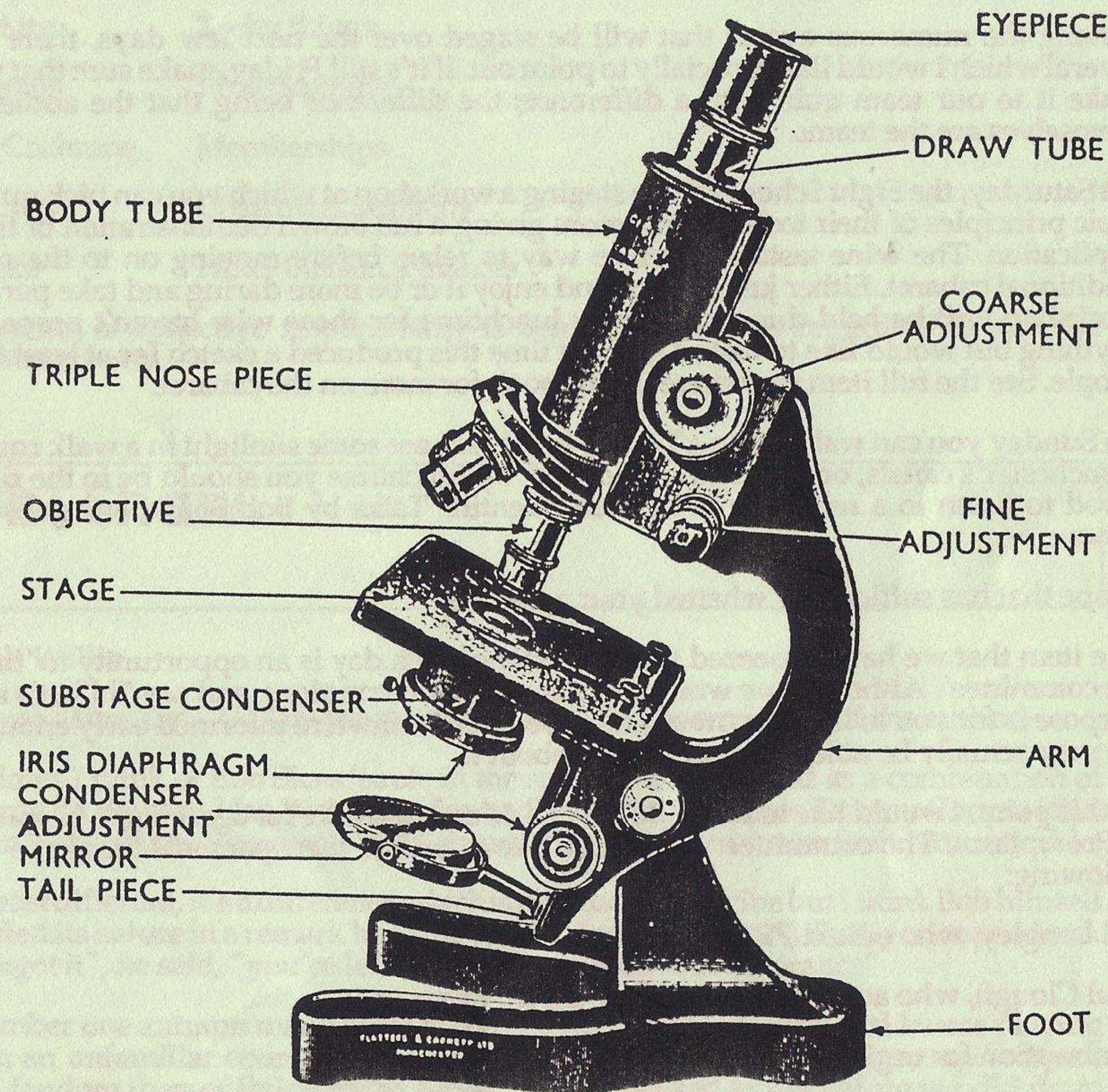


PROTOPLASM



Guest of Honour - Bob Shaw
Special Guests
Mary Gentle Dean Wayland
Mike Gearing

A Word From Our Chairman

Neil Curry

Well, here we are again, and this time the convention trail has stopped in Manchester. Not that it needs saying, but I hope (and am sure) that you will enjoy the weekend.

