

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

MAY 2019

ISSUE 572

HONORARY PRESIDENT: **CHRISTOPHER PRIEST**

COMMITTEE: **CAROL GOODWIN (CHAIR); PAT BROWN (TREASURER); VERNON BROWN (SECRETARY); DAVE CORBY (PUBLICITY OFFICER); THERESA DERWIN (ORDINARY MEMBER); CAROL GOODWIN (NEWSLETTER EDITOR); WILLIAM MCCABE (WEBSITE); IAN MORLEY; (MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY)**
NOVACON 49 CHAIR: **STEVE LAWSON**

WEBSITE:

www.birminghamsgroup.org.uk/

FACEBOOK:

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

EMAIL:

bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk

TWITTER:

@BirminghamSF

DANIEL GODFREY

May 10th

Our guest this month is the SF author, **Daniel Godfrey**.

He was shortlisted for Best Newcomer at the British Fantasy Awards in 2017.

His first novel, **NEW POMPEII** had the people of Pompeii brought forward in time and relocated to a replica city hidden in central Asia. It was included in both the *Financial Times'* and *Morning Star's* 'Books of 2016' lists. It was followed by a sequel, **EMPIRE OF TIME**.

His near-future crime novel, **THE SYNAPSE SEQUENCE**, is set



June 14th - Authors Jeannette Ng and Micah Yongo

in a UK where workers are being replaced by robots and watched over by AI's. As people struggle to survive on minimum income and tensions rise, a disgraced accident investigator uses new technology to examine the memories of a coma victim who may hold the secret to the disappearance of a young girl. It was included in *The Guardian's* June 2018 round-up of best recent science fiction.

Daniel has also self-published a children's e-book (**JOHNNY MAX AND THE PANTHER'S SKULL**) and he has had several short stories published. 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 for members and £6 for non-members.

YTTERBIUM - A Report on Eastercon 2019 by Chris Morgan

It's the first con where I've bought a Bee Gees single; this one was all the better for having been recycled into a battery clock, with a fantasy painting on one side (by Judy Perrin)! As always at Eastercons, there were usually at least six programme items happening at once, so even when I got to see one, I was missing many others. These are my own highlights.

My first impression was that for a Park Inn (we were at Heathrow) there was not enough parking. We found one vacant spot after driving all round, looking hard, at lunchtime on the Friday, well before the opening ceremony. And it looked like "no room at the Inn", because it took hotel reception quite a while to find us a room. Puns aside, this is a large hotel, very busy with cosmopolitan travellers and aircrew.

There were frequent book launches, mostly by small presses, all with free wine, only some of it drinkable. The dealers' room was about eight tiny rooms and one slightly more capacious. There was one solitary second-hand book table (though even that is one more than at Novacon).

The art show was large with a wide range of enticingly wonderful originals, prints and jewellery (at prices up to £8000). Among the usual suspects were Jim Burns, Margaret Walty, Fangorn and Dave Hardy. It was lovely to see, for the first time, tattoo artists Emma and Luke, baring

evidence of their talents. The art auction itself (limited to items with two or more bids) was a farce, with just 15 pieces and lasting 20 minutes.

On Saturday night we were serenaded by Mitch Benn, the satirical songwriter/guitarist, with a marvellously entertaining set of old and new material, full of humour, imprecation and deafening decibels. He's an SF fan and has performed at an Eastercon before.



A different sort of highlight was the presentation to **Dave Hardy** of a certificate of **Fellowship of the British Interplanetary Society** (an immense honour, limited to an iconic few).

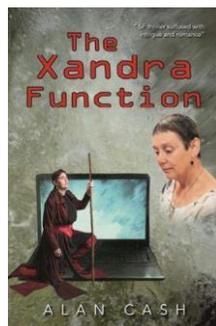
Pauline and I performed some of our poems at an enjoyable open mike event. Dave Langford was selling copies of **NEW MAPS** by John Sladek, new this month. Dave has carefully assembled this second volume of uncollected writings by the late John Sladek (1937-2000). It's an outstandingly witty volume, well worth buying (see details in **ANSIBLE**) and has kept me chortling for the last four days.

