

# BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

## BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

MAY 2015

ISSUE 524

HONORARY PRESIDENT: **BRIAN W ALDISS, OBE**

COMMITTEE: **VERNON BROWN (CHAIRMAN); PAT BROWN (TREASURER); VICKY STOCK (SECRETARY); CAROL GOODWIN (NEWSLETTER EDITOR); DAVE CORBY (PUBLICITY OFFICER); WILLIAM MCCABE (WEBSITE); VICKY STOCK (MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY); THERESA DERWIN (ORDINARY MEMBER); NOVA CON 45 CHAIR: TONY BERRY**

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

EMAIL:

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

FACEBOOK:

[www.facebook.com/groups/BirminghamSFGroup/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/BirminghamSFGroup/)

TWITTER:

[@BirminghamSF](https://twitter.com/BirminghamSF)

***Friday 8th May***

***IAIN GRANT***

Iain Grant is a local writer and the founder, alongside Heide Goody, of Pigeon Park Press. This was formed in 2012 primarily as a means to publish their own works although they do promote other local writers as well. They also run and facilitate collaborative writing events in the Birmingham area such as “Circ: Ten to One” (a novel written by 10 international authors) and “A Hard Day’s Write” where a relay of writers occupy a phone box as a base for the creation of stories. They also have regular spoken word events usually with a theme such as “Halloween” or “Stories in Winter”. Pigeon Park Press is essentially a self-publishing business model with a marked emphasis on electronic books over paper (they do print paperbacks but this is only a small part of what they do).



**June 9th - Science fiction author, Stephanie Saulter**

Iain and Heide have found the most success with *Clovenhoof*, a comic fantasy series which details Satan's adventures in suburban Birmingham after being fired from his job in Hell. The third book GODSQUAD was published on April 23rd. Iain is also the sole author of a fantasy novel, A GATEWAY MADE OF BONE and has published a series of steampunk chapbooks. The six stories in the cycle will be published as THE GEARS OF MADNESS in July.

All of this means he has a lot of interesting things to talk about with us ranging from his individual books through to the nature of writing and publishing in the 21st century. Further details about Pigeon Park Press can be found at <http://pigeonparkpress.blogspot.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 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*

## **BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION AWARDS**

The winners of the BSFA Awards were announced at Dysprosium (Eastercon) in Heathrow on the 5th April.

**Best Novel:** ANCILLARY SWORD by Ann Leckie (Orbit)

**Best Short Fiction:** "The Honey Trap" by Nina Allan, in LA FEMME anthology (Newcon Press)

**Best Artwork:** "The Wasp Factory" (after Iain Banks) by Tessa Farmer. An artwork commissioned for Loncon3.

**Best Non-Fiction:** Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers in the First World War (website) by Edward James (<http://fantastic-writers-and-the-great-war.com/>)

## **HUGO AWARD NOMINATIONS**

The finalists for the Hugo Awards and the John W Campbell Award for Best New Writer were announced on 4th April, amidst much controversy (see news section). The final nominees for Best Novel are given below. (Full details of all categories are available at [www.thehugoawards.org/hugo-history/2015-hugo-awards/](http://www.thehugoawards.org/hugo-history/2015-hugo-awards/).)

NB: Cixin Liu was added after *LINES OF DEPARTURE* was withdrawn by the author, Marko Kloos as he did not want to be nominated by the “Sad Puppies” slate (see news section)

### **BEST NOVEL NOMINEES**

*ANCILLARY SWORD* by Ann Leckie (Orbit)

*THE GOBLIN EMPEROR* by Katherine Addison (Tor)

*SKIN GAME* by Jim Butcher (Orbit)

*THE DARK BETWEEN THE STARS* by Kevin J Anderson (Tor)

*THE THREE BODY PROBLEM* by Cixin Liu (translated by Ken Liu) (Tor)

### ***CLARKE AWARD NOMINATIONS - SHORTLIST***

The nominees for the Arthur C Clarke Award have been announced. The winner will be announced on May 6th at Foyles Bookshop, London:

*THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS* by M R Carey (Orbit)

*THE BOOK OF STRANGE NEW THINGS* by Michael Faber (Canongate)

