

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

SEPTEMBER 2011

ISSUE 480

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

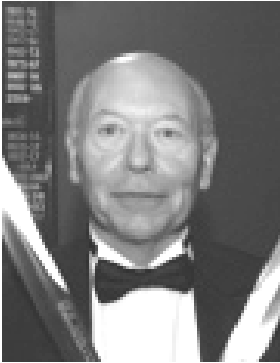
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Friday 9th September

**STAN
NICHOLLS
& ROG
PEYTON**



Yes – a change of speaker! Unfortunately, Peter Weston, who was supposed to be here this month along with Stan Nicholls, has once again (!) double booked himself. We've already postponed this item on two previous occasions due to double-booking by Mr Weston so, at the suggestion of Stan, I'm taking Peter's place.

Stan Nicholls is of course a Brum Group member (who we don't see at meetings often enough) and is the author of several books of SF, fantasy, TV tie-

Oct 14th - SF author DAVID WINGROVE, co-writer with Brian Aldiss of THE TRILLION YEAR SPREE history of science fiction , will be talking about the expanded re-publication of his *Chung Kuo* sequence.

ins, etc. – even ghost-writing the autobiography of William Roache (Ken Barlow of CORONATION STREET fame!). And me? I haven't written any books at all but I've sold a lot! I did feature quite a lot in Peter Weston's WITH STARS IN MY EYES so feel fully qualified to talk this month - and of course I'm old enough!

Both Stan and I were involved in SF fandom in the 60s, Stan in London and myself here in Birmingham. Both of us have been booksellers. But what was fandom like 50 years ago? Was it different in the two cities? Were there connections? And was buying SF as easy as it is now? All these questions and more are hopefully of interest to anyone interested in the history of SF and SF fandom.

What we intend to do is discuss the SF world before this current Brum Group started in 1971. Yes, there was life before that momentous event. There were two previous SF groups in Birmingham but there was not an official London Group in the years following World War II. Why? Maybe Stan knows the answer. I will be bringing the one artefact that proves there was an even earlier Group here in Brum than the two I've been involved with.

So if you're one of our older members wanting to indulge in a slab of nostalgia, or one of our younger members still not born in the 60s just wanting important knowledge, this is the meeting for you. RGP

The meeting will take place in the conference room on the first floor of The Briar Rose Hotel, Bennetts Hill, off New Street.

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. The entrance fee for this meeting is £3 for members, £4 for non-members

APOLOGIES & CONGRATULATIONS

My apologies to our Secretary Theresa Derwin for spelling her name incorrectly on the title of her interview with Carrie Vaughn last month. As I know how her name is spelled I have no explanation for how it happened.

But congratulations to Theresa on the production of her first fanzine called ANDROMEDA'S OFFSPRING. You can get an email copy of this by contacting Theresa on [theresa \[dot\] derwin \[at\] yahoo \[dot\] co \[dot\] uk](mailto:theresa.derwin@yahoo.co.uk).

Theresa has also sold her first short story this month – an achievement duplicated by new member Sean Jones. Congratulations to both. RGP

THE CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

Yes, Christmas – and here we are still waiting for Summer to start! It does seem a long way away but Vernon wants to get things organised early this year.

This year's Christmas Social will be held at The Selly Park Tavern, 592 Pershore Road, Selly Oak, where we have once again hired the Skittles Room for our own private use from 7.00pm until 11.00pm on Friday 3rd December. To get

there take a 45 or 47 bus from Corporation Street. Ask for The Selly Park Tavern - its about 15 minutes ride. **PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE FROM OUR USUAL SECOND FRIDAY.**

Tickets are £10 each which covers the cost of the skittle alley and the food but not your drinks (we have our own bar). There will be prizes for individual games – you don't have to know how to play skittles because we have our own variants of the game, designed to give everyone a chance, none of which would be allowed at competition or any other level! There will be a free half-hourly raffle and, to judge from past comments, a good time to be had by all.

The meal will be a buffet of a selection of sandwiches, sausage rolls, quiche, chicken wings, pizza, salads etc., plus a separate selection for vegetarians, provided that this requirement is clearly stated when you order your ticket.