As with most cons, my leading highlights were conversations. I managed to talk with Christopher Priest (don't miss his visit to the Brum Group in July), with artists including Jim Burns, Fangorn, Chris Moore and Judy Perrin, with long-time fan, Mary Burns and with John Brunner's widow, Liyi. Next year's Eastercon will be at the NEC.

(Photograph ©Jackie Burns)

News from Ex-Member, Alan Cash

Some of you may remember Alan Cash. He used to be Secretary and was involved in building a space capsule for the Lord Mayor's Show. He made a film for the group called "Kentucky Fried Warp Drive". He is having a book signing for his new book, **THE XANDRA FUNCTION** in May. This will be at **WH Smiths (Park Street) Walsall** from **11am to 1 pm** on Saturday **25th May**. Everyone welcome. For anyone who is interested, the book is £8.99 paperback and can be found on Amazon.



BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION AWARDS

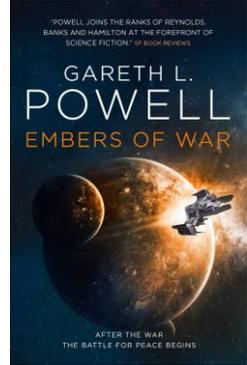
The winners of the BSFA Awards were announced at Ytterbium (Eastercon) at Heathrow on the 20th April.

Best Novel: EMBERS OF WAR by Gareth L Powell (Titan Books)

Best Short Fiction: TIME WAS by Ian McDonald (Tor.com Publishing).

Best Artwork: Likhain for IN THE VANISHERS' PALACE: DRAGON I and II (story by Aliette de Bodard).

Best Non-Fiction: "On Motherhood and Erasure: People-shaped holes, hollow characters and the illusion of impossible adventures" by Aliette de Bodard (Intellectus Speculativus)



HUGO AWARD NOMINATIONS

The finalists for the Hugo Awards and the John W Campbell Award for Best New Writer have been announced. There was also a Retro Hugo shortlist for 1943. The final nominees for Best Novel are given below. (Full details of all categories are available at www.thehugoawards.org/).

BEST NOVEL NOMINEES

RECORD OF A SPACEBORN FEW by Becky Chambers (Hodder & Stoughton)

THE CALCULATING STARS by Mary Robinette Kowal (Solaris)

SPINNING SILVER by Naomi Novik (Macmillan)

TRAIL OF LIGHTNING by Rebecca Roanhorse (Saga)

REVENANT GUN by Yoon Ha Lee (Solaris)

SPACE OPERA by Catherynne M Valente (Corsair)

BEST 1944 NOVEL NOMINEES

DAS GLASPERLENSPIEL by Herman Hesse (Fretz & Wasmuth)

CONJURE WIFE by Fritz Leiber Jr (*Unknown Worlds* 4/43)

GATHER DARKNESS by Fritz Leiber Jr (*Astounding Science Fiction* 5-7/43)

PERELANDRA by C S Lewis (Bodley Head)

EARTH'S LAST CITADEL by C L Moore & Henry Kuttner (*Argosy* 4/43)

THE WEAPON MAKERS by A E Van Vogt (*Astounding Science Fiction* 2-4/43)

CINEMA FILM RELEASES

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

HIGH LIFE - Release date May 10th. A father and daughter struggle to survive in deep space.

ALADDIN - Release date May 24th. Live action remake of the Disney cartoon.

AD ASTRA - Release date May 22nd. Horror. An astronaut searching the outer solar system for his missing father must unravel a mystery that threatens Earth's survival.

GODZILLA: KING OF THE MONSTERS - Release date May 29th. Godzilla battles other monsters Mothra, Rodan and King Ghidorah.

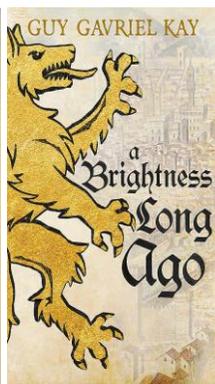
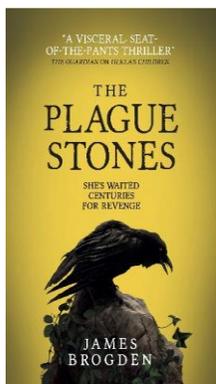
MA - Release date May 31st. Horror. A lonely woman lets teenagers party at her house, but she is not as friendly as the kids believe.

