

BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

JUNE 2019

ISSUE 573

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Jeannette Ng & Micah Yongo

June 14th

Thanks to help from the publisher, Angry Robot, this month we are able to bring you two guests. Our guests this month are up and coming fantasy authors, **Jeannette Ng and Micah Yongo**



July 12th - We have two award-winning SF authors as guests, BSFG Honorary President, **Christopher Priest** and **Nina Allan**.

Jeannette Ng is originally from Hong Kong but now lives in Durham. Her MA in Medieval and Renaissance Studies fed into an interest in medieval and missionary theology, which in turn spawned her love for writing gothic fantasy with a theological twist. She runs live roleplay games and is active within the costuming community, running a popular blog. Her first novel, *UNDER THE PENDULUM SUN* was published in 2017 and is a gothic fantasy about a pair of Victorian missionaries going to fairyland. She won the Best Newcomer (Sydney J Bounds Award) in the British Fantasy Awards in 2018, She was a finalist for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer at Worldcon last year and is a finalist again for the 2019 Award. As well as her novel, she also writes short stories.

Micah Yongo is a Manchester-based writer and journalist with an interest in books (obviously), movies, the arts, boxsets, all things sci-fi, superheroes; random nerdy bits of pop psychology, anthropology or philosophy. His debut novel, *LOST GODS* (published in 2018) is an ancient Africa/Middle East-inspired epic fantasy novel about betrayal, hidden mythologies and adolescent assassins. The sequel, *PALE KINGS* is due for release in July. He is one of the finalists for *Starburst* magazine's Brave New Words Award. This award goes to an individual, not a specific work and the winner will be announced at Edge-Lit in Derby in July.

Further information can be found at <https://jeannetteng.co.uk> and <http://micahyongo.com> 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.

Erratum

Correction: In the Eastercon report it was mentioned that Dave Hardy was given a Fellowship of the British Interplanetary Society. Dave has been a Fellow for many years – what he received was an Honorary Fellowship of which only seven have ever been granted.

Membership Fee Increase & Revised Renewal Dates

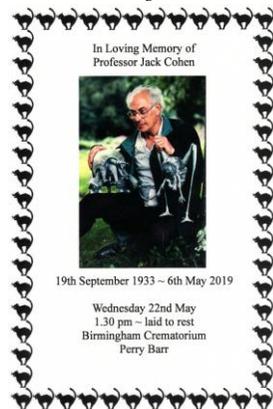
As discussed in the April newsletter, the membership fees need to be increased to keep the group going. An increase to £29 for single members and £39 for joint members was proposed. Following feedback from members, we have accepted that this is probably too big an increase to be palatable to many members. Accordingly, we have decided in the interests of retaining members, to **limit the increase to £25 per year for a single member and £35 for joint members**. On its own, the above action will not be enough to cover the group's expenses and the committee will continue to look at other ways to save money and/or increase revenue. As previously stated, the membership fee increase will be implemented for all renewals from 1st June 2019.

Also, as previously outlined, we will also be moving gradually over the next year to everyone having the same renewal month [March]. To phase this in throughout the year, those members whose renewal is due in 2019 will pay a pro-rata amount for 2019 to March 2020. This pro-rata amount will be based on the revised fee structure. For example, if your renewal is due in June you will pay for 9 months, to take your subscription through to **March 2020**. For the few members whose renewal is due in Jan/February 2020, you will pay for 13 or 14 months to take the renewal to **March 2021**. This means that for this year only (2019-2020) everyone will have a different renewal amount. However, the Membership Secretary will let you know your individual renewal amount with your renewal letter. From March 2020 every member will be renewing in March annually. CG

JACK COHEN'S FUNERAL by Vernon Brown

On the 22nd of last month Pat and I attended the funeral of Jack Cohen, reproductive biologist, science writer, and SF author, fan and consultant, who had died at the age of 86.

