

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

NOVEMBER 2012

ISSUE 494

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**

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Friday 2nd November **ERIC BROWN**

Eric Brown is a science fiction writer who was born in Haworth, Yorkshire (an auspicious place for a future writer!). He has lived in

DECEMBER 7th - CHRISTMAS SOCIAL at the Selly Park Tavern from 7pm (see inside newsletter for details)

Australia, India and Greece and now lives in Scotland. His first publication was a children's play (NOAH'S ARK) in 1982. He sold his first short story to *Interzone* in 1986. His story "The Time Lapsed Man" won the *Interzone* readers' poll for the most admired story in 1988. He was voted the Best New European SF Writer of the Year in the early nineties and has won the British Science Fiction Award twice (for the short stories "Hunting the Slarque" in 1999 and "Children of Winter" in 2001). He has published over twenty books including SF novels, YA and children's stories as well as radio plays, articles and reviews. His SF work includes the *Bengal Station*, *Kethani*, and *Virex* series as well as individual novels including GUARDIANS OF THE PHOENIX and THE KINGS OF ETERNITY. This year he has published HELIX WARS (a sequel to HELIX) and THE DEVIL'S NEBULA. He also somehow finds the time to write a monthly SF review column for *The Guardian*. Further information can be found at his website <http://www.ericbrown.co.uk>

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 normally 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.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Dave Cox. It is with sadness that we have to report that longtime BSFG member Dave Cox passed away on October 16th. No other information is known at the time of printing.

Theresa Derwin will be reading from her new book MONSTERS ANONYMOUS at Waterstones High Street on the 27th November (Details in Events section).

Stan Nicholls will be giving a talk at Northfield Library on 10th December at 11am. See Events section for further details.

COMMITTEE POSTS

There is only one "standard" meeting between now and the AGM when elections will be held for next year's Committee. For anyone thinking of standing for election an outline of the various duties is given below. If you would like more information about any of them please speak to Vernon at the meeting or use the Group email: bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk

THE COMMITTEE OFFICERS DUTIES

The following “Job Descriptions” are outlines of the basic duties of each Officer. However, there is a great deal of interaction and working to common deadlines between the various posts and some reports, such as the Financial Report, are made to an agreed format.

GENERAL DUTIES (and a requirement)

To help organise BSFG Meetings throughout the year. To attend monthly Committee meetings in the City Centre, usually on the Wednesday evening of the week preceding the week in which the Group Meeting is held. To assist other Committee members in their duties as necessary. To present a report at the AGM. To have email access at home.

OFFICERS' DUTIES

CHAIRMAN

To chair Committee meetings and present a report. To chair Group Meetings, introduce and thank the Speaker. To negotiate with hotels and other organisations on behalf of the Group. To organise, prepare and supervise the annual Christmas Social. To liaise with the Secretary in arranging the Committee meeting agenda.

SECRETARY

To communicate with Speakers on behalf of the Committee. To communicate with other persons and organisations on behalf of the Committee. To present a report at Committee meetings. To take and circulate ASAP Records of Committee meetings.

TREASURER

To maintain the current BSFG Bank Account. To attend Group Meetings, arriving early and ensuring that the Meeting room is prepared for Group use. To collect admission money etc at Group Meetings. To liaise with the Membership Secretary in the collection of membership fees etc. To present a detailed current Financial Report at Committee meetings. To present an Annual Financial Report at the AGM.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (This post and the post of Secretary may be held by one person)

To maintain BSFG Membership records. To organise the collection of membership subscriptions, renewals etc. To liaise with the Treasurer as necessary. To present a report on current membership numbers at Committee meetings.

PUBLICITY OFFICER

To advertise the BSFG by all means possible. To present a report at Committee meetings.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

To maintain contact with sources of potential information for the Group Newsletter. To edit and produce master copy to an agreed format ready for printing. To organise printing of the Newsletter, and to distribute it, to a specific timescale. To liaise with book publishers for review copies. To present a report at Committee meetings.

