

# BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

## BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

SEPTEMBER 2012

ISSUE 492

HONORARY PRESIDENT: BRIAN W ALDISS, O.B.E.

COMMITTEE: VERNON BROWN (CHAIRMAN); PAT BROWN (TREASURER);  
DAVE NICHOLS (SECRETARY); CAROL GOODWIN (NEWSLETTER EDITOR);  
DAVE CORBY (PUBLICITY OFFICER); WILLIAM MCCABE (WEBSITE);  
VICKY STOCK (ORDINARY MEMBER/MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY);  
NOVACON 42 CHAIRMAN: TONY BERRY

WEBSITE:

[www.birminghamsfgroup.org.uk/](http://www.birminghamsfgroup.org.uk/)

EMAIL:

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



Friday 14th  
September  
**SIMON R  
GREEN**

Simon R Green is a prolific author of both science fiction and fantasy novels. Amongst these are his best-selling *Deathstalker* (SF) and *Nightside* (Fantasy) series. He was born in Bradford where he still lives. He has obtained an M.A. in Modern English and

American Literature from Leicester University and he also studied history and has a combined Humanities degree. His first sale, *MANSLAYER* was in 1976

**OCTOBER 12th - Supernatural Horror writer ADAM NEVILL whose latest novel LAST DAYS was just published in May of this year.**

followed by *AWAKE, AWAKE, YE NORTHERN WINDS* in 1979. There then followed a disheartening gap of nearly 10 years of publishers' rejections followed by the incredible sale of seven novels in 1988. In 1989 he was commissioned to write the novelisation of the film *ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES* which has sold over 370,000 copies. Since then he has continued to write. He has recently submitted his latest novel in the *Blue Moon Rising* series (also known as the *Forest Kingdom* series) and is working on the next novel in his *Secret History* series. More information can be found at his website [simonrgreen.co.uk](http://simonrgreen.co.uk) CG

*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 our January AGM is free and the August and December socials are ticket only events. All other meetings the entrance fee is £3.00 for members and £4 for non-members.

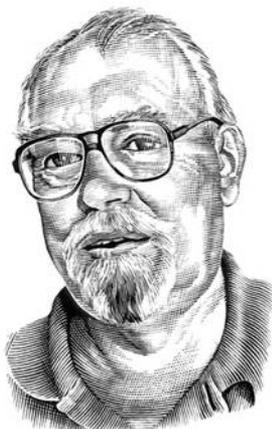
## **HARRY HARRISON PASSES AWAY**

It is with sadness that we have to report that Harry passed away peacefully in his sleep on 15th August following a long illness. To quote from his official website

“He was a truly inspirational writer and a wonderful human being - one of the greats of science fiction, who never let his success go to his head. Harry always had time for his fans. Even though his illness over the past couple of years prevented him from always replying in person, he read every message, and appreciated them all.

But now he's gone... It's difficult to picture the future without him, but Harry would not have wanted us to dwell on his death. Instead, he'd have wanted nothing more than for fans to - now and again - raise a glass in his memory, and share a few stories about him.

The outpouring of grief at his passing and support for his friends and family has been, frankly, stunning. The news appeared on literally hundreds of newspapers and news websites throughout the world. If you would like to write a message of condolence, or note your favourite memories of Harry, there is a memorial page at the [Harry Harrison News Blog](http://harrison.wordpress.com/2012/08/15/harry-harrison-1925-2012) (<http://harrison.wordpress.com/2012/08/15/harry-harrison-1925-2012>)”



**HARRY HARRISON**  
12 MARCH 1925 - 15 AUGUST 2012  
AD ASTRA

I know that he was a personal friend to many members of the group. Although Official Condolences have been sent by Vernon on behalf of the Group as a whole, if anyone wishes to write anything -memories, opinions, tributes, etc. - please send them to me at [goodwincd@yahoo.com](mailto:goodwincd@yahoo.com) for inclusion in the October issue.

## ***MEMBERS' SUCCESS STORIES***

**Janet Edwards** will appear on a panel at the forthcoming Birmingham Book Festival on Monday 8th October at 7pm. For further details see the Events section later in this issue.

**David Hardy** - as well as the cover art for *Amazing Stories* Issue 2 mentioned in last month's News, the issue also includes a "retrospective" and an excerpt from his novel AURORA. David will also be speaking at the British Interplanetary Society Event on 15th September (see Events section)

**Theresa Derwin** has sold her anthology, MONSTERS ANONYMOUS (ISBN 978-1908328519) to Anarchy Books ([www.anarchy-books.com](http://www.anarchy-books.com)) with an expected release date of 30th September.