*EUROPE IN AUTUMN* by Dave Hutchinson (Solaris)

*MEMORY OF WATER* by Emmi Itäranta (Harper Voyager)

*THE FIRST FIFTEEN LIVES OF HARRY AUGUST* by Claire North (Orbit)

*STATION ELEVEN* by Emily St John Mandel (Picador)

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

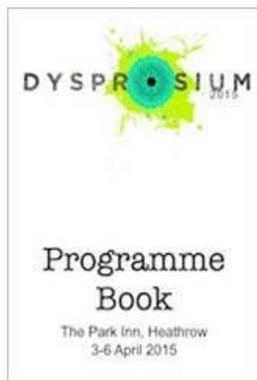
#### **THE LETTER COLUMN OF ‘BRUM GROUP NEWS**

Anything to say about the Group, meetings or SF in general? Email your opinions or queries to me at [goodwined@yahoo.com](mailto:goodwined@yahoo.com)

### ***MY DYSPROSIUM by Chris Morgan***

We all have different conventions--even when we attend the same one. Some people go to dozens of programme items, some stay at the bar, some play games or improve their costuming, or brush up their writing, or search through the second-hand books for that elusive title, or volunteer to help the con.

When Pauline & I went to Dysprosium (the 2015 Eastercon at Heathrow) we were trying to sell books, hoping to clear our duplicates and



unwanted review copies. This was the only Eastercon I can remember that didn't have a dealers' room. Instead it had about twelve, each the size of your lounge. Inside every small space were one, two or three dealers, waiting for customers.

Outside was a busy corridor, linking the main con programme room with the Real Ale Bar and smaller programme rooms. You could see every convention member go past. Few of them bothered to stop and venture inside, inhibited by the smallness of the rooms and the feeling that they might be forced to buy something. No dealers did well, and the committee didn't seem to care. Dealers are the lifeblood of cons and should get much better treatment than this.

The programme was probably very good, with masses of exciting-looking panels and talks and such. But dealers have to stay with their wares and rarely get to attend programme items. We went to the Jim Butcher g-o-h item (he was well interviewed by Charles Stross) which was entertaining. And we went to the poetry reading, because it was in the evening and we were running it. It was even more traffic than you could imagine--but then I would say that, wouldn't I? And I did the Art Auction (with Andy England) which seemed to go well. The Art Show was of a very high standard, not just left-over Loncon stuff.

Overall, the Park Inn was fine, with quite decent guest-rooms, good cheap and more expensive food and almost enough parking for everyone. The staff were extremely hardworking, though the system allowed hundred-yard queues to form at breakfast time.

While I'm on plus points, there seemed to be plenty of free food, alcohol and books--a con worth going to. *CM*

### ***DYSPROSIUM – EASTERCON 66 by Carol Goodwin***

As this was my first Eastercon, my experiences were always going to be different from people such as Chris and Pauline who have been going for a long time and (presumably) know many people. The convention was a large one, with about 1000 people registered. With this many people milling about, you can get the misleading perception that everyone knows lots of people except for you which can be a bit intimidating at first. In fact from talking to people there were a lot of newbies for whom this was only their first or second (having attended Loncon) convention. Eastercon had tried to make some efforts to help with this but it felt like it needed further thought - a meeting to introduce new people should assist them to talk to each other, not have people lecture them from behind a table about how wonderful things will be if you only volunteer and then praising an article in

the Welcome Pack which told everyone how they had no right to complain about anything.

That being said, I actually did have a good time and through attending the more interactive items such as the quiz, evening concert and Kaffeeklatsches I ended up having fun conversations and laughs, mainly with a trio of Belgian, Dutch and American ladies who were also fairly new to the conventions circuit. The programme itself was excellent. I am a huge fan of Jim Butcher (urban fantasy writer) and Seanan McGuire (fantasy and SF writer (as Mira Grant)) and attended both their Guest of Honour panels as well as their Kaffeeklatsches which were amusing, informative and entertaining (especially Seanan's animal tales including her stowaway cat which she found after her luggage had been through X-ray and security!). This was impressive given that both authors were suffering from jet lag and tiredness due to severe delays in their flights.