ORDINARY MEMBERS - one of whom will be...

WEBSITE MANAGER

To maintain the BSFG Website to an agreed format and to update it as necessary.

To present a report at Committee meetings.

The other ORDINARY MEMBER

To contribute to the efficient functioning of the Committee. To present a report at Committee meetings.

THE CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

This year's 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 7th December. To get there take a 45 or 47 bus from outside Boots, opposite New Street Station on Smallbrook Queensway. Ask for The Selly Park Tavern - it is 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. 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 the Membership Secretary, together with a cheque/postal order for the appropriate amount, at the address on the back page of the Newsletter. However, as there are sometimes problems with the postal system if you apply by post please send her an email at the same time in case your application is delayed. THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS MONDAY 26th 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 almost every year and had to refuse latecomers.

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

BRITISH FANTASY AWARD WINNERS

The British Fantasy Awards winners were presented on September 30th, at Fantasy Con in Brighton

Novel: (There are two awards - one for horror and one for fantasy)

The August Derleth Award (for best horror novel): THE RITUAL by Adam Nevill (Pan)

The Robert Holdstock Award (for best fantasy novel): AMONG OTHERS by Jo Walton (Tor Books)

Novella: GOREL AND THE POT BELLIED GOD by Lavie Tidhar (PS Publishing)

Short Fiction: “The Coffin Maker’s Daughter” by Angela Slatter (A BOOK OF HORRORS, Jo Fletcher Books)

Anthology: THE WEIRD edited by Jeff and Ann Vandermeer (Corvus Books)

Author Collection: EVERYONE’S JUST SO SO SPECIAL by Robert Shearman (Big Finish)

Screenplay: MIDNIGHT IN PARIS by Woody Allen

Magazine/Periodical: Black Static edited by Andy Cox (TTA Press)

Comic/Graphic Novel: LOCKE AND KEY by Joe Hill and Gabriel Rodriguez (IDW Publishing)

BFS Special Jury Awards:

The PS Publishing Independent Press Award: Chomu Press; Quentin S. Crisp

The Artist Award: Daniele Serra

The Non-Fiction Award: SUPERGODS: OUR WORLD IN THE AGE OF THE SUPERHERO by Grant Morrison (Jonathan Cape)

The Sydney J. Bounds Best Newcomer Award: Kameron Hurley

The Karl Edward Wagner Special Award: Peter & Nicky Crowther

NEWS IN BRIEF

.... Actor **Michael O’Hare** has died after suffering an heart attack. O’Hare may be best known for his role as Commander Jeffrey Sinclair in *Babylon 5* The first issue of *James Gunn’s Ad Astra*, a new annual journal of science fiction, reviews, and criticism, has been published. It includes stories by Peter Charron, Eric Cline, Shaenon K. Garrity, Adria Laycraft, Nikki J. North, and Adrian Simmons Austrian skydiver **Felix Baumgartner** set a new world’s record for highest skydive, leaping from a balloon at an altitude of 128,000. He broke the record set by Joseph Kittinger on August 16, 1960. Kittinger, who worked as an advisor to Baumgartner, had jumped from 102,800 feet. During the jump, Baumgartner also became the first human to break the sound barrier without the use of a jet, achieving that feat on the 65th anniversary of Chuck Yeager becoming the first human to break the sound barrier **The Alchemy Press** intends to start a new line, **Alchemy Novellas**. In the first instance, they will publish four novellas a year as eBooks. Then the novellas will be collected together and published as a print book. The proposed publication schedule for the eBooks is February, May, August and November. They are looking for original, unpublished novellas that touch on almost all areas of Fantasy and Horror. There will be a payment for both eBook and print publication. If you are interested and want to learn more please send a query email to [alchemypress \[@ \] gmail.com](mailto:alchemypress [@] gmail.com). Submission guidelines are at <http://alchemypress02.blogspot.co.uk/p/blog-page.html> Author **Sir Terry Pratchett** has set up a multimedia production company, Narrativa, to hold