## ***AND WHAT DID YOU THINK?***

### **THE LETTER COLUMN OF 'BRUM GROUP NEWS**

Anything to say about the Group, meetings or SF in general? Is there anything you would like to see in the Newsletter or indeed anything you do not like? Email your opinions or queries to me at [goodwincd@yahoo.com](mailto:goodwincd@yahoo.com)]

## ***ROG PEYTON RESIGNS AS NEWSLETTER EDITOR***

Rog has resigned as editor of the newsletter. Carol Goodwin will take over the role. Rog stated that "I have edited the newsletter for the past 10 years or so and at the last two AGMs have expressed my wish to stand down. As no volunteers were forthcoming, I was persuaded to continue. After requesting a volunteer for an assistant, Carol volunteered and after assisting on one newsletter, she has produced the past two newsletters single-handedly. She's doing the work and therefore deserves the credit by having her name on the masthead so it seemed only right that I should resign Please be aware that I am not resigning from the Group and will continue attending meetings as usual. I am always here as a fallback and am quite willing to help produce our special 500th newsletter next year. I will continue to meet speakers prior to their talk and take them for a meal as in the past and am always willing to help out with suggestions for future speakers/programme items." Rog also wished to thank all those members who had contributed to the contents or production of the newsletter

Any items for inclusion in the newsletter should now be passed directly to Carol at [goodwincd@yahoo.com](mailto:goodwincd@yahoo.com). Rog will continue to organise the receipt of review books for the time being but completed reviews should now be sent to Carol.

I am sure that we all wish to express our thanks to Rog for his sterling efforts over the past decade. I have a hard act to follow. I personally have appreciated, and will no doubt continue to seek, his excellent knowledge and advice. CG

## ***BEN AARONOVITCH – An Appraisal by Michael Jones***

Ben Aaranovitch began as a TV scriptwriter, notably for DR WHO during the



Sylvester McCoy years when he seems to have been the first to find a means for Daleks to do stairs. He also wrote for various other projects of an SF nature (to say nothing of CASUALTY and the like.) Unfortunately there came a time when these activities became less successful and so he took a job in Waterstones

The way he tells it, he was shelving the science fiction section one day and noticed that he was putting out a lot of books by first-time authors. So, on the assumption that writing books that got published was better than writing scripts for things that didn't get made, he decided to write one himself. The result was RIVERS OF LONDON, published in 2011, which was an immediate success and quickly went through several reprints. It was followed by the first sequel MOON OVER SOHO later the same year. At one time he had evinced an intention to do two books a year, but with only WHISPERS UNDER GROUND in 2012 and BROKEN HOMES not scheduled until 2013 that ambition may have been scaled back.

Being a Londoner born and bred it was only natural that his books should be set there, in a place where in his own words "You lift up a rock and history comes out and mugs you." His books are steeped in the history and mythology of London; RIVERS OF LONDON refers back to Roman times ( and even before ) and although the later books might not go back so far in time their plots and stories are also very dependent on the history of the parts of the capital where they are set.

They are stories of Peter Grant who, at the beginning of RIVERS OF LONDON is a newly qualified Police Constable. Having shown himself possessed of an innate sensitivity toward the supernatural, he finds himself posted to Economic and Specialist Crime Unit 9, the head ( and only other member ) of which is Chief Inspector Thomas Nightingale, the last wizard in the ranks of the Met. This posting involves him becoming an apprentice wizard to Nightingale and being trained in the practice and use of magic in fighting crime, with the tacit approval of a police organisation which would much prefer not to acknowledge the existence of magic at all.

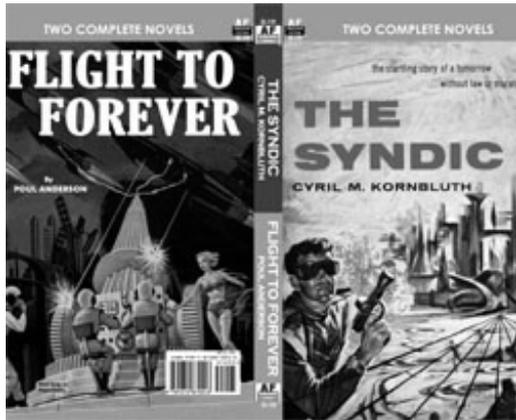
There are two elements in the writing of these books which differentiate them – and help them stand out – from other examples of what might otherwise be the same kind of “Urban Fantasy.” Neither of them is unique in themselves, but they are here combined to unique effect. The first is the presentation of magic as a codified system subject to rules of scientific discipline, rules first systemised by no less an authority than the great Isaac Newton. Secondly, and perhaps more important from the literary point of view, is the level of wit and humour which imbues almost every page of these books. There are few, if any laugh-out-loud jokes, no overtly comic characters such as are to be found in the Discworld for example, just the cheerfully insouciant and irreverent attitude to police procedures, magic and life in general exhibited by first-person narrator Peter Grant which makes them easy to read and very, very readable.

