



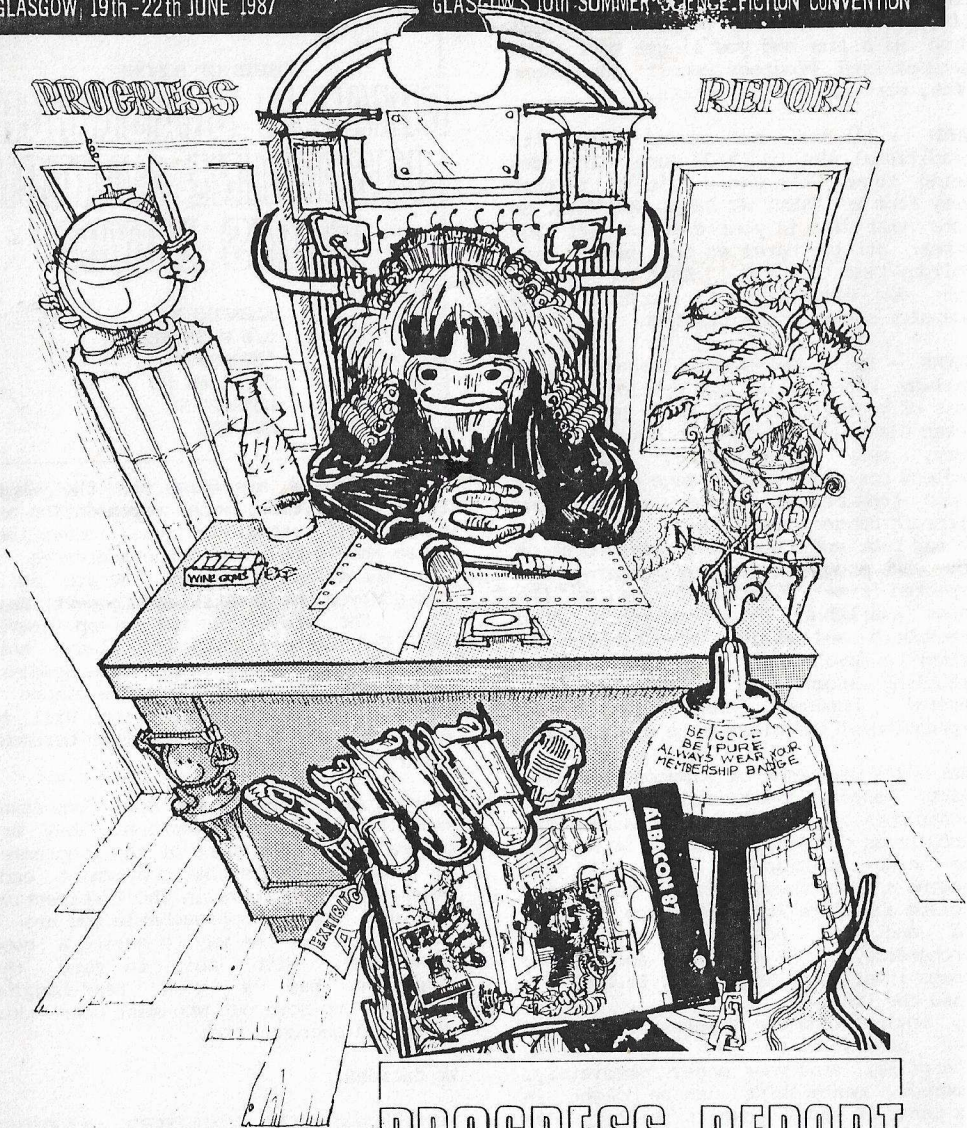
ALBACON 87

GLASGOW, 19th - 22th JUNE 1987

GLASGOW'S 10th SUMMER SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

PROGRESS

REPORT



PROGRESS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to Progress Report 2. (Ignore the fact that it says Progress Report 1 above, this being a ploy by our less than illustrious treasurer to hide the fact that he would only let us do one Progress Report to save money). This is the publication that will let you know the **WHAT, WHEN, WHERE**, etc. of the Con. If it doesn't, that's no problem - just drop us a line and you'll get your own, personalised Progress Report supplement back, more or less by return.

WHEN - Albacon has moved from its traditional slot to 19/22 June. The idea being to move the Con a little further away from **THE EVENT WE SHALL NOT NAME**. So note that date in your diaries. If you appear at the hotel at the usual Fair Holiday time then you'll have to organise your own entertainment. We will be in Acapulco spending the profits.

WHERE - In a Neo-Gothic Great-Western Railway Hotel called the Central Hotel. Lots of you will know it as it has hosted seven Glasgow S.F. cons to date. It's a very, very big building, possessing endless corridors and a range of function rooms from broom cupboard size to medium aircraft hanger proportions. This means we can pick and choose the ideal location for each programme item by matching the expected size of the audience to the rooms available. This generates a good atmosphere and avoids the problem of either a small but interested group 'rattling around' in a huge room, or several hundred fans doing their impression of the black hole of Calcutta!

WHAT - The programme of Albacon comprises talks, panels, films and less formal events such as quizzes and games plus The Fancy Dress Competition, which is usually the most spectacular part of the weekend's programme. Other facilities include a Dealers Room where you can buy old and new books and other SF merchandise, an SF art show, and various groups involved in Star Trek, Dr. Who, D & D and the like.

So, having read the Progress Report and been persuaded to join our worthy enterprise, send your money immediately. Remember, memberships can be bought in six-packs or shrunk-wrap in hundreds. Our membership secretary gets very sad if he doesn't get at least a dozen memberships a day! Support your local membership secretary!

ALBACON 87

GLASGOW'S TENTH SUMMER
SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION
CENTRAL HOTEL GLASGOW
19th - 22nd JUNE 1987

PROGRESS REPORT 1

GUESTS OF HONOUR:

BRIAN M STABLEFORD
JOSEPHINE SAXTON
CHRIS BOYCE

ALBACON 87
c/o MARK MEENAN
"BURNAWN"
STIRLING RD
DUMBARTON
G82 2PJ

Also enclosed are forms for the Short Story competition, hotel accommodation and cheap rail travel to the convention. These should be sent to the addresses on the forms and NOT to us. We are again grateful to the Theatre and Concert Rail Club for providing the cheap travel facility for our members. Please note that the Short Story competition deadline is May 8th, so get writing! The winner of the Short Story competition will be announced at a prize giving ceremony early at the convention.

Guests are arguably the most important constituent of the Convention. They are central to a large part of the programme. If you have guests that complement each other, are innovative in their respective writings and are approachable you are a large part of the way to having a good convention. With this in mind the committee had a good head-banging stramash to sort out who must bear this heavy and onerous load.

