

# BRUM GROUP NEWS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE

## BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

JUNE 2012

ISSUE 489

HONORARY PRESIDENTS: **BRIAN W ALDISS, O.B.E.**  
& **HARRY HARRISON**

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Friday 8<sup>th</sup> June

## GRAHAM JOYCE

Graham Joyce is a welcome return visitor. He was born in the Midlands in the mining village of Keresley, near Coventry and is an internationally published author of seventeen novels which have been translated into over twenty languages. He has won many prizes including the O Henry short story award, the World Fantasy Award (FACTS OF LIFE / 2003) and is the four times winner of the British Fantasy Award - DARK SISTER (1993), REQUEIM (1996), TOOTH FAIRY (1997) and INDIGO (2000). His latest novel, THE SILENT LAND, was nominated for both the British and World Fantasy awards

**July 13th – SF editor JO FLETCHER has given first class talks to the group in the past. Now she is a publisher and will give us the lowdown on what that takes to set up.**

in 2011. His work resists classification but has been described as speculative fiction fusing realistic and fantastic tendencies. A Graham Joyce novel features strong narrative with humour and has influences from British Gothic such as Alan Garner and Angela Carter. As well as writing he lectures in English and Creative writing at Nottingham Trent University and is Acting Chairperson of the British Fantasy Society. Most recently, Focus Features have attached Oscar-winning director James Marsh to direct a film version of *THE SILENT LAND*. He has recently completed *SOME KIND OF FAIRY TALE*, which is scheduled for release on 21<sup>st</sup> June (Gollancz hardcover ISBN: 978-0575115286) and this has also been sold to Hollywood. More information can be found on his Official website: [www.grahamjoyce.net](http://www.grahamjoyce.net)

CG

***The meeting will take place in the conference room on the first floor of The Briar Rose Hotel, Bennetts Hill, off New Street.***

*The doors open at 7.30pm and the meeting will commence at 8.00pm so please arrive early, get your drinks from the bar on the ground floor, and be seated in plenty of time. The entrance fee for our January AGM is free and the August and December socials are ticket only events. All other meetings the entrance fee is £3.00 for members and £4 for non-members.*

***ASSISTANT EDITOR FOR NEWSLETTER – FOUND!***



Last month I asked if anyone was interested in becoming Assistant Editor for the newsletter. Virtually immediately I received an offer from Carol Goodwin and after talking to her at the Stephen Hunt meeting I decided to accept her offer. It's not a committee position so constitutionally doesn't require any sort of vote.

And...just like buses...you wait ages and then two turn up together! Yes, I received a second offer to become Assistant Editor, this time from Theresa Derwin, the day after accepting Carol's offer.

We're not quite sure yet how it's going to work but so far I've sent Carol a newsletter template and all the reviews, news, etc., that I have received and she has produced her version of this June newsletter incorporating some new ideas and finding news items I may have missed. It's very impressive for a first attempt after being literally thrown in at the deep end. Any piece with CG at the end is all Carol's version.

RGP

***2012 SUMMER SOCIAL – TICKETS GOING FAST!***

It's now time to start thinking about our Summer Social in August. As usual it will take the form of a meal at the Black Eagle in Hockley and will be on Friday August 10th from about 7.00 to 11.00pm. Yes, it's three months away but

tickets sell quickly for this as we're limited to 12 places. In fact, we've already had money thrown at us by keen regulars so six tickets have already gone!

£5 deposit will be required when booking and tickets, menus and directions will be issued beforehand. Please pay Pat at the Group meeting or send your £5 per person to the Membership Secretary (see back of this newsletter). But book early, we usually easily fill our reserved table and we cannot extend as the remainder of the restaurant is already fully booked..

Some of you may remember the usual post meal confusion attendant on any group paying together on one bill, but arrangements have been made, as was done last year, so that everyone pays the waitress directly for their own meal and any problems are sorted out afterwards by the staff and myself.

So I look forward to seeing all the usual faces this year with, I hope, a selection of new ones.