exclusive worldwide rights to all of his work across film, television, merchandising, and digital media **Amazing Stories**, in anticipation of the forthcoming roll out of the new website, is now seeking the assistance and participation of fans and bloggers from across the genre spectrum. Anyone who might like to write for *Amazing Stories*, should email Steve.Davidson33@comcast.net and request an information packet UK publisher **Quercus**, which includes SF imprint **Jo Fletcher Books**, announced plans to establish a New York office and to begin publishing books in North America starting in Autumn 2013. Quercus made a multi-year sales and distribution agreement with Random House Publisher Services, which will handle all print and e-book distribution in the US and Canada SF and Fantasy publishers **Rebellion** have announced the launch of a children's/YA imprint to be called **Ravenstone**. This follows the launch earlier this year of the **Strange Chemistry** SF /Fantasy imprint for children/YA by **Angry Robot**. Clearly science fiction and fantasy for younger readers is seen as worth developing The Orion Publishing Group and Hodder & Stoughton are to jointly publish a new horror story **IN THE TALL GRASS** written jointly by bestselling authors (and father and son) **Stephen King** and **Joe Hill** Astronomers have found a planet whose skies are illuminated by **four different suns** - the first known of its type. The distant world orbits one pair of stars which have a second stellar pair revolving around them. The discovery was made by volunteers using the Planethunters.org website along with a team from UK and US institutes. Computerised attempts to find things in the data had missed this system entirely! The planet, located just under 5,000 light-years away, has been named **PH1** after the Planet Hunters site. It is thought to be a "gas giant" slightly larger than Neptune - more than six times the radius of the Earth. All four stars pulling on it creates a very complicated environment but it appears to sit in an apparently stable orbit Astronomers have discovered a planet roughly the size of Earth orbiting **Alpha Centauri B**, the star nearest our sun. The Alpha Centauri system – composed of three stars orbiting one another – is only 4.4 light-years away. Though the newly discovered planet has about the same mass as our own, its orbit is 25 times smaller, so a year on this planet passes in just 3.2 days. This means the planet is sitting up against its star, roasting at perhaps 2,200 degrees Fahrenheit with a surface likely composed of molten lava. The discovery of at least one planet in the system increases the probability of finding other smaller planets existing there at the right distance to host life. The paper describing the discovery appeared in *Nature* on Oct. 17 **Sarah Brightman** (soprano singer and ex-wife of Andrew Lloyd Webber) will become only the eighth farepaying space tourist to visit the International Space Station in 2015 – and only the second British woman into space Next year a comet which could outshine the moon is due to fly by the Earth. **Comet ISON** is visiting the inner solar system and is set to put on spectacular views for the Northern Hemisphere across November and December as it heads towards the sun. It may prove to be brighter than any comet of the last century - visible even in broad daylight - and this may end up being its one and only trip to the solar system, as its trajectory may see it plunge into the sun in a fiery death.

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 or queries to me at rog [dot] peyton [at] btinternet [dot] com or Carol at goodwincd@yahoo.com

Dear Everyone of the Brum Group,

I see from the October News, Issue 493, my name is there as the one and only Honorary President.

Of course I am secretly very pleased about this and I thank you all very warmly for our long continuing association.

But of course there's something missing in this headline. Dear Old Harry is no more. Our long and intense friendship forever down that almighty drain. Rog Peyton has a very good summary of Harry's brilliant personality, his generosity and his humour. My life would not be the same had Harry never existed, and I guess many people can say the same.

You may be glad - or perhaps indifferent - to know that I am still writing. The Friday Project is signed up to produce all I ever wrote (which is about 80 books) electronically. Meanwhile at the moment, just for fun, to torture myself, I have set myself to write a short story every day. 18 of the terrible things - well - some good some poor - it keeps one going.

All the best and thanks to everyone, Brian Aldiss O.B.E.

