

for something a little
... different ..



**contra
vention**

PR 8

Choosing a name for a new convention is the first difficult decision the committee must make. It can be the cause of more disagreements than any other item on the agenda. At first, 'Contravention' struck us as a distinctive although slightly peculiar name for a convention, but as we discussed and integrated our ideas it became apparent that the name was not only an appropriate title for the event we were planning, it was almost divinely inspired; we saw that Contravention would be something completely different from the normal, run-of-the-mill Eastercon.

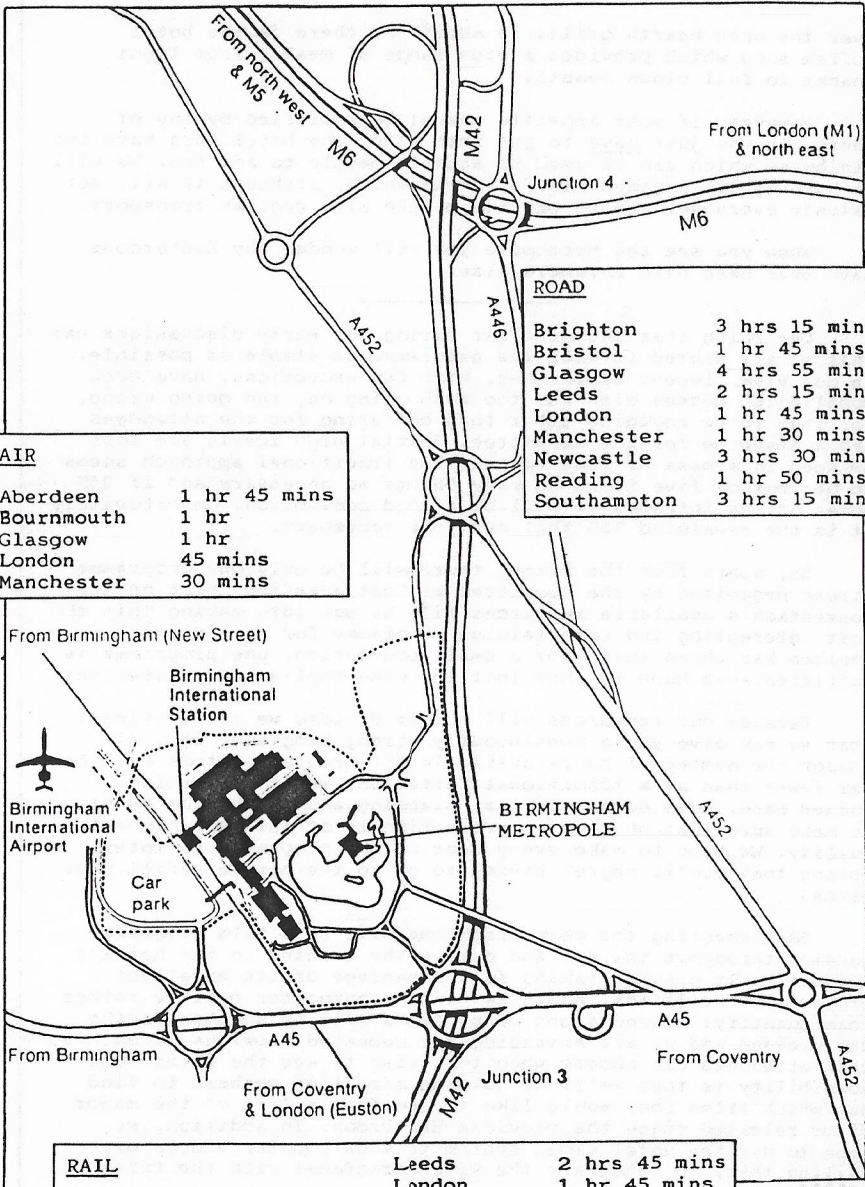
In this initial progress report we will be outlining some of our ideas for Contravention—our basic philosophy if you like. With the convention more than a year away and the bid not yet won it's difficult to go into detail; nevertheless, we hope it will be possible for you to gain the flavour of the event we are planning from what follows.