Although he will be known to the majority of those reading this through his SF activities, I first met him in the late 1950s when I left school to work in the Department of Zoology and Comparative Physiology at Birmingham University. I don't remember much about him then except that he was a friendly smiling chap whenever we met. After I left, I didn't see him again until he spoke to the BSFG in 1971, by which time he had spent a year at Harvard Medical School before returning to Birmingham University.



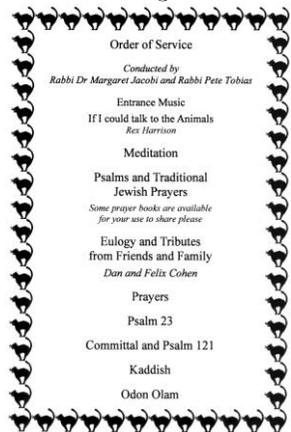
When he spoke in July 1971 on “Possible life on other planets” it was at the first formal meeting of the BSFG. It was an auspicious start for us and he has spoken to us several times since then, although not for a decade or so, possibly because he moved down South after working at the Humana IVF Clinic in London followed by some years at Warwick University. But his connection with the Group was not just as a speaker. He was a member of Mensa and, with other members, he persuaded Isaac Asimov to visit the UK in 1974 for the first and only time. After three days in London being interviewed, doing book signings and being GoH at the last meeting held at *The Globe*, Asimov spent a day in Birmingham at signing sessions, including of course *Andromeda Bookshop*, before speaking to a joint meeting of the BSFG and Mensa at the Holiday Inn Hotel.

As well as his talks to the BSFG Jack also spoke regularly at Novacons and Eastercons, was a speaker at Worldcon/Eurocon 1995 in Glasgow and was a Special Guest at Eurocon 1994 in Romania. In 1990 he met Ian Stewart, who is a BSFG member and regular speaker, and between them they have produced a fair number of books on science, the science behind SF and SF itself, the most well-known probably being the *Science of Discworld* series with Sir Terry Pratchett. And all this in addition to his research and teaching and writing seven academic books. A full and productive life.

Jack’s funeral took place at Birmingham Crematorium in Perry Bar. Outside the venue we met Tony Berry, Pauline and Chris Morgan and Steve Jones and chatted before entering.

The chapel was of moderate size, just right for the 70 to 80 people there, with the catafalque bearing Jack’s coffin at centre front. I understand that Jack was an observant Jew, and although he became an atheist, he continued to attend synagogue, so his funeral service was a Jewish one. It was quiet and low-key, mainly psalms and prayers plus tributes from friends and family, no hymns although one of the two officiating Rabbis sang several times. It was the first Jewish service that I have ever attended, although I have visited a synagogue; it’s difficult to express in words but I found it quite soothing and enveloping, quite different from the constant activity found in so many services. Jack would have been pleased how it went.

After the service we met outside for a few minutes. We were joined by Ian Stewart and his wife before we all (apart from Tony Berry) drove to Great Barr Golf Club. It was an enjoyable occasion, apart from its *raison d’etre*, as people mingled. We met Nickolas, Jack’s son, an ex-member of the Group,



who had left when he became a father; and a school friend of Jack's, who regaled us with tales of Jack's love of animals and of how they had once carried two large snakes around their necks on the London Underground – for some odd reason they were soon travelling in an empty carriage! At one point we were joined by a couple who had heard that we were from an SF group and wanted to know more so we did a bit of advertising there. At intervals during the celebration tributes and reminiscences of Jack were given, during one of which, given by Ian, everyone raised a glass to Jack's memory.

But at last it was time to go so we made our thanks to Jack's daughter Rebecca who had organised it, and made our exit. It had been an enjoyable occasion and, again, I am sure that Jack would have been pleased with it.

CLAIRE NORTH – not quite a review by Chris Morgan

The best thing at Fantasycon in October last year was Claire North. She's young (33), articulate and strongly opinionated. She's a prolific writer, with more than twenty books published. She has a day job (as a lighting engineer). And her name isn't Claire North.

Before Fantasycon I'd never heard of her. Since Fantasycon I've been reading her novels. I'd better explain that her real name is Catherine Webb (under which she's written for teenagers). She's also written magical fantasy as Kate Griffin.