Interview with David A. Hardy by Pauline Morgan

David A. Hardy is an award winning astronomical artist and a long standing member of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group as well as a Vice President of the IAAA (International Association of Astronomical Artists) and also a VP of the ASFA (Association of Science Fiction & Fantasy Artists)

PM: You are known as a versatile astronomical artist working in a range of media; why did you decide to write a novel?

DH: I've always written and had many articles on astronomy, space, art etc. published, as well as co-writing books with Patrick Moore and others, and my own seven non-fiction books. I've written many short stories so, like most writers, I had a novel at the back of my mind for many years. I realised that two of my short stories could be connected, if the baby at the end of the first, which took place in World War 2, could become the girl in the second (which had been published as 'Rock' in magazine *Orbit* in 1986). There was an age problem - she would have to be around 30, not a teenager but I found a science-fictional way around that and the rest of the novel then flowed very quickly; in fact I really had to get it down on paper, as if under some sort of compulsion to do so!

PM: When you had completed AURORA how easy was it for you to find a publisher?

DH: I gave it to John Jarrold at a Birmingham SF Group meeting and he kept it for quite a while, then returned it saying some quite nice things about it but that it ‘wasn’t for him’. I then gave it to Richard Evans at Gollancz, who also kept it for a while. Then he rang and said he’d like to publish it. Sadly, he died before it could be published, and the editor who took over, wasn’t as keen on it and returned it. It sat in a drawer for a year or two, until Paul Barnett, who edited some of my books like *HARDYWARE* (text by Chris Morgan) and *FUTURES*, suggested taking it to what was then Cosmos, one of the better POD publishers in the USA, who agreed to publish it. They later transmuted into Borgo, the publisher of the current edition.

PM: Most authors have no say in the covers of their books. Did you consider your cover part of the package - possibly a selling point - or did you have to persuade the publisher to let you do it?

DH: I never thought for a moment that anyone else would do my cover and the publisher felt the same. In the first edition each chapter opens with a graphic: an illustration of the ‘beacon’ which appears in the third part of the novel, whose double-sphere shape echoes the relative size of Earth and Mars and the two Martian volcanoes, Uranus and Ceraunus Tholus. I felt quite strongly about this at the time, and it is reflected in the design of the original cover. But for the new edition I took a scene on Mars, with Aurora as a rock singer superimposed.

PM: Is this new edition a result of the renewed interest in Mars, because of the landing of the Mars rover, or because the first edition has sold out?

DH: Being Print On Demand the first edition can’t sell out! But as you say, there was renewed interest, with Curiosity etc., and I felt that there was more life in this novel. The dates, especially, had to be changed, because in the original the Mars-landing was in 2018, which is clearly too close to the present.

PM: This is a revised version of the original novel. As our knowledge of Mars has changed in the intervening years, how difficult did you find it to update the text?

DH: Our knowledge of Mars hasn’t really changed that much, in ways that affect the story. When he read the original edition Michael Carroll, a leading US astronomical artist and a prolific writer himself, wrote: “Your descriptions of Mars are among the best I’ve ever read.”

PM: Other than the updating of the scientific side of the novel, have you made any other significant changes?

DH: Michael also made a few suggestions about the behaviour of two leading characters near the end of the book, which I felt were valuable, so I took these on board and made some changes. I also had to make a few other changes in the light of what has happened during the intervening years.

PM: The novel begins during the Second World War. As you were a child at the time, how much of your recollections influenced this part of the novel?

DH: A lot of this section, which was originally a short story, was definitely autobiographical! For instance, I did have mumps and measles during the War and played with model aircraft etc. inside a Morrison air-raid shelter. A land-mine nearby did send soot and brick-dust down the chimney. . .

PM: I know you have long had an interest in music. Does the band that Aurora plays with reflect the music you prefer? Would you have liked to play in a band? What instrument?