Since 1979 the British Eastercon has been held at either one end of the country or the other. Even ignoring the travelling costs, the strain such long distance travelling puts on the body is hardly conducive to having a good time when you reach the other end. The National Exhibition Centre, however, is an ideal location for an Eastercon: nearly two-thirds of the UK population live within 120 miles—only two hours by car. What's more, the NEC is one of the easiest places in the country to get to; if you're exceedingly wealthy you can even fly there!

Whenever the NEC is mentioned people immediately think of a cluster of dingy aircraft hangars masquerading as car, boat and ideal home showrooms—as though we would be holding the convention in one of those! The NEC hotel, the Birmingham Metropole, is superb; it boasts some of the most sought-after conference facilities in the UK. Looking round it for the first time you'll believe it was designed by an SF fan with an Eastercon in mind. Is there anywhere in Britain more ideally suited to hold the 1986 Eastercon? NO! (We know, we looked at the alternatives and found them sadly lacking.)

The Metropole is located in its own beautiful and extensive grounds (complete with lake) adjacent to the Exhibition Centre. It is modern, pleasantly spacious, and very well designed. All the main conference halls face onto the central foyer. It contains its own purpose-built cinema, a coffee shop, a large main hall that can be subdivided to suit the needs of the programme, numerous smaller meeting rooms, a plush lounge and bar area with tables and extravagantly comfortable armchairs—there are even squash courts on site for the more energetic guests.

Yet even the most perfect site must have at least one drawback and we admit the NEC is no exception: it is rather isolated. You can't just walk down the road to the Chinese take-away. But not to worry, the Metropole has two fine restaurants on its premises, serving superb and affordable food. One has an extensive a la carte menu (with a selection of more than 220 wines to complement it, for the connoisseur), while in the other you can choose from a display of quality meats and have your order cooked



AIR

Aberdeen	1 hr 45 mins
Bournemouth	1 hr
Glasgow	1 hr
London	45 mins
Manchester	30 mins

ROAD

Brighton	3 hrs 15 mins
Bristol	1 hr 45 mins
Glasgow	4 hrs 55 mins
Leeds	2 hrs 15 mins
London	1 hr 45 mins
Manchester	1 hr 30 mins
Newcastle	3 hrs 30 mins
Reading	1 hr 50 mins
Southampton	3 hrs 15 mins

RAIL

Brighton	3 hrs	Leeds	2 hrs 45 mins
Bristol	1 hr 30 mins	London	1 hr 45 mins
Glasgow	4 hrs 40 mins	Manchester	2 hrs 30 mins
		Reading	2 hrs
		Southampton	3 hrs 20 mins

over the open hearth grill. In addition, there is the hotel coffee shop which provides a wide range of meals, from light snacks to full blown feasts.

However, if your appetite cannot be satisfied by any of these, or you just have to get into town, the hotel does have two minibuses which can be used to shuttle people to and fro. We will be working out a timetable for these which, although it will not satisfy everyone, should provide people with regular transport.

When you see the Metropole you will wonder why Eastercons have ever been held anywhere else.

One thing that became clear during our early discussions was that we all wanted to keep the programme as simple as possible. In our view, recent Eastercons, with few exceptions, have been complicated messes with far too much going on, and going wrong, for them to be anything other than confusing for the attendees and a headache for the committee. Initial high ideals are soon swamped in a mass of fine detail. The traditional approach seems to be: put on five times as many things as necessary and if 25% comes off as intended it will be a good convention. Unfortunately it is the remaining 75% that everyone remembers.

So, apart from the films, there will be only one programme stream organised by the committee at Contravention. Most of the convention's available resources will be put into making this the most interesting and entertaining programme for many years. Mexicon has shown that, for a small convention, one programme is sufficient—we hope to show that the same applies for Eastercons.

Because our resources will not be divided we are confident that we can give you a continuously strong programme and, although the number of hours available for programme items will be far fewer than at a traditional Eastercon, we'll be working damned hard, both during initial planning and during the event, to make sure that what we're presenting is of the very highest quality. We hope to make every hour of the programme so interesting that you'll regret having to go to the bar to refill your glass!