Although as Chris has said the dealers were poorly served by having them all in separate rooms, some did try to improve matters by having their own mini-programme items. I think this worked well on two counts. Firstly, the small scale felt friendlier and secondly the panellists and audience could see each other (in daylight) rather than being anonymous in a darkened room. This led to a more natural and interactive conversation. Newcon Press in particular had some excellent panels.

Having attended one Eastercon I am in two minds as to whether I would attend another. Although on the whole I enjoyed myself, it is not a cheap weekend when you factor in hotel and transport costs and four days can be a long and tiring time.

## ***NEW CINEMA FILM RELEASES***

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

***THE AGE OF ADALINE*** - Release date May 8th. A young woman has remained ageless since an accident at the beginning of the 20th century.

***MAD MAX: FURY ROAD*** - Release date May 15th. In a post-apocalyptic world, Max and a woman, Furiosa must co-operate to survive.

***TOMORROWLAND - A WORLD BEYOND*** - Release date May 22nd. A dangerous mission to unearth the secrets of the mysterious "Tomorrowland".

*INSIDIOUS 3* - Release date June 5th. Horror. Gifted psychic tries to help teenager targeted by dangerous supernatural entity.

*JURASSIC WORLD* - Release date June 12th. To halt falling visitor numbers, the dinosaur theme park creates a new attraction with terrible consequences. CG

## **NEWS – THE HUGO CONTROVERSY**

There was a lot of controversy over the nominations this year. Two conservative groups, mainly US based have been lobbying supporters to buy supporting memberships and then nominate from a list of “approved” nominees. The groups are known as the “Sad Puppies” (fronted by **Larry Correia** and **Brad Torgersen**) and the more right wing “Rabid Puppies” (fronted by **Vox Day** (real name **Theodore Beale**), who was expelled from the SFWA after writing very offensive comments about African Americans and women). Ostensibly they are objecting that the Awards were becoming “an affirmative action award: giving Hugos because a writer or artist is (insert underrepresented minority or victim group here) or because a given work features (insert underrepresented minority or victim group here) characters” and that they “barely have any science fictional or fantastic content in them”. By “gaming” the voting system they dominated the short lists especially **Vox Day** (two nominations) and works from his publishing company, Castalia House. There has been a lot of subsequent debate online and in the press with some people urging voting “No Award” rather than allow a “puppies” nominee to win. Since publication of the original Hugo shortlist, three nominees: **Marko Kloos** (novel *LINES OF DEPARTURE*), **Annie Bellet** (short story “Goodnight Stars”) and *Black Gate* fanzine have withdrawn themselves from the Hugos in protest and **Connie Willis** has declined the offer to present awards this year. A long list of responses is available if interested at <http://news.ansible.uk/> CG

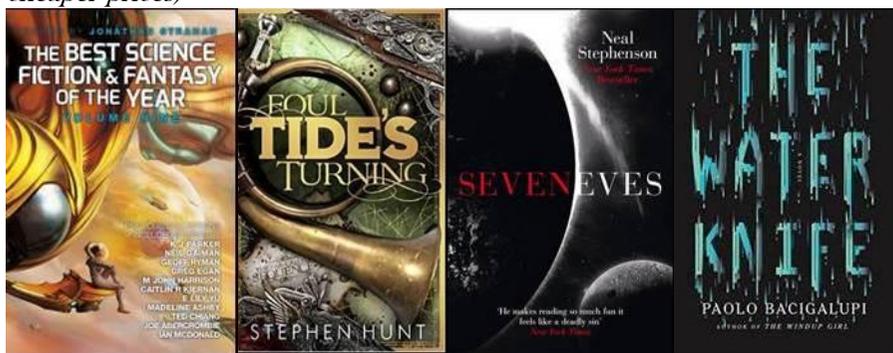
## **NEWS IN BRIEF ...**

The identity of fantasy author **K J Parker** has been revealed to be humorous fantasy author **Tom Holt** .... The Nova Awards (presented annually at Novacon) for fanzines have been discontinued as they were receiving very few votes. The Special Nova which is awarded intermittently to honour individual merit will be retained .... The Longlist for the **David Gemmell Awards** for epic fantasy is now open for voting (open to anyone) at [www.gemmellawards.com/](http://www.gemmellawards.com/).... The winner of the **Philip K Dick Award** for Best original paperback publication was *THE BOOK OF THE*