There are five stand-alone novels as by Claire North. All of them contain SF elements (mostly along with bits of fantasy and horror) and all, in my opinion, are worth reading. In *THE FIRST FIFTEEN LIVES OF HARRY AUGUST* (2014) the central idea is concerned with reincarnation. Harry is born in 1918. When he dies, he keeps his memories and repeats his life, trying to improve on it each time. So, it's a novel mainly set in the past, and it takes a scientific look at the problems of reincarnation. Some 1200 years are telescoped into 400 pages. Harry is lucky and talented, perhaps too much so, but it's easy to suspend disbelief. There are plenty of plot twists and North's approach, telling the story in 82 brief chapters, makes for a gripping and fast-paced read. It's a novel of great promise but with stylistic problems in places.

In *TOUCH* (2015) the gimmick is a talent for being able to inhabit the mind of another person. The narrator, Kepler, can move swiftly from one mind to another, simply by touching the next person. The host usually knows nothing about it until Kepler moves on, often leaving him or her in a confused state, depending on the length of time Kepler has been inhabiting that mind.



The plot here is the same as in *HARRY AUGUST*, in that a small group of talented people is being destroyed by an agency, which has to be found and stopped. Again, it's a great read partly due to short chapters.

THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF HOPE (2016) concerns a young woman of that name whose disability or talent is to be easily forgotten (despite being half-Sudanese and very dark-skinned). Within a couple of minutes of any interaction, people forget her. This (beginning from puberty) complicates family life, studying at college or personal relationships. So, Hope adopts the only profession open to her: she becomes a thief. There's a complex thriller plot and her condition is scientifically studied (in an attempt to make this novel into SF). North makes a fine job of research, using convincing small details to bring to life many British and foreign settings. This time there are 106 brief chapters, and it won the International Fantasy Award.

Charlie, who is young, male and living in London, lands the job of being the Harbinger of Death in *THE END OF THE DAY* (2017). Death, whose HQ is in Milton Keynes, makes several appearances in the book. Charlie's role is to deliver specific gifts to specific people around the world (usually but not always just before they die). So, this is more of a fantasy novel, humorous at the start, becoming much darker as it goes on. North is trying to say things here about the world dying as people become nastier and less tolerant, especially in the US (where the last third is set). The story is less entertaining because of all this stuff North is determined to say. Later chapters (110 of them) become increasingly fragmented.

At last, *84K* (2018) is definitely SF, being a near future dystopia of immense bleakness. It portrays a Britain where The Company controls everything and all public services have to be paid for by the recipient. If you can't pay you become a pattie (a slave working for The Company) or they just kill you. If you can pay you can commit crimes, even murder, and simply pay an indemnity to avoid punishment. Against this background Theo Miller (not his real name) is trying to bring down the system and find the location of a young woman who may be his daughter. He travels on a narrowboat with Neila, its owner, and he frequently gets beaten up by different sides. North uses naturalistic dialogue in this novel, allowing sentences to tail off, and while this suits Theo's personality, using it for all speakers brings a certain unwarranted hesitancy to everything. The 83 chapters help keep the plot moving along. Most of North's novels have been at least nominated for awards; this one was a runner-up for the 2019 Philip K Dick Award.

Do yourself a favour and try one of these novels. And I was so impressed by Claire North in person that I feel she should be invited as a Brum Group speaker and/or a GoH at a future Novacon.

None of these were review copies; I bought them all.

CM

CINEMA FILM RELEASES

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

BRIGHTBURN - Release date June 21st. Retelling of Superman origin story where he becomes a villain not a hero.

TOY STORY 4 - Release date June 21st. Animation. The toys go on a road trip.

APOLLO 11 - Release date June 28th. Limited release. A look at the Apollo 11 mission including never-before-seen footage.

SPIDER-MAN: FAR FROM HOME - Release date July 2nd. After AVENGERS: ENDGAME events, Spider-Man must cope with new threats in a changed world.