Among the numerous events that will be staged over the next few days, there are several which I would like especially to point out. If it's still Friday, make sure that you make it to our team quiz with a difference; the difference being that the audience themselves are the teams.

On Saturday, the Fight School will be staging a workshop at which you can pick up the basic principles of their techniques, before giving a full blown demonstration of their application. The wine tasting is a nice way to relax, before moving on to the now traditional cabaret. Either just sit back and enjoy it or be more daring and take part. A workshop will be held during Saturday lunchtime for those who haven't prepared anything but would like to have a go. Last time this produced a sketch for at least five people. See the full item elsewhere in this book for more on the cabaret.

On Sunday you can wake up to a Turkey breakfast, see some sunlight in a walk round Manchester's canals, or just crawl out of bed. By lunchtime you should be in the right mood to listen to a rendition of Serious Scientific Talks by Bob Shaw, our guest of honour.

I hope that has sufficiently whetted your appetites!

One item that we have squeezed in at the start of each day is an opportunity to 'meet the committee'. Although we won't mind if you just come along and say "hi", it's real purpose is for you to let us know of any problems etc. If we're informed early enough, we may actually be able to do something about it.

At this point, I would like to thank Bob, Dean, Mary and Mike for agreeing to be guests at Protoplasm. The committee would also like to extend their personal thanks to the following:

Bill Longley, who edited PR1 and PR2.

Paul Clough, who acted as treasurer for the first year or so.

Contraption for organising the games room.

Lidia Plintshev for the Protoplasm "Blob" which adorns the convention t shirts

Walt Willis for allowing us to use his article on Bob Shaw

Additionally, Jonathon Cowie and John Bray have put a lot of effort into our programme.

The first two of these were originally on the committee, but had to leave because of other commitments. I'm sure that many more of you will deserve our thanks by the end of the convention.

If you get as far as reading the committee profiles, you may find them, ahem, slightly different from what you would normally expect. One piece of information missing is nominal responsibilities of the committee, so this item finishes with a nice boring list.

Committee:

Nick Atty	Operations
Steve Atty	Techy things
Jon Brewis	Programming
Eddie Cochrane	Memberships
Neil Curry	Chairman, Publicity
Phil Race	Hotel Liaison, Finances

A doctrine of collective responsibility is being exercised as regards PR3 and the programme book.

Bob Shaw

by Walt Willis

(Reprinted from the LUCON program book with kind permission of the author)

Sometimes I think of Bob Shaw's role in the science fiction world as a combination of Leonardo da Vinci and Ian Botham. Admittedly, to adapt a classic Tommy Cooper joke, Botham is not much of a painter and Leonardo never played for an Italian county side,

Or at least different, It's a difference which is not easy to describe but I think Bob himself identified its nature in a remark he made once about education. "When you read a book and forget it", he said, "you're left with a different kind of ignorance"

I remember one autumn many years ago when my wife Madeleine and I were playing golf on an unfamiliar course in Minorca, no more thinking of Bob Shaw and science fiction fandom than of flying to the Moon (as people used to say before we did fly to the Moon), when we came across a huge clump of bamboo growing by the side of the fairway. We both smiled. "I know", I said, "you're thinking of Bob Shaw and the bamboo bookcase". She admitted it. We had this old broken down bookcase made out of bamboo, and had complained we couldn't get any bamboo anywhere in Belfast to repair. "why don't you get a little bam", offered Bob helpfully, "and boo it yourself?"

I am not nominating this little joke for the Ignoble Prize, just pointing out that here there seems to be a whole new template of joke. You can dimly discern behind it a series of morphic resonances, a vista such as that which may have been glimpsed by the originator of the first knock knock joke. It made you think creatively, and that's the effect Bob has on one.

Of course, apart from relieving the almost continuous tragedy of my typical round of golf, Bob is also capable of the complex sort of joke which always seems to me to have

a sort of catastrophic inevitability, like the end of the world. I remember once while we were staying at a seaside cottage, I asked Bob to bring the jar of salt from the cupboard. But it had spilled, a fact that Bob reported as follows. "The salt, dear Brutus, lies not in the jar but on our shelves"

It is difficult to explain the influence of Bob Shaw on science fiction fandom without knowing something about the history and culture of that world wide network of people of all ages, sexes, nationalities, social classes and occupations who seem to have nothing in common but a liking for science fiction. The other things they have in common of course is an urge to communicate with like minded people. As Bob himself once expressed it, "people have to be a bit special if their minds encompass all that is expressed by the following set of black marks on paper; galaxy, fanzine, Bradbury, continuum, alternative universe, TAFF, Lensman, clone, annish, slan, time machine, Finlay, esper Quandry, quasar, Astounding, con ... Our criteria for judging our peers were ... Did a person have a genuine, creative, unpredictable sense of humour? Did he have enough imagination to regard himself as a citizen of the universe?"

