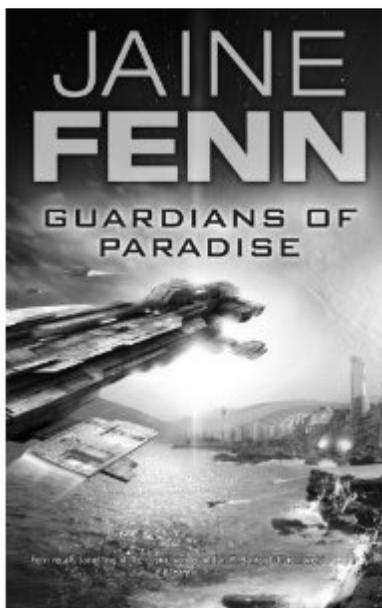
Although this may look like a young adult book, it has some deeply disturbing passages involving brutality and exploitation. These things are probably going on right now, in the places Doctorow describes. He has changed the parameters but the message is the same. Act now.

Hidden inside a thoroughly enjoyable fast paced book is material that should make any civilised reader think. PM

GUARDIANS OF PARADISE by Jaine Fenn

Gollancz / 336pgs / £12.99 trade paperback ISBN: 978-0575083264

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan



Jaine Fenn has embarked on an ambitious potentially nine-volume series of which GUARDIANS OF PARADISE is the third. So far, each of them has a different flavour. The first of the series, PRINCIPLES OF ANGELS, was set in a highly technical environment. The city of Khesh floats above the atmosphere of a barren planet. In it, we are introduced to two characters. Nual is an angel. This means she is a physically altered executioner. Taro lives in the undertow, the maze of walkways and hovels clinging to the underside of the city.

Volume two, CONSORTS OF HEAVEN, is very different in setting. It is an adventure on a low-tech world that has many of the trappings of a fantasy novel. It is only towards the end that it becomes clear that it has links with the universe of PRINCIPLES OF ANGELS. It also introduces the third character, Jarek, who is part of the triad that GUARDIANS OF PARADISE revolves around.

By the start of the third novel (providing you have read the other two) we know that Nual is Sidhe. This race was thought to have been wiped out a long time ago, to the

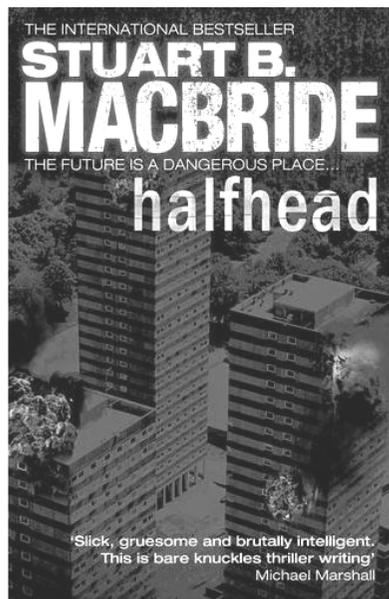
great relief of humanity as they are extremely manipulative and have the power to bend minds to their will. Nual is young, in Sidhe terms and was little more than a child when Jarek found her aboard a derelict Sidhe mother ship, the only sane survivor of some kind of disaster – she didn't know what. The Sidhe, however, want her either back in the fold or dead. They don't care which. They have already, (in *PRINCIPLES OF ANGELS*) tried to use her friend and mentor as an assassin. Now they have sent a more blatant hit squad. Jarek, by coincidence, arrives just in time for the shoot out. Once they have escaped, Jarek tells Nual and Taro that he has discovered the source of the 'shift units' that take space craft between systems instantaneously. They are the rewired brains of boys with a kinetic talent, bred for that trait on Serenein, the planet in *CONSORTS OF HEAVEN*. Despite the fact that it might eventually lead to the end of faster than light space travel, the three team up to find where these boys are processed and put a stop to their torture. If it also wipes out the Sidhe once and for all, they decide it is a price worth paying.

Whereas, volume one was an unusual, high tech setting with a deal of politics and volume two appeared superficially more like fantasy, this third volume is a more traditional space opera with a different kind of action and intrigue. Although Jaine hopes that each volume will stand alone, it is advisable to start with *PRINCIPLES OF ANGELS* in order to understand the full import of the series. PM

***HALFHEAD* by Stuart B. MacBride**

HarperCollins / 376pgs / £7.99 paperback ISBN: 978-0007349265

Reviewed by Jim Pearce



This is the first foray into science fiction by a prolific crime/thriller writer Stuart MacBride (note no initial 'B'). His *noir* crime novels are set in Aberdeen and feature a gritty and much put-upon detective sergeant Logan McRae whose efforts in solving a number of high profile and sometimes horrendous cases are not recognised or appreciated by his superiors.