DH: Again, this section was originally a short story, and much of it was based on my experiences in the 70s, when I used to meet up with session guitarist 'Big' Jim Sullivan (who sadly died recently) when I went to see publishers in London, and he took me to Abbey Road and other studios. Around this time Pink Floyd, Hawkwind, the Moody Blues, Camel and other bands used my space slides as part of their 'light show'. I got to know the Moodies' producer Tony Clarke quite well and he bought 3 paintings from me, one commissioned. Personally I am a would-be guitarist; I have a Fender Strat, and would just love to be able to play it well; sadly I just don't have any natural talent in that direction.

PM: As you have given Aurora an interest in astronomical art, how much do her adventures reflect the kind of ambitions you had at the start of the space age to travel to other planets?

DH: I think all space artists would like to be able to travel in space. I did once have my name down on NASA's 'Artists in Space' list, but of course nothing ever came of that, especially after the Shuttle disasters ... Instead we do the next-best thing: we (by which I mean the International Association of Astronomical Artists (IAAA), of which I'm European Vice President) hold workshops in the most 'alien' parts of Planet Earth, like Iceland, Death Valley, Yellowstone Park, and so on. I've been to all of these, and more!

PM: Of all the technical advances that you have projected in this book, which do you think is the most likely to happen? Which do you think is least likely?

DH: Hopefully we shall see advances in propulsion methods which will enable us to reach the planets (and asteroids, etc.) much more quickly than we can today. I'm afraid I don't really think that time travel will ever happen, but it's still a valuable SF device!

PM: Is there any particular reason why you chose the areas of Mars that you did for the unfolding of this story?

DH: The Tharsis area of Mars is the most interesting, geologically, with many large shield volcanoes, canyons and other features, so it was a 'natural' really. Also, it contains the pair of large volcanoes that I mentioned earlier, and these play a big part in the story.

PM: Some purists are sceptical about including pseudo-science alongside hard science. As you have used telepathy and dowsing as tools to enhance your plot, how would you answer the charge that you are veering into the realms of fantasy?

DH: Telepathy is well-established as a science-fictional device; for instance, Asimov uses it in his *Foundation* stories, and everyone seems to accept it and enjoy stories which include it. So no problem there. I agree that dowsing is more problematic. It was used in the story as a last resort and seems to have worked. Michael Guest, a very steady, educated and intelligent person with a scientific background certainly believed in it, and had plenty of proof that it worked. So I don't consider it 'fantasy', but leave readers to make up their own mind! I'm sure

you will agree that there are several SF books out there which include elements which are more fantasy than hard SF, so I'm in good company ...

PM: If we ever do get out to other planets, whether in the solar system or beyond, do you see yourself more on the side of the terraforming school of thought or the genetic adaptation to the new environment? Why?

DH: I think that as long as we are completely certain that there is no indigenous life present on the world in question, and there is a good reason for the human race to move out to it, we should consider terraforming. Even the Moon could be terraformed - and it's a lot closer! Certainly Mars, which has more Earthlike features already. On the other hand, we seem to be making such a mess of our own planet that we'd do better to concentrate on getting our own house in order, before moving on to new ones ...

PM: Thank you for your time and good luck with the sales of this edition.

📖📖📖📖 **BOOK REVIEWS** 📖📖📖📖

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

***FEVER* by Lauren DeStefano**

HarperVoyager / 341 pgs / £9.99 trade paperback / ISBN: 978-0007457793

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

Sometimes it seems that the reason books are labelled Young Adult is that the author and/or editor believes that the readership at which it is aimed is only looking for a well-written tale and the inconsistencies and the flaws will be forgiven. The problem is that most reviewers are not the target market. Some YA books, like Janet Edward's *EARTH GIRL* can be thoroughly enjoyed by readers of all ages no matter what label is put on it. Lauren DeStefano's *FEVER* and its predecessor *WITHER* should really only be read by those who just want an interesting story without having their credibility stretched too far.