X-MEN: DARK PHOENIX - Release date June 5th. Marvel. When Jean Grey's powers turn her into Dark Phoenix, the X-Men may have to kill her to protect the world.

MEN IN BLACK INTERNATIONAL - Release date June 14th. The Men in Black have a mole in their organisation. CG

FORTHCOMING BOOKS

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

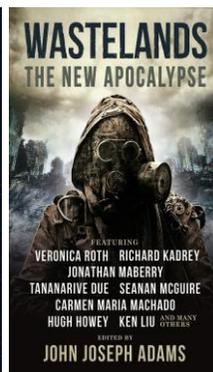
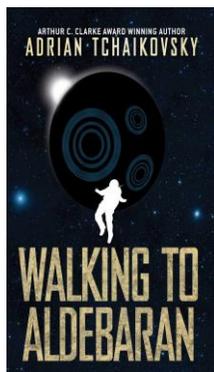
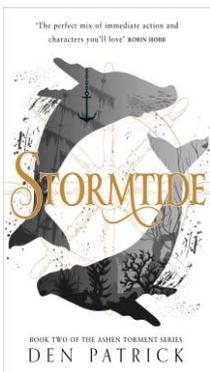
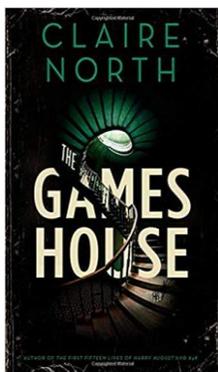


THE PLAGUE STONES by James Brogden / Titan Books / 496 pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1785659959 / May 14th. Ancient boundary stones around a small village still affect the modern world.

A BRIGHTNESS LONG AGO by Guy Gavriel Kay / Hodder & Stoughton / 448 pgs / £19.99 hardback / ISBN 978-1473692336 / May 14th. In an alternative Renaissance Italy, two mercenary commanders' rivalry puts a world in peril.

THE POISON SONG (The Winnowing Flame 3) by Jen Williams / Headline / 576 pgs / 14.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1472235220 / May 16th. The fell-witch Noon must recruit new allies against the invading Jure'lia.

CHILDREN OF RUIN (Children of Time 20) by Adrian Tchaikovsky / Tor / 576 pgs / £18.99 hardback / ISBN 978-1509865833 / May 16th. SF. In a new solar system, the combined abilities of the uplifted spiders and humans are needed to deal with new alien lifeforms.



GAMESHOUSE by Claire North / Orbit / 432 pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0356513122 / May 30th. Three unusually talented contestants compete in the Gameshouse for the highest stakes of all.

STORMTIDE (The Ashen Torment 2) by Den Patrick / HarperVoyager / 464 pgs / £14.99 hardback / ISBN 978-0008228163 / May 30th. Steiner and his scattered crew continue to fight against the dark rule that persecutes all those born with the witchsign.

WALKING TO ALDEBARAN by Adrian Tchaikovsky / Solaris / 140 pgs / £25 hardback / ISBN 978-1781087060 / May 30th. SF. A lost astronaut stranded on an alien artefact, struggles to find a way home.

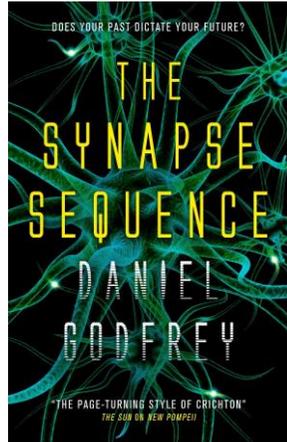
WASTELANDS: The New Apocalypse edited by John Joseph Adams / Titan Books / 512 pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1785658952 / June 4th. Anthology of post-apocalyptic stories by Hugh Howey, Seanan McGuire, Ken Liu, Charlie Jane Anders, Paolo Bacigalupi et al *CG*

📖📖📖📖 **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)**

THE SYNAPSE SEQUENCE by Daniel Godfrey
Titan Books / 432 pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1785653179
Reviewed by Carol Goodwin

Whilst I was aware that a lot of good things were being said about Daniel Godfrey’s work. I hadn’t read any of his books before. Based on reading **THE SYNAPSE SEQUENCE** I will definitely be looking for his other books. For a relatively short book it packs in a lot of ideas and action, all set in a near-future UK which feels depressingly likely. Jobs are being increasingly performed by bots and managed by AI’s, with fewer and fewer jobs available to humans. Most people subsist on a basic Universal Income (UI) and there is a growing resentment that is moving up the class ladder.