With this newsletter there should be an application form for one or two tickets. Please complete it as indicated and hand it to Pat, with the necessary money, at the November group meeting. Or send it to Vicky Stock, together with a cheque/postal order for the appropriate amount, at the address on the back page of this Newsletter. However, as there are sometimes problems with the postal system if you apply by post please send Vicky an email at the same time in case your application is delayed. **THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS MONDAY 21st NOVEMBER** because the Tavern needs food numbers that week. However, by that time NOVACON will have happened and there may not be any tickets left – numbers are restricted for safety reasons and we have reached that number every year previously and had to refuse latecomers.

REMEMBER THAT TICKETS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE ON THE NIGHT – GET THEM NOW!

2011 HUGO AWARD WINNERS

2100 valid voting ballots were counted, 2086 electronic and 14 by postal mail – the largest number of votes ever cast at the Hugos.

Best Novel: BLACKOUT/ALL CLEAR by Connie Willis (Ballantine Spectra)

Best Novella: THE LIFECYCLE OF SOFTWARE OBJECTS by Ted Chiang (Subterranean)

Best Novelette: “The Emperor of Mars” by Allen M. Steele (*Asimov's*, June 2010)

Best Short Story: “For Want of a Nail” by Mary Robinette Kowal (*Asimov's*, September 2010)

Best Related Work: CHICKS DIG TIME LORDS: A CELEBRATION OF DOCTOR WHO BY THE WOMEN WHO LOVE IT edited by Lynne M. Thomas and Tara O'Shea (Mad Norwegian)

Best Graphic Story: GIRL GENIUS, VOLUME 10: AGATHA HETERODYNE AND THE GUARDIAN MUSE, written by Phil and Kaja Foglio; art by Phil Foglio; colours by Cheyenne Wright (Airship Entertainment)

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form: INCEPTION, written and directed by Christopher Nolan (Warner)

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form: *Doctor Who*: “The Pandorica Opens/The Big Bang,” written by Steven Moffat; directed by Toby Haynes (BBC Wales)

Best Editor, Short Form: Sheila Williams

Best Editor, Long Form: Lou Anders

Best Professional Artist: Shaun Tan

Best Semiprozine: *Clarkesworld*, edited by Neil Clarke, Cheryl Morgan, Sean Wallace; podcast directed by Kate Baker

Best Fanzine: *The Drink Tank*, edited by Christopher J Garcia and James Bacon

Best Fan Writer: Claire Brialey

Best Fan Artist: Brad W. Foster

John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer: Lev Grossman

WATCH THE CEREMONY – you can watch the full Hugo ceremony at <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/16783348>.

NEWS FROM GOLLANCZ

The results of their survey for the Top Ten Favourite SF & Fantasy books published by Gollancz in the past 50 years were (in alphabetical order):-

BOOK OF THE NEW SUN by Gene Wolfe

DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP? by Philip K Dick

DUNE by Frank Herbert

ERIC by Terry Pratchett

FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON by Daniel Keyes

HYPERION by Dan Simmons

I AM LEGEND by Richard Matheson

THE LIES OF LOCKE LAMORA by Scott Lynch

NAME OF THE WIND by Patrick Rothfuss

THE TIME MACHINE by H G Wells

Over 10,000 votes were cast. All ten will be published in September in a uniform series with the classic yellow jackets with red lettering. <<Their publicity calls them beautiful – sorry but the adjectives I would choose would be dull, boring, unimaginative... But then any book without cover art always looks cheap and nasty to me – RGP>>

And in addition...

“Gollancz is thrilled to announce the launch of the world's largest digital SFF library - the SF Gateway - which will make thousands of out-of-print titles by classic genre authors available as eBooks!

“Containing works by the classic SF pulp writers of the Golden Age right through to modern award-winning authors, the SF Gateway is the largest library of digital



Science Fiction and Fantasy ever assembled. With news, opinions, community features and forums, and links to the ultimate SF authority, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION, the site should quickly become the natural home for anyone with an interest in classic SFF.

“The site will go live this autumn. To find out more visit www.sfgateway.com for updates on the project, exclusive videos and content as we count down to the launch of a brand new future in Science Fiction and Fantasy digital publishing!”

...AND WHAT DID YOU THINK?

THE LETTER COLUMN OF ‘BRUM GROUP NEWS’

Anything to say about the Group, meetings or SF in general? Email your opinions to me at [rog.peyton \[at\] btinternet \[dot\] com](mailto:rog.peyton@btinternet.com)

From one-time member **Steve Green**: “I’m not sure if you consider this appropriate for coverage in the Brum Group News, but there is now an Ann Green Tribute Fund at Diabetes UK. Donations can be made via The Tribute Fund Manager, Diabetes UK, Freepost LON12807, London, NW1 2YF, or online at www.diabetes.org.uk (quoting ref. 1655034).

<<I see no reason not to give this publicity. Ann gave a lot to the Group, particularly in the organisation of NOVACON. I hope members will support this. – RGP>>

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .



.... Artist **Gene Szafran**, 69, died January 8th. He was one of the most promising SF illustrators during the New Wave, producing most of his work between 1968 and 1972. Prominently doing cover art for books by **Robert Heinlein**, **Robert Silverberg**, **Poul Anderson**, etc. Scientist **R.C.W. Ettinger** (b.1918) died on July 23. Ettinger is best known as one of the pioneers of the cryonics movement and founded the Cryonics Institute in 1976. His body is the 106th body frozen by the institute. Ettinger was injured during World War II and came up with some of his ideas during his long recuperation and his love of science fiction. Ettinger also published two science fiction stories in 1948 and 1950 **George R R Martin** is reporting that two signed scripts from the first season of GAME OF THRONES, which were meant to be auctioned

off for charity, were stolen from the US mail. The two final shooting scripts for episodes nine and ten of season one, “Baelor” and “Fire and Blood,” were autographed by writers **David Benioff** and **D.B. Weiss** and director **Alan**

Taylor and printed on white paper. Martin would appreciate it if people could contact him if they see the scripts being offered for sale **George R R Martin's** long-awaited *A DANCE WITH DRAGONS*, fifth in his *Song of Ice and Fire* series, sold 298,000 copies on its release, more first-day sales than any other book published in the US and Canada so far in 2011 The **US Postal Service** has announced the 2012 release of a forever stamp in honour of **Edgar Rice Burroughs**, the early-twentieth-century author best known for his *Tarzan of the Apes* series and *John Carter of Mars* books. The stamp, which shows an image of Tarzan clinging to a tree combined with a profile of Burroughs based on a 1934 photo, is the creation of artist **Sterling Hundley** and art director **Phil Jordan** **THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION**, soon to be launched free online has announced that contents have now passed the 3 million word mark! Sample entries can be seen at <http://sfe3.org/index.htm> **Tor Books** and **NASA** have announced a collaboration to publish a series of science based, commercial fiction books, referred to as "NASA inspired Works of Fiction". The series will allow authors to work closely with NASA Subject Matter Experts to ensure that the science incorporated into the novels is accurate. The Goddard Space Flight Center's Innovative Partnerships Program (IPP) Office will host a two-day workshop for authors Wildside Press has sold *Weird Tales* magazine to **Marvin Kaye**. Kaye has elected to edit the magazine himself and the staff, including Hugo-winning editor **Ann van der Meer** will not be retained. van der Meer's last issue will be #359 with subsequent issues edited by Kaye (and some will contain van der Meer purchased stories) Texas won the right to host the **71st World Science Fiction Convention** in 2013. LoneStarCon 3 will be held in San Antonio, Texas from Aug. 29-Sept. 2 **Gay Haldeman** was the recipient of this year's Forrest J Ackerman Big Heart Award. The award was presented at the beginning of the Hugo ceremony by **Dave Kyle** **The Sidewise Awards for Alternate History** were presented at Renovation, the 69th World Science Fiction Convention. Both winners were present. Long Form: *WHEN ANGELS WEPT: A WHAT-IF HISTORY OF THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS*, by **Eric G. Swedin**; Short Form: "A Clash of Eagles" by **Alan Smale** Do thrillers or SF deserve literary status? Author **Philip Hensher** has claimed that thrillers are attaining a literary status they don't deserve – while sci-fi is still largely ignored. Which genre should be taken more seriously? The online poll closed with votes for thrillers 16.3% and SF 83.7% As I write this (August 28th) I'm reminded that today is Jack Vance's birthday. He's 95 today!

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.**

***COWBOYS & ALIENS* by Joan D Vinge**

Tor / 369pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1447202110

Reviewed by Michael Jones



Guess what this is about. Yes; the date is 1875, the scene is a remote frontier town in New Mexico, and savagely murderous alien invaders have landed in a spaceship and are terrorising the locals. Apparently they are chiefly there to obtain gold, but they are also not above abducting a few of the local townspeople as well, although it is not really clear what for. To eat, maybe. It falls to an amnesiac outlaw, a local rancher and a band of landless Apache Indians to band together and fight back. This unlikely alliance is assisted by a strange woman who has appeared seemingly from nowhere and turns out, unsurprisingly, to be far more than she appears! Eventually these improbable allies are successful and the alien ship is blown up as it attempts to fly away. (How often have we seen that before?).

This is actually the novelisation of the film of the same name; not the book from which the film is derived. As such, the writer – here, the highly competent, award-winning Joan D Vinge – has little or no opportunity to enhance the story, however much that may seem necessary, but is confined to providing detailed descriptions of sights and sounds which the filmgoer will be able to take in immediately. At the same time, however, there is the possibility of elaborating upon the thoughts and motivations of the protagonists to provide insights into their actions which the screen may not be able to show.

The result is not entirely successful. It works reasonably well in the action sequences, but the intervening bits are slow and insufficiently well-written to maintain interest until something else starts to happen. And what the action content, however dramatic and exciting it may be, whether on paper or on the screen, cannot disguise is that the basic story is trivial and little more than an assembly of clichés – SF clichés and Western clichés both – with scant originality

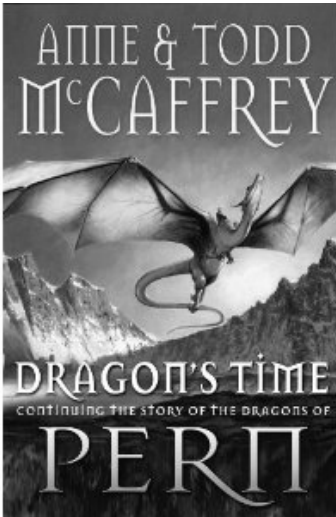
on either side. Also, any need to provide a logical link between disparate events and situations has as often as not been ignored.

Whether the film – which, incidentally, features Harrison Ford and Daniel Craig in the two main roles – will appear any better than the book still remains to be seen at the time of writing. In the meantime, the book may or may not encourage an audience to flock to the cinema. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine that a potential reader who has already seen the film will want to bother reading this reminder of the story it tried to tell. *Mj*

DRAGON’S TIME by Anne & Todd McCaffrey

Bantam / 321pgs / £18.99 hardcover / ISBN: 978-0593066201

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan



Todd McCaffrey began a sequence of novels set in his mother’s creation, the planet of Pern with its thread-fighting dragons. The first four volumes have had their problems but in this, the fifth, Anne has taken a hand. The difference is noticeable as the characters are more deftly portrayed and the plot is more complex. There are still problems, many arising from what has gone before.

Set at the beginning of the Red Planet’s third pass near Pern, there are insufficient dragons to keep the thread falling on the ground and destroying the vegetation. At the end of DRAGONGIRL, Lorana leaps forward in time to try and bring back dragons from the next interval, knowing it will cost her her unborn child. She believes she has failed and is forced to look for a different solution. On a dragon that she has borrowed from another rider, she does a lot of time hopping, leading Fiona back to the empty Igen Weyr so that the young dragons can grow up in the past (see DRAGONHEART). Now she has to find another place to do the same with the next batch of weyrings.

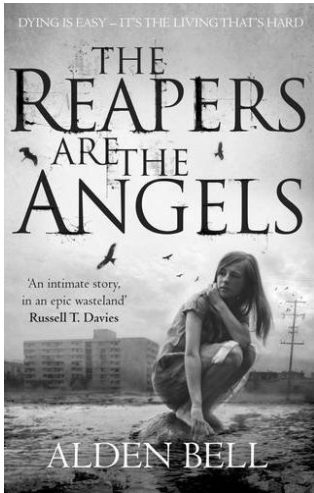
Although this novel explains some of the incidents that have occurred in earlier volumes in the series, it is introducing new concepts. Not enough time is spent on some of the more interesting aspects, such as the story of Terin and F’jian and there is far too much emphasis on babies.

If some of the terminology sounds confusing, then do not start here; go back to the original beginning and DRAGONFLIGHT. *PM*

***THE REAPERS ARE THE ANGELS* by Alden Bell**

Tor 294pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0330518963

Reviewed by Michael Jones



This may appear at first glance to be about zombies, but in fact, this is not the sense of the book at all. It is the story of a teenage girl calling herself Temple, although her real name is Sarah Mary Williams, and her quest to find meaning in her life and in the only world she has ever known. The zombie apocalypse is simply the setting in which the author has chosen to tell her story.

Within the first few pages we are shown both Temple's capacity for finding beauty and wonder in the simplest things and her capacity for the savage ferocity which she needs to exercise if she is to survive. As she continues to travel across a fractured America, she is seen still managing to find pleasure in the little things, but occasional outbursts of violence continue to suggest she may not be a very nice person at all. Withal, when the opportunity to help someone less fortunate than herself comes, she takes responsibility for him, remembering a young boy she had previously tried to protect but was unable to save. For a while it seems that this selflessness may give her the chance of ultimate redemption, but in the end it all goes awry and comes to an ending which is as shattering as it is unexpected.

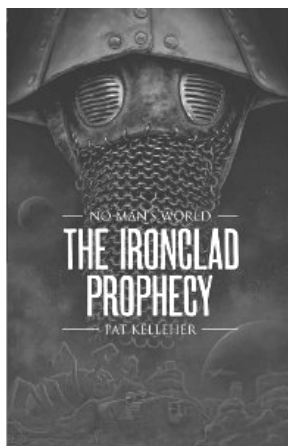
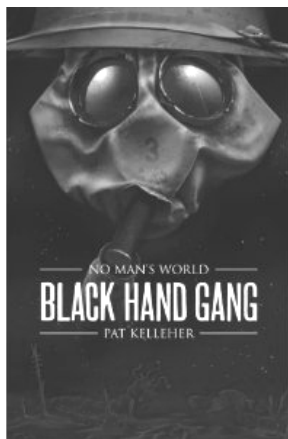
It has to be said that the book is not without its faults, not least of which is a degree of implausibility shared with some other post-apocalyptic stories in which an amount of left-over technology is made available to suit the needs of the plot rather than the needs of realism. Apart from that, the author has chosen to write it in the present tense, which can sometimes grate, and to eschew quotation marks, but one soon learns to ignore both these affectations as the sheer quality of the writing and imagery take hold.

These faults, if such they be, are easily forgiven as the reader becomes immersed in the narrative and the totality of Temple's story becomes apparent. It is a powerful story with an ending which is positively heart-rending and wrenchingly emotional, although one is left wondering whether any other ending would have been possible. It is a wonderful, beautiful book and deserves to be read over and over again.

THE REAPERS ARE THE ANGELS has been widely acclaimed and was nominated for the Philip K Dick Award which it should have won. *MJ*

NO MAN'S WORLD: BLACK HAND GANG by **Pat Kelleher**
Abaddon Books / 335pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN: 978-1906735357
NO MAN'S WORLD: THE IRONCLAD PROPHECY by **Pat Kelleher**

Abaddon Books / 362pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN: 978-1907992155
Reviewed by **Jim Pearce**



These books are volumes 1 & 2 in a series. They cover the translocation of the 13th Battalion of the Pennine Fusiliers from the hell of the Somme to an unknown world and their adventures there. When they arrive they discover that this land is occupied by a hostile anthropoid race, the 'Chatts', as well as conveniently English speaking humans, the 'Urmen'. Under attack from the start by inimical animals and vegetation, the Broughtonthwaite Pals, as they are known, have swapped one hell for another.

With many good characters the story focuses on Private Thomas 'Only' Atkins who could be said to be the book's hero; Lieutenant Gilbert W Jefferies, the black magic weaving villain and 2nd Lieutenant J C Everson. In addition there are many supporting characters these include the crew of a tank (which is the 'ironclad' in the second book), the pilot of a Sopwith plane, two nurses and their FANY (First Aid Nursing Yeomanry) driver. There is throughout a high death toll with many dying in each book, several in gruesome ways.

In developing his tale the author clearly takes inspiration from two actual First World War events. The first being the creation on June 1st 1916 of the Lochnagar crater on Hawthorne Ridge in the area to be assaulted by the 10th Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment (The Grimsby Pals). The second of these being the disappearance in the Sulva Bay area of Gallipoli by the Sandringham

Company of the 5th Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment on the 13th August 1915. He also suggests in his acknowledgements section that the adventures of the 'Pals' are actual events, quoting the sources on which he has based his story.

These books are described by the publisher as being pulp science fiction adventures. However I hesitate to describe them as SF as the translation of the Pennine Fusiliers from the Somme to this unknown world appears to have been effected by the performance of a 'black magic' ritual. To my mind SF requires

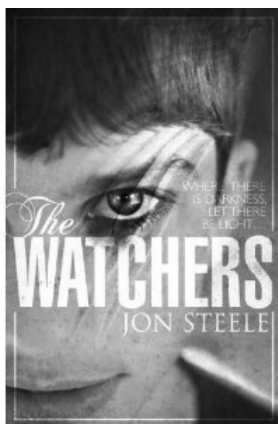
the use of 'advanced' technology. That said the stories are cleverly written reflecting many of the attitudes of the early part of the twentieth century, for instance the approach of authority figures (including medics) to shell shock victims, females and native populations.

Although the author's style of writing took a bit of getting used to, the adventures of the Broughtonthwaite Pals grew on me and I found myself enjoying these books. Their story will continue in *THE ALLEYMAN*. *JTP*

***THE WATCHERS* by Jon Steele**

Bantam / 552pgs / £12.99 Hardcover ISBN 978-0593067512

Review by William McCabe



The biggest problem with any review of this book is going to be in spoiling the plot. This is almost unavoidable since the plot, as it is, doesn't really become apparent until well into the second half of the book. Even when it does start, it isn't particularly fast. There are flashes of extreme violence in the first half but they are delivered second-hand and somehow seem less essential because of it. That sort of thing would usually imply that this is going to be a thriller. If that was the intent, it fails miserably. It's simplest to say that this book does have a plot but there isn't much of it and you have to plough through 400 pages of filler to get to it.

There are characters here too. The three principles are:- Marc Rochat, a French-Canadian of 'independent means' (an inheritance) who works a 'le guet' at Lausanne Cathedral. The job seems to be more to do with tradition than any kind of skilled work which is a good thing because Marc seems to have very limited intelligence. He spends most of the book in the belfry of the cathedral talking to the bells or watching the world through binoculars. He has been told that one day an angel will come to the cathedral and that he should help the angel.

Katherine Taylor, a high-class, extremely expensive prostitute from the USA who is living in Switzerland to escape the heavy taxes that she owes the US government. She is employed by the 100 club who have the sort of clientele that are rich enough not to be mentioned in the press.

Jay Michael Harper, a private eye who cannot remember a moment of his life prior to arriving in Switzerland at the beginning of the book. He is, apparently working for the International Olympic Committee on the case of a former athlete and trainer who wanted to tell the details of a psychedelic substance but has been killed in a car wreck.

None of these three know that they are the major players in a plot that has been planned since the beginning of time or that they are not really who or what they think they are. Sounds like a good mystery doesn't it? It's just a pity that it takes so long for the author to tell us what this is all about.

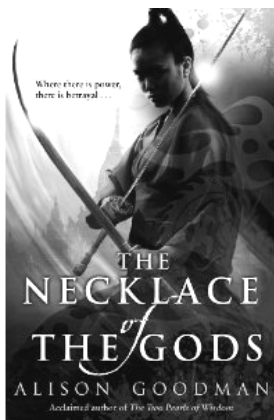
The plot isn't too complex. It takes the story of the Nephilim from the apocrypha as a starting point. Some time before the birth of Christ, angels came to Earth and bred with human women. The offspring are known as the Nephilim. They are evil and corrupt and close to immortal. In this book they are behind corrupt governments, white slavery, prostitution and a whole lot of nastier stuff. There are also forces of good in the world. Every so often they can call up a warrior archangel to deal with some of the nastier bad guys. The problem with this is that these archangels come with no knowledge of who or what they are and what they are supposed to do. If they have children with human women in this state, the children are different and have some kind of special powers. Once you know this, you just need to work out who is the archangel, who the child and who is the potential mother of another one. One of the three principal characters dies and it all ends in a big fight in the cathedral.

WAM

THE NECKLACE OF THE GODS by Alison Goodman

Bantam Press / 467pgs / £12.99 large format paperback / ISBN: 978-0593061374

Reviewed by Jim Pearce



This young adult fantasy is the second by the author set in a Chinese Empire-type world. The first book, *THE TWO PEARLS OF WISDOM*, describes how a young girl, Eona, becomes a Dragoneye, able to manipulate wind and water to nurture and protect the land. As females are not allowed to be Dragoneyes, Eona has to masquerade as a boy, Eon.

In *THE NECKLACE OF THE GODS* Eon's gender has been revealed and as the Lady Eona, the first female Dragoneye in hundreds of years, she is a major player in a counter rebellion against the usurper High Lord Sethon. Full of well defined characters the book describes how, along with fellow rebels Ryko and Lady Dela and others, she finds Kygo, the young Pearl Emperor. As his forces are greatly outnumbered he needs Eona's powers to help him recover his throne. Unfortunately for him, Eona has little idea of how to use her powers requiring tuition from the treacherous Lord Ido (the only other surviving Dragoneye). Her attempts to use her power, although well intentioned, often have disastrous consequences for others. This results in those whom she is trying to help doubting her motivation. As a further complication she is attracted

to both the Emperor and Ido. The final battle is well described with some interesting twists and turns.

Although this is a second book in a series the characters and the situation are well enough described so someone who has not read **THE TWO PEARLS OF WISDOM** can easily follow the story. It is full of action, passion, evil and treachery including some from an unexpected source. It is well written although in a somewhat 'soft focus' style. This is probably because it is aimed at the young adult market.

It should be noted that these both books have alternate titles. **THE NECKLACE OF THE GODS** also being published as **EONA: THE LAST DRAGONEYE** and **THE TWO PEARLS OF WISDOM** as **EON: RISE OF THE DRAGONEYE**.
JTP

RECOMMENDED SF BOOKS – Rog Peyton

Batch number 7. Please note that these 10 books are NOT my favourite ten, or whatever – I've just picked books from the 100 at random. Another 10 next month. Please remember that I may be able to supply most of these titles – just email me and I can bring orders to the Group meetings.

Currently in print and widely available:-

Edgar Rice Burroughs - PRINCESS OF MARS/GODS OF MARS/WARLORD OF MARS (1912/1913/1913) 3 books but really one novel with cliff-hanger endings for books 1 and 2. Not great writing but first class storytelling and tremendous imagination. First 3 books in the *John Carter of Mars* 11-book series. (Sterling 978-1435134485 - £6.99 / 978-1435134454 - £6.99 / 978-1435134461 - £6.99)(Vol 3 due October)

Arthur C Clarke - THE CITY AND THE STARS (1956) Expanded version of **AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT**. In the far future, Diaspar is a self-contained city in a bubble. No-one knows what is outside the city but one young man decides to find out. (Gollancz SF Masterworks 978-1857987638 - £7.99)

Harry Harrison - MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM! (1966) A superb novel of overpopulation that was made into the not-so-superb movie **SOYLENT GREEN**. Enjoy the movie by all means but read the book! (Penguin Modern Classics 978-0141190235 - £9.99)

Aldous Huxley - BRAVE NEW WORLD (1932) One of the most well-respected novels by people outside the SF field. This dystopian novel is still well worth reading or re-reading. (Vintage Classics 978-0099518471 - £8.99)

Ian McDonald - DESOLATION ROAD (1988; revised & corrected 1990) A strange novel set on Mars that reads like a cross between Ray Bradbury and Jack Vance. The original 1988 paperback had more errors and typos than any other book I'd seen so in 1990 I published a corrected edition in hardcover. (Drunken Dragon Press 978-0947578022 - £14.95) First Edition hardcover still available – Special price to Brum Group members £5.00!

Kate Wilhelm - WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG (1976) The Hugo Award winning novel that was the very first to feature cloning. Wilhelm is one of the most-underrated authors and if you haven't read anything by her, this book is an excellent starting place. (Orb USA 978-0312866150)

And the out-of-print books:-

Algis Budrys - SOME WILL NOT DIE (1954/1961/1978). Most of humanity is wiped out by a virus. The survivors battle to attempt rebuilding civilisation. One of the very best books on a familiar theme. First published as FALSE NIGHT in 1954, the manuscript was cut and the full version was published as SOME WILL NOT DIE in 1961. Budrys expanded it in 1978. All later editions follow the 1978 text to the best of my knowledge.

Robert Heinlein - DOUBLE STAR (1956) Despite winning the 1956 Hugo Award this novel about a failed actor impersonating a galactic politician hasn't been in print for well over 30 years but is generally considered his best book of the 50s. Why isn't this in print?

Edgar Pangborn - A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS (1954) Winner of the 1955 International Fantasy Award. Two factions of Martians fight for control over a boy genius on Earth.

Robert Silverberg - DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH (1970) Balzagar was once a colonised planet but abandoned when it was realised that the elephant-like Nildorer were a sentient race. Gunderson is haunted by his memories of his time there and returns ten years later – and discovers the planet's great secret. <<one new paperback for sale on Amazon at £134!!!! Used for £34>>

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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 to be announced

The British Library - "Out of this World: Science Fiction But Not As You Know It" will include works by Mary Shelley, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Francis Godwin, Cory Doctorow and China Miéville, among others as it traces the evolution of the genre. The exhibition runs until 25 Sept and appearances by Iain M Banks, Brian Aldiss and Michael Moorcock are promised. There's a nice display of images on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-12860638> but full details can be found at <http://www.viewlondon.co.uk/whatson/out-of-this-world-science-fiction-but-not-as-you-article-612190-16498.html>

ROBERT RANKIN EVENING at Phoenix Square, Midland Street, Leicester, LE1 1TG on Thursday September 15th. Phone 0116 242 2800. Website is http://www.phoenix.org.uk/index.php?cms_id=487

BIRMINGHAM BOOK FESTIVAL / BIRMINGHAM LIBRARIES FRINGE FESTIVAL runs from Thursday 29th of September to Saturday October 15th. See website <http://www.birminghambookfestival.org/fringe-festival-in-association-with-birmingham-libraries-685/> Entry to all the Birmingham Libraries Fringe Festival events are free but events marked BOOK must be booked via the Box Office on 0121 446 3232 (www.macarts.co.uk or www.birminghambookfestival.org). For further information about any of these events, please contact Nikki Bi, Reader Development Support Officer on 0121 303 2895 or email via nikki.bi@birmingham.gov.uk.

THE FESTIVAL OF FANTASTIC FILMS 2011 - The 22nd Annual Convention of the Society of Fantastic Films will be held on the 21st - 23rd October, 2011 at the Days Hotel, Sackville St., Manchester (The Manchester Conference Centre). Website is <http://fantastic-films.com/festival/>

OLYMPUS 2012 - The 2012 Eastercon, 6th - 9th April 2012 at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London, UK. Guests of Honour: Paul Cornell, George R.R. Martin, Steph Swainston. Fan Guests of Honour: Margaret Austin, Martin Easterbrook. Registration is £55 and increases on Aug 31st so register NOW. Website is <http://www.olympus2012.org/>

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG

Oct 14th – **DAVID WINGROVE** author of the *Chung Kuo* SF sequence.

Nov 4th – **author, editor and publisher IAN WHATES**

Dec 2nd – **The Christmas Social**

Jan 13th 2012 – **Annual General Meeting and Auction**

Feb 10th – **the Annual Quiz**



NOVACON 41 will be held over the weekend of November 11th to the 13th at The Park Inn, 296 Mansfield Road, Nottingham. NG5 2BT. The Guest of Honour will be SF author JOHN MEANEY. Further details can be found on the website <http://novacon.org.uk/>

BRUM GROUP NEWS #480 (September 2011) copyright 2011 for Birmingham SF Group. Designed by Rog Peyton (19 Eves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham, B32 3QL – phone 0121 477 6901 or email [rog \[dot\] peyton \[at\] btinternet \[dot\] com](mailto:rog.peyton@btinternet.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 Membership Secretary, 10 Sylvan Avenue, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 2PG