MIDSOMMAR - Release date July 5th. Horror. A young woman joins her boyfriend at a Swedish festival, but things quickly go wrong.

THE DEAD DON'T DIE - Release date July 12th. Comedy Horror. Starring Bill Murray. The peaceful town of Centerville battles a zombie horde. *CG*

NEBULA AWARD WINNERS

The Science Fiction Writers of America have named the winners of the annual Nebula Awards.

Best Novel: THE CALCULATING STARS by Mary Robinette Kowal (Rebellion)

Best Novella: THE TEA MASTER AND THE DETECTIVE by Aliette de Bodard (Subterranean Press)

Best Novelette: “The Only Harmless Great Thing” by Brooke Bolander (*Tor.com*)

Best Short Story: “The Secret Lives of the Nine Negro Teeth of George Washington” by P Djeli Clark (*Fireside Magazine*)

Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Science Fiction and Fantasy:

CHILDREN OF BLOOD AND BONE by Tomi Adeyemi (Macmillan)

Best Game Writing: BLACK MIRROR: BANDERSNATCH by Charlie Brooker (*House of Tomorrow/Netflix*)

Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation: SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE by Phil Lord & Rodney Rothman

Kevin J. O'Donnell Service to SFWA Award: Lee Martindale

Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award: Nisi Shawl & Neil Clarke

Damon Knight Grand Master Award: William Gibson

CLARKE AWARD NOMINATIONS - SHORTLIST

The nominees for the Arthur C Clarke Award have been announced. The winner will be announced on July 17th.

SEMIOSIS by Sue Burke (Harper Voyager)

REVENANT GUN by Yoon Ha Lee (Solaris)

FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD by Ahmed Sandawi (Oneworld)

THE ELECTRIC STATE by Simon Stalenhag (Simon & Schuster)

ROSEWATER by Tade Thompson (Orbit)

THE LOOSENING SKIN by Aliya Whiteley (Unsung Stories)

LOCUS AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Locus Science Fiction Foundation has announced the finalists for the 2018 Locus Awards. The nominees for the SF novel and Fantasy novel categories are given below. Full details of all categories are available at <https://locusmag.com/2019/05/2019-locus-awards-finalists/>

SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL

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

THE CALCULATING STARS by Mary Robinette Kowal (Rebellion)

IF TOMORROW COMES by Nancy Kress (Tor)

BLACKFISH CITY by Sam J Miller (Orbit)

REVENANT GUN by Yoon Ha Lee (Solaris)

EMBERS OF WAR by Gareth Powell (Titan)

ELYSIUM FIRE by Alastair Reynolds (Gollancz)

RED MOON by Kim Stanley Robinson (Orbit)

UNHOLY LAND by Lavie Tidhar (Tachyon)

SPACE OPERA by Catherynne M Valente (Corsair)

FANTASY NOVEL

LIES SLEEPING by Ben Aaronovitch (Gollancz)

FOUNDRYSIDE by Robert Jackson Bennett (Jo Fletcher)

THE MONSTER BARU CORMORANT by Seth Dickinson (Tor)

DEEP ROOTS by Ruthanna Emrys (Tor.com Publishing)

AHAB'S RETURN by Jeffrey Ford (Morrow)

EUROPEAN TRAVEL FOR THE MONSTROUS GENTLEWOMAN by Theodora Goss (Saga)

THE MERE WIFE by Maria Dahvana Headley (MCD)

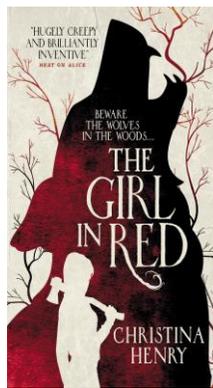
THE WONDER ENGINE by T Kingfisher (Argyll Productions)

SPINNING SILVER by Naomi Novik (Macmillan)

CREATURES OF WANT AND RUIN by Molly Tanzer (John Joseph Adams)