The synapse sequencer of the title is a machine which allows someone to directly experience the memories of another person. At the start of the book it is still in the early development stages but has a number of potentially very lucrative uses. Anna Glover is an ex-accident investigator, now virtually unemployable after her conclusions about an aircraft crash were used as justification to start an unpopular and nasty war in Tanzania. She is now testing the synapse sequencer’s potential to investigate crime based on directly accessing the memories of witnesses. Much criminal investigation is now computerised and heavily reliant on data from closed circuit cameras, electronic purchases and social media. Prioritisation of which crimes to investigate is decided by algorithms supposedly based on the likelihood of success versus the resources needed but clearly also considers political factors such as notoriety and the public’s interest in a case.

When the daughter of a high-profile couple is kidnapped, Anna (and the company) are approached by a PI as the only potential witness is her foster brother, who has been badly beaten and is now in a coma. Despite the girl's high status, the police investigation has been given a low priority. As Anna delves into the young man (N'Golo's) memories she starts to uncover evidence that this is not just a simple ransom kidnapping. It has ramifications linked to the political landscape and the conflicts over how much should machines be allowed to watch and control society, and she faces increasing obstacles and dangers as she progresses.

As I said at the beginning, there is a lot packed into this book. The setting of the story feels very credible and convincing and shows a lot of thought. Anna, the main protagonist, is interesting as someone who has to make some morally dubious choices due to her circumstances. At times the book reminds me of some of Philip K Dick's themes, considering things such as how much can one trust the memories of one person and how much do Anna's own assumptions and prejudices affect her analysis and conclusions. It also has some of the feel of Michael Crichton's work; combining SF ideas with exciting action to appeal to a broader audience. In short, it works really well as a tense, complex thriller and I can see it also being enjoyed by readers outside the SF field.

CG

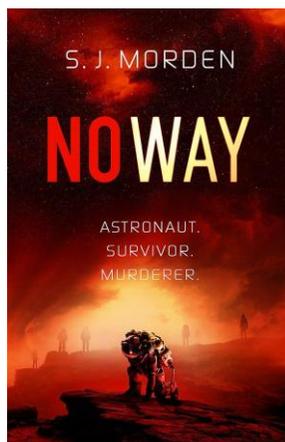
(Review copy kindly donated by Titan Books)

NO WAY by S J Morden

Gollancz / 416 pgs / £14.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1478222592

Reviewed by Jim Pearce

This is the follow-up to ONE WAY, both written under Simon Morden's pen name of S J Morden. Simon has previously written several books as well as winning the Phillip K. Dick Award and has been a judge on the Arthur C. Clarke Award. He has degrees in Geology and planetary Geophysics so he should know what he is talking about when writing a book about the exploration of Mars, and it shows. As with ONE WAY this book was a pleasure to read as it is full of engrossing action which takes place in an extremely demanding and well described environment.



If you have already read ONE WAY or my review published in the June 2018 (No 561) edition of the BRUM Group News you may remember that a private conglomeration, Xenosystems Operations (XO)

has, with promises of a fully automated construction process, won the contract to build NASA's permanent Mars base. Unfortunately for them the required technology does not work! So without telling NASA they decide to manually construct the base using long-term convicts with appropriate technical backgrounds to do the construction and maintenance work before NASA's professional astronauts arrive. Accompanying these prisoners to Mars was one XO supervisor, who was to return to Earth when the NASA astronauts leave. Shortly after they arrive things started to go wrong resulting with Frank Kitteridge, a convicted murderer being the last man standing. All this is succinctly covered in the first few chapters of *NO WAY* so readers who have not read the first book are not at any disadvantage. That said I would highly recommend reading *ONE WAY* just because it's very, very good.