We decided.

We reckoned **BRIAN STABLEFORD**, **JOSEPHINE SAXTON** and **CHRIS BOYCE** were the people for the job. You will have the chance to decide for yourselves when you meet them at the convention. We are very pleased to

welcome them as our Guests of Honour and we hope that you will too. Brief articles on all our guests are included in this Progress Report.

Our earlier advertising stated that Angus MacVicar, the author of the "Lost Planet Series", would be a guest author at Albacon. Regretably, Angus has had to undergo medical treatment and will be unable to speak at the convention. We wish him a speedy recovery, and hope that we will be able to introduce him to you at a future time.

(We wish to thank Roger Perkins and Roger Robinson for their work in producing an excellent appreciation of Angus for our Programme Book. Again, we hope to have the opportunity to use it at a future time.) ■

PROGRAMME

The Guests will form the core of the programme not only through their speeches and appearances on panels but by various themes suggested by their works. These include politics, biological sciences, alien contact and man-machine interfacing.

The programme will also feature items that address some topical questions in SF: The Future of SF Publishing; Is the market too Fantasy orientated? Where are the up&coming SF writers? Will there be a market for them? Is SF producing too much juvenilia which will cause SF's collapse? Minority Interest Groups in SF; What are they? Why are they needed? Why doesn't mainstream SF offer enough?

If all this sounds too serious, don't be concerned. The programme will also have talks, panels and interviews covering topics both serious and frivolous, games and quizzes for you to take part in and even win some prizes, auctions where you could obtain something long wished for, parties, a disco, a late bar (with Real Ale!), and much more.

Apart from the Ceilidh, Fancy Dress and Debate which are detailed elsewhere in the Progress Report, the following is a brief listing of some of the items we intend to run:

"Chesley Bonestell - A Slideshow Retro-

spective" by Ed Buckley on the late Space Artist whose great work influenced many film makers and artists. "When Worlds Collide", "Destination Moon" and "War of the Worlds" are just a few of the classics that bear the Bonestell hallmark.

"The Albacon Senses of Wonder" - See us quiz all the senses of the fans. (Including their common sense!)

"The Hang-glider's Guide to the Galaxy." A talk on flight in non-terrestrial atmospheres. The title says it all.

"Last of the Red-Hot Hippies - a Party" Help celebrate the 21st Birthday of Dave Ellis' Jeans by turning up in your parent's 60's gear. Let's remember the "The Summer Of Love" (1967) with flowers, headbands and beads! Birthday presents especially welcome.

"Colonizing the Galaxy" - Will Wimpey terraform Mars? Will your grandchildren be living in another Solar System? Will their planets be ice-capped or rate-capped?

"The Albacon Terminal Quiz" - Wait and see what this one is about! A shocking event.

"Is the New Wave all Washed up?" - A discussion on whether the New Wave movement in SF is finished. Or is there still life in it?

"The Saville & Wilkes Chat Show" - Makes 'The Last Resort' look like Paradise. A Committee's Welcome you'll never forget!

"The Trial" - The Progress Report cover was inspired by this programme item. Jurisprudence prevents us from giving details of this event, but be prepared to be summoned for Jury Duty in the famous Court Number 1 of the Central Hotel.

"Odd Ways Into Orbit" - a detailed slideshow on the space vehicle concepts now on the drawing board. Which will become fact, and which will be left on the designer's floor?

We hope to stage a repeat of Unicon 3's performance of "Blunderbirds Are Go!", or rather an updated version of it. We have our director at this very moment working hard on a rewrite. The committee are currently walking around pretending

they have strings attached!

Have you ever seen a film where you KNOW that you can provide a better ending than the one you actually saw? Well, this is your chance! The thankfully, inimitable Ian Sorensen and Jim Barker will lead teams which try to act out their versions of the ending of a film. So all you budding thespians out there, come along and be prepared to look silly in front of thousands of people. If you have always wanted to be King Kong, Darth Vader or even Scarlet O'Hara, this is your chance!

"Notes Towards a Politics of Survival" How we can survive the next 300 years. Duncan Lunan puts forward his proposals to secure Earth from all impending dangers.

"The Cabinet of Dr. Caligary" - this silent classic will have a live piano accompaniment. Experience what your grandparents saw at the cinema, long before videos and stereo t.v.

"The Age of the Spaceplane?" - A look at British and American proposals for a spaceplane into orbit. What are the technical realities involved, how much will it cost, and are they really worth it? A video and slide talk will illustrate the ongoing work on Britain's HOTOL and NASA's Aerospace plane.

THE CEILIDH.

Now you all remember how to pronounce that word from last year, right? In one of the PR's I did explain and hint at a number of ways not to mispronounce it, but I did suggest that 'collide-ay', while wrong, was liable to be most appropriate. The line of the night, quoted in the Con newsletter the following day, was "I think I've injured your wife, but only slightly." It is true that Albacon's US representative was hurled to the floor at one point, but it wasn't intentional, and anyway we're insured.

If you weren't at Albacon III, or you haven't been to any other ceilidh before, give me a moment to explain before running away in terror. A ceilidh is what happens when we turn our backs on the synthetic charms of the disco, hire a live band who play 'reel' music, and try to remember the Scottish country dances the teachers tried in vain to force us to master back before the comprehensives. That was all very

genteel stuff, except when you couldn't remember the steps. It was years later before we found out that you can actually have fun; that the atmosphere of a good ceilidh is totally unlike a school dance; that learning the steps as you go along is part of the entertainment, especially if the organiser or the band have a really good caller lined up to demonstrate them.

What else do you need for a ceilidh? Well, you use a lot of energy, so the organiser needs to lay on some way to replenish it. Last year the Central Hotel came up trumps by providing haggis, with the proper trimmings - tatties and neeps - and it was delicious. Another important point is that people appreciate a break after two or three strenuous dances, and the organiser usually tries to lure in some singers under the Old Pals Act so that the dancers can sit down now and again. Who'll be on stage this year? We're not telling come to the ceilidh and find out!



WE WANT YOUR BODY ...

...and we want it dressed up in all sorts of fancy dress for the Fancy Dress Competition. All entries are welcome, from the simple but outrageous pun, to the glitter and glamour of sequins and satin. If you have a special place in your heart for a favourite costume you wore in a past contest then here's your chance to give it another airing - if there are enough repeat costumes we could even have a special award category. Anything goes at this party!

Albacons have a proud history of excellence combined with fun for their Fancy Dress Competitions - so get busy with the scissors and thread, we've a tradition to maintain.