VB

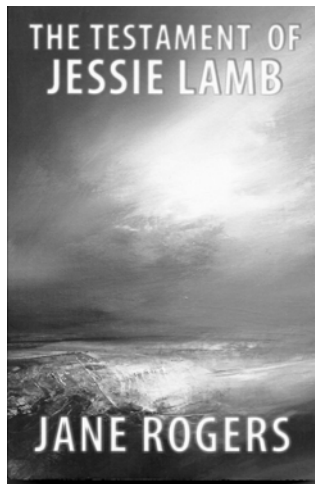
### ***...AND WHAT DID YOU THINK?***

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

Anything to say about the Group, meetings or SF in general? Email your opinions or queries to me at rog [dot] peyton [at] btinternet [dot] com

From regular contributor **Dave Hardy**: "If you have a spare line or two in the BGN, I wonder if you could mention that I have a brand new (and much better) website? Same URL: <http://www.astroart.org>, but completely new site."

### ***2012 CLARKE AWARD***



The winner of the 2012 Arthur C. Clarke Award was announced at Sci-Fi-London 8: The Eighth Annual International Festival of Science Fiction and Fantastic Film. The winner is Jane Rogers for the novel **THE TESTAMENT OF JESSIE LAMB**. (Sandstone Press, £7.99 paperback ISBN: 978-1905207589)

"Jessie Lamb is an ordinary girl living in extraordinary times: as her world collapses, her idealism and courage drive her towards the ultimate act of heroism. If the human race is to survive, it's up to her. But is Jessie heroic? Or is she, as her father fears, impressionable, innocent, incapable of understanding where her actions will lead? Set just a month or two in the future, in a world irreparably altered by an act of biological

terrorism, **THE TESTAMENT OF JESSIE LAMB** explores a young woman's determination to make her life count for something, as the certainties of her childhood are ripped apart.."

## NEBULA AWARDS

The awards were announced at the Nebula Awards Banquet held in Arlington, Virginia.

**Novel Winner:** AMONG OTHERS by Jo Walton (Tor)

**Novella Winner:** “The Man Who Bridged the Mist” by Kij Johnson (Asimov’s SF, Oct/Nov 2011)

**Novellette Winner:** “What We Found” by Geoff Ryman (F&SF Sep/Oct 2011)

**Short Story Winner:** “The Paper Menagerie” by Ken Liu (F&SF Mar/Apr 2011)

**Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding**

**Dramatic Presentation Winner:** *Doctor Who*: “The Doctor’s Wife” by Neil Gaiman (writer), Richard Clark (director) (BBC Wales)

**Andre Norton Award for Young Adult SF & Fantasy Book Winner:**

THE FREEDOM MAZE by Delia Sherman (Big Mouth House)

**2011 Damon Knight Grand Master Award:** Connie Willis

**Solstice Award:** Octavia Butler (posthumous) and John Clute

**Service To SFWA Award:** Bud Webster



## EUROCON AWARDS

Presented in Zagreb at Kontakt, this year’s Eurocon, on April 29...

**Best Author:** Ian McDonald (UK)

**Best Publisher:** Ailleurs et Demain (France)

**Best Artist:** Nela Dunato (Croatia)

**Best Promoter of Science**

**Fiction:** THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA ONLINE team (UK)

**Best Magazine:** Galaxies (France)

**Best Translator:** Pavel Weigel (Czech Republic)

**Best Website:** Concatenation (UK)

**Grand Master:** Brian Aldiss (UK)

**Honorary Award:** Jean Giraud / Moebius (France)



IAN McDONALD

## NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

.... Artist and author **Maurice Sendak** (b.1928) died on May 8 from complications from a stroke. Sendak is best known for his children’s book

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE. He was involved in the early development of *Sesame Street*. He received the first Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award and also received the Caldecott Medal, the Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal, and the Hans Christian Andersen Award .... Author and activist **Ernest ‘Chick’ Callenbach** (b.1929) died on April 16. Callenbach wrote the futuristic novel *ECOTOPIA* in 1975, which laid out a design for more ecologically friendly living and helped spur the modern green movement. Originally self-published, and described as half-novel, half-tract by the author, it eventually was reprinted by Bantam and translated into a dozen languages .... Fan and photographer **Jay Kay Klein** (b.1931) died on May 13 from oesophageal cancer. Klein joined fandom in Philadelphia in 1945. He published a series of Worldcon Memory Books filled with his photographs in the early 1960s and provided the photos for *Analogue’s* “Biolog” feature from 1977 through 2005. In 1974, Klein was the Fan Guest of Honor at Discon II, that year’s Worldcon .... **Jonathan Frid** (1924-2012), Canadian actor who played the vampire Barnabas Collins in the TV series *Dark Shadows* (1966-1971), died on 14 April; he was 87 .... **Stanley Schmidt**, editor of *Analogue* is the winner of the 2012 Robert A. Heinlein Award .... This year’s inductees into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame have been announced. They are **Joe Haldeman**, **James Tiptree, Jr.**, **James Cameron** and **Virgil**