UNNAMED MIDWIFE by Meg Elison .... The winners of the **Tiptree Award** are THE GIRL IN THE ROAD by Monica Byrne and MY REAL CHILDREN (Jo Walton) .... **Eastercon 2016** will be in Manchester (Mancunicon) and guests of honour to date are **Aliette de Bodard, Ian McDonald, Sarah Pinborough** and **David L Clements**. Details available at [www.mancunicon.org.uk/](http://www.mancunicon.org.uk/) .... **China Miéville** has been awarded a Hall of Fame award as Best Author by the European Science Fiction Society at Eurocon .... The first **James Herbert Award** for Horror has been awarded to **Craig Davidson** for THE TROOP .... Nina Horvath of Austria has won the **2015 TAFF Award** and will be financed to travel to Sasquan (Worldcon 2015) in August .... **Alastair Reynolds** and **Stephen Baxter** are to write a sequel to **Arthur C Clarke's** A MEETING WITH MEDUSA .... Gollancz has acquired rights to a large collection of **Ursula K LeGuin's** works. As well as print editions they also have eBook rights to 12 novels, including the *Earthsea* series .... Gollancz has announced that they will be holding a second **Gollancz Festival** on the 16th and 17th October. Working with Waterstones and Future PLC (publisher of *SFX* and *Total Film* magazines) it will feature a number of live events in Manchester and London as well as many online events. More details to be announced. *CG*

## ***FORTHCOMING BOOKS***

*(NB Prices given are Recommended Retail Price and may be available at cheaper prices)*



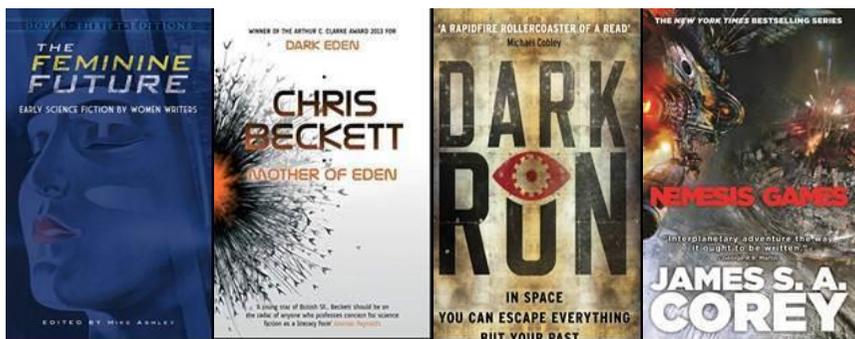
***THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY OF THE YEAR: VOL. 9*** edited by **Jonathan Strahan** / Solaris / 612 pgs / £12.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1781083086 / May 21st. Anthology of “best” stories from the past twelve months.

***FOUL TIDE'S TURNING (Far Called 2)*** by **Stephen Hunt** / Gollancz / 448 pgs / £16.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0575092105 / May 21st.

Steampunk. In rescuing his son from slavery, Jacob Carneham has inadvertently started a war.

**SEVENEVES** by Neal Stephenson / The Borough Press / 880 pgs / £20 hardback / ISBN 978-0008132514 / May 21st. SF. A desperate race to escape a dying Earth and five thousand years later the progeny of the survivors return.

**THE WATER KNIFE** by Paolo Bacigalupi / Orbit / 384 pgs / £16.99 hardback / ISBN 978-0356501741 / May 28th. SF. In a future desperate for water, assassins and a journalist hunt for a secret water source.



**THE FEMININE FUTURE: EARLY SCIENCE FICTION BY WOMEN WRITERS** edited by Mike Ashley / Dover Publications / 176 pgs / £4.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0486790237 / May 29th. SF. Rare short stories published between 1880 and 1920.