Anyone wishing to enter, please send us your name, title of entry and any other information needed. Alternatively, use the form that will come with the Programme book and hand it into the registration desk at the convention, the more the merrier - why not talk your friends into entering too!

ANNE PAGE

FILMS

Albacon's traditionally have a very strong film programme and this year we hope to enhance the presentation of our films by committing one of our programme rooms as a cinema. Obviously some of the films will attract large audiences so there will be showings in the main programme hall as well, but most of the film programme will take place in the cinema.

This system has several advantages: The cinema has a high ceiling so films can be shown minus silhouettes of heads and other obstructions as well as having better acoustics. The room is smaller than the main programme hall so each showing should produce a full room and therefore generate a real atmosphere. The greater flexibility of the programme will mean that everyone should have the opportunity to see all of the films. But most important, we will finally get the chance to dust-off our vendor costumes and sell ice-cream to the audience, and it could be a hot June!!

So without further ado, we announce this year's film programme. This list forms a core to the film programme and will be longer by the convention.

ALIEN: The original blockbuster. Yes! we know it's been on the box recently but it's teamed with ALIENS to give a more complete story. The survivor from the first mission is returned to the alien planet with a group of high-tech mercenaries, armed to the teeth with the latest special effects.

REPO MAN: Another of our BIG SCOOPS. In pursuit of a fairly ordinary cadillac are a repossession company, government scientists, the police, a bunch of UFO nuts, a motor-cycle gang and a radio-active professor. The cause of all the interest is the content of the car boot - a couple of aliens! Pure mayhem, laughs and a terrific rock soundtrack. Don't miss it.

BRAZIL: The highlight of the weekend. The fellow who works for the Ministry of Information has strange dreams about a beautiful girl and being a hero in the face of overwhelming odds. He gets the chance to see his dreams turned into

reality as he encounters anti-state heating engineers, the officious police, the inefficient system, a promotion in work from his mother and the girl of his dreams. It's all set in a futuristic, though strangely forties image time and place. Terrific special effects and design work combine with an uncompromising script and great acting.

THEM: Good old skiffy from the 50's. Radiation is in the bad books again as giant mutated ants emerge from the New Mexico desert to terrorise Los Angeles. It's not as bad as it sounds, the suspense is well built up and the performances are low-key, coupled with full size mechanical ants and creepy atmospheric photography. It has it's jumpy moments and gripping action sequences, especially when the US Army confront the giant ants in the city sewers with flame throwers.

The ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW: Yes! It's back. The favourite of Albacon. If you haven't seen it, try it. On a stormy night a young, straight couple get stranded at an old castle. Soon they meet with a strange mad scientist, singing transvestites, a frozen motor cycle rocker and a really weird butler. The music is terrific and the film really gives you a lift. Don't be scared to sing along with the rest of the audience. (For the benefit of newcomers, and the hotel's beleaguered cleaning staff, we will be showing the film with and without audience participation. The different performances will be clearly distinguished in the programme sheets and in the hotel.)

The CABINET OF Dr. CALIGARY: A 1919 silent film and a real novelty. The story concerns the experiments of a strange professor. Much fiendish plotting goes on, shot in a very arty and unique fantasy style. This year we are pleased to present this film as it was originally intended to be shown, with a live piano accompaniment to create a creepy, (or perhaps hilarious), atmosphere. Give it a try, you aren't likely to see this one at your local flea pit.

In addition to all these goodies, we have four Sf documentaries on all aspects of Sf plus lots of cartoons of the merry melodies kind and a few rarities. ■



BRIAN STABLEFORD

BIG MALKY'S GUIDE TO BRIAN STABLEFORD

Right then, let us now be all upstanding and give this boy a great big hand and that!

Ever spent the other half of Saturday banging your nut against certain bookshop walls in Woodlands Road looking for real SF? None of this flapping about the place on dragons (dragons - and they call it science fiction?) or philosophising about why God created noses (interesting but is it SF, Big Malky?).

I mean there are those few left amongst us. Mainly the older generation, you know the pre-Marvel comics lot, who like a straight forward good thumping steam roller read of a science fiction novel, a book that zaps you out along the spiral arm of the Galaxy with the kind of hero (yes, Big Malcky... I did say hero, not protagonist!) that you'd be more than happy to spend the other half of the same Saturday conjoining with in an ultimately melodious stroll around eighteen or nineteen of this fair city's hostels.

Personally speaking that is one of the easiest rules of thumb for judging an author. Are his main characters your actual drinking fraternity? Could one genuinely encounter them imbibing casually in a local watering hole, stumbling out of a nearby tandoori house after sinking a Rub Murray which will blow him into orbit over Finnieston come noon Sunday?

So look no further, china. Do as the cognoscenti do. Straight to the Stableford shelves - and I mean shelves, 'cause this birdie has some twenty eight novels under his wing at my latest reckoning which for a full time hack would be mind shafting, for a full time sociologist is like one of Big Malcky's fits of buying a round - the shock can numb the nervous system! I mean credit it, can you? Twenty eight novels, a zillion short stories and two zillion articles for this that and the other from Vector to Foundation to the reams of Sf encyclopedia. All this plus two kids. Personally I have to say I'm impressed.

Like all who write to please, Brian Stableford knows when he sits down at the blank page 1, with all those wee keys looking up in questioning anticipation, that he is going to watch a mountain of slag build up from the critics. Let me digress into metaphor here. That's just what they do, these critics. I mean we have this lovely wonderful mental landscape, totally unpolluted, populated with all sorts of delicate budding writers and then in come the big combines - the critical literary type magazines - and they tear up everything in sight, plunder the place, rape it, stick specimens into controlled environments so that these specimens can no longer exist in the wild and only in the totally unnatural lab conditions created for them!

Now that's what I call an extended metaphor! Shut up, Big Malcky - who cares what you call it!?