Each book so far tells its own principal story, but there are also common threads running through them all, with at least two major issues and many lesser ones to be resolved over the course of the series. There will be at least three more volumes to follow the three already published and there can be no doubt that these will be eagerly awaited by their many fans. Ben Aaronovitch deserves every success.

*MJ*

## ***RETURN OF THE ACE DOUBLE by Rog Peyton***

Some 50-odd years ago I saw my first Ace doubles. For the younger members among us these were paperbacks containing 2 novels back-to-back each with its own cover. They fascinated me mainly because of the covers. The actual fiction was readable (at least for someone who had only recently discovered SF), some of them were appallingly bad, some were excellent. Many



were very short – this was a good way to get novellas/short novels into print. And also it was a way to get new authors into print by placing them on the other side of more famous authors. I collected them and had a good 75% until I realised that most were only average and that I’d never read them again. They were sold off through Andromeda.

Ace doubles ceased production in the early 70s. Librarians and collectors found it difficult to file them – which author did you file them under? Recently, I came across this site...<http://www.armchairfiction.com/pages/doublenovels.htm>

It was wonderful to see some of the original artwork kept on the original books they were meant for and they probably look impressive on these new large format volumes especially with the same 'appearance' with blue strips across the top ('Two Complete Novels') and AF (Armchair Fiction) in exactly the same font & colour as 'Ace' in the originals. There are old magazine covers resurrected from *Fantastic Adventures*, *Amazing Stories*, *Galaxy*, etc., plus books originally published by Monarch, Berkley, Pyramid, Ballantine, etc. Obviously these books are print on demand. It seems like a great idea but who is reading this kind of fiction in the modern world? Who is reading J Hunter Holly? Paul Fairman? William P McGivern? Yes, there are a few that deserve reprinting - TAKEOFF and THE SYNDIC by C M Kornbluth, for instance. And it's nice to see Poul Anderson's FLIGHT TO FOREVER and INSIDE EARTH making their first book appearance (not counting anthology inclusion). Two stories that I was very fond of 40 years ago but would I enjoy them now? Probably not. Though I might just buy those two for nostalgia's sake.

The big question, though, is whether these are pirate editions or not. Fiction remains in copyright until 75 years after the death of the author and artwork is 70 years after the death of the artist. So all these books are still in copyright - even the ones by H G Wells and Edgar Rice Burroughs, as is the artwork for each and every cover. If these are legal that's a hell of a lot of copyrights to track down and pay for. And I'm not sure that the lettering and overall design isn't copyrighted somewhere.

If they are pirate, Armchair Fiction titles will disappear immediately with no stock left as they are print on demand, so order the titles you want asap. RGP

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

.... Director and producer **Tony Scott** (b.1944) committed suicide on August 19 by leaping off the Vincent Thomas Bridge in San Pedro, CA. Scott, the younger brother of Ridley Scott, is best known for directing TOP GUN and BEVERLY HILLS COP 2, but also has genre credits, including producing the film PROMETHEUS and the television mini-series *The Andromeda Strain*. His current projects included the Medieval historical series *World without End* and the drama THE GOOD WIFE .... Actor **William Windom** (b.1923) died on August 16. Windom appeared in episodes of *The Greatest American Hero*, *The Wild Wild West*, *Star Trek*, *The Twilight Zone*, and many other genre television shows. Windom also appeared in several horror films. He won an Emmy Award for his starring role on the one-season television show *My World and Welcome To It* .... Actor **Biff Elliott** (b.1923) died on August 15. Elliott appeared in the *Star Trek* episode "The Devil in the Dark" as well as episodes of *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Planet of the Apes*, and *Starman*. He also appeared in the feature film THE NAVY VS. THE NIGHT MONSTERS, based on Murray Leinster's THE MONSTER FROM EARTH'S END .... Special effects genius **Carlo Rambaldi** died 10 August 2012, after a long illness. Born 15 September 1925 in Emilia-Romagna, Italy, he won three Oscars, for his work on KING KONG (1976), ALIEN (1979), and E.T.: THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL (1982). He also won a