**MOTHER OF EDEN (DARK EDEN 2)** by Chris Beckett / Corvus / 480 pgs / £17.99 hardback / ISBN 978-1782392354 / June 4th. SF. On the dark planet of Eden, all humanity is descended from one woman, Gela but has split into two conflicting groups.

**DARK RUN** by Mike Brooks / Del Rey / 432 pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0091956646 / June 4th. SF. Smugglers must deliver a special cargo to Earth without being detected.

**NEMESIS GAMES (Expanses 5)** by James S A Corey / Orbit / 544 pgs / £20 hardback / ISBN 978-0356504223 / June 4th. SF. A thousand worlds are now available, causing a land rush and the political collapse of the Solar system.



## BOOK REVIEWS



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

***ADAM ROBOTS*** by Adam Roberts

Gollancz/ 391 pgs / £12.99 paperback / ISBN 978-057513034

Reviewed by William McCabe

The difficulty with reviewing short story collections is usually that you aren't reviewing one story. Occasionally there will be a theme that you can latch onto that helps categorise what you have just read so that you can cover more than one story at a time or, even more rarely there will be a sequence to the stories and plot lines and characters will carry from on to the next. The least you can hope for is that many of them will be from the same sub-genre or written in the same style. None of that is true here. You would be hard pressed to find a more diverse collection from one writer than this.



Not content with changing sub-genre from one story to the next, Roberts changes style and theme frequently if not with every story. For example, the title story (there is one, it's not just a play on the author's name) is a robot story. Except they're not really robots. And it's a variation on the "Garden of Eden" tale. Only it's turned on its head. I know that doesn't give much away but it's only 11 pages and there's not a whole lot you can say without giving away too much.

Here you have two dozen stories ranging from one page to fifty in length covering a different sub-genre of science fiction every time - possibly more than one per story and with a few odd variations that you might not expect. All but the odd one are at least well done. Here you have the story of a space-going dynasty told in verse, a couple of time (travel?) stories - one about communicating with the past, another explaining how you can camouflage a disaster and the truth about nuclear weapons - one step further than steampunk or an artificial intelligence that is really a ... No, that gives away a little too much ... how Macbeth could have gone if they hadn't cheated on the prophecies, why Copernicus was

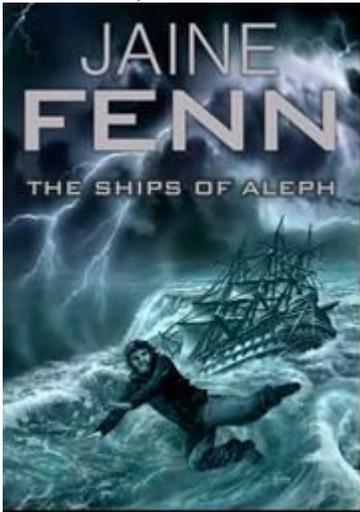
wrong, Neanderthals in space... and many others. There is the obvious failure - an attempt to make something of a nursery rhyme although there is something of the Philip K Dick on drugs about it and an oddity at the end that I still don't get the point of. Only two of the stories are new in this collection but all the others have appeared in collections (often from small presses) rather than magazines.

It's hard to make an overall judgement on the collection but, apart from a mis-step or two, this is all good stuff with new and interesting ideas.  
*WM* *(Kindly donated by Gollancz)*

***THE SHIPS OF ALEPH by Jaine Fenn***

**Tower of Chaos Press / 42 pgs / £0.99 eBook /**

**Reviewed by Carol Goodwin**



If you are going to start a new small publishing company, then it is vital to produce a quality product from the start and this novella is certainly that. Tower of Chaos Press are a small independent publisher, run by Dave Weddell (Jaine Fenn's partner) and THE SHIPS OF ALEPH is its first publication. It aims to produce mainly short stories and novellas, initially mainly by Jaine Fenn. THE SHIPS OF ALEPH was originally published as a limited edition chapbook for Novacon 42, when Jaine Fenn was Guest of Honour. It is now being made available as an eBook by Tower of Chaos Press.