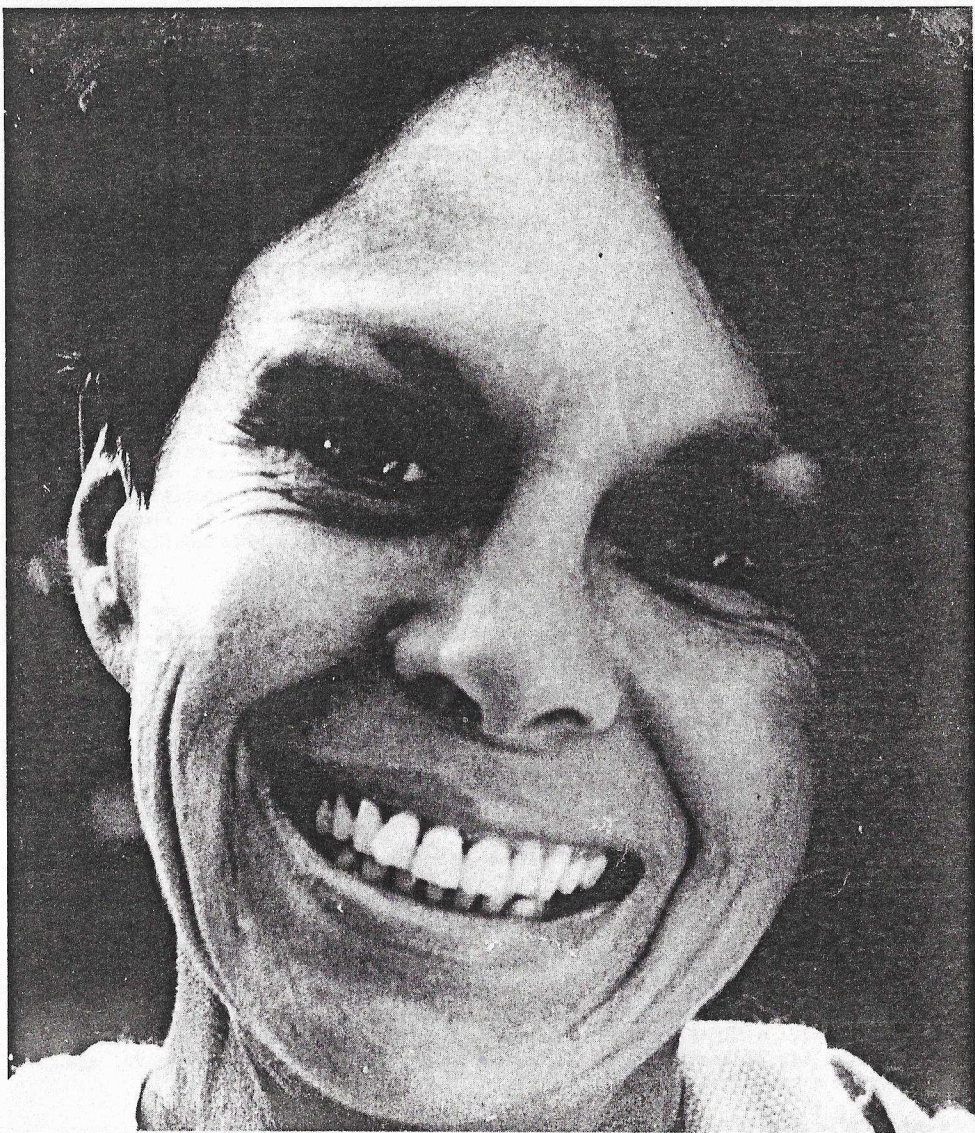
So what creatures do survive? The tough ones pal. That's who. The Graingers of the world. Now, Grainger, there's your hardy annual with the emphasis on the hardy. You can see this character at home in any Glasgow pub, New York bar or Marseilles bistro. Ever read Halcyon Drift? Ever read any of the Hooded Swan books with Grainger Bogarting it across the star fields in his favourite form of transport, a bit like a Knightswood garage Strathclyde bus driver with a face like a bag of spanners and his own personal bus! Not a character to run foul of on a bad night.

Fortunately for those of us who like our fiction hard boiled as a marble egg, there is Stableford and he sticks right in there doing what he does best - writing for me, writing what I like to read, helping me escape from the daily round of grind grind grind and wiping the bird crap from my eye.

Far as I'm concerned you can stick all those terribly moody, subtly drawn works which require more mental effort to read than to write. The mark of a good writer is simply that he or she is a joy to read, that when you've read one book by that writer you look out for others and you buy them if you can because you know you're going to read them again and loan them to the Big Malcky's of this world when your brain short circuits at the weekend.

So here is Brian Mitchell Stableford, a man who resists the lure of literary blandishment just to keep me happy. And the way I see it, even if he does live in Berkshire, he can't be all bad.

CHRIS BOYCE



"I have been called many kinds of writer: Science Fiction editors say I am mainstream, mainstream editors say I am Science fantasy, for example. I have written things with violent death in them, does this make me a writer of horror, detective, sadism, metaphysics? I refuse to be labelled, because metaphysical content embraces every possible kind of experience and mode of existence which might be taken from real life, imaginary life. One theme seems to be emerging over the years which I was not aware of until I recently collected and revised my short stories, and that is a strong feminist theme. This does not make me a woman's writer, so forget it. I write about things which happen to people, for people to read; who needs more? I can say with authority that it takes just as much imagination to write well about something you do every day as it does to write about a trip to Aldebaran 62. People who only write and/or read SF are very narrow people and I don't wish to be identified with them any more than if I set a story in the west of America I would want to be called a cowboy writer. Who started this ghetto of fiction anyway? Publishers? Editors? It certainly couldn't have been thinking writers."

JOSEPHINE SAXTON

JOSEPHINE SAXTON

The title is something of a misnomer. With Josephine Saxton there isn't that long, awkward period of getting to know someone. She is one of those rare people who, the moment you first meet, makes you feel you've known them a lifetime.

I first met her at Channelcon. I'd written to her, asking her to be the convention's toastperson, and she had agreed. Now, knowing nothing about her but a certain reputation for wildness, I was awaiting her arrival in the hotel lobby with a certain trepidation. I will swear that as she crossed the room the crowd parted before her like the Red Sea. I introduced myself diffidently, and suddenly her arms were spread wide, her face, shadowed by the wide brim of her hat, was lit with a broad grin I would come to know well, and she was saying, "Well, Paul, how are you?" as if we were lifelong buddies who'd happened to be apart for a day or two. Within moments she had somehow bundled me out of the hotel, round the corner, and into an Indian restaurant. There we spent a riotous lunch which she enlivened with a constant stream of unrepeatable and hilarious stories.

We have met several times since then, and she has always been one of the easiest people I know to talk to, and a most delightful companion. Her fund of wickedly funny stories is matched only by the equally wicked humour of her fiction. Who else would write about a food journalist kidnapped by a food technologist who plans to use her as the filling in his latest and very successful line of meat pies? Or a story all about the disgusting toilets of Morocco? Both are in *Little Tours of Hell* (Pandora), one of the three books she had published during 1986. And we are fortunate indeed to be enjoying the publishers' rediscovery of one of our most original and most distinctive writers.

Getting to know Josephine Saxton

Her stories first saw print when the *New Wave* was at its height in the 1960's, but after three novels the publishers seemed to lose interest. This lamentable state of affairs lasted throughout the 70's, and though the short lived Virgin Books did bring out one short novel in 1980 it wasn't until 1985 that she saw print again with the collection *The Power of Time* (Chatto). Then, in 1986, there followed a novel, *Queen of the States* (Women's Press), surely one of the best books of the year, and two more collections, *The Travails of Jane Saint* (Women's Press) and *Little Tours of Hell*. What these proved is that if anything her writing is better than ever, vivid, surreal, full of quirky humour, fast moving and totally unputdownable.

But if there is one pleasure greater than reading a Jo Saxton story, it is meeting the lady herself. By the time of *Albacon* one thing may have changed. After qualifying as an acupuncturist, she is now talking of taking the treatment to stop smoking. If so the cigarette that was a part of so many expansive gestures may have gone. But I don't think the gesture will be any less expansive, or the pleasure of her company in any way reduced. Enjoy!

PAUL KINCAID

an introduction to chris boyce

I first met Chris Boyce when he was working in the Mitchell Technical Library. He wore a look which could best be described as "I'm-a-librarian, what's-your-excuse?" A mutual friend had told us about each other, and carried a message from Chris to go round to see him. I had just sold my first story, Chris was already on the cover of *Impulse* with "The Rig". As soon as I introduced myself he was transformed, thrusting upon me a book called "The Three Christs of Ypsilanti", which I was to read until he could take a break.

It was a strange book. I have since been to Ypsilanti, which has a water tower you wouldn't believe if I described it, and a science fiction club which meets in a pub with a corner missing to let trains go by in the street. It figures.

Chris and I became friends at once. He threw himself into the discussions which led to my own "Man and the Stars", contributed a guest chapter to it, then expanded that into his own "Extraterrestrial Encounter", to which I in turn supplied a chapter. One major discovery was that we could write together, not in collaboration but at the same time. We would take it in turns to visit each other to write; and since I am a night-owl and Chris is an early bird, I would sit up singing songs with Chris's father, and Chris would get up in the morning to do my mother's shopping.

At that time, Chris was known for his appearances in *Impulse*, in it's one brief year as the final incarnation of Science Fantasy. For the collector, the issues to go for are Nos. 4, 7 and 11 - and number 4 gives you Angus McAllister's debut as a bonus. The story in number 4 was "George", a curious little tale about the return of the dinosaurs and a man with a flamethrower who hates his wife and daughter. I can't honestly say that it made a great impression on me, but "The Rig" in number 7 was an entirely different matter. This was the one about the giant lily which takes over a North Sea oil rig and starts broadcasting love, telepathically, to prevent human beings from destroying it. It's principal defender is a man who can find love in no other way.

There had been some typographical tricks in "The Rig", but "Mantis", the cover story on *Impulse* No.11, made more subtle use of them - until you came to the ending. The ending was a beauty, and I've quoted it before, so all I can say here is that if you don't know it, you should seek it out.

Then came the great dying of the British SF magazines. *New Worlds* was to last a bit longer, with an Arts

Council grant for it's final fling before the *Daily Mail* and *Sunday Express* went gunning for it, and that really was the end. In early 1974 there was an article bemoaning their loss as a forum for new British writers: some had made the transition to the American market, but where (the critic demanded) was Chris Boyce, for instance?

Those who knew him weren't worried. It was true that the US magazines hadn't gone for the distinctive style and the typographical fireworks, but we knew what was coming. With only the most general idea of the content, we knew it would win the Gollancz/Sunday Times competition. I didn't even bother entering.

The novel was "Catchworld". It came first equal in the competition, was published by Gollancz over here and by Fawcett in the USA. It features a starship bound for Altair on a revenge mission after Earth has been savagely attacked from space. However, nothing going on is what the characters, or the readers, think it is. It's a novel which keeps slipping away from you when you try to grasp it's essence - some of which is due to unsympathetic editorial rewriting (Gollancz didn't like the fireworks either) but a great deal more of which is due to the sheer complexity of what's happening. As Ian Watson said at the following year's Eastercon, after dismissing "Rendezvous With Rama" as simplistic, "there are no disappointments like that in 'Catchworld'..."

And then we come to "Brainfix". This is the novel in which Chris had the British Government using nerve gas to control the populace, the S.A.S. wiring itself into a computer for total rapport, and one ridiculous prediction that made it almost impossible to publish: that unemployment in Britain could reach three million! There was an earlier draft in which Russia invaded Afghanistan in 1988 and the U.S. withdrew from the Olympics in protest... It was after the frustrations of seeing that one into print that Chris declared, "it's back to the spaceships from now on, I'm afraid". His fans are waiting.

Times change of course. Chris is now very much the family man, with two beautiful daughters, Petra and Toni. He works long hours in the Glasgow Herald library, and gets up to do his writing before the household rises. He's into home computers the way other people collect stamps. But he still has a place in his routine for me - he saves me a lunch-hour once a month! Yes, Chris will talk to you even though he's rich and famous. If he looks fierce when you approach, don't let it worry you - he's only thinking about libraries again... ▼

THE MOVING PICTURE SHOW

11

Want to see the art show? It's upstairs, down a corridor, round the bend and in the basement. When found it's either in the process of being set up or being taken down. If found open, viewing is a solitary experience, because everyone else has tired of trying to get in.

On this basis we reckon any change has got to be an improvement.

The plan is to change the Art Show from being an 'always there but never noticed' part of the con, to a main programme event run in conjunction with the Art Auction.

In detail, we propose to set up the Art Show in the biggest function room in the hotel, on Sunday. It will be open for viewing late morning and for the early part of the afternoon, to be followed immediately by the auction.

Towards the latter part of the viewing and to encourage your "artistic sensibilities", cheese and wine will be served. Ok, so this is a blatant bribe to persuade the fans to turn out en masse to be culturally ministered to. But if it works?... Thus if you want to see the Art Work in comparative quietude you should turn up early.

To those who would think only to slake their thirst and head-off, nibbling the cheese, I would suggest that you stay and have a look at the display around you. A lot of the artwork will be for sale in the auction at prices that are extremely low for material of that quality. Why not consider bidding? After all, art prices are increasing all the time. We expect big things at the sale of Mike Molloy's Sunflowers!

The other departure from tradition is the auction itself. Basically, the auctioneer and audience will go to the artwork. There are several reasons for this arrangement:

Why remove paintings from the display boards where

presumably the artist has arranged them to their best effect?

There is considerable risk and labour involved in moving artwork from Art Show to auction, and in keeping track of money and buyers once the auction is over. With the new system the artwork stays in one place and can be collected and paid for at the convenience of both buyer and organisers.

The auctioneer will move methodically along the line of the artwork. Up to the second a work goes under the hammer it will be possible to go and look at the picture you are agonising over buying. It also allows you to judge WHEN the particular piece you want will be auctioned, rather than waiting for pot luck.