**Finlay** .... The Winnipeg Science Fiction Association (WINSFA) has announced the creation of the **A. E. van Vogt Award**, in honour of the Canadian author. The award will spotlight the best in Canadian Science Fiction Writing over the past years. The first A. E. van Vogt Award will be presented in Winnipeg in Fall of 2012 .... Ireland beat out Romania to host **Eurocon in 2014** by a vote tally of 61-16. The Irish committee, headed by **James Shields**, has selected the weekend following the likely 2014 London Worldcon for the convention, hoping to attract fans in the United Kingdom to come over to Ireland and lengthen their fannish vacation.

**A E VAN VOGT** Shamrokon will take place the weekend of August 22 at the Burlington Hotel in Dublin. Guests of Honour will include **Seanan McGuire** and **Jim Fitzpatrick** .... Six major British science fiction authors (**Alastair Reynolds**, **Ken Macleod**, **Geoff Ryman**, **Justina Robson**, **Simon Ings** and **Paul McAuley**) are calling for closer collaboration between arts and sciences similar to the US National Academy of Sciences’ Science and Entertainment Exchange (established 2009) which matches scientists to creative projects needing advice .... The **Philip K. Dick Trust** has refiled a lawsuit against **George Nolfi** and **Media Rights Capital**, claiming breach of contract and other causes of action based on the film *THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU*, which is an adaptation of Dick’s story “The Adjustment Team”. Nolfi and MRC

have counterfiled seeking a declaration of right to the story, claiming that the story was in public domain at the time the film was made and no payments to the estate are required .... **Alex Proyas** (DARK CITY, I, ROBOT) is to direct a film of **Robert Heinlein's** book THE UNPLEASANT PROFESSION OF JONATHAN HOAG starting in Autumn 2012 .... US Science fiction publisher, **Tor Books** announces its entire range of ebooks is to be free from Digital Rights Management (DRM) by Summer. This means that purchased ebooks can now be viewed on any ereader device or moved to new devices as the old device becomes obsolete. NB: **Baen Books** has been free of DRM for some years (and has some excellent free e-books in its Free Library) .... **Waterstones** is to sell Amazon's Kindle book-reader and launch other Kindle digital services. Last month, US bookseller Barnes and Noble teamed up with Microsoft (who have invested £185 milion) to promote and develop its alternative ebook reader to the Kindle, the Nook .... The **Space X Falcon 9** privately financed rocket launched from Florida with a cargo for the International Space Station. It also contained ashes from 308 people, including **James Doohan** (Scotty from *Star Trek*) and Mercury astronaut **Gordon Cooper** .... A group of billionaire entrepreneurs have announced plans to mine asteroids for their resources. The multi-million-dollar plan would use robotic spacecraft to squeeze chemical components of fuel and minerals such as platinum and gold out of the rocks. The founders include film director and explorer **James Cameron** as well as Google's chief executive **Larry Page** and executive chairman **Eric Schmidt** .... RGP & CG



## B O O K   R E V I E W S



(**REVIEWERS** please note:- all reviews should be emailed direct to me at rog [dot] peyton [at] btinternet [dot] com) **Deadline for each issue is 14 days prior to the date of the monthly meeting.**

### ***SHADOW'S LURE by Jon Sprunk***

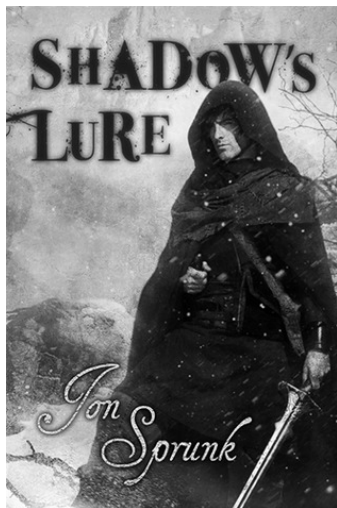
**Gollancz / 432pgs / £8.99 paperback / ISBN: 978-0575096066**

**Reviewed by Dave Corby**

SHADOW'S LURE by Jon Sprunk is his second novel, the first being SHADOW'S SON, which I reviewed in a previous newsletter. Both books are set in a low-fantasy world (no elves with healing magic here) in a setting that feels slightly pre-renaissance, with sophisticated city life, an all-powerful church rule, but no gunpowder or more modern technology. The story itself focuses on Caim, the main protagonist, and also details the continuing, but completely separate, story of Josie, the young noblewoman from the first book.