In the future world of these books, longevity treatments were discovered and dispensed to all. Unfortunately, proper tests were not made and the children have a greatly reduced life-span. Boys die at twenty-five, girls at twenty; a fact that cannot be escaped. Thus there is an urge to keep the teenagers breeding in the hope that a cure can be found. In *WITHER* Rhine was forcibly snatched from the streets and became one of three wives to Linden. In the basement of their home, Linden's father, Vaughn, is prepared to commit all kinds of atrocities to find a cure for his son. At the end of



the book, Rhine and Gabriel escape from the house. Rhine's vague plan is to get back to Manhattan where she expects to find her twin brother.

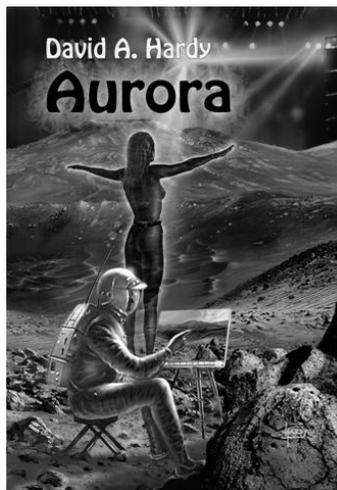
At the beginning of *FEVER* the euphoria of escape quickly changes as they seek refuge with a motley band camped in the grounds of an old carnival and they realise that this is within the Scarlet District. The Madam of this particular tented brothel recognises Rhine's quality and devises plans for her. Initially it is a peep show with the punters spying on Rhine and Gabriel as two captive love-birds, then as a commodity, selling her on to the highest bidder. As Rhine realises what Madam's intentions are, she becomes determined to escape. With the help of Lilac, another of the girls, they head on to Manhattan accompanied by Lilac's malformed child. Their eventual arrival is not what Rhine expects. Vaughn is also determined to find and bring Rhine back to the house. To make matters worse, Rhine's health begins to deteriorate even though she should have a couple more years left before her inevitable demise.

The trouble with many second volumes in a trilogy is that they tend to be makeweights, being the bridge between the excitement of setting up the scenario and the climax of the resolution in volume three. Here the plot is very circular and if it had been omitted it is doubtful that it would have been missed. Having said that, the younger readers who are the target audience may well disagree. *PM*

***AURORA: A CHILD OF TWO WORLDS* by David A. Hardy**
Borgo / 262 pgs / £9.99 trade paperback / ISBN: 978-1434445001
Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

There are many authors whose artistic skills are practically zero – though they may think otherwise. Some artists are unable to write coherently. There is however, a small band of people who can do both. One of these is Freda Warrington; another is David Hardy. While Freda concentrates more on her writing and employs her artistic talents secondarily, David Hardy is better known as an astronomical artist. The cover of *AURORA*, with its limited colour palate is an excellent example of his work.

The novel itself is a revised version of the volume originally published in 2003. It opens in dramatic fashion during a German air raid on London during the Second World War where baby Aurora is a miraculous survivor of a direct hit. Since the book takes place over eighty years Hardy does not fall into the trap of trying to relate the whole of Aurora's life and only describes the highlights. This includes an episode when she is briefly the star of a rock group. (This section of the book was originally published as a short story in *Orbit* in 1986). At this time, she is beginning to believe that there is something weird



about her. She never gets ill – in fact she was an unexpected survivor of the crash that killed her mother – and she appears much younger than her chronological age.

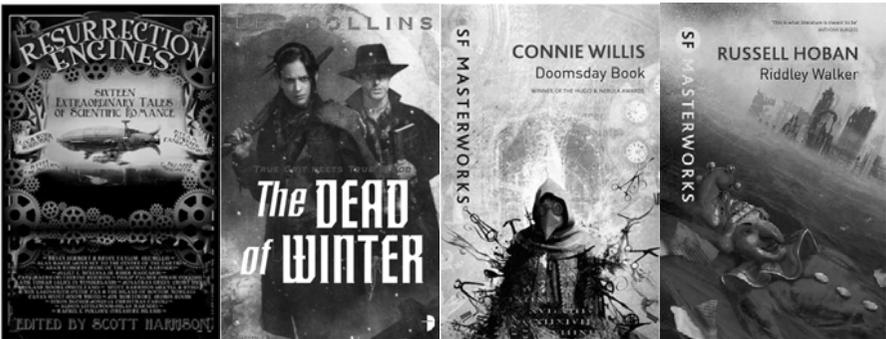
Most of the answers to the mysteries in the first fifty pages are resolved in the final two-hundred. By 2028, Aurora has changed her name, adjusted her credentials and got herself onto the first manned mission to Mars. Although actually seventy-eight she passes for thirty-five and is accepted for what her credentials say she is – a geologist with an interest in astronomical art. Two important story arcs are played out in the confined circumstances of the expedition. The first concerns Aurora’s abilities which are not confined to her longevity; the second, the discovery of artefacts of an advanced technology. These two arcs come together at the end of the book.