A natural phase for children is the "Why?" stage, when they want to know the answer to everything about the world and how it works. Most people grow out of it but some adults retain that curiosity, not least among them many SF writers and readers. THE SHIPS OF ALEPH is a tale of that sort of curiosity and how far you would be prepared to go in pursuit of knowledge and truth. It is a science fiction story although it may not seem so at first. The narrator, Lachin grows up in a small fishing village. His enquiring mind and a lame leg leave him isolated from his peers. When the Duke announces a project to build a ship to explore the seas, Lachin is eager to join despite the prevalent mood that it is ungodly and thus doomed to failure. Thrown into the sea when the ship founders at the edge of the world he wakes up seemingly back in his home village although he is

the only inhabitant. From there he faces a series of choices all of which involve remaining in his current state of knowledge or risking the unknown and ultimately a chance at another exploratory journey unimaginable to his earlier self.

I really enjoyed this story. The pace is quite gentle but keeps the reader interested. The characterisation of Lachin, as one would expect of Jaïne Fenn's work is excellent and he is a very believable and sympathetic character. Considerable attention has been paid to the structure of the story with the theme of journeys both spatial and intellectual integrated really well without detracting from the actual narrative - not an easy thing and one many authors don't always manage satisfactorily. Although the story fits into Jaïne Fenn's SF *Hidden Empires* series, the story still works even without an awareness of these. As a final incentive to buy it also has a superb piece of blue-toned cover art by David A Hardy. CG  
*(Kindly donated by Tower of Chaos Press)*

**HER DARK VOICE** edited by Theresa Derwin

**Knightwatch Press / 130 pgs / £9.99 enlarged paperback / ISBN 978-1505625820**

**Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.**

It is always good to welcome new, independent publishers to the field, especially those prepared to produce anthologies of new stories. It is a pity they have to go through a steep learning curve before the product is right. Knightwatch Press is a relative newcomer to the playground and is still learning the rules. This is one of their early volumes and, as such, exhibits many elementary mistakes. It does, though get some things right. It is better to begin with the positive.

This book, subtitled AN ANTHOLOGY CELEBRATING THE FEMALE VOICE, was produced to raise money for the Breast Cancer Campaign, all profits going to that organisation. For that reason, all those involved gave their services without charge. There are twelve stories here (not ten as stated in the forward) and all but two are previously unpublished. They range from contributions from well-known authors such as Jaïne Fenn and Liz Williams to the relatively unknown. Most of the stories are worthy of being included in almost any quality magazine and, unlike many anthologies



these days, there is no particular theme, the only connection being that all the authors are female and the stories are of a sinister bent.

Normally, it is good practice to have the strongest story as the first in a volume, for the simple reason that this is what a potential reader will look at first (other than the cover) and decide whether or not to buy. The second strongest goes last. It is a shame that this convention was not used as the weakest story in the whole volume ("Honour Among Thieves" by Lynda Collins) kicks off the book. It doesn't help that the final story "The Tenant Of Rosewood Abbey" is also by Lynda Collins. Although this is a far better story it could be further developed and there are other female writers who would have been happy to contribute to this volume.

It is not all bad news. There are some delightful stories here. "Fear Not Heaven's Fire" by Jaine Fenn is not only powerfully written but the kind of story that I would expect in an anthology with this title. The narrator is a strong, female character; a blind nun who discovers a man hiding beneath the convent granary. In a mediaeval setting when the power of faith was stronger, still not all those who took the veil necessarily did so as a vocation.

The idea of these stories is to have a dark edge. That is certainly true of "The Clinic" by Jan Edwards. The sister of the narrator is in the last stages of Motor Neurone disease. Sarah wants the ordeal over and when she is made an offer to resolve the matter, she seriously considers it. This is a story with subtlety. Jacey Bedford's story, "Kindling The Flame" is much less so but is still an entertaining piece of writing. The cover of the book is an illustration from the story - but more about that later.

The title character in Gaie Sebold's "Ice-Cream Man" definitely has a demonic bent and is looking for an apprentice. This is a powerful story, and shows how low some youths can sink because they think that no-one cares. "Cyndy And The Demon Asmodeus" by Rhiannon Mills is almost another demonic recruitment story. Although not particularly sophisticated it still has a lightness of touch.