This second volume has over 100 more pages than the first, but the book does not feel any longer in narrative. This is largely because of the break-neck speed with which Sprunk races through the scenes; he has crammed quite a bit more into the second book.

In my review of the first book, I noted that the first text hinted at supernatural elements which only come to the fore at the climax. From the first book's resolution, this reviewer suspected that the supernatural will be a much stronger theme in the sequel, and that this would be beneficial to the story.



SHADOW'S LURE does indeed expound greatly on those supernatural elements; but I find it is debatable whether this is actually an improvement. In general, Sprunk has turned everything up to eleven in this book, as if he was testing the water in the first book, and feels free to let rip with every weapon in the second. Unfortunately this means that the text loses a lot of the subtlety that I can now appreciate the first book having! The almost historical novel feeling has given way to a much more garish genre fantasy feeling, and this reviewer finds that to lessen the experience.

For example we need look no further than the action sequences. Sprunk is able to write violence with a fairly visceral feeling; used sparingly in the first novel it felt punchy, kind of like an evenly used spice to enliven the prose. In the sequel, five of the first seven chapters feel liberally soaked in bloody gore. Before long, this reader tired a little and longed for a slow down! Similarly, the supernatural element has been ramped up so as to be almost ubiquitous; suddenly there are magical adepts and evil sorceresses peering out of every corner. Bang goes the realistic verisimilitude.

I will admit that I enjoyed seeing some of the questions from the first book answered; alas, this second book asks as many questions as it answers, as Sprunk clearly intends to add at least one more volume. But I am increasingly of the opinion that Sprunk needs to learn some restraint, as his writing was clearly more balanced in the first book. The first one also had a better story, with more mystery to reveal; this sequel is a more straightforward hack and slash through the bad guys until the resolution.

I can but hope (with ever decreasing expectation) that in the third volume Sprunk will find a way to return some of the subtlety with still being able to deliver a climax worthy of a trilogy. DC

### ***WIND ANGELS by Leigh Kennedy***

**PS Publishing / 240pgs / £39.99 signed hardcover ISBN: 978-1848631977 / £19.99 hardcover ISBN: 978-1848631960**

**Reviewed by Pauline Morgan**

A good short story explores one idea and engages all the reader's senses. Anyone wanting to become a short story writer should look at the way an expert

constructs their fiction. A fine example of such an author is Leigh Kennedy. Each of the fifteen stories in this volume do exactly what they set out to do. Each one is a small gem.



Contemporary short stories have an advantage over genre ones in the reader is familiar with the background and little needs explaining, leaving the tale itself to ensnare the reader in its wiles. Those written by Kennedy start in ordinary ways and subtly change. The first story in the volume, “Bats”, starts with the strange incident of a bat flying through the bedroom window, followed by others; by the end both you and the narrator know that something creepy is going on. “Vulture Trucks” could be set in any mid-American small town but the female tow-truck driver owes her success to her prescience.

Some have very definite SF themes, such as the title story, “Wind Angels” which is set in a flooded future, “Helen, Whose Face Launched Twenty-eight Contestoga Hovercraft” is set on an artificial habitat in Earth-orbit and “Belling Martha” is set in a future that has entered another ice age due to the eruption of three massive volcanoes. In each of these, the information needed to understand the setting is dropped in gently, the focus being on the interactions between the characters. These demonstrate the sure touch of Kennedy’s subtle hand and the way stories like this should be written.

Horror can feature as part of a story depending on the traumas the author decides to put their characters through. Several stories here deal with grief. “Tropism” deals with a situation of a wife exhuming her dead husband because she believes that he is not fully dead while “The Preservation of Lindy” is a 3D walk-in image of a dead daughter. “Vida” has grief at its heart when fleeing from seeing her stepfather kill her mother, Vida finds a strange sanctuary.