Saturn Award for E.T., and was nominated for another for CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (1977) .... SF author **Ken MacLeod** has been appointed as Writer in Residence at Edinburgh Napier University where he will provide guidance and advice to students on the MA in Creative Writing course .... **Brian Aldiss** has signed a publishing deal with The Friday Project (Harper Collins) for his entire back catalogue. This means that his latest novel, THE FINCHES OF MARS should finally be published in November after a five year wait since completion. Exact details regarding order and timing of any re-issues are not yet available .... The **Mars Curiosity Rover** landed successfully. NASA has named the spot where it touched down as Bradbury Landing, in honour of **Ray Bradbury**. The Rover has also completed its first drive (only 4 ½ metres) and “zapped” its first rock for analysis .... *Weird Tales* magazine has been attacked for publishing an extract from the allegedly racist young adult novel by Victoria Foyt. REVEALING EDEN: SAVE THE PEARLS features dark-skinned “Coals” and fair-skinned “Pearls”. The magazine initially defended its decision but the publisher has now issued a blanket apology .... The BBC Seventies SF series *Blake’s 7* is to be remade by the US network, SyFy. It is not clear how faithful the remake will be to the original .... The second **Geek Girl Con** (a multi-media SF and Fantasy convention) in Vancouver has been a huge success with over 3000 attendees on the first day. Sessions featuring female scientists and engineers (including NASA representatives) were especially popular. CG



## BOOK REVIEWS



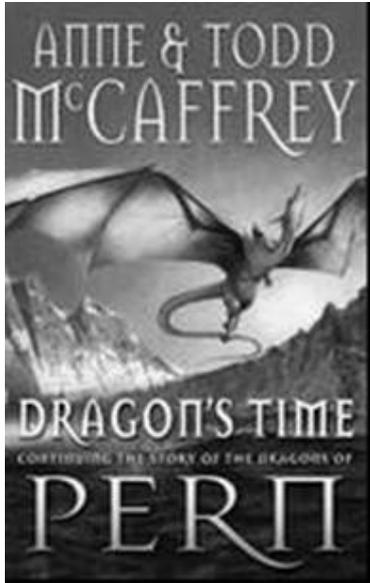
(REVIEWERS please note:- all reviews should be emailed direct to me at [goodwincl@yahoo.com](mailto:goodwincl@yahoo.com) Deadline for each issue is 14 days prior to the date of the monthly meeting.

**DRAGON’S TIME** by Todd & Anne McCaffrey

Corgi / 496pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0552162456

**Reviewed by Theresa Derwin** This sequel to DRAGONGIRL continues the epic saga that is Pern. Lorana has cured the dragons' sickness but so many died from the disease that there are no longer enough dragons to fight the deadly Thread (a disease which sucks the land dry). With numbers reaching crisis point, Lorana flies forward in time in a desperate bid to bring dragons from the future back to fight Thread. It involves an unbelievable sacrifice on her part - but without her action all life on Pern is doomed. Left behind at Telgar Weyr, Fiona, Kindan and T'mar are distraught when they realize what Lorana has done, but two things save them from complete despair. The first is that Fiona is pregnant, the second the fact all the dragonriders are exhausted, a sure sign that they are “Timing it” - (existing elsewhere in space and time). This gives them hope for the future and confidence that Lorana has found a way through time to help them. They just have to trust in her and wait for her to lead them through this most perilous of times. As this is going on, a young lad Jeriz, ten years old, is apprenticed to Fiona, to remind her to

eat and look after her pregnancy, whilst she teaches him to read and write and gives him access to the 'Records'.



For the uninitiated into Pern, even with a brief introduction to Pern's history supplied, the world is too confusing to care about. If I'm completely honest, I didn't care enough about these characters. I believe this is predominantly due to the fact I am not immersed into Pern culture, so for readers continuing with the saga, this would not be the case. However, there seems to be an excess of everyday dialogue and interactions, which detract from the plot development. In short, up to two hundred pages in, not a lot had actually happened. Despite the SF tropes (genetically-engineered dragons and time travel) it also feels incredibly like old style fantasy as opposed to SF. It feels much like post-Tolkien, pre- Adrian Tchaikovsky fantasy.

If I were an established reader of Pern, I am sure I would have enjoyed this book, however, as a Pern novice this was not the book for me. Novices should start with an earlier book.

*TD*

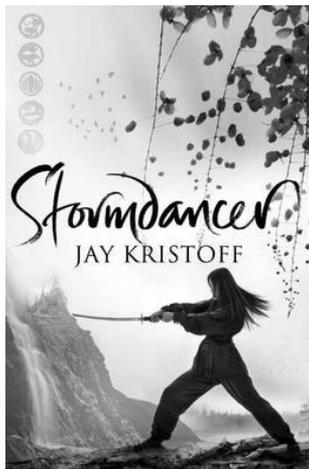
### ***STORMDANCER: BOOK ONE IN THE LOTUS WAR TRILOGY*** by Jay Kristoff

**Tor/ hard back / 449 pgs / £17.99 hardcover (Ebook £11.99) / ISBN: 978-0230759010**

**Reviewed by Jim Pearce**

STORMDANCER is a fantasy novel set in the Shima Imperium beset by imminent environmental collapse and as such is a very enjoyable story. The looming demise of this, a Japanese type empire, is due to the misrule of a line of despotic emperors, the current one being sadistically mad, and the actions of the virtually all-powerful 'Lotus Guild'. The latter are the source of the clockwork industrialisation marvels/horrors and the lotus based fuel that is destroying the environment. You will be horrified to discover the source of the fertilizer that is used to temporarily restore land made toxic by the 'Blood Lotus' plant.