This book, written in his normal lively if occasionally gruesome style, is set in a relatively near future with the action (and I do mean action) taking place in Glasgow. To be specific, in its vast and deprived south side connurb blocks, these are always set to explode at the least provocation. They were, eleven years ago, the scene of the VR (virtual reality) riots in which 3 million people died. At the same time similar riots transformed the United States from a superpower to a third world state.

In this world perpetrators of major crimes are surgically mutilated on conviction, losing their lower jaw, and are lobotomised before being sent out by the State to do menial jobs in the community in order that everyone can see what happens when you break the law. These are the 'halfheads'. One of these, Dr Fiona Westfield, who was one of the most

prolific serial killers Glasgow has ever seen, is waking up and she wants revenge, particularly on William Hunter who was instrumental in her arrest and conviction. Since then he has been promoted to the rank of Assistant Network Director. The Network is a type of special police force/paramilitary organisation dealing with major crimes.

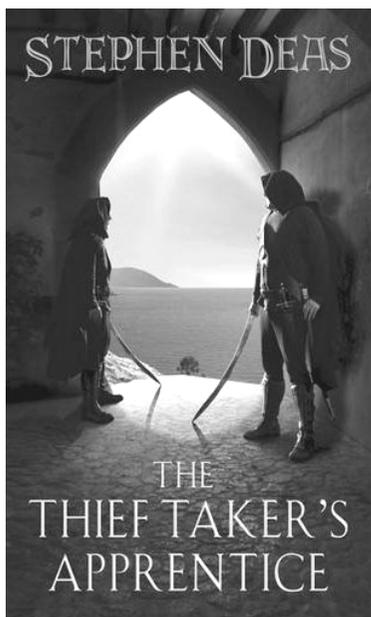
The book follows these two over the period of Dr Westwood's awakening. Extra spice is provided by the machinations of a powerful and rogue extra government organisation. There are a good number of strong secondary and minor support characters seamlessly interwoven throughout this action-packed story.

This story has a start, middle and a strong and clear end, which still leaves open the possibility of a sequel. If you like *noir* crime/thriller novels both *HALFHEAD* and the *Logan McRae* books take some beating and are strongly recommended. For once I agree with the quotes on the jacket, i.e. "Compelling" (SFX) and "Slick, gruesome and brutally intelligent." This is bare knuckles thriller writing" (Michael Marshall). JP

***THE THIEF-TAKER'S APPRENTICE* by Stephen Deas**

Gollancz / 282pgs / £9.99 hardback ISBN: 978-0575094475

Reviewed by Jim Pearce



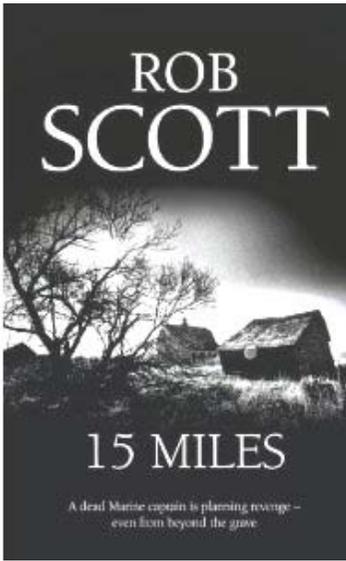
This is the first of a series following the life of Berren, a fourteen-year-old boy living in the city of Deephaven. Berren is a thief who has the nerve to steal the purse of Deephaven's most feared thief-taker, Syannis. Impressed by this, Syannis hunts down Berren and buys him from his vicious gang-master/owner Hatchet. The book then follows Berren's first few months as the thief-takers apprentice.

The book is well written and is easily read but is a linear depiction of Berren's story, lacking the varied strands that often gives a book breadth and makes it come to life. For instance, although Syannis is a very successful and potentially interesting character, how he goes about his business, discovering vital information, is largely unreported. So overall, I found the book was somewhat bland and disappointing. At one stage I thought to myself that this book is more for young persons and not adults. It was therefore not surprising that when I finally read the press release, as I did not wish to be over influenced by it, I found that it was aimed at young adults. This was not apparent from the information on the jacket. Reassessing my conclusions, it is not a poor book and young persons (young teens) should gain a good deal of enjoyment from it. However, I still think that widening its scope to follow the lives and experiences of some of the other characters more closely would make it a much better and exciting read. JP

15 MILES by Rob Scott

Gollancz / 356 pgs / £12.99 trade paperback ISBN: 978-0575093867

Reviewed by William McCabe



The blurb on the front cover reads “A dead Marine captain, a forty year old secret, revenge from beyond the grave.” Of these three items one is true, one nearly irrelevant and one false. Elsewhere this is described as a horror story. If that makes you think of something fantastical or supernatural, you're probably wrong. This qualifies as horror in the same way as *PSYCHO* or *SILENCE OF THE LAMBS*. Some might call this a detective or crime novel but I'd debate that too. The crime here is in an unreported death and defrauding the welfare system and the detective isn't really detecting anything most of the time. The best description I can come up with here is ‘Thriller’. It's not a great one but it's a creditable try.