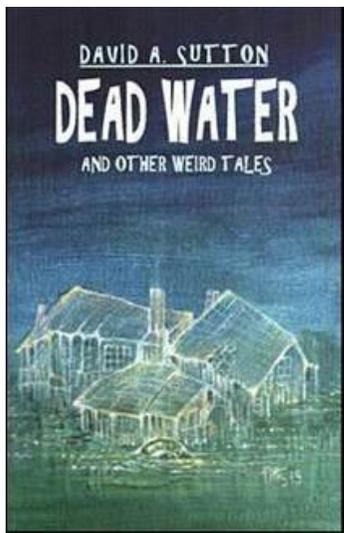
There are some writers who retell old tales in a different fashion, others who invent their own myths. Misa Buckley belongs to the former, as in her "Siren Shadows" a young man is lured to a night of lust with what he thinks are three beautiful women. Liz Williams belongs to the latter. Her "Blanchenoire" is a fable. Blanche is approaching adulthood, and lives in a world that is totally monochrome. Events change her perspective and allow colour to enter the world. Williams is a complex writer and even within a story this short there are themes that need teasing out. Nothing here is superficial. Lynn M. Cochrane's "Leaf Green" also plays with myth

but in a very different way to the other two. This story feels like a fragment of something longer.

So, this is a mixed bag of stories, some excellent, some enjoyable and a turkey. But readers don't always agree with an editor's choice. The downside of this book revolves around two factors, cover and layout. The cover illustration is amateurish, drawn by an artist who, in this instance, shows no skill in illustrating the human form. Covers sell books. This deserved better. The other big issue is inside. The content list fails to acknowledge the authors - a huge omission - and the author biographies at the end are too detailed. On a personal note, I find the actual layout of the text a little annoying. I prefer a larger indentation at the start of paragraphs, but it is consistent throughout.

Whatever the shortcomings of this volume, the important reason for buying it is that had been produced to aid a very worthwhile charity. You don't have to read the book, just buy it as a contribution. *PM*  
(*Kindly donated by Knightwatch Press*)

***DEAD WATER And Other Weird Tales* by David A Sutton**  
Alchemy Press / 252 pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0992980955  
Reviewed by Carol Goodwin



David Sutton may be a local author but he has an impressive pedigree as a writer and editor (one I must admit that I was not aware of until I read this book). Based on these stories I have been missing some very accomplished storytelling. David Sutton is the recipient of the World Fantasy Award, the International Horror Guild Award and twelve British Fantasy Awards. He has been writing since the 1960's and also owns the small press company, Shadow Publishing.

This collection contains eighteen stories dating from 1976 to 2015, including two completely new stories. The stories display an impressive imagination and vary extensively in theme although all contain some element of the fantastical or weird. This is a very strong collection and although some of the stories are horrific they are usually subtle and build tension very effectively. Refreshingly they also do not rely upon nasty things happening to young women (or men for that matter) which is one of

my pet aversions. Unusually I don't think I could name one story that I didn't feel of some merit.

With eighteen stories I can only describe some of my favourites to give you a flavour of the book. The first story in the book, "The Fisherman" is set in a remote Welsh village and revolves around the mysterious disappearance of a fisherman's wife and what he might be obsessively fishing for in the remote bay at night. The author's use of metaphor and vocabulary is lovely; short but precise and has a Bradbury-esque feel to it at times.

"Mind-Forged Manacles" is a science fiction story set in a future Australia and the confrontation between a "polluter" - an aboriginal woman protecting a nature reserve, and the company man sent to clear her land for industrial exploitation. This story is multi-layered with physical and ideological conflicts between the protagonists which leaves you thinking even after the conclusion.

On a lighter note, there is also "Innsmouth Gold" which is an homage to H P Lovecraft's *Cthulhu* stories. Whilst the story of an adventurer after bootleggers' gold who discovers the macabre inhabitants of the abandoned town works well without an awareness of Lovecraft, the little "Easter eggs" for those readers familiar with his work add to the fun of this eerie story.

Finally, there is the eponymous "Dead Water" which is set in the salt marshes of the Camargue in France. It concerns two bird watchers who get lost at dusk amid the narrow causeways and salt pools and stray into a prohibited area, much to their regret. The story starts with a light tone and gradually very effectively builds menace.