The book's heroine Yukiko is engaging, compassionate, brave and well supported by the other characters. These include the mad emperor, his intriguing sister, an artificer of the Lotus Guild, her father the emperor's hunt master, demons and the legendary, thought to be extinct, thunder tiger as well as many others. On the basis of a rumoured sighting of the thunder tiger (half eagle, half tiger), the first for a century, and a dream, the emperor sends Yukiko and her father on a desperate mission that they cannot refuse to the last wilderness within the island nation. There she becomes stranded with only a crippled and furious thunder tiger for company, which even though she has saved its life only wants to kill her. However despite their traumatic initial meeting they develop a remarkable friendship that will challenge the empire and presumably form the backbone of the following parts of the trilogy.



STORMDANCER is described in its press release as “Japanese Steampunk” and unfortunately I seem to have an almost automatic aversion to anything described as steampunk. That said my misgivings quickly evaporated when I started reading it. Jay Kristoff has an easy style that produces plenty of narrative colour without detail overload with each character's viewpoint adding to the scope of the story without drowning Yukiko's voice. Readers who prefer a narrative

strand that does not continuously jump backwards and forwards in the story's timeline will be well pleased by this tale, there being only few look-backward scenes and these are essential to the tale. Support to the reader's understanding of Japanese terms is provided by a glossary at the end of the book. If I had one minor complaint about this book it would be that on one or two occasions I would have liked the story to explain how Yukiko and the thunder tiger got from point A to point B. However the last notwithstanding STORMDANCER is highly readable and I look forward to enjoying the following parts of the trilogy. *JTP*

### ***STRUCK* by Jennifer Bosworth**

**Doubleday Childrens / 384pgs / £9.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0857530950**

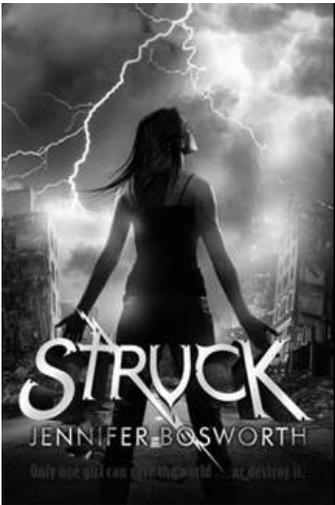
**Reviewed by Theresa Derwin**

‘Only one girl can save the world .... or destroy it’. And I don't particularly care which at this stage! Mia Price is a lightning addict. She's survived countless strikes, but her craving to connect to the energy in storms endangers her life and the lives of those around her. Los Angeles, where lightning rarely strikes, is one of the few places Mia feels safe from her addiction. But when an earthquake devastates the city, her haven is transformed into a minefield of chaos and danger. The beaches become massive tent cities. Downtown is a crumbling wasteland,

where a travelling party moves to a different empty building each night, the revellers drawn to the destruction by a force they cannot deny.

Two warring cults rise to power, and both see Mia as the key to their opposing doomsday prophecies. They believe she has a connection to the freak electrical storm that caused the quake, and to the far more devastating storm that is yet to come. This dystopian novel for younger readers sees Mia Price attempting to hold her family together in the midst of this chaos.

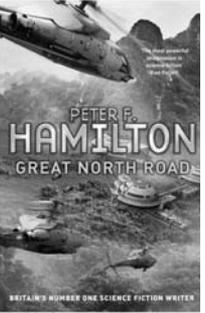
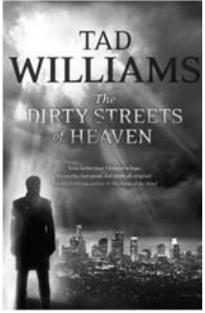
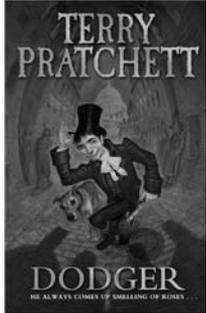
Whilst the premise is promising, the novel itself is a letdown. The blurb made the book sound great, and whilst there was some potential to live up to the blurb, it was destroyed by prophecies and God botherers. The cults are where it falls down. They are straight out of a bad 1970s flick rather than a modern novel. For instance, a number of religious cults are handled and portrayed far better in *LAST DAYS* by Adam Nevill. Granted, *STRUCK* is a YA novel, however, that doesn't mean it has to be dumbed down.