Our world of such people is one that Bob has bestrode for nearly forty years, like some congenial Colossus, spreading what he likes to call "fannish good cheer"

Enjoy

The Canal Walk

by Nick Atty

"The discovery that a chap could, by digging a ditch and filling it with water, not only become obscenely rich but also invent Manchester ... must have been thought a good idea at the time, however it may appear now"

Sam Llewellyn, "The Worst Journey in the Midlands"

"The Bridgewater Canal's ... effect upon the growth of Manchester can scarcely be over estimated, in fact it may be said that in partnership with the steam engine and the spinning jenny, the Duke's canal launched the factory phase of the Industrial Revolution in South Lancashire"

L.T.C. Rolt, "The Inland Waterways of England"

These two quotes just represent the extremes in style of an idea expressed in almost every book that touches on the history of the Industrial Revolution. It would therefore seem inappropriate to attempt in a page or so to describe the processes that led to the construction of the canal, and the development of what was for many years the world's leading technological city.

School children are often told that the building of the Bridgewater canal in 1761 halved the price of coal in Manchester. This is true, but of far greater importance was that it permitted greater quantities of coal to be delivered. Growth followed rapidly, and within a few years Manchester had grown from a small town to one of the largest in the land. The Bridgewater canal was followed in the next few years by the Rochdale canal and the Manchester, Bolton and Bury canal, and the Trent and Mersey's junction with the Bridgewater connected Manchester to the rapidly expanding canal system throughout the country.

Manchester may not have had the first canal, but it had the canal that showed the rest of the country the money making value of canals. Similarly, with the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, it helped to introduce the idea of the passenger carrying railway to the world. The coming of the railways led inexorably to the decline of the canals throughout the country, but Manchester, not content with its claim to the first major canal in England, also produced the last: the Manchester Ship Canal, opened in 1894.

Today, successive governments' pandering to the road lobby has left Manchester engulfed in congested motorways, whilst the canals have been reduced to pleasure traffic, or simply abandoned. Similarly, many miles of railway have been short sightedly destroyed. The canal walk, Sunday morning, will explore the area surrounding Castlefields, the terminus of the Bridgewater canal. Although this area is rapidly being "developed", there is still some atmosphere, and signs of the industry that caused the development of the area. Come and see it before all is smothered in concrete imitation cobbles, cast iron lookalike lamp stands, and "Jolly Bargee" theme pubs.

Manchester

By Phil Race

Manchester city centre has the usual supply of facilities. Here I aim to give you a practical guide to the sorts of places you may need to find. Most of them are back along the road past Victoria station (Corporation St).

The first encounter on the right is Hanging Ditch where the Odyssey science fiction book shop is located. This is on the round sweeping corner of the old Royal Exchange. The interior of this building is used as an indoor market bursting with exotic stalls. The opposite (left) side of the same road puts you right in the middle of the shopping area - this is the Arndale centre (which used to display signs about being Europe's largest indoor shopping centre until the Gateshead Metro centre came along).

Continuing a few yards further along Corporation Street you start to encounter all the banks with their all too convenient cash point machines. This is a handy staging point for visits to the restaurants of China Town which may be reached by turning left at this point and continuing for 1/3 mile (not along a direct street unfortunately - but that should help you with the geography).

There are any number of good places to eat in Manchester, Chinese, Thai, Greek, French, Italian and Indian. Also the usual chains. Some of these are reviewed below. There are some good pubs in Manchester city centre: Sinclairs in Shambles Square. serves excellent Sam Smith's. Mr Thomas' Chop House serves excellent ales including Pedigree, as does the Mark Addy which also serves exceptional cheese or pate and bread lunches. Further afield are the Flea & Firkin near the University, and a pub with a good reputation is the Railway at Stalybridge station (only 10 mins by train from Victoria!). The Beerhouse off the Rochdale road usually has about 8 different real ales! If you need to locate any of these waterholes I may be willing to act as guide!