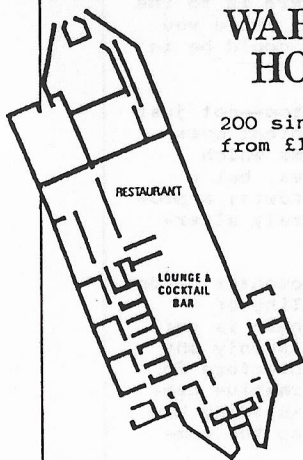
Supplementing the main programme will be a film programme running throughout the day and during the evening in the hotel's purpose-built cinema, taking full advantage of its excellent projection facilities. Again we will be going for quality rather than quantity: around eight major films will be on show during the weekend and we are arranging for repeated showings of each so that attendees can choose when they wish to see the films. One possibility is that we'll be holding a poll of members to find out which films they would like to see from a list of the major films released since the previous Eastercon. In addition, we hope to use the hotel video system to show popular videos or, failing that, to integrate the video programme with the film programme.

WARWICK HOTEL

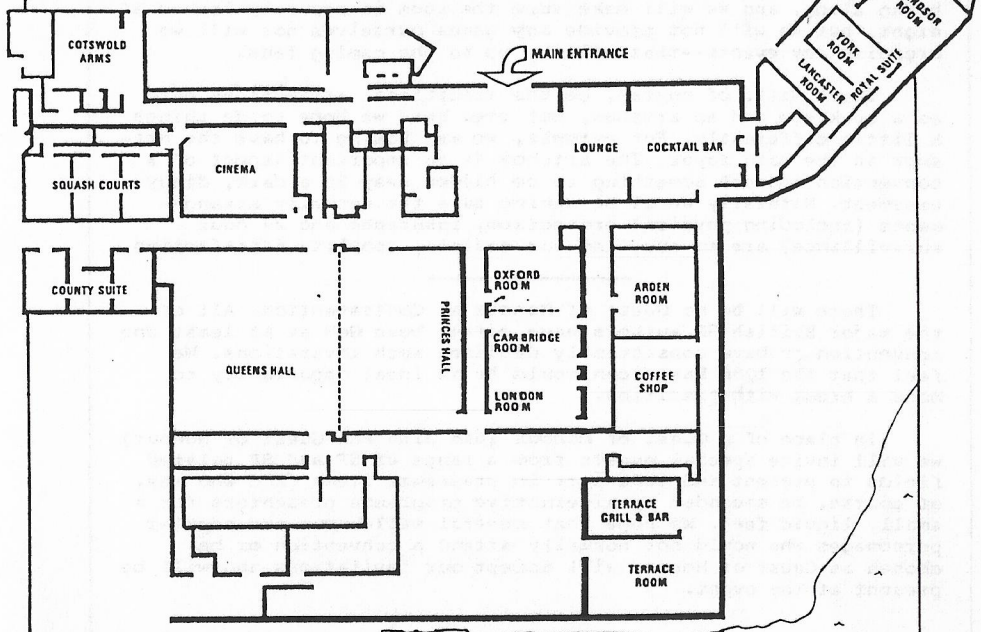
200 single rooms
from £16.50/night

CARPARK

Free parking
for 500 cars



	Area (m ²)	Capacity (n persons)	
Princes Hall	440	670	MAIN PROGRAMME
Cinema	196	200	FILM PROGRAMME
Arden Room	150	230	ALTERNATIVE PROG
Cambridge & London Rooms	226	330	BOOKROOM
Oxford Room	113	165	FANZINE ROOM



BIRMINGHAM METROPOLE

10 single, 25 double
and 460 twin rooms
from £16.50/person/night

And that, parsimonious as it is, will be all there is to the convention programme. Who wants to go to a convention where you can only see 10% of the programme items, even if you could be in two places at once?

We hope there will be an alternative programme too—not just another programme put on by the committee as a convenient overflow for all those unexciting, minority-interest items which someone, somewhere once thought would be a whizzo idea, but a programme entirely independent of the committee's efforts; a programme organised and presented by the attendees; a truly alternative programme.

We will provide as much of the equipment the presenter needs as we can, and we will help with the initial timetabling of events to make sure there is no double booking and there is sufficient room for slippage, we'll even do our best to supply any helping hands the presenter needs, but we will not interfere in any way with the organisation of the items. The alternative programme will be an opportunity for fans to do their own thing how and (more or less) when they like; a chance to show up the committee's own piffling efforts.