It seems that Bosworth set up something that could have been so strong, yet she didn't have the writing skills to follow through. Never mind the predictability of the plot, the budding romance is what drags the novel down. It is the Twilight-esque feel to the book that makes it difficult to read and enjoy. The writer is more concerned with Mia's love life than with a potential apocalypse. I was struck dumb (ahem) at how mundane the book was considering what it could have been.

TD

**FORTHCOMING BOOKS**

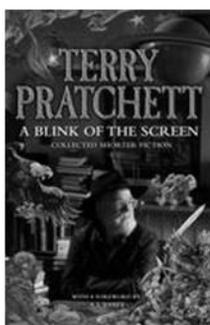
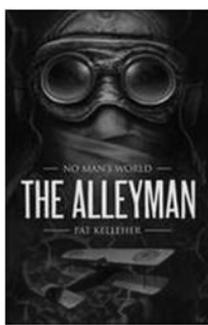
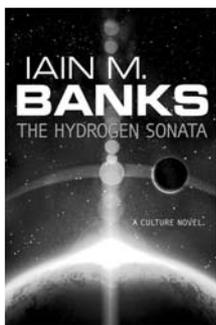


**DODGER** by Sir Terry Pratchett / Doubleday Childrens / 368pgs / £18.99 hardcover / ISBN 978-0385619271 / September 13th Dodger is a street urchin in an alternative Dickensian London.

**THE DIRTY STREETS OF HEAVEN** by Tad Williams / Hodder & Stoughton / 416pgs / £18.99 hardcover / ISBN 978-1444738551 / September 13th First of a new series. Bobby Dollar is an angel advocate for the recently deceased who must find a “stolen” soul

**HELIX WARS** by Eric Brown / Solaris / 544pgs / £5.75 mass market paperback / ISBN 978-1781080498 / September 25th Sequel to HELIX. A further adventure set in Helix, which is a spiral of ten thousand worlds built aeons ago as a refuge for endangered alien races.

**GREAT NORTH ROAD** by Peter F Hamilton / Macmillan / 1100pgs / £20 hardcover / ISBN 978-0230750050 / September 27th Isolated in the jungle on St Libra planet, an investigative team must discover whether murders are an alien threat or the work of their untrustworthy colleague



**THE HYDROGEN SONATA** by Ian M Banks / Orbit / 528pgs / £20 hardcover / ISBN 978-0356501505 / October 4th A Culture novel. Lt. Commander Cossont, aided by an ancient android and a suspicious avatar, must find a nine thousand year old man

**THE ALLEYMAN (NO MAN'S WORLD 3)** by Pat Kelleher / Abaddon Books / 320pgs / £6.39 paperback / ISBN 978-1781080252 / October 9th Transported from the Somme to an alien world, the Pennine Fusiliers battle to survive and to track down the individual responsible for their predicament.

**A BLINK OF THE SCREEN : COLLECTED SHORT FICTION** by Sir Terry Pratchett / Doubleday / 320pgs / £20 hardcover / ISBN 978-0385618984 A collection of shorter fiction spanning the whole of his writing career.

## **NEW FILM RELEASES**

Listings should not be necessarily taken as recommendations. View at your own peril! NB Release dates are subject to change.

**LOOPER** - Release date September 28th SF thriller starring Bruce Willis. A killer who works for the mob of the future recognises one of his targets as his future self

**RESIDENT EVIL:RETRIBUTION** - Release date September 28th Another in the horror series starring Milla Jovovich as Alice who must survive legions of zombies created by the engineered T-virus

**SINISTER** - Release date October 5th Horror thriller starring Ethan Hawke. Found footage helps a novelist uncover how a family was murdered in his new home but exposes his own family to danger from a supernatural entity

**HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA** - Release date October 12th. Animated family comedy. Dracula runs a hotel refuge from the human world for monsters but becomes over-protective when a human boy falls for his teenage daughter

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

*All details are correct to the best of our knowledge, we advise contacting organizers 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 is always welcome - please send to Carol at [goodwincd@yahoo.com](mailto:goodwincd@yahoo.com)*

**James Herbert talk** 3rd September, Birmingham. The horror author discusses ASH, his first novel in six years, at Waterstones in Birmingham city centre (128 New Street, B29 6NH). The talk takes place from 7.00pm. Website: [www.waterstones.com](http://www.waterstones.com) Tickets: £3, redeemable against the purchase of a copy of ASH on the night. :Phone: 0843 2908151 (Also appearing at Foyles, London (113-119 Charing Road, WC2H 0EB) on 7th September. The talk takes place from 6.30-7.30 pm Tickets: Free, but you need to reserve them in advance from [www.foyles.co.uk](http://www.foyles.co.uk) Email: [events@foyles.co.uk](mailto:events@foyles.co.uk))

**Scott K Andrews signing** 7th September, London The launch of SCHOOL'S OUT FOREVER, a new omnibus edition of Andrews's three dystopian thrillers for Abaddon, taking place at Forbidden Planet's London Megastore (179 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8JR), from 6.00pm-7.00pm. Website: <http://forbiddenplanet.com>

**SF Spectacular Book Sale**, 7th to 17th September, Reading The Oxfam Book Shop in Reading (8 High Street, Market Place, Reading RG1 2EA) hosts the third SF Spectacular featuring readings and signings by various authors including Jaine Fenn. More details available at Website: [http://www.tenebroustexts.com/page8.htm0118\\_939\\_3868](http://www.tenebroustexts.com/page8.htm0118_939_3868), by becoming our friend on facebook (Oxfambooks Reading), following us on Twitter (Oxfambksreading), or emailing us at [oxfambooksreading@hotmail.com](mailto:oxfambooksreading@hotmail.com)

**Deborah Harkness and Christopher Fowler talk** 11th September, London The authors of DISCOVERY OF WITCHES and the *Bryant & May* series discuss

“how to capture London’s urban oddities on the page” at Foyles (113-119 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0EB). The talk takes place from 6.30-7.30pm. Tickets: Free, but you need to reserve them in advance from [www.foyles.co.uk](http://www.foyles.co.uk) Email: [events@foyles.co.uk](mailto:events@foyles.co.uk)

**Brian Froud signing** 13th September, London Fantasy illustrator Brian Froud is also well known for his concept designs for the Henson films LABYRINTH and THE DARK CRYSTAL. Froud has a new book, TROLLS, coming out in September. He will be signing copies at Forbidden Planet’s London megastore (179 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8JR) from 6.00-7.00pm. Website: <http://forbiddenplanet.com>

**From Imagination to Reality (British Interplanetary Society Event)** 15th September, London One day event comparing ideas of “travel to the heavens” with the reality our exploration of the Solar System and beyond has uncovered. Various speakers including **David Hardy** and Jack Cohen. 27/29 South Lambeth Road, London, SW8 1SZ from 9am to 7pm Tickets: £40 members / £50 non-members. Available via Website: <http://www.bis-space.com/products-page/symposia/from-imagination-to-reality1/>

**Danie Ware signing** 20th September, London. Danie Ware signs copies of her sardonic debut fantasy ECKO RISING at their London Megastore (179 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8JR), from 6.00pm-7.00pm. Website: <http://forbiddenplanet.com>

**The Hobbit at 75** 21st September, London. The British Library hosts a celebration of this book and the run-up to the film release with speakers including authors Adam Roberts and Jane Johnson and broadcaster Brian Sibley. Time: 6:30pm to 8pm. Tickets: £7.50 / £5 concessions. Tickets available from box office at [http://boxoffice.bl.uk/category\\_details.php?pgto=cat](http://boxoffice.bl.uk/category_details.php?pgto=cat) or Phone: 01937 546546

**Oxenmoot 2012** 21st to 23rd September, Oxford. This year’s annual Oxenmoot is particularly special, as the Tolkien Society will be celebrating the 75th anniversary of THE HOBBIT’s publication. The event will include panels, discussions, an art exhibition and more at Lady Margaret Hall (OX2 6QA). Website: [www.tolkiensociety.org/oxon/](http://www.tolkiensociety.org/oxon/)

**Peter F Hamilton signing** , 25th September, London Peter F Hamilton will be signing copies of his new novel GREAT NORTH ROAD at Forbidden Planet’s London megastore (179 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8JR) from 6.00-7.00pm. Website: <http://forbiddenplanet.com>

**Brent Weeks signing** 26th September, London THE BLINDING KNIFE is the second entry in Brent Weeks’s epic fantasy series, the *Lightbringer* trilogy. He’ll be

signing copies at Forbidden Planet's London megastore (179 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8JR) from 6.00-7.00pm Website: <http://forbiddenplanet.com>

**Titan Books signing** 27th September, London Titan authors Guy Adams, Samit Batsu, Joanne Reay, Kim Newman and Danie Ware team up for a signing event at Forbidden Planet's London Megastore (179 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8JR), from 6.00pm-7.00pm. Website: <http://forbiddenplanet.com>

**Iain M Banks Book Launch** 4th October, Bath To launch the latest book in his Culture series, *THE HYDROGEN SONATA*, the author will be talking about the creative process and the ideas that underpin the world of the Culture at Topping & Company Booksellers (The Paragon, BA1 5LS). Start at 8:00pm (doors open at 7.45pm). Tickets: £8/£7 Website: [www.toppingbooks.co.uk/](http://www.toppingbooks.co.uk/) Email: [bath@toppingbooks.co.uk](mailto:bath@toppingbooks.co.uk) Phone: 01225 428 111 Also appearing at Waterstones Yeovil (5th October at 1pm) and Waterstones Bristol Galleries (5th October at 7:30pm). For details see Website: <http://www.waterstones.com/waterstonesweb/displayDetailEvent.do?searchType=3&month=10|October|12&mFilter=1>

**Grimmfest 2012** 4th to 7th October, Manchester. The fourth annual Manchester international festival of horror and cult films is back. Tickets: A limited number of early bird passes are now available at the reduced price of £45.00 (+ £2 booking fee). Website: [www.grimmfest.com](http://www.grimmfest.com) Email: [Info@grimmfest.com](mailto:Info@grimmfest.com) Twitter: [@grimmfest](https://twitter.com/grimmfest)

**Birmingham Book Festival**, 4<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> October, Birmingham A series of events and activities celebrating literature. Website: <http://www.birminghambookfestival.org/> Of particular interest is the session:-

**Discovering Alternative Genres : Science-fiction, fantasy and the spaces in between** 8th October, Birmingham With an ever-expanding readership, and fascinating new subgenres emerging all the time, we are entering a golden age for genre fiction. Join us for a night exploring the meaning and boundaries of science-fiction and fantasy today. This panel discussion features bestselling science-fiction writer Peter F. Hamilton (*The Commonwealth Saga* and *The Void Trilogy*), million-selling fantasy novelist Stan Nicholls (ORCS: FIRST BLOOD and ORCS: BAD BLOOD), young adult author **Janet Edwards** (EARTH GIRL) and author and publisher Mez Packer (THE GAME IS ALTERED). 7 to 8.30pm, The Custard Factory Theatre, Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham, B9 4AA £8 / £5. To book please call the BOX on 0121 245 4455 or secure box office weblink <https://secure.birmingham-box.co.uk/helppage.asp>

**Cheltenham Literature Festival**, 5th to 14th October, Cheltenham Sessions of interest include appearances by Iain M Banks, Alan Garner, Phillip Pullman and Radio 4 Extra's *Science Fiction Futures* featuring a reading/recording of three

classic SF stories. For details of session timings and prices see Website: <http://www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/literature>

## **CONVENTIONS**

**TITANCON, 21st-23rd September, Belfast** An SF literary, media and gaming convention. The event will take place at the Europa Hotel (BT2 7AP). Tickets: Friday night drinks free entry, Saturday full membership £18 Website: [www.titancon.com](http://www.titancon.com)

**FANTASYCON 2012, 27th-30th September, Brighton.** This year's British Fantasy Society meeting once again takes place at the Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton (35 Old Steine, BN1 1NT). Guests include Muriel Gray, Joe R Lansdale and Brent Weeks. The highlight will be the presentation of the British Fantasy Awards on the Sunday afternoon. Tickets: Weekend membership £55 (£50 to existing BFS members). Email: [info@fantasycon2012.org](mailto:info@fantasycon2012.org)

**NOVACON 42, 9th-11th November, Nottingham.** Now in its fifth decade, Novacon is held at the Park Inn Hotel in Nottingham. **Guest of Honour Jaine Fenn.** Website [www.novacon.org.uk](http://www.novacon.org.uk) Twitter: @Novacon42

**EIGHT SQUARED CON (EASTERCON 64), 29th March-1st April 2012, Bradford** To be held at the Cedar Court Hotel, Bradford, UK. Guests of Honour: Walter Jon Williams, Freda Warrington, Anne Sudworth and Edward James. Registration is £60 which will be held until Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> 2013. Website is <http://www.eightsquaredcon.org/>

## **FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG**

Oct 12th - horror writer **ADAM NEVILL**

Nov 2nd - SF author **ERIC BROWN**

Dec 7th - **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL** - Skittles and buffet

Jan 11th- **Annual General Meeting and Auction**

Feb 8th - **Quiz**

Mar 8th -local urban horror author **James Brogden**

Apr 12th - Honorary President and SF author **Brian Aldiss OBE**

**BRUM GROUP NEWS #492** (September 2012) copyright 2012 for Birmingham SF Group. This issue produced by Carol Goodwin ([goodwincd@yahoo.com](mailto:goodwincd@yahoo.com)) and 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[dot]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 Membership Secretary, 10 Sylvan Avenue, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 2PG