In *NO WAY* the situation is that Frank has come to an accommodation with XO and agrees that if he takes the place of the XO supervisor without letting the astronauts know who he actually is and successfully supports their mission he can come home with them at the end of the mission. But naturally things are not that simple as XO cannot be trusted and will do anything to protect its own interests. What follows is high quality human interaction interspaced with high drama as Frank becomes integral to the NASA mission enabling them to meet and survive the threats that Mars and XO throws in their way. All this action is set in a well-described unforgiving world coupled with realistic science and ends in a totally believable way that sets the scene for a concluding volume.

As I said at the beginning of this review, I really enjoyed *NO WAY* and its predecessor and look forward to reading the sequel. I highly recommend it. (*Review copy kindly donated by Titan Books*) *JTP*

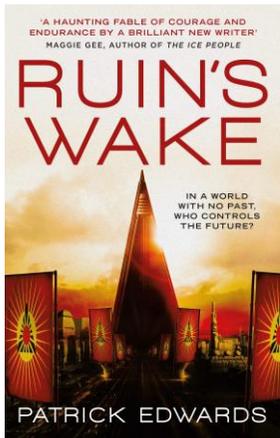
***RUIN'S WAKE* by Patrick Edwards**

Titan Books / 448 pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1785658792

Reviewed by Carol Goodwin

This is the debut novel by Patrick Edwards. It's set in a militaristic, totalitarian regime, where the state controls most things. The story is told through the alternating viewpoints of three protagonists; Cale; an old soldier living at the edge of civilisation; Kelbee, a young woman sold into an arranged, abusive marriage to a high-ranking military officer; and Professor Sulara, Song, a female scientist, marginalised and side-lined in the patriarchal society, who has discovered a strange relic from the past. These three people, for various personal reasons, converge on the site of the mysterious ancient artefact, which has the potential to have a profound effect on the future of the repressive regime.

In writing about a dystopia, there is always a danger in making it too unpleasant. The book has a pronounced “grimdark” feel and is quite graphic in some sections. There is an audience for this type of book but it’s not to my taste, so I am perhaps the wrong reader here. While the society is clearly written as misogynistic and male-dominated, I personally found the violence that Kelbee in particular endures repugnant. It also felt to me



that the author was more comfortable and adept at writing male characters and I found the two female characters less convincing and almost stereotypical at times.

While each character does have something to contribute to the final conflict, I felt that at times the pace in getting them there was a little slow. In particular, Cale’s journey felt overlong for the amount of character development that he underwent and would have benefitted from being shorter. One of the problems I have with a lack of pace in a story is that I start to pay more attention to little niggles that drop me out of the flow of the story. In particular, Dr Song’s sections are written in a different font, which is very distracting and I am not sure why it is necessary.

As an SF story, I also felt that the story would have benefitted from more information about the previous more technological society. Whilst the protagonists could not be expected to know much, due to the regime’s suppression of information, there could have been more detail given to the reader. At times until near the end it felt to me that the story had very few science fiction elements to it. In short, while some SF readers may enjoy this book, it’s not one for me.

CG

(Review copy kindly donated by Titan Books)

THE TRUE QUEEN by Zen Cho

Macmillan / 367 pgs / £16.99 hardback / ISBN 978-1509801077

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

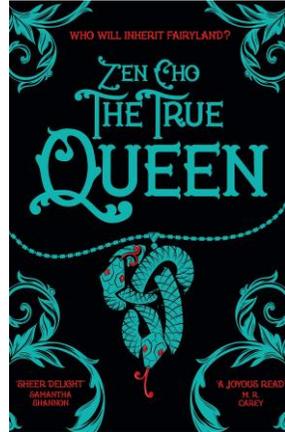
As many writers will tell you, producing the second novel to the high standard of the first can be fraught with difficulty. With her first novel, **SORCERER TO THE CROWN** Zen Cho blended history with folklore from the cultures of both England and Malaysia, added social issues that are still relevant today and stirred the mix with sorcery. This second novel, **THE TRUE QUEEN** contains a similar mixture but with different flavours.