There will also be a games room at the convention but we will not be organising any tournaments in it. We will provide safe storage for games (and for any other items) you want to bring along, and we will make sure the room is securely locked at night, but we will not provide any games ourselves nor will we organise any events—that will be up to the gaming fans.

There will, of course, be the traditional attractions such as a bookroom and an artshow, but even here we hope to do things a little differently. For example, we are hoping to have the artshow in the main foyer. The artshow is an important aspect of a convention and not something to be hidden away in a dark, dingy basement. Naturally we'll be making sure the security arrangements (including physical protection, insurance and 24 hour surveillance) are to our, and our artists, complete satisfaction.

There will be no Guest of Honour at Con(tra)vention. All of the major British SF authors have either been GoH at at least one convention or have consistently declined such invitations. We feel that the 1986 Eastercon would be an ideal opportunity to make a break with tradition.

In place of a Guest of Honour (and also Fan Guest of Honour) we will invite special guests from a range of SF and SF related fields to present and take part in programme items (and who may, of course, be seconded by alternative programme presenters for a small, liquid fee). We hope that several well-known and popular personages who would not normally attend a convention or be chosen as Guest of Honour will accept our invitations and will be present at the event.

Our committee is small but dynamic, and by keeping it that way we hope to avoid the problems suffered by recent Eastercons (including excessive travelling expenses). Too many committees in recent times have been overwhelmed by idle glory-seekers and 'nice' people whom no-one has had the heart to tell that they're incompetent. When there are too many people on a committee the chances of sensible ideas and observations penetrating the noise are minimal.

Our approach is simple: if we need someone to do a job we will not press-gang the first likely-looking fan who comes along onto the committee—we'll either make damn sure we can do it ourselves, get a professional to do it for us, or just drop the whole idea there and then.

Between us we have been involved in the running of more than 30 conventions: from the small and informal Unicons, through Novacons, to the mighty Seacon 84. But don't get the idea that we're just a bunch of jaded old hasbeens—nothing could be further from the truth. Our committee contains both fans who could run a convention with their eyes closed and inexperienced novices (only 6 or 7 cons old yet!) who are still untainted enough to ask "But why?" at awkward moments and keep the old guard on their toes.

SF fans are special people because they readily accept new, even outrageous ideas; they are not afraid to speculate and look ahead. Yet the stagnation of recent Eastercons belies this. Perhaps it is because the fans have not been given a real choice before. Well, now you have. Try us and see. They say a change is as good as a rest—we know Contravention will be much better than that!

COMMITTEE

John Wilkes	Presenter	Secretary
Paul Oldroyd	Coordinator	
Chris Donaldson	Programme	Registrations
Chrissie Pearson		Guests
Richard Vine		Publications
Jan Huxley	Publicity	
Chris Hughes		
Rochelle Dorey	Treasurer	

PRESUPPORTING MEMBERS (contd.)

Helen Brown	Marina Holroyd	Hazel Langford
Sandy Brown	Leroy Kettle	Joy Hibbert
Arnold Akien	Steve Lawson	Mike Ford
Julian Headlong	Martin Hoare	Stephen Davies
Dave Turtle	Katie Hoare	Tim Illingworth
Bob Jewett	Jon Cowie	Pete Lyon
Pete Gilligan	Fiona O'Conner	Elda Wheeler
Gill Baxter	Linda James	Robert Holdstock
Norman Baxter	Andrew Stephenson	Vincent Doherty
Ian Sorenson	Mike Parry	John Harvey
Martin Smith	Colin Fine	Eve Harvey
Tibbs	Caroline Mullan	Dave Rowley
Marcus Roland	Ken Slater	Geoff Rippington
Henry Balen	Joyce Slater	Maureen Porter
Anthony Johnson	John Fairey	Mike Bernardi
Kate Moore	Oscar Dalgleish	Simon Ounsley
Tony Berry	Bruce Saville	
Roger Robinson	Friend of above	
Dai Price	Dave Langford	

contra vention

PRESUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP FORM

All presupporting members will be entitled to a £1 discount on their attending membership fee.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

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Please register me as a presupporting member. I enclose a POSTAL ORDER/CHEQUE for £1 made payable to 'Contravention'.

Send to: CONTRAVENTION, 46 Colwyn Road, Beeston, Leeds
LS11 6PY