FORTHCOMING BOOKS

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

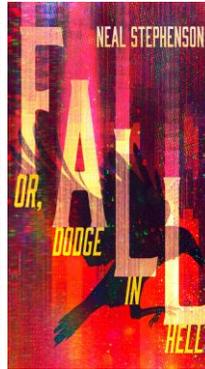
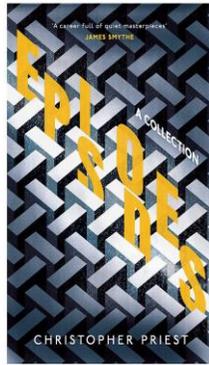


VELOCITY WEAPON by Megan O'Keefe / Orbit / 544 pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0356512228 / June 13th. SF. Sanda awakens 230 years in the future, to be told the star system is dead, but can she believe her “rescuer”?

THE GIRL IN RED by Christina Henry / Titan Books / 368 pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1785659775 / June 18th. SF-retelling of Red Riding Hood. Red is a woman trying to survive in a world turned upside down since the Crisis disease.

THE GRAND DARK by Richard Kadrey / Harper Voyager / 416 pgs / £9.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0008288853 / June 27th. A young man is caught up in the politics of a strange city, Proszawa as it prepares for war.

GROWING THINGS and Other Stories by Paul Tremblay / Titan Books / 496 pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1785657849 / July 2nd. Horror. A chilling short story collection by Bram Stoker Award-winning author.



EXHALATION by Ted Chiang / Picador / 368 pgs / £16.99 hardback / ISBN 978-1529014488 / July 11th. SF. Short story collection by author whose short story was the basis of the SF film, ARRIVAL.

EPISODES by Christopher Priest / Gollancz / 368 pgs / £20 hardback / ISBN 978-1473226005 / July 11th. SF. Short story collection including commentary and reflections from the author.

FALL, OR, DODGE IN HELL by Neal Stephenson / The Borough Press / 896 pgs / £20 hardback / ISBN 978-0008168827 / July 11th. SF. A gaming billionaire dies and awakens in a digital “afterlife” that may not be as perfect as it first appears.

PALE KINGS (Lost Gods 2) by Micah Yongo / Angry Robot / 432 pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-0857667854 / July 12th. The secrets of a young assassin’s childhood are vital to defeating a nameless enemy. *CG*

📖📖📖📖 **BOOK REVIEWS** 📖📖📖📖

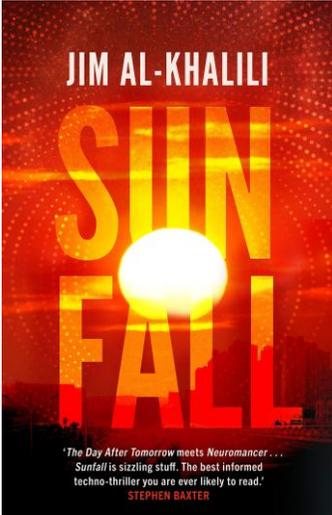
(REVIEWERS please note: - all reviews should be emailed direct to me at goodwinced@yahoo.com **Deadline** for each issue is 14 days prior to the date of the monthly meeting)

SUNFALL by Jim Al-Khalili
Bantam Press / 375 pgs / £16.99 hardback / ISBN 978-0593077429
Reviewed by Michael Jones

There have always been professional scientists and mathematicians who have, presumably in their spare time, turned their hands to writing SF - Smith, Bell, Sheffield, Vinge, Brin, Benford to name just a few. More recently, the likes of

Carl Sagan, Brian Cox, Hannah Fry, and others whose names are omitted only because they do not immediately come to mind, are to be found fronting popular science programmes on radio and TV. Now, to tick all the boxes, physicist and successful broadcaster Professor Jim Al-Khalili has published his first SF novel.

He posits an incipient collapse of the Earth's magnetic field which normally protects us from the devastating effect of Coronal Mass Ejections from the Sun. Without that protection, we can look forward to probably nothing less than the end of civilisation as we know it and perhaps even the extinction of life altogether.



Inevitably in this sort of situation it takes a group of maverick scientists to come up with an audacious solution - restarting the magnetic field with beams of dark matter! - and get it accepted by the powers-that-be so that it can be put into effect. It is of course inevitable in this kind of novel that they will be successful, but the story is as much about the obstacles that they have to overcome and their personal problems and struggles as it is about the scientific process. It has been suggested elsewhere that the characters involved lack depth and personality, but that does not in fact seem to be sufficiently the case to constitute a significant detraction.

Meanwhile the gravity of the situation has been made apparent by accounts of storms, tidal waves, plane crashes etc. much in the manner of a mainstream disaster movie. At the same time a quasi-religious group believing that the extinction of humanity is the true destiny of the Earth comes into being and plans to sabotage the plan to save the world and as one might have expected the true identity of the leader of this movement is only revealed at the last possible moment, just in time for him to be thwarted. This kind of thing has, of course, been done several times before, there being a propensity for SF writers to introduce the science-vs-religion dichotomy as a means of demonstrating the superiority of the rational point of view. The result is a tendency for *SUNFALL* to stray into the thriller area popularised by the likes of Michael Crichton or Dan Brown (Readers unable to see beyond the latter's association with *THE DA VINCI CODE* should perhaps try his latest, *ORIGIN*, an intriguing speculation on human evolution both past and future.)

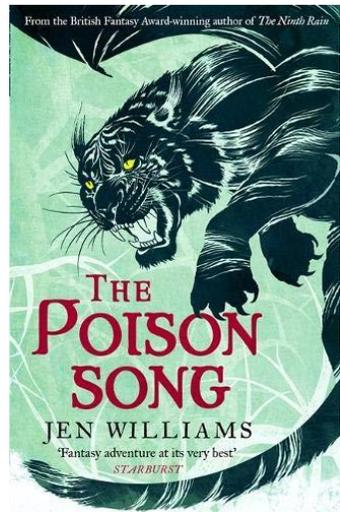
However, the science does take centre stage in the story and

SUNFALL does not fail to be an enjoyable book, holding the reader's attention to the very end if only to see how the science and all the other complications are all worked out. (Needless to say, they are.) The author has taken great care to be sure that the science can be presumed to be flawless, however speculative, and any shortcomings of plotting or characterisation are not massive enough to worry about unduly.

It may not go down in history as one of the all-time great novels, but it may be summed up by that old cliché that if this is the sort of thing you like, you will like this. Your reviewer did. MJ

***THE POISON SONG* (*Winnowing Flame 3*) by Jen Williams**
Headline / 576 pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN 978-1472235244
Reviewed by Carol Goodwin

This is the third and concluding volume of Jen William's excellent and different *Winnowing Flame* trilogy. The first two books, *THE NINTH RAIN* and the sequel, *THE BITTER TWINS* were reviewed in #548 and #559 issues of the BSFG newsletter. To do a quick recap, the world has been fighting an invasion by an aggressive, intelligent species called the Jure'lia. The resistance led by Fell-Noon, a witch who can cast winnowfire; Tor, a long-lived Eboran warrior and Vintage, a human scientist/adventurer have had some successes with the aid of powerful war beasts, but they are limited in number compared to previous incursions. At the end of the last book they had inflicted enough damage to cause the



Jure'lia to retreat temporarily but with significant costs to them and their resources. Now in the brief lull, they must seek new allies and methods in order to rebuild their forces. However, the Jure'lian Queen and the traitorous Eboran, Hestillion (Tor's sister) are also re-assessing their tactics and everything builds towards a dramatic climax.