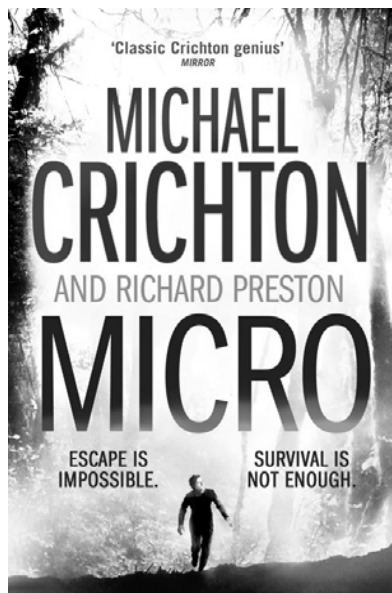
Yet there is also fantasy here, as in “The Ineffable” where a nettle fairy is working in a hospital netting souls but catches a very rare one.

If there is any secret to Kennedy’s ability to write exceptional stories it is that she is able to take and follow through one idea and refuses to get bogged down with the side issues that rightly belong in novels. Also she doesn’t allow genre labels to restrict her. If the idea demands elements from several genres, it gets them. If you have never read any of Kennedy’s stories, buy this volume and find out how it should be done.

*PM*



**MICRO by Michael Crichton & Richard Preston**  
**Harper / 533 pgs / £7.99 paperback ISBN: 978-0007350001**  
**Reviewed by Dave Hardy**



makers!

I suppose with a title like MICRO, and with the discovery in the first few pages of a perfect tiny aircraft the size of a peanut, one should expect a story about miniaturization. But it still came as something of a surprise, in a book by Michael Crichton of JURASSIC PARK fame. We had the film THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN in 1957 (based on a Richard Matheson story), FANTASTIC VOYAGE in 1966, updated to INnersPACE in 1987, both with a very similar theme to this novel (I wonder if the author had a movie in mind with this one – ?). We can also recall *The Borrowers* and *Land of the Giants* on TV, which is really the same idea in reverse; and, of course, HONEY I SHRUNK THE KIDS. OK, so the idea isn't new, but is attractive to film-

Crichton was well into this novel when he died in 2008, and it was completed by Richard Preston, who is a 'best-selling author of eight books', which seem to be mainly non-fiction. Stories with this theme are usually regarded as SF, though if one takes the view that science fiction requires a known, accepted scientific principle, creating humans half-an-inch tall is not yet in that category! In this novel the method is to subject just about anything to an immensely powerful magnetic field, thousands of times stronger than those in normal industrial use, and known here as a tensor field. This apparently produces a 'phase change', and the object – car, plane or human – is reduced to a centimeter or so in size, but everything working normally. (So presumably the very atoms in those objects must be reduced too, which I find most unlikely!) However, after a few days in this state humans become subject to 'the Bends'; even slight wounds or bruises quickly become worse, and start to bleed profusely, so it is necessary to get back into the tensor field as soon as possible and reverse the effect.

As with other scenarios by this author the setting is in Hawaii; in this case the island of Honolulu. The new company of Nanigen MicroTechnologies has its headquarters and laboratories there, headed by despotic and probably psychopathic venture capitalist Vincent Drake. Seven graduate students are taken to the island as potential employees; one of these, Peter Jansen, has a brother who is a top executive with the company. But Eric Jansen dies in a mysterious boating

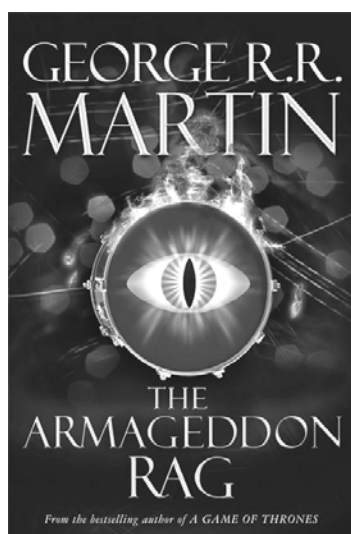
accident, after sending a text to Peter saying ‘don’t come’. The seven students are shrunk, but become aware that they could also become victims, and escape. From then on it becomes quite an exciting adventure as they evade capture and find themselves in a strange world at the lowest level of the Hawaiian jungle where they are in danger of being attacked and eaten by ants, wasps, spiders and even birds many times larger than themselves, always with the deadline of the onset of the Bends. Some of them don’t make it.