The setting for both these novels is the Regency Period. England is at war with France and the British Empire is already extensive. The former barely impinges on London society as the aristocratic classes know the navy will keep them safe. Their battles are closer to home, one of them being how to persuade the rulers of fairyland to allow the flow of magic back into Britain. This was an issue not resolved in **SORCERER TO THE CROWN**.

Off the coast of Malacca (now part of Malaysia), the island of Janda Baik is rich in magic. It is the home of Mak Genggang, a powerful witch who influenced the action in the first book. After a great storm, two girls, sisters Muna and Sakti are washed up on the island. They are taken in by the witch as they have no memory of their past. They believe themselves to be cursed so Mak Genggang resolves to send them to England to consult the Sorceress Royal – Prunella Wythe a focal character from the first book. She sends the girls by the fast route, through Fairyland. Unfortunately, Sakti vanishes en route and only Muna makes it.

In England, Rollo Threlfall, one of Prunella’s friends has his own problems. A true sorcerer has a familiar who willingly serves his sorcerer. Rollo is sorcerer Damerell’s familiar (in more ways than one) and although preferring the guise of a human, is actually a dragon whose family hold estates in fairyland. His family has been entrusted to guard an object known as the Virtu. Now the Queen of the Unseen Court wants it back and it has disappeared. The Queen believes Rollo has stolen it and sends the Duke of the Navel of the Seas to issue an ultimatum to the English that if it is not returned, the Queen will wipe out England and all who live there. Rollo’s problems are tied up with those of Muna.

On one level, this novel is very much a Regency Romance with added magic. It also explores various other issues. In **SORCERER TO THE CROWN** prejudice was a predominant theme. Prunella was not only a woman wanting to practice thaumaturgy – a province for men only – but also an orphan, penniless and of mixed heritage (it was likely that her parents were unmarried as well). Her ally, and later her husband, was a manumitted slave with the effrontery to have inherited the staff of Sorcerer Royal. Although these issues are still present to a lesser degree in **THE TRUE QUEEN**, others come to the fore. Zen Cho explores the relationship between sisters who are very different from each other – two



sides of the same coin. Prunella's friend Henrietta is being persuaded into a marriage she doesn't want - for the sake of the family and the relationship between Rollo and Damerell is one that isn't talked about in polite society. Most characters have to walk the maze of social mores.

Both these novels have at their centre a mystery. Here it is not just the origins of Muna and Sakti or the whereabouts of the Virtu but why the Fairy Queen is determined not to allow England a fair flow of magic.

Zen Cho won the BFS Award for Best Debut Novel in 2016 for **SORCERER TO THE CROWN**. Will this book have the same success? Only time will tell.

PM

(Review copy kindly donated by Pan Macmillan Books)

***HURRICANE (Hive Mind 3)* by Janet Edwards**

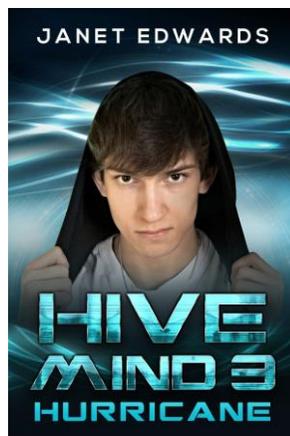
Independently published / 399 pgs / £9.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1795266383

Reviewed by Carol Goodwin

Of the various books Janet Edwards has written, I think the *Hive Mind* series are my favourites. For those who aren't aware of them, they are set in a future where most people now live in giant self-contained cities or "hives". At the age of 18, everyone is assessed and assigned to a job which most precisely matches their abilities and inclinations. To enable them to quickly become productive, their minds are imprinted with the necessary knowledge. The protagonist, Amber is one of the rare exceptions. She is a newly-identified telepath and vital to the stability of the hive society. Unlike others she is not imprinted

as there is a risk it might interfere with her telepathic abilities. One of only five telepaths in the hive, she uses her abilities to identify and isolate criminals before they can commit crimes. In the previous books, Amber has been growing into her role and learning to deal with the problems of being a telepath. She is also slowly starting to discover and question things about the organisation and rules of the Hive city.