This has been one of my favourite fantasy series recently. Jen Williams continues to be able to write a spectacular, exciting story. There are some wonderful and thrilling confrontations and battles between the two antagonistic groups, yet there is always time to look at the emotional and physical toll on the individuals in the story. By this third book, this reader was very invested in the various characters and was on constant tenterhooks

empathising with their individual traumas and triumphs and wondering who would survive. Despite all this, the author still manages to leaven this with, where appropriate, the sarcastic, irreverent and humorous dialogue which has been another of my favourite features of this series. Another strength that I have appreciated, is that the author continues to examine the motivations and justifications of the “enemy” rather than just have them as black-hearted villains – as monstrous as they appear and the effects of their invasion are, the reader can understand and to some extent, sympathise with their drives. I shall miss this world and its wonderful, unique characters and definitely recommend the entire series to fantasy fans. CG

(Review copy kindly provided by Headline)

NEWS IN BRIEF ...



It is with sadness that we note **Dr Jack Cohen** passed away in May aged 85. He was a respected biologist and author, with an academic career primarily at Birmingham and Warwick universities. He was also a member of Mensa and the Institute of Biology. As Vernon has already mentioned, he was active in SF circles, being a frequent speaker at the BSFG, Novacon and Eastercon. He wrote science, science fiction and non-fiction books, most notably collaborating with Prof Ian Stewart and Sir Terry Pratchett. He was also a consultant for SF shows and authors on plausible aliens. Writers who acknowledged his advice included Anne McCaffrey, Harry Harrison, Larry Niven and Terry Pratchett Horror writer and editor **Dennis Etchison** has died. His writing included his own original novels as well as film novelisations for **THE FOG**, **HALLOWEEN**, **VIDEODROME** etc. He also wrote for television. He was an editor on various World Fantasy winning works and served as President of the Horror Writers Association from 1992-1994 Actor **Stephen Thorne** has died. He was best known for his appearances on *Dr Who* as Azal the Daemon, the renegade Time Lord, Omega and as Eldred (*The Hand of Fear* episodes) SF editor **Malcolm Edwards** has stepped down from Orion and Gollancz after 43 years in the publishing industry A seat in the front row at the premiere of **GOOD OMENS** (the Amazon Prime TV adaptation of the Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett novel) was reserved and kept empty in remembrance of Terry Pratchett. As a tribute, his trademark hat was placed in the seat The winner of the Stoker Awards Best Novel was author **Paul Tremblay** for **THE CABIN AT THE END OF THE WORLD** A fungus

has been genetically modified to produce a **spider toxin to target malaria-carrying mosquitoes**. In trials in the country of Burkina Faso, the modified fungus caused mosquito populations to collapse by 99% within just 45 days. *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 goodwincd@yahoo.com

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 or 0121 236 4353

THE PLANETS - AN HD ODYSSEY WITH NASA FOOTAGE, 21st June. Holst's music with NASA footage of Mars, Voyager etc. At Symphony Hall. £28 - 50. At Box Office, 0121 780 49490 or www.thsh.co.uk

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

WALLY FUNK'S RACE FOR SPACE, 23rd June, Leicester. Wally Funk was one of the 13 members of the 1961 Women in Space Programme. National Space Centre. Tickets from £15+ <https://spacecentre.co.uk> or 0116 261 0261

WHAT WE LEFT BEHIND screening, 26th June. Film celebrating 25th anniversary of Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. At Electric Cinema (www.theelectric.co.uk or 0121 643 7879) and Mockingbird Cinema (www.mockingbirdcinema.com/)

PAN'S LABYRINTH Book Launch, 3rd July. Author Cornelia Funke discusses turning the film into a novel, Waterstones High Street. Tickets £3 www.waterstones.com/events/

APOLLO 11 screening, 5th - 25th July. At Showcase cinemas (Dudley/Coventry) from 5th - 11th July. Also, at The Electric Cinema (from 19th - 25th July).

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.

EDGE-LIT 8, 13th July, Derby. Literary SF/Fantasy festival. Guests of Honour Alette 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

August 9th - Summer Social

September 13th - tbc

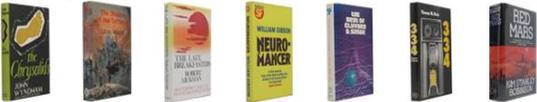
October 11th - Space scientist, **Dr Amaury Triaud**

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

December 6th - Christmas Social

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



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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