The Programme

By Jon Brewis

Biology is the main theme of the programme, with regard to both science fiction and the real world. For SF we will be asking, amongst other things, if there are any really convincing aliens. Often the rocketships and rayguns in SF are carefully explained, whilst the aliens are not necessarily as well thought out. This is a shame as the interactions of aliens and man have provided some of the best stories going.

Back in the real world, biotechnology and the state of environment are the major concerns of the programme.

The problems of ozone depletion, global warming and loss of habitat were supposed to be addressed at the Rio summit. At the time of writing, however, the US is refusing to sign the biodiversity treaty, and the industrialised and developing nations are involved in a slanging match as to who is to blame. This is partly due to the leaders listening to differing scientific opinions.

Environmental change has been addressed in SF by such people as John Brunner, but this 'future' is now so close that SF is losing its voice in this field, as it did with the reality of spaceflight and computing. It will be interesting to see where SF got it right and where it went wrong. If previous predictions are any judge, it should provide a few laughs, if nothing else.

Advances in the biotechnology industry are quickly outstripping the ideas of most science fiction authors: the first human has already received genetic therapy, viable transgenic animals have been around for a while, and what they're doing to the yeast in your beer is quite amazing.... The ethics of genetic engineering will be far more of a constraint on what can be done than the technology itself. This has led to 'Frankenstein' stories in the media, which hasn't helped the debate. Currently, ethics is a limiting factor, but if this changed it could lead to situations that we would find repulsive today.

This is another golden opportunity for SF to lead the way, especially if it is to retain its claim to 'the leading edge.'

Writers have started to address both these issues, but the reality of what happens in the next few years will both shape and be shaped by SF.

FRIDAY

7.45pm Opening Ceremony

Well, everyone else has one...

8.00pm The Allsorts Quiz

No, not types of liquorice, but a test of your ability to work out backward (SF) music, answer pointless questions and such stuff. The teams are your good selves, audience participation being obligatory. (Oh no it isn't. Oh yes it is).

9.00pm SF and the Greens

How green is SF? Is Footfall environmentally sound, or The Sheep Look Up on the wrong track? This discussion hopes to find out green we think writers are, and fandom itself, of course.

10.00pm Debate: Is Biology Big Science?

The Human Genome Project is the first 'big science' attempted in the field of biology. It is supposed to help cure all genetic diseases, and help fight cancer. But according to some it is wasted money, and with the resignation of James Watson the controversy is not going away. What do people think of the possibilities, both real and fanciful. Two protagonists put their views, and invite discussion from the floor.

SATURDAY

10.00am Problem Page

A chance to put any problems you have to the committee so they can be straightened out a.s.a.p.

10.30am You know your Science Fiction, Do you Know your Science?

A quiz in which we get to see how much real science two teams of fans know, with both serious and silly questions to test the intellect. Just the thing after last nights drinking.

11.30am Is The Evolution of Intelligence Inevitable?

Man's large brain puts a tremendous demand on the body for its upkeep, and has allowed the development of weapons that could wipe out the race. Is this a long term evolutionary advantage? John Bray helps us to find if this is why we seem to be alone.

1.00pm Aliens vs the Solipsists - The Probability of ET intelligence in the galaxy

Jonathan Cowie, the publications manager for the Institute of Biology, presents his view of life elsewhere. As for the solipsist bit, I had to look it up, why don't you? Jonathan gives these talks to groups all over the country, and this is one that's well worth catching.

2.00pm Technological Clean up of Pollution

The problem of pollution is one we are all aware of, but what can be done. There are micro organisms that metabolize toluene and actively take up radioisotopes; will these combined with more traditional techniques help clean up the environment? Mukesh Patel helps us put the world's chemical ills to rights.

2.00pm Cabaret Workshop(Upstairs)

For those taking part in the cabaret later on a chance to sort out what tech you'll need and to polish up your act.

3.00pm Man in the Future

Jack Cohen has been presenting entertaining talks on biology at conventions for a long time. He combines points on serious science with humour, and what he doesn't know about sex... This is one absolutely not to be missed.

4.00pm Where are They?

John Bray asked the old question, and hopefully provides a few new answers about where ET's got to.