To the Artist; you might be understandably concerned at a large press of drink laden fans coming against your work. To ensure against this, barriers are to be erected to keep everyone at arms length plus a little bit, from the work. Continuous supervision will make sure that people stay on the right side of the barrier.

At the auction the convention will take 10% of all proceeds. So you can be sure that our ace auctioneer will be trying to get the best prices for those of you that want to sell your work.

The convention carries Insurance that will cover all artwork on display. If a frame gets broken while on display we can sort that out, but the person with the pencil sketch with a price tag featuring large amounts of "0"'s to the left hand side of the decimal place, will have to arrange their own cover.

The people running the Art Show are: Ed Buckley (Artist), Pat MacLennan, Alan Gunn and Ian Riddell (Artist). They have all been involved in running Art Shows many times before. They know what they are about and if you have any problems they will be glad to help ▲

ROOMS TO LET

At previous conventions the suites of small function rooms on the first floor of the Central have tended to be under utilized, so this year we will be letting them to any group for any responsible activities. Define responsible activities? These could be wargames, parties, folk singing, an exhibition, a barmitzva, or to plan the overthrow of the convention. The time requested can be from a minimum of 2 hours to a maximum of a day. If you write in to book the room well in advance, we may be able to advertise your event in the programme notes.

Each day a rota will be displayed outside each room showing what has been booked for that room and at what times. We reiterate that the room can be booked for any responsible activity and that it is your responsibility to ensure that the room is left in a clean and fit state for those who plan to use it after you.

To book a room, write to us at the convention address and give details of: Name and description of event, times and dates required, any equipment we might be able to help you with, and your name and address. ▲

INFORMATION

HOTEL

The convention will take place in Glasgow's Central Hotel. The hotel has been the site of the last seven SF conventions in Glasgow, all of which proved to be very successful. The management and staff are well prepared for our usual brand of fun, silliness and mayhem! The bars will be open, with an extended license until the early hours, providing good service and very reasonable rates. Real ale will, of course, be available.

If you plan to have a room in the hotel during the convention then the following negotiated room rates will apply:

TRIPLE room without bath.....£14.00
 TWIN/DOUBLE without bath.....£14.50
 TWIN/DOUBLE with bath/shower.....£18.00
 SINGLE without bath.....£17.00
 SINGLE with bath/shower.....£18.50

All rates are per person per night and include VAT and breakfast.

All hotel bookings should be booked directly with the hotel at The Central Hotel, Gordon Street, Glasgow G1 3SF, (Tel No. 041 221 9680), and NOT to the committee. Please notify the hotel of any special requirements on the back of your form. Book early to ensure you obtain the room that you want. No deposit is required when booking.

DEALERS ROOM

Any dealers wishing tables should book them soon as the demand for space in the Carradale is high. The rates are £10 per table. However, if we receive your money for the tables at least 2 weeks in advance of the convention (ie by the 5th of June) the tables will be only £8 each. If you wish to pay after the convention they will be £12 each.

ADVERTISING

We welcome anyone wishing to advertise in our Programme Book. There is a 20% discount for fans. All copy should be A4 or A5 size, camera ready and allow 10mm margins. Photos and half tones

should be dot-screened. The copy date is 18th May, and if payment accompanies the ad prior to the copy date there will be a 20% discount. Payment after 22nd June will result in a 20% surcharge. The rates are - £25 per full page, £15 per half page, and £8 per quarter page.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Rates are:
 £10 Attending till 18th May
 £12 from 18th May
 £4 Supporting at all times.

All membership applications should be sent to:

Albacon 87
 c/o Mark Meenan All correspondence should
 "Burnawn" be sent to this address.
 Stirling Rd
 Dumbarton
 G82 2PJ

NO - S M O K I N G P O L I C Y

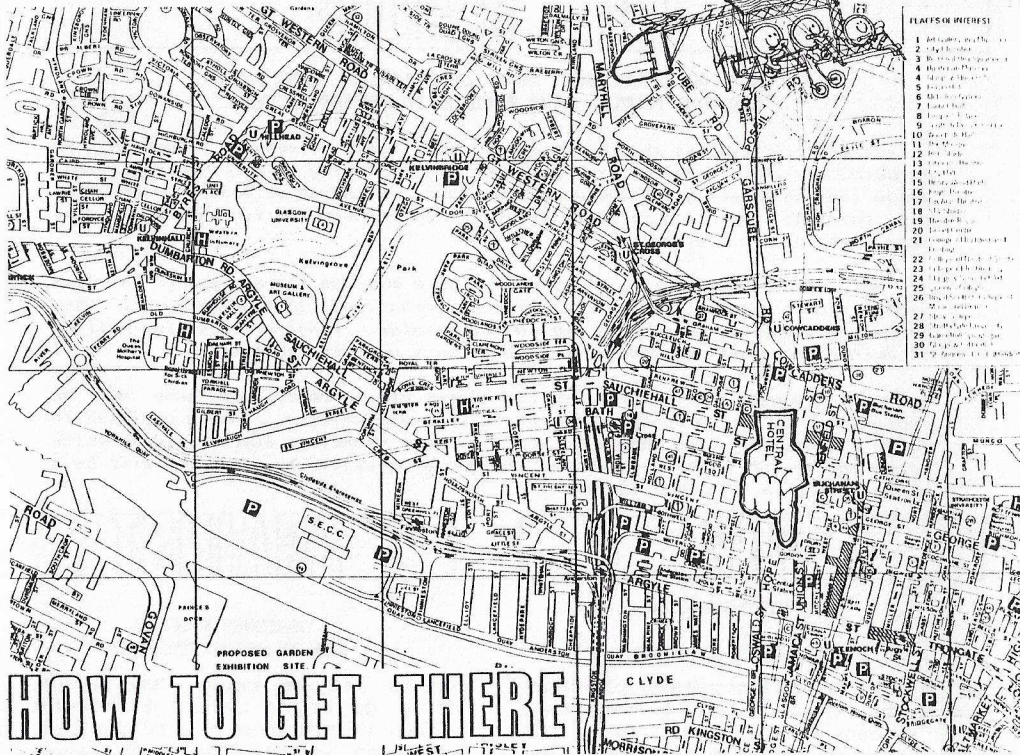
Albacon 87 will be operating a No-Smoking policy in all our programme areas and in the dealers room and art show. Smoking will be permitted in the bars and corridors. We hope that smokers will abide by this as a measure of courtesy to non-smoking members.

Travel

The convention hotel is part of Glasgow Central Station. It has two entrances; one off the station concourse, the other on the corner of Hope St. and Gordon St. If lost, phone the Central at 041 221 9680.