In **HURRICANE**, Amber and her team move outside the city to investigate a series of crimes in the sea farm unit. This is an additional challenge as the small sea-farm community are more independently minded than the contented city dwellers she is used to scanning. Assessment and imprinting at 18 is not compulsory there, and any minor "policing" needed is normally handled by their own security without the



need to involve telepaths. With a resentful population, the threat of an imminent hurricane and the escalating violence of the criminal, she faces probably her most daunting task yet.

I think it was Isaac Asimov who famously scorned those doubters who said that you can't write a good Science Fiction mystery. It may be more difficult but can be done as long as the author is "fair" with the reader (as is the case with any conventional mystery). In **HURRICANE**, Janet Edwards has written a very satisfying who-dunnit with plenty to keep the reader guessing. Although Amber has the ability to read minds, the author has clearly and cleverly included credible reasons and restrictions why identifying the "villain" takes time and effort. Another strength is that the characters in the book continue to be believable and relatable. Despite her abilities, Amber is not some "superwoman" and her doubts and insecurities make her more interesting to the reader and also what one would expect from an 18-year old girl having to suddenly cope with an unanticipated and extremely high-pressure role. As well as the main plot the author adds more depth to the story as she continues to explore and develop the arc plot about the Hive Societies and the role and abilities of telepaths. This is an eminently readable SF story that will appeal to a wide age range beyond just YA. I'm eagerly looking forward to the next instalment. *CG*
(Review copy kindly donated by the author)

NEWS IN BRIEF ...

Author **Gene Wolfe** passed away aged 87, after a long battle with heart disease. He is most well-known for his *Book of the New Sun* series. Various books in the series won the BSFA, World Fantasy, Locus, Nebula and Campbell Memorials Awards. In 1996 he was awarded the World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement and was made an SF Grand Master in 2012 ...

Following last month's news about **Vonda McIntyre's** illness, it has been announced she has passed away Next year's **Eastercon (2020)** will

be held in **Birmingham** at the Metropole Hilton at the NEC. Guests of Honour to date are Rhianna Pratchett, Tade Thompson and Alison Scott. More information at their website (www.concentric2020.uk/) The winners of the **Kitschies Awards** for "intelligent and progressive SF" were **CIRCE** by Madeline Miller (Best Novel) and **FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD** by Ahmed Saadawi (Debut Novel) The winner of the **Philip K Dick Award** was **THEORY OF BASTARDS** by Audrey



Schulman, with 84K by **Claire North** received a special citation **Tor Books** is to launch a **Horror imprint**, Nightfire The **Brave New Words Awards Shortlist** has been announced. The winner will be announced at Edge Lit in Derby in July. Finalists are **ORIGAMY (Rachel Armstrong)**, **84K (Claire North)**, **EMPIRE OF SAND (Tasha Suri)**, **ROSEWATER (Tade Thompson)**, **THE LOOSENING SKIN (Aliya Whiteley)** and **LOST GODS (Micah Yongo)** The **David Gemmell Awards** for epic fantasy has closed, due to a lack of suitable volunteers The **Andre Norton Award** for YA SF has been upgraded to a full Nebula The first picture of a **black hole** was released by the Event Horizon Telescope *CG*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All details are correct to the best of our knowledge, we advise contacting organizers before travelling. Any information about forthcoming SF/Fantasy/Horror events is always welcome - please send to Carol at goodwinced@yahoo.com

JAMES BROGDEN Book Launch, 11th May. Local author (and former BSFG guest) launches his latest novel, **THE PLAGUE STONES** at Foyles, Grand Central Birmingham. 6:30pm. Free. Book at www.foyles.co.uk/Public/Events/Detail.aspx?eventId=3883

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW play, 13th - 25th May. Tickets £13 - £55. At the Alexandra Theatre, Suffolk Queensway. www.atgtickets.com/

COMIC POTENTIAL, play, 16th - 18th May. The Luke Players present Alan Ayckbourn's comedy about an android that develops a sense of humour and human emotions. MAC (Midlands Arts Centre). Tickets £7 - £9. <https://macbirmingham.co.uk/event/comic-potential>

APOLLO 10 - THE TEAM WHO GOT US TO THE MOON, 18th - 19th May, Leicester. Featuring Q & A with Dutch von Ehrenfried, Gerry Griffin, Sy Liebergot & Bill Moon, plus screening of **MISSION CONTROL** film. National Space Centre. Tickets from £15+ <https://spacecentre.co.uk> or 0116 261 0261

A MATTER OF LIFE & DEATH screening, 26th May. Classic Powell & Pressburger film. MAC at 2pm. www.macbirmingham.co.uk or 0121 446 3232.