Crichton obviously has a good knowledge of (or has done his research on) botany, zoology, entomology, along with physiology and quite a few other ‘ologies’, and he makes good use of this to produce a story which I enjoyed a lot more than I expected to at the start. Not very original, but still a good read. *DAH*

### ***THE ARMAGEDDON RAG by George R R Martin***

**Gollancz / 369 pgs / £18.99 hardcover ISBN: 978-0575129535**

**Reviewed by Michael Jones**



First published in 1983, this early Martin novel has been out of print for many years and the decision to re-issue it now may well be connected with the recent success of the writer’s TV series *A Game of Thrones*. In truth, it scarcely belongs in these pages – it contains no SF element at all. There are hints of occultism, but this does not appear until almost halfway through and so little is made of it that it almost might as well not be there at all.

The story kicks off with the gruesome murder of a rock promoter on the anniversary of the day when the lead singer of the heavy metal group he managed, The Nazgûl, was shot dead during an open-air concert ten years before. Journalist-turned-author Sander Blair is offered the job of writing a story on the murder in the context of what has happened to the man and the surviving musicians during the intervening years, but soon finds himself disconnected from his putative employer as a result of his insistence on writing his own story instead of the one he was hired to produce. Criss-crossing America, he looks up old friends as well as the surviving band members and this part of the story becomes something of a mish-mash of disparate themes as he rediscovers his own past, and finds himself haunted by dreams of his student days. He may be sliding into madness, a slide which is checked when he meets Edan Morse, a mysterious, possibly criminal, entrepreneur who wants to recreate The Nazgûl with a new lead singer created in the image of the old one. Sandy is hired to handle the

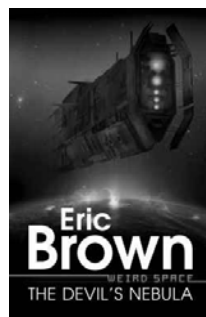
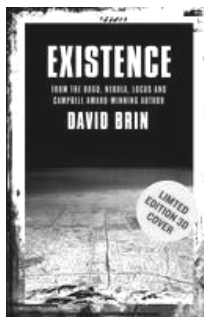
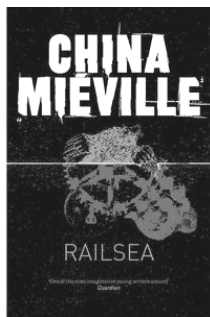
publicity for the revival tour which is scheduled to climax in a final concert staged on the date, at the time and in the place where the original singer was killed. From this point onwards the story really takes off, with unexpected twists as tension and drama increase to a climax which remains uncertain until the very end, while Sandy continues to wrestle with his demons, still unsure whether they are real or not.

To present this as primarily a murder mystery is to miss the point. What it is, is an homage to the pop music-hippie-peacenik-radical-nonconformist student culture of the sixties and early seventies and this aspect of the book is brilliantly and evocatively realised. The original killings are the trigger which set the whole thing in motion, and somehow death and blood are supposed to bring about some kind of apotheosis in which Sandy is to play a critical part, but it is the story of the music which is important.

George R R Martin has made a name for himself as a fine SF writer, as his many awards testify, and he had already come into his own when he wrote this thirty years ago. It is well crafted and well-written, and certainly deserving of being read by anyone with an interest in its principal theme. However, as has already been stated, a reader looking for SF, or even Fantasy, should not expect to find them here.

*MJ*

## ***FORTHCOMING BOOKS***



**RAILSEA by China Mieville** / Macmillan / 384pgs / £17.99 hardcover / ISBN: 978-0230765108 / May 24

Marketed as a Young Adult novel, this is clearly based upon *MOBY DICK* but with trains substituting for ships and a hunt for the ivory mole instead of a whale.

**2312 by Kim Stanley Robinson** / Orbit / 576pgs / £18.99 hardcover / ISBN: 978-1841499970 / May 24

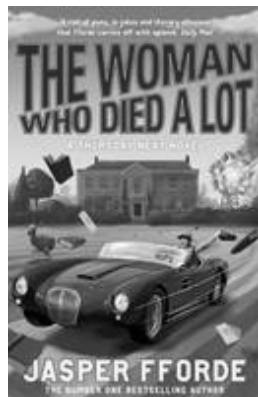
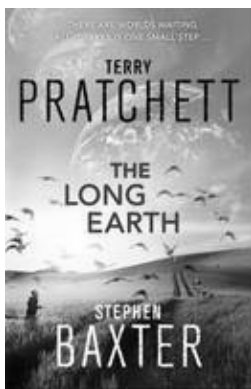
In the year 2312, mankind has spread throughout the solar system. But a sequence of events will force humanity to confront past, present and future. For Swan Er Hong, a designer of worlds will now be led into a plot to destroy them.

**EXISTENCE by David Brin** / Orbit / 560pgs / £13.99 paperback Special Edition with 3D cover / ISBN: 978-0356501727 / June 21

An alien artefact plucked from Earth's orbit throws the world into chaos with both warning and promise. This is a first contact scenario and could be read as a prequel to *Starline Rising* although it stands alone for those unfamiliar with his earlier works

**WEIRD SPACE: THE DEVIL'S NEBULA** by **Eric Brown** / Solaris / 352pgs / £7.99 paperback / ISBN: 978-1781080221 / June 21

A crew of smugglers are blackmailed into crossing hostile alien territory and entering the uncharted space of the Devil's Nebula in search of long-lost settlers.



**SOME KIND OF FAIRY TALE** by **Graham Joyce** / Gollancz / 400pgs / £9.99 hardcover / ISBN: 978-0575115286 / June 21

Peter Martin's sister re-appears 20 years after walking into the woods and does not look any older. As the month's go by it appears that the woods are not finished with Tara and the Martin family

**THE LONG EARTH** by **Terry Pratchett & Stephen Baxter** Doubleday / 352pgs / £18.99 hardcover / ISBN 978-0857520098 / June 21

A science fiction story of travel across universes to many different versions of Earth

**THE WOMAN WHO DIED A LOT** by **Jasper Fforde** / Hodder / 432pgs / £16.99 hardcover / ISBN: 978-0340963111 / July 12

The BookWorld's leading enforcement officer, Thursday Next is semi-retired after an assassination attempt but between protecting Swindon from destruction by an angry deity, dealing with synthetic Thursday replacements and a looming meteorite, retirement is not easy.

CG

## ***NEW FILM RELEASES***

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

**IRON SKY** – Release date May 23rd

“Science Fiction comedy” in which Nazis set up a secret base on the moon in 1945 where they hide out and plan to return to power in 1918!

**MEN IN BLACK 3** - Release date May 25th

Billed as a Science Fiction comedy, Agent J (Will Smith) travels back in time to MIB's early years in the 1960s, to stop an alien from assassinating his friend Agent K (Tommy Lee Jones) and changing history.

**SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN** – Release date 1st June

In a twist to the fairy tale, the Huntsman (Chris Hemsworth (*Star Trek*, *THOR*, *CABIN IN THE WOODS*) ordered to take Snow White (Kristen Stewart - *Twilight* movies) into the woods to be killed winds up becoming her protector and mentor in a quest to vanquish the Evil Queen.

**PROMETHEUS** – Release date 1st June (large screen at Birmingham IMAX)

Ridley Scott directs this *ALIEN* prequel. A team of explorers discover a clue to the origins of mankind on Earth, leading them on a journey to the darkest corners of the universe. There, they must fight a terrifying battle to save the future of the human race.

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN :VAMPIRE HUNTER** – Release date 20th June

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, discovers vampires are planning to take over the United States. He makes it his mission to eliminate them.

**THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** – Release date 3rd July

Reboot with a new actor (Andrew Garfield) as Spider-Man. Peter Parker finds a clue that might help him understand why his parents disappeared when he was young. His path puts him on a collision course with Dr. Curt Connors, his father's former partner.

CG

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## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

*All details are correct to the best of our knowledge, we advise contacting organisers 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 are always welcome - please send to me at rog [dot] peyton [at] btinternet [dot] com*

**The Central Library SF and Fantasy Reading Group** meets on Thursdays at 5.45pm to 7pm monthly, in GP5 on the 5th Floor at the Central Library, Chamberlain Square, B3 3HQ. It's a small friendly group meeting to discuss SF & fantasy books. Contact person is Pam Gaffney on (0121) 303 3398. Future books to be discussed to be announced.

**China Mieville talk and signing** for his new book, RAILSEA, Thursday 7th June, 7pm at Waterstones, High Street. Tickets are £3.

**Iain Banks and Kim Stanley Robinson In Conversation**, 9th June to discuss Robinson's new book 2312, the end of the world, and the future of science fiction. At the Auditorium at the British Library, London. Doors open 3.00pm for a 3.30 start, and the event will be followed by a public signing from 5.00-6.00pm. Tickets: £7.50, concessions £5. Website: <http://forbiddenplanet.com>

**The 11th Fantastic Films Weekend**, 15th- 17th June, Bradford Shlock and women in horror are amongst the themes of this year's programme. Tickets: Weekend pass £60 / (£50 concessions), day pass £25 (£20 concessions). Passes do not include IMAX titles. Single tickets £7.50 (£5.50 concessions), Premium Events £10 (£8 concessions). Website: [www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk](http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk) Twitter: [@FFWfest](https://twitter.com/FFWfest) Phone: 0844 856 3797

**Sir Terry Pratchett/Stephen Baxter Lecture**, 21st June, London To tie in with the release of their new collaborative novel THE LONG EARTH, messrs Pratchett and Baxter will be appearing at The Royal Institution (21 Albemarle Street, W1S 4BS) to discuss the ideas behind the book. The talk takes place from 7.00pm to 8.30pm, with the assistance of philosopher of physics David Wallace. Tickets: £10 standard, £7 concessions and £5 Royal Institution members Website: [www.rigb.org](http://www.rigb.org) Phone: 020 7409 2992

**Ben Aaronovitch reading and signing**, 26th June (12:30pm) at Waterstones, High Street. Ben Aaronovitch will be signing copies of WHISPERS UNDER GROUND, the third in his *Rivers Of London* series. This event is free entry and not ticketed.

**Sci - Fi Symphony III** - On Friday 6th July at 7.30 pm the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra will be playing a selection of music with an SF theme. Details can be found at [www.cbso.co.uk](http://www.cbso.co.uk).

**Jasper Fforde** will be signing copies of his new book **THE WOMAN WHO DIED A LOT** at Waterstones, High Street on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **CONVENTIONS**

**EDGE-LIT**, 14th July, Derby Guests of Honour Christopher Fowler and Geoff Ryman head up this literary event at QUAD (Market Place, DE1 3AS) which brings together over 30 speakers from the genre. Tickets: £25.00 Website: [www.derbyquad.co.uk/edgelit](http://www.derbyquad.co.uk/edgelit) Phone: 01332 290 606

**THE EIGHNNNNNNNN DISCWORLD CONVENTION** - 24-27 August at the Metropole Hotel, Birmingham. Guest of Honour: Sir Terry Pratchett. Website: <http://www.dwcon.org/>

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

# **NOVACON 42**

**9-11th November 2012.**

**The Birmingham SF Group's own convention,  
now in it's fifth decade!**

**Guest of Honour is  
JAINE FENN**

**Full details on how to join is at**  
[http://www.novacon.org.uk/join\\_novacon.php](http://www.novacon.org.uk/join_novacon.php).

## ***FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE BSFG***

**Aug 10th – SUMMER SOCIAL – meal at the Black Eagle**

**Sep – comic fantasy/SF author SIMON R GREEN**

**Oct – tba**

**Nov – SF author ERIC BROWN**

**Dec - CHRISTMAS SOCIAL – Skittles and buffet**

**BRUM GROUP NEWS #489** (June 2012) copyright 2012 for Birmingham SF Group. Designed by Rog Peyton (19 Eves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham, B32 3QL – phone 0121 477 6901 or email rog [dot] peyton [at] binternet [dot] com). Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the committee or the general membership or, for that matter, the person giving the ‘opinion’. Thanks to all the named contributors in this issue and to William McCabe who sends me reams of news items every month which I sift through for the best/most entertaining items.

**ABOUT US...** The **Birmingham Science Fiction Group** meets on the second Friday of each month. Membership is £16 per year per person (or £21 for two members living at the same address). This includes the 12 free issues of the Newsletter plus reduced entrance fee at each meeting. Cheques should be made payable to “The Birmingham Science Fiction Group” and sent to our Membership Secretary, 10 Sylvan Avenue, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 2PG