Train

Arriving at Glasgow Central Station from the South, you will have but a short stagger to reach the haven of the Central Hotel. The door is to the left, at the far end as you get off the train. If you arrive at Queen St. Station, leave by the exit beside the Burger Bar on the wall facing you. This will bring you out beside the Copthorne Hotel. Central is then just three blocks away. Don't forget about the cheap rail forms with this PR!



- LIST OF INTERESTS
- 1 Glasgow University
 - 2 City Hall
 - 3 Glasgow Museum
 - 4 Glasgow City Hall
 - 5 Glasgow City Hall
 - 6 Glasgow City Hall
 - 7 Glasgow City Hall
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HOW TO GET THERE

Coach

Most of the long distance buses arrive at Buchanan St. Bus Station. Leave by the main exit which brings you out onto West Nile St. Go downhill. At the bottom of the hill you will be at St. Vincent St. Continue for one more block then turn RIGHT into Gordon St. The Central is two blocks along (past the burnt-out building) at the end of Gordon St. If you arrive at Anderston Bus Station, turn LEFT along Argyle St. Turn LEFT into Hope St., which is before the station canopy. The Central is on the RIGHT at the end of the station.

Air Travel

European and inland flights will probably arrive at Glasgow Airport (041 887 1111). There is a half-hourly bus service from the Airport which goes to Glasgow Central Station. It leaves at 5 to, and 25 past the hour. Direct trans-atlantic flights will probably arrive at Prestwick Airport (0292 79822). Early arrivals (up to 10am) have a bus service to Glasgow. After that, the nearby train station provides a rail link with the city.

Road

Coming from the south you will be on the A74 which becomes the M74. The 2nd junction after the Hamilton services (M73 THE NORTH) takes you onto a short stretch of the M73. After about 1 mile take the first junction (M8 GLASGOW). Go along the M8 for 7 miles. Near junction 16, (A81 Aberfoyle), move into the middle lane as the inside lane disappears. You will then be on a left hand bend. As you come out of the bend there is a flyover with the sign (S.E.C. ANDERSTON PARTICK) on it. Move to the inside lane. Leave the M8 at junction 19 (S.E.C. ANDERSTON PARTICK). You will see the Holiday Inn to your front-left. You will be between the M8 and a slip road rising to meet it. There is a complex traffic light system. Turn LEFT onto Argyle St. The Holiday Inn will be on your left. Continue along Argyle St. At the 4th set of lights you must turn LEFT into Hope St. ie. DON'T go under the station canopy which covers the road. The Central Hotel is part of the station, the main entrance being at the end of the block on your right. Unloading is no longer possible inside the station.

THE DEBATE

THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THAT GENETICALLY ENGINEERED
'DESIGNER PEOPLE' HAVE A PLACE IN FUTURE SOCIETY.

Following it's success at Albacon III we will again be running a debate. To prepare for this event we have included the following articles in this PR, proposing and opposing the motion given above, although we hasten to add that the opinions expressed in these articles are not necessarily shared by the committee, or the writers!

As before, the debate will be formal. There will be three speakers on each side, with 5 minutes allowed for their contribution. The audience will then become involved via a question and answer session. Finally, each side will be allowed a two minute summing-up followed by a vote on the motion.

Written comments for or against the motion are welcome, and some may be included in future convention literature if space permits. Should you wish to raise a question at the debate but find you are unable to attend, please write to us and we will endeavour to have the question delivered. (Brevity will be a major factor in this decision!)

FOR

THE KRYPTON FACTOR
or
FRANKENSTEIN ABSOLVED.

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, plausibly argued by Brian Aldiss to be the first real science fiction novel, there was born one of the most enduring and powerful images in modern mythology. If man is so foolish as to play God and think that he can create life, this is what he will get: a shambling monster with a bolt through his neck, wandering about and strangling innocent children.

For those who believe in a traditional God, it is probably self evident that usurping God's function will lead to disaster of one kind or another. I have no quarrel with people who believe this; it is just that their arguments and mine must forever be at cross purposes. However, even atheists and agnostics are inclined to be hesitant about the advisability or morality of tinkering with the life process.

Why? Because it is contrary to Nature? Yet human civilisation has been built upon interference with Nature, from the day the first spark from a flint was fanned into a flame, or the first field was laid out for the cultivation of crops. Nor have we ever been squeamish about the selective breeding of animals for our own purposes; if this is wrong,

AGAINST

DESIGNER PEOPLE?
ARE WE BEING SERIOUS?

Things are bad enough. Bad enough to drive us to the limits of desperation which is just where we find the kind of brainless propositions which worsened things to begin with, if you follow my drift. I mean, take personal stereos; there you are sitting quasi-stupefied on the train of a morning and six cretins are there, little heads going like those toy dogs you used to see in the back of cars, noddie-noddie, noddie-noddie and they're all listening to different whatsits of course and everyone in the bleeding carriage is overannoyed at the racket from the supposedly 'personal' systems which merely broadcast at the public volume once reserved for the more considerate players of trannies on trains (anybody remember trannies?) Then of course the solution to this problem appears (this problem which has upped one's time for the Guardian crossword from 15 to 27 mins!!). And it is a simple solution too - get your own system! So there we are on the 7.34 out of Scotstounhill, brains being cooked courtesy of Sony and Mahler and I can't hear the other noddies having become one myself - and ultimately every other person in the carriage is wired for sound and they don't talk, they just finger to each other in the dummy language.

where are the picket lines of outraged moralists at Ascot, Crufts Dog Show, or at cattle shows throughout the world?

But, it will be argued, there is a difference in kind between this and actual tinkering with the genetic code itself. Nonsense! It is merely another step along an existing path. It is also a path that we have already taken, in fish farming, for example, or as a means of growing better vegetables. So far these modest ventures have not produced any Frankenstein monsters. The world has not been overrun by mutated sardines, and the attack of the killer tomatoes remains a not very convincing film fantasy.

But surely, many will protest, it is different with people? Even though the genetic building blocks are the same, even though the techniques involved are merely a more complex development of existing ones, is the question not one of human morality? All right then, so let's look at some of the advantages of human genetic engineering.

By manipulating genes we will be able to eradicate haemophilia, mongolism, cystic fibrosis and a thousand other genetic disorders. It may happen that the strong inherit the Earth, not, in the manner of crude bunglers like Hitler, by consigning the weak and inferior to the gas chamber, but by ensuring that they are never born at all.

There is no reason why designer people have to be homicidal maniacs with riveted necks or, (even more horrible), like the clientele of Finlays pubs. There may be good designs as well as bad ones. We prefer our clothes to be made to measure, so why should people be always off the peg? We have it in our power to save future citizens from worries about their size or appearance, to prevent hangups about whether their bodily parts are the wrong shape, or too large, or too small. Why should we forever rely upon a random fall of the genetic dice, when we can load them to throw a six every time?

The real reason why people have always resisted the idea of being bred like racehorses or farm animals is that they insist upon the freedom of choosing their own sexual partners. But we already have artificial insemination and test tube babies, and in the future it will be

The problem is people have no consideration for other people and this is particularly evident in the way parents visit horrors on their kids. How would you like to be named after every single member of the Celtic team that won the European Cup as are some teenagers today? And what about the Elvises running about the place? A name that really restricts your career. Imagine an undertaker named Elvis or Ziggy.

The trouble with designer people is twofold - fashion and the lack of consideration just mentioned.

Let's say a couple of the birdbrained rich decide they want a kid, one who'll be female, have rosy apple cheeks and stay babylike for at least fifteen years.... Another couple want their kid smarter, better looking, stronger and to have naturally spiky bright green hair in keeping with contemporary fads.... Let's say a show puts in an order for fifty or sixty assorted freaks, two-headers, three-arms, six-leggers, a few with tails, and if you've any with wings....

But even with a supposed 'sensible' 'responsible' approach all we're going to create is grief. There's just no way that you can cut away all the responsibilities which nature shoulders without being hit by flak. Imagine what it would be like if you could blame someone for everything that you don't like about yourself from the colour of your eyes to the shape of your nose. Sure, obviously and of course there are always the traditional remedies of nose jobs and contact lenses but they don't avoid the apportioning of blame in the first place. Lets take a society in the near future where stunning hooters are all the rage, where Barry Manilow is seen to be as handsome as Robert Redford, where Barbra Streisand would never have visited the cosmetic surgeon and Cyrano would have been an even greater egomaniac. Just before this fashion comes to bloom everyone with big schnozzles is making sure their kids don't acquire the genetic necessities for the good old family profile. The kids do not take greatly to this: the tens of thousands of galactic credits which mumsie and dadsie ploughed into the genetics job are wasted as soon as kiddo reaches sixteen and rushes round to the nearest plastic surgeon for a nasal update.

possible to entirely divorce human reproduction from the sexual act. We will be able to choose our children as well as our mates.

Most importantly of all, our descendants will be intellectually as well as physically superior; to use the words of H.G.Wells, they will have "minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish." "Dead are all the gods," said Friedrich Nietzsche, "now do we desire the Superman to live." We must not block our children's path to greatness because of superstitious fears, or from feelings of envy or inferiority. When primitive men first ventured from the caves there were doubtless those who, afraid of the light, scuttled back to the safety of the gloom. These were not the founders of human civilisation.

Here is the true message of Frankenstein: one ungainly step by Boris Karloff, one giant leap for mankind. □

The point is that if you program the finer details of a future person that person will not thank you for it unless you're zapping sickle cell anaemia or something. On the other hand if you don't do exactly what that person in the future thinks you should have done engineering wise they'll blame you for that too - imagine knowing your parents could have made you the smartest and best looking kid in school and didn't! The thing here is that if one group of idiots start it the thing will rage out of hand for maybe twenty years and at its worst we'll see murders and mayhem between parents and kids. Kids will be able to blame their parents for everything and will!. The benefit here will be that the IQ will shoot up as a lot of parents will want their kids to be smarter than the other kids. When the kids grow up neurotic geniuses reacting as they must completely against the previous generation they will abandon the whole concept of designer people. Too right! □

angus mc allister

by 'antidonal'

membership

G Brian	Stableford	027	Dawn of the Dead	057	Mike	Cobley	087	Nick	Mills
G Josephine	Saxton	028	Jon Axtell	058	Kevin	Gallagher	088	Peter	Pinto
G Chris	Boyce	029	Tom Taylor	059s	Iain	Thomas	089	Graham	Anderson
G Angus	MacVicar	030	Marina Holroyd	060s	Bill	Morris	090	Spleenmash	the Disturbed
001 Mike	Molloy	031	Oscar Dalgleish	061	Bruce W.	Grant	091	John	McCallum
002 Bruce	Saville	032s	David Porter	062	Ed	Buckley	092		Dednat
003 Vince	Docherty	033s	Alan Blair	063s	Horrible	Green	093	Dez	Struction
004 Chris	O'Kane	034s	Malcolm McLeod	064	Paul	Paolini	094	Gary	Heron
005 J.E.	Johnson	035s	Lesley Scott	065	Jean	Paterson	095s	Gregor	McNeil
006 Mark	Meenan	036	J. Murnin	066		Tibs	096	Alastair	Reid
007 Dave	Ellis	037	Roj Blake	067	Larry	Van Der Putte			
008 Pat	MacLennan	038	Linda Mackie	068	Tim	Illingworth			
009 Roger	Robinson	039	Iain McCord	069	John	Dallman	097s	Carol Ann	Green
010 Elda	Wheeler	040	Bruce McDonald	070	Steven	Glover	098	Hooby the	Great
011 Gus	McAllister	041	Paul Winship	071	Laura	Wheatly	099	Andy	Ramage
012 Kathy	Westhead	042	Gordon G. Cunningham	072	Steve	Davies	100	M.A. Campbell-Jewett	
013 Kay	Allan	043	George Neil Houston	073s	D.	Elworthy	101	Kenneth	Nelson
014 John	Kelly	044	Malcolm M. Reid	074	Bernie	Evans	102s		Wilson
015 Neil	Craig	045	Ian Cairns	075	Barbara Ann	Blackburn	103	Alan	Gunn
016 Joyce	Craig	046	David Bell	076	Jain	Banks	104		U.E
017s Gizmo the	Mogwai	047	Andrew Ramage	077	Paul	Dommer	105	Ian	Weller
018 Bernard	Eatp	048	Deborah Ramage	078	Ian	Sorensen	106	Ian	Sutherland
019	Cuddles	049	The Tenth Nazgul	079	Anne	Page			
020 Jim	Gallagher	050	Ian Whitehouse	080	Steve	Lawson			
021s Wilf	James	051	Eamonn Patton	081	Roger	Perkins			
022 Ken	Slater	052	Des Gorra	082	M.M.Kamal	Hashmi			
023 Joyce	Slater	053	Mark Turner	083	Keith	Edmond			
024 Russell	Aitken	054	Bob Jewett	084	Steven	Linton			
025 A.B.	Rennie	055	Colin Goldie	085	Peter	Wareham			
026 Ray	Thomson	056	Jette Goldie	086	Gwen	Funnell			

Membership at 8/4/87