This is my favourite anthology for quite some time and I would emphatically recommend it if you like speculative fiction. CG  
(*Kindly donated by Alchemy Press*)

## ***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 [goodwinced@yahoo.com](mailto:goodwinced@yahoo.com)*

**POP IN SPACE: WE CHOOSE TO GO TO THE MOON, 21st February - 18th July, Wolverhampton.** Exhibition of artists' responses to the Space Race during the Cold War. Wolverhampton Art Gallery. Free Admission. Lichfield Street, WV1 1DU. Tel: 01902 552055

**AN EVENING WITH SARAH J MAAS, 21st May, Birmingham.** Author of fantasy *Throne of Glass* series discusses her new book at Waterstones New Street from 7pm. Entry £3. Tel: 0121 631 4333

**CONAN DOYLE CON, 30th May, Birmingham.** A day celebrating the works of Arthur Conan Doyle. Special guest Dr Tom Ue. The City Tavern, 38 Bishopgate Street. 12 - 6:30 pm. Cost: £15 at [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/conan-doyle-con-tickets-16295793156](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/conan-doyle-con-tickets-16295793156)

**SCI-FI AND THE FUTURE, 4th June, Cheltenham.** Panel at Cheltenham Literary Festival. Stephen Baxter, Farah Mendlesohn and Seth Bullock discuss the effect of culture on Sci-Fi. Cost £10 +booking fee [www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/science/whats-on/2015/sci-fi-and-the-future/](http://www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/science/whats-on/2015/sci-fi-and-the-future/)

**SFF & BSFA Mini-convention and AGM's, 6th June, London.** Central London - venue still to be confirmed. Guests of Honour Brian Aldiss & Pat Cadigan. Entry free. BSFA/SFF membership required to vote at respective AGM's. Details at [www.bsfa.co.uk](http://www.bsfa.co.uk) or [www.sf-foundation.org](http://www.sf-foundation.org)

## ***CONVENTIONS***

**EDGE-LIT, 11th July, Derby.** Literary SF/Fantasy festival. Guests of Honour M R Carey, Joanne Harris, Paul McAuley, Claire North & Samantha Shannon. Tickets £30 from 01332 290606 or [www.derbyquad.co.uk/special-event/edge-lit-4](http://www.derbyquad.co.uk/special-event/edge-lit-4)

**NINE WORLDS GEEKFEST, 7th - 9th August, London.** Multi-media with strong literature strand. Guests of Honour tba. Tickets £95 (from April 1st) at <https://nineworlds.co.uk/>

**BRISTOLCON, 26th September, Bristol.** Guests of Honour Jasper Fforde, Jaine Fenn and Chris Moore. Doubletree Hotel. £20 (£25 from May 1st). Details at [www.bristolcon.org](http://www.bristolcon.org)

**FANTASYCON, 23rd - 25th October, Nottingham.** Guests of Honour are John Connolly, Jo Fletcher and Brandon Sanderson with Master of Ceremonies Juliet E McKenna. East Midlands Conference Centre & Orchard Hotel. Tickets £55 (non-members of BFS) from

<http://fantasycon2015.org/> - price expected to increase on 1st April but new rate not available at present.

**NOVACON 45, 13th - 15th November, Nottingham.** Guests of Honour are Anne and Stan Nicholls. The Park Inn, Nottingham. Tickets £45. Details at [www.novacon.org.uk](http://www.novacon.org.uk)

***FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG***

June 12th - SF author, **Stephanie Saulter**

July 10th - author **Adrian Cole**

August 14th - **Summer Meal**

September 11th - editor, reviewer and author, **Professor Edward James**

October 9th - **tbc**

November 6th - author **Emma Newman**

December 4th - **Christmas Social**

**BRUM GROUP NEWS #524** (May 2015) copyright 2015 for Birmingham SF Group. Articles, artwork and photographs must not be reproduced in whole or part without the consent of the editor and/or the respective authors. This issue produced by Carol Goodwin ([goodwincd@yahoo.com](mailto:goodwincd@yahoo.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.

***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