Hardy can probably best be described as a traditional exponent of hard science fiction – the emphasis is on the technology and the scientific discoveries that come from the hard graft of exploration. He doesn’t neglect other areas, hinting at developments in biology and certainly does not dismiss what others might call pseudo-sciences such as dowsing and telepathy giving them roles within his projected future. While many authors would have taken a plot outline similar to this and padded it out to doorstop thickness with detailed angst and emotional upsets between the principal characters, Hardy prefers to keep this mostly off-stage. Like Arthur C. Clarke his focus is on the technology and the sense of wonder to be found by looking outwards and exploring the universe rather than inwards and following others in an exploration of the psyche.

In this revised volume, Hardy has updated the text in line with developments and discoveries since first publication. With a renewed interest in the exploration of Mars, this book will be worth looking at by readers who like the spare style of such old masters as Clarke.

PM

FORTHCOMING BOOKS

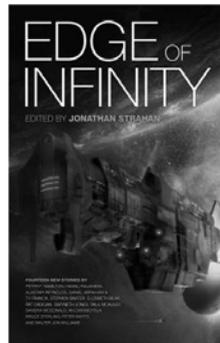
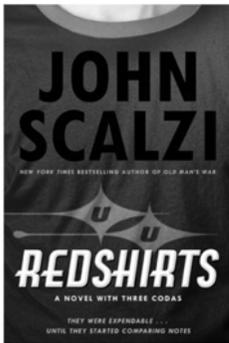


RESURRECTION ENGINES edited by **Scott Harrison** / Snow Books / 512 pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1907777844 / November 1st Anthology of “retellings and reimaginings” of classic speculative fiction classics

THE DEAD OF WINTER by **Lee Collins** / Angry Robot / 416 pgs / £8.99 medium paperback / ISBN 978-085762712 / November 1st Fantasy with a Western setting. Cora, a hunter of things which should not exist, must protect her small town.

DOOMSDAY BOOK (SF Masterworks) by **Connie Willis** / Gollancz / 608 pgs / £5.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0575131095 / November 8th Hugo and Nebula award-winning novel of time travel and plague by a SFWA Grand Master

RIDDLEY WALKER by **Russell Hoban** / Gollancz / 256 pgs / £9.99 hardcover / ISBN 978-0575119512 / November 8th A twelve year old boy travelling through post-apocalyptic England discovers an old relic which may cause (another) end of the world.



REDSHIRTS by **John Scalzi** / Orion / 320pgs / £14.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0575134294 / November 15th. Set in an “Star Trek” style Universe, this comedy asks what happens when the expendable lower ranks (“redshirts”) start to question their high mortality rate.

COLD DAYS (Dresden Files 14) by **Jim Butcher** / Orbit / 528 pgs / £16.99 hardcover / ISBN 978-0356500898 / November 29th. Urban fantasy with humour. Harry Dresden must obey the faerie queen Mab and attempt to kill an immortal. Yet again Harry is in deep trouble!

EDGE OF INFINITY: FOURTEEN NEW SHORT STORIES edited by **Jonathan Strahan** / Solaris / 384 pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1781080559 / December 6th. Hard SF anthology with a theme of Solar System colonisation featuring stories by Alastair Reynolds, Stephen Baxter, James Corey, Paul McAuley and others.

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NEW FILM RELEASES

Listings should not be necessarily taken as recommendations. View at your own peril!

LOVE BITES - Release date November 9th British horror-comedy set in a seaside town where a werewolf is preying on virgins!

RAY HARRYHAUSEN: SPECIAL EFFECTS TITAN - Release date November 9th Documentary about the legendary stop-motion animator featuring recently found footage of some of his tests and experiments.

TWILIGHT: BREAKING DAWN Part 2 - Release date November 16th. Final part of the Vampire teenage romance. Bella and Edward must now protect their vampire/human hybrid child from hostile vampires.

RISE OF THE GUARDIANS - Release date 30th November. Children's animation in which Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny etc band together against the Bogyman.

THE MAN WITH THE IRON FISTS - Release date 7th December. KILL BILL style martial arts film (starring Russell Crowe) with some fantasy elements.

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

Theresa Derwin Book Reading 27th October, Birmingham. BSFG member, **Theresa Derwin** will be reading short stories from her horror collection **MONSTERS ANONYMOUS**. The first five attendees will receive a free Kindle copy of the book. Also free horror themed cupcakes! Location: Waterstones Birmingham High Street from 2pm to 5pm

SCI-FI-LONDON Mini-Festival 9th to 11th November, London. SCI-FI-LONDON'S Autumnal event. Includes UK Premieres, *Mystery Science Theater* and Anime All-Nighters and a **FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR** screening. Location: Stratford Picturehouse cinema (Salway Road, Stratford, London, E15 1BX). Details and booking at www.sci-fi-london.com

Robert Rankin signing 10th November, London Robert Rankin will be signing copies of **THE EDUCATED APE** at The Forbidden Planet Megastore on Saturday 10th November from 4pm till 5pm. Address is 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR,

Armadacon 24 16th to 18th November, Plymouth A SF and fantasy multimedia convention taking place at the Future Inns (PL6 5US). Guests this year are "superfan" Pat Harkin, writer Ian Edginton and author Marion Pitman. Tickets: £30 adults, £25 concessions. Website: www.armadacon.org Email: enquires@armadacon.org Twitter: [@ArmadaCon](https://twitter.com/ArmadaCon)

Return To Middle Earth 23rd to 25th November, Northampton Massive Events celebrate the 10th anniversary of *The Lord Of The Rings* film trilogy at the Park Inn (NN1 2TA). Confirmed guests so far include Billy Boyd (Pippin) and John Rhys Davies (Gimli) Tickets: £78 adults, £29 children. Website: www.massiveevents.co.uk/middleearth Email: info@showmasteryonline.com Phone: 01908 671138

Den Of Eek! 27th November, London A night of spooky storytelling featuring original stories (told live) by James Moran (writer of **COCKNEYS VS ZOMBIES** and **SEVERANCE**), horror novelist Sarah Pinborough, Johannes Roberts (director of **STORAGE 24**), Neil Jones (co-creator of *Bedlam*), actor Kevin McNally (the *Pirates Of The Caribbean* movies) and more. It takes place from 7.30pm at The Phoenix, Cavendish Square (W1G 0PP). Proceeds go to the Geeks Vs Cancer appeal. Tickets: £5.00 plus 95p booking charge. Website: www.denofgeek.com

Stan Nicholls Talk 10th December, Northfield Stan will be at Northfield library. Every month the library hosts a guest author under the banner *Talk About*. He will be discussing fantasy and science fiction for one hour from 11am, and admission is free. Northfield library is at 77 Church Road, Northfield, Birmingham B31 2LB. Further details at www.birmingham.gov.uk/northfieldlibrary

CONVENTIONS

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

EIGHT SQUARED CON (EASTERCON 64), 29th March-1st April 2013, 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. 31st 2013. Website is www.eightsquaredcon.org/

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSGF

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**

May 10th - tba

Jun 14th - authors' agent **IAN DRURY**

Jul 12th - **RICHARD DENNING** on self-publishing

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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