5.00pm Fight School

Mary Gentle, Dean Wayland and Ashley Bird give you the opportunity to learn a few of the skills used in safe swordfighting. There are obviously limited places for this so it's first come, first served. In order to ensure the safest conditions, if you are taking part please obey Mary and Co.'s instructions to the letter, and don't expect to be Conan after a few minutes.

6.00pm Fight!

After all our fumbings early on, Mary, Dean and Ashley show us how its all done.

7.30pm Wine Tasting (UPSTAIRS)

A chance to whet your pallet (spitting out is not compulsory) before...

9.00pm Cabaret

The now traditional chance to make a fool of yourself, or watch others doing it. Comedians, filkers, jugglers, fire eaters: if you can do it, come along. If you can't, watch the fun.

SUNDAY

10.00am Problem Page

A second chance to put any problems you have to the committee so they can be straightened out a.s.a.p.

10.30am A Walk

A what? Nick Atty takes you on a walk of Manchester's canals to blow away the cobwebs. Just what you need to get rid of the hangover.

11.00am Turkey Reading

Fiona Clark, queen of turkeys (take that how you will) leads you on a glorious rampage through the more dire works of SF and Fantasy. Audience acting out of descriptions are voluntary, and great fun.

12.30pm Limited Ecologies

Biosphere 2 is the world's first attempt at a self sustaining closed environment. Depending who you listen to its not going well, or its the model for future space colonies.

If we are going to live in space this sort of thing has got to work. We look at the chances, and you can chuck in your twopenneth as to what more might be needed.

2.00pm Bob Shaw's Serious Scientific Talk

Our Guest of Honour gives one of his now legendary talks on a very, very, very, serious scientific subject. You have been warned.

3.30pm Are There Any Convincing Aliens In SF?

Sick of that guy with the pointy ears? As pioneered in an article by Jack Cohen, some things may be common to all life, while others are unique. this discussion aims to sort out which is which in your favourite aliens.

4.30pm Closing Ceremony

A chance to claim a prize if you won something earlier in the con, and to see the last of the committee outside the bar.

A Note on Participants

Besides our guests, two of the people on items deserve special mention.

Jack Cohen has been involved in SF for a long time and advises authors on how to make aliens believable and possible. He is a reproductive biologist and so knows a hell of a lot about sex, just ask him. He has published several serious science books including "The Privileged Ape".

Jonathan Cowie is the man behind Concatenation, the SF and science fact fanzine, and publications manager for the Institute of Biology. He has been involved with environmental voluntary groups, not to mention Eastercons and a Eurocon. A long standing fan, Jonathan will doubtless be found at some point in the bar.

Video Programme

For the night owls amongst you there will be a video programme running through the night (Midnight - 9 am) where a wide selection of videos both serious and silly will be shown.

A Letter from Russia

We were quite surprised when an envelope all the way from Russia fell on the convention doormat. We were even more surprised when we opened it as the article it contained encompasses one of the main themes of the convention.

Unfortunately Yuri could not make it to the convention for reasons he explains but we felt that his article was worth including in the programme book. We also decided to include Yuri's covering letter as it seemed the best way to introduce the writer and the theme of his article.

Yuri also requested that we include his address as he would like to discuss his ideas with like minded people. So if the article has interested you, and you have thoughts of your own on the subject (one of the reasons for including it), then why not write to him at the address shown at the bottom of the letter.

Dear Friends!

I am Russian SF fan and biologist (Doctor of Biological Science). I am interested in problem of men evolution in science fiction and in science.

I have read that in June in Britain will be SF biological Convention ("PROTOPLASM"). I have never been in England and for a long time I dreamt to get into your country. Unfortunately it is impossible because we have wrong monetary system. We can't change our roubles to \$ or GBP. (Wages of scientist for example are 1500 rubl. In black market they can change this month wages on 7GBP. Consequently a ticket to England and back cost my 5 years wages) but it is very important for me to discuss the biological and SF problems with other people.

I send you my article "The man of future" and I shall be very glad if anybody will be interested of it. Please accept my best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Yuri Scherbatykh

Russia, 394036, Voronezh, ul.Koltsowskaja 17, kw 136, Scherbatykh Yuri

THE MAN OF FUTURE

(the view of science fiction at the ecology of human development)

by Yuri Scherbatykh

Human beings have always tried to catch a glimpse of the future from the time of the ancient pharaohs to the present. There have always been fortune tellers and prophets, astrologists and palm readers. But the questions about the future change to suit each period in history. People can try to forecast changes in the Earth's climate, changes in political systems, or can predict technological progress. Let's try to imagine what human beings will be like in the distant future let's guess how their bodies and souls will develop.

People are children of nature; they are the product of the laws of evolution of living creatures on our planet. But after having always been an organic part of the biosphere, they are now becoming more and more alien to it. This has to do with the fact that humankind has persistently been creating its own technological living environment; a "technosphere" that greatly differs from the environment out of which it was created. In order to better understand possible directions of human development, I would like to present a hypothesis of the three stages of humans' adaptation to their environment.

In the first stage of development, when people were only thinking primates, they reacted passively to changes in their environment and adapted to them. For example, in the cold, all mammals' blood vessels contract, regulating the organisms heating reflexes. When people acquired reason, they found another way to react to natural factors. Rather than passively adapting to natural factors, they started changing their environment, altering it to conform to their needs and desires.

Thus began the second stage of the evolution of living creatures on Earth. What people do when it gets cold? They put on clothes, build shelters, turn on electric appliances. In other words, they create around them a micro environment with comfortable living conditions. Most of the problems that face human beings today have to do with the fact that our living environment has changed drastically in the past century, while biologically speaking, human beings themselves have remained just as they were a thousand years ago.

The core of my hypothesis is that humankind will be forced to turn to yet a third step of adaptation. In this stage humans will learn to change their organisms to meet a desired goal to be flexible and adjust to their environments, consciously changing their bodies as became necessary. Indian yogas were the first to start doing this: they can change their own body temperature, metabolism, hear beat, etc. Today biofeedback machines help people control their own vegetable systems. This is only the beginning of the process of human beings' release from the rigid genetic programs that are established in them by nature.

What can humans expect in the future? Let's turn to science for an exact answer. But unfortunately, today's science doesn't look more than two or three decades into the future. Here are the reasons why: (1) Absence of funding of long term project. (2) The impossibility to properly test on existing models, since only time can show what the future will really be like. (3) The narrow specialisation of contemporary science discourages the collaboration of experts from many different branches of science biologists, psychologists, physiologist, philosophers,.... that is critical to distant predictions.

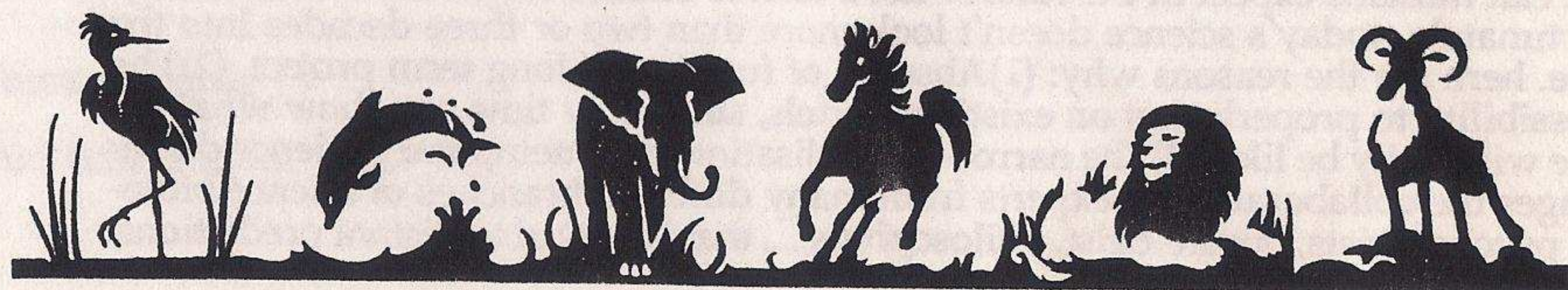
So if science won't tell the future for us, we'll turn to science fiction. Fantasy bravely creates images of a new world. Constant invention of new images is vital to science fiction, since it is what arouses readers' interest. However science fiction is more than fruitless dreaming, it often turns out to be valid predictions. Remember that lasers, holographs, the atom bombs, robots, television and space flight appeared first in science fiction literature, and only later in real life. Science fiction presents us with a wide variety of alternatives for the future, and at least a small number of them will be realised. Today science fiction is the only way to get a clear, concrete look at the future.

How does science fiction present human beings of the distant future? There are generally three different kinds of predictions, each of which has its own branches and variations. The first is that human beings will not change. This is most popular view, and is presented by such authors as Isaac Asimov in "The End of Eternity" and Stanislaw Lem in "Solaris". Humans can come up with amazing machines, change the planet's climate, and conquer the galaxy, but their own souls remain just as perplexing and their bodies just as powerless as ours are for us today.

The second sort of literature looks at the constant process of evolution: a race of "new people" will take the place of human beings we know. Examples of this sort of prophesy include "Time Machine" by H.G.Wells and "The Evolution of Doctor Pollard" by Edmund Hamilton. This kind of fantasy, in which humans change passively, is probably unlikely. In his book "The Past, Present and Future of Humanity", the Russian professor Bystrov wrote: "In order for man's biological evolution to continue, it is necessary to place people in life threatening conditions in which they need certain biological traits in order to survive". But this probably isn't possible in our humane and civilized world, where weak and strong, and ignorant and intelligent have practically even chances to reproduce.

The third group of science fiction prediction is that humans change actively, by their own will and according to their own plan. The probability of this kind of development is greater. Some authors expect drastic changes in human beings, who in future, will gain entirely new capabilities: telepathy, levitation, and telekinetics. Other authors concentrate on technological perfection of people: artificial gills, mechanical brains and other organs, and so forth. The general symbol of this approach to evolution is the concept of a "Cybernetic organism" a human machine that combines the advantages of both people and robots. However, the human body and human emotions are too alien to machines' logic to successfully combine the two.

But a person doesn't need to insert a computer into his or her brain in order to learn to control his or her body and consciousness. We don't know which direction human development will really take, and can only make suggestions. Right now, science fiction writers are faced with the problem of people's psychological preparation for surprises and unprecedented changes that will arise through the development of human civilisation on Earth. Science fiction literature serves as a gradual adaptation to the future.



Committee Profiles

Neil Curry

Occupation: Worshipful Master of the Sacred Order of Wombats
 Born: Vienna 1898
 Hobbies: Solo squash, long distance hopping.
 Famous Quote: Man who sits under apple tree in autumn will get sore head.

Neil is best known for his paper on the dynamics of celestial objects published in 1902. After a rather brief and unsuccessful musical partnership with Tim Rice (their one musical "Captain Cochran on the Planet of the Amazons" being a total and utter flop) he then went on to form another brief, and again totally unsuccessful, partnership with his unknown brother Tim. However after appearing on New Faces, where they were unanimously panned by the critics because the name of their act wasn't remotely funny, they broke up. Following this second failure to make the big time Neil dropped totally out of sight spending several years in the equatorial rain forest where he was worshipped as a god. He recently reappeared in Western society and is, once again, making his presence felt.

Jon Brewis

Occupation: Navigational adviser to Vasco De Gama
 Born: Circa 1325
 Hobbies: Free fall gymnastics
 Famous Quote: How many times do I have to tell you Chris, America is that way
 Other details:

Jon has now been officially recognised as the person who introduced the potato peeler and the chip pan to Western civilisation. However due to an unfortunate miscalculation Europe had to wait another 128 years for the potatoes. A direct ancestor of Robert the Bruce Jon is very proud of his famous relation but freely admits that he can't abide spiders. Unlike the rest of the committee Jon is a time traveller. Being shorter than the other committee members his head is nearer the gravity centre of the earth and therefore travels slower through time than everyone else's.

Nick Atty

Occupation: Mad Scientist
 Born: Venezuela 1956
 Hobbies: Mutant Spotting
 Famous Quote: You only gaffiate once, Doctor Glover

Dr Nicholas Atty graduated from the University of Bogota with a first class honours degree in Weird Science. Since graduating he has been directly involved in many of the major, and some of the minor, scientific discoveries and inventions of the past two decades, culminating with the successful construction of a small scale atomic reactor in his back garden using nothing but household objects. His thesis "Thermodynamics Of A Fried Egg" was a best seller and remained at the number one spot in the bestseller lists for over 2 years. Despite this moderate success Dr Atty continues to work in relative obscurity in his \$175M laboratory at the University of Guam.

Eddie Cochrane

Occupation : Millionaire recluse and philanthropist
 Died : 1960
 Hobbies: Counting his money
 Famous Last Words: Wop bop a loo bop a wap bam uurrghgh

Despite having been