Sam ‘Sailor’ Doyle is a police detective. He drinks a lot. He has a drug problem - pills he acquired in bulk some time before. He is on his first case as lead detective on a homicide. The case is gruesome. There are two mutilated and mummified corpses, a lot of feral cats and several

dead farm animals. It looks bad but it will get a whole lot worse. By the end of the story he will have been badly scratched by cats, infected with bubonic plague and bitten by several poisonous snakes. There's also a 40 year old woman with the mind of a 6-year-old that could bring the plague to a major city and beyond. There are also sub-plots involving suggestions of biological warfare and a plot to murder a senior politician that don't really work.

There are two real failures here. The first smacks a little too much of a Stephen Donaldson character. Fairly early on you realise that Sailor likes his beer and has a pill problem. That isn't really enough for him to keep reminding us exactly how much beer he has had and how many pills he has taken along with all the other medication that he's been shot up with. The second item seems to be a teaser for some kind of supernatural element that may develop into something in a sequel. Sailor feels responsible for the death of his sister years before. He didn't pick her up from the airport. She got a lift with friends and they were involved in an accident with a snowplough that killed them all. Throughout the book he hears voices and sees messages saying that his sister forgives him and that he should ‘find the girl’. They could be messages from beyond the grave but considering his physical state it's never suggested that they're anything more than delusions. If that's the truth, why are they there?

All in all this is a good solid thriller that is probably the first of a series - the website is sailordoyle.com not something from the author's name. It could improve if Sailor gets over his substance abuse problems and they don't get sued by the people responsible for *THE FRENCH CONNECTION*. *WAM*

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 [dot] peyton [at] btinternet [dot] com

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.

Future books to be discussed will provisionally be...

Forthcoming:- COALESCENT by Stephen Baxter; DIVERGENCE by Tony Ballantyne; LET THE RIGHT ONE IN by Jon Avide Lindquist; HUNTER'S RUN by Martin, Dozois & Abrahams.

THE MISFiTs are an informal group of local SF fans who meet regularly at 7pm at the Wagon & Horses, Oldbury on the third Friday of each month. Real ale, good food and great company. More details from Martin Tudor - (empties084 [at] btinternet [dot] com).

PROFESSOR IAN STEWART speculates on the possibilities of extra-terrestrial life and how different it might be to our own, while Professor Andy Fabian and Dr Carolin Crawford reveal the secret sounds of the solar system, including the big bang itself. Gaze into the vastness of space in the company of some of the biggest scientific brains on the planet. Thursday 7th October 7:00pm at Symphony Hall, Broad Street, Birmingham. £7.50, £5 students and under 16s.

DOCTOR WHO LIVE! BBC Worldwide has announced a series of arena dates for the very first production of DOCTOR WHO LIVE which is coming to The NIA, Birmingham, 18 - 20 October 2010. Tickets range from £25 to £38.50 each. The new stage show, based upon the BBC's smash-hit, award-winning series *Doctor Who*, promises to deliver a spectacular audio/visual experience featuring live music, special effects and appearances from the show's most popular monsters. Full details from The Ticket Factory - phone 0844 338 0388 or see their website www.theticketfactory.com

ILLUSTRIOUS is the 2011 Eastercon to be held at the Hilton Metropole Hotel, the NEC, Birmingham over the Easter weekend 22-25 April. Guests of Honour are US author David Weber and UK author Peter F Hamilton. Artist GoH is none other than our own David A Hardy! Fan GoH is Vince Doherty.

More info: <http://www.illustrious.org.uk/>



NOVA CON 40 – the Brum Group’s own convention and the longest-running regional convention in the UK, will be once again held at The Park Inn, 296 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, NG5 2BT. Dates are November 12th to 14th November. Guests of Honour are **Iain M Banks** and our Co-President **Brian Aldiss, O.B.E.** Full details at <http://novacon.org.uk/>

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG

November 5th – SF author CHARLES STROSS

December 3rd – Christmas Social

Jan 2011 – Annual General Meeting and Auction

Feb – QUIZ with University SF Society

Mar – tba

April 8th – comic SF/Fantasy author ROBERT RANKIN

BRUM GROUP NEWS #469 (October 2010) copyright 2010 for Birmingham SF Group. Designed by Rog Peyton (19 Eves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham, B32 3QL – phone 0121 477 6901 or email [rog.peyton \[at\] btinternet \[dot\] com](mailto:rog.peyton[at]btinternet[dot]com)). 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, 10 Sylvan Avenue, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 2PG