CHRIS BAKER (FANGORN): A FANTASTIC VOYAGE, 19th June, Birmingham. SFF Artist Chris Baker (well known to the group) talks about

his work. At RBSA Gallery, 4 Brook Street. Booking Essential. 6 - 8:30pm. Info at www.rbsa.org.uk. Free to RBSA Friends/Non-members £5. Book: Gallery /0121 236 4353

AN EVENING WITH HELEN SHARMAN, FIRST BRITISH ASTRONAUT, 22nd June. Helen Sharman talks about her experiences. At Town Hall, Birmingham. £20.50 - 53. At Box Office, 0121 780 49490 or www.thsh.co.uk

IN CONVERSATION WITH MARGARET ATWOOD, 28th October. Symphony Hall. £20.50 - 38. Box Office (0121 780 49490 or www.thsh.co.uk *CG*

CONVENTIONS and EXHIBITIONS

NEW APOLLO 50th ANNIVERSARY exhibition, 23rd March - 3rd November, Stoke on Trent. A special exhibition featuring 50 models, memorabilia etc. Free entry. The Potteries Museum, Stoke on Trent.

CYMERA BOOK FESTIVAL, 7th - 9th June, Edinburgh. Festival of SF, Fantasy & Horror Writing. Tickets for individual sessions at www.cymerafestival.co.uk

EDGE-LIT 8, 13th July, Derby. Literary SF/Fantasy festival. Guests of Honour Aliette de Bodard, Christopher Golden, Anne Charnock, Neil Spring, Tim Lebbon & Sarah Lotz. Tickets £30 at www.derbyquad.co.uk/whats-on/events/edge-lit-8

TOLKIEN 2019, 7th - 11th August, Birmingham. 50th Year Anniversary of Tolkien Society, MacDonald Burlington Hotel (New Street). £95 www.tolkienociety.org

WORLDCON 2019, 15th - 19th August, Dublin. Guests of Honour Ian McDonald, Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Steve Jackson, Diane Duane, Ginjer Buchanan and Bill & Mary Burns. Convention Centre. 235 Euros. <https://dublin2019.com/>

FANTASYCON, 18th -20th October, Glasgow. Guests of Honour to be announced. Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel, Glasgow. £65. www.fantasycon.org

BRISTOLCON, 26th October, Bristol. Guests of Honour Diane Duane, Gareth Powell & Andy Bigwood. Doubletree Hotel. £20. Details at www.bristolcon.org

NOVACON 49, 8th – 10th November, Nottingham. Guest of Honour is Mike Carey. Nottingham Sherwood Hotel (same venue – name has changed), Nottingham. Tickets £49 till end of Eastercon. Details at www.novacon.org.uk

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG

June 14th – Fantasy authors **Jeannette Ng** and **Micah Yongo**

July 12th – SF authors, **Christopher Priest** and **Nina Allan**

August 9th – Summer Social

September 13th – tbc

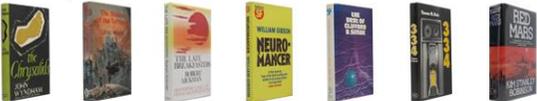
October 11th – Space scientist, **Dr Amaury Triaud**

November 1st – tbc (NB early in month due to Novacon)

December 6th – Christmas Social

BRUM GROUP NEWS #572 (May 2019) copyright 2019; 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). 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.

Durdles Books is run by Ian & Lou Morley, BSFG members
Some expensive items but we have books to suit all budgets



BSFG Members: use code BSFG18 for 10% order discount
Visit www.durdlesbooks.com email info@durdlesbooks.com
or call 0121 777 0209

Durdles Books
www.durdlesbooks.com

Science Fiction
Fantasy
Modern Firsts
Comics

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. Details of how to join/pay can be obtained at a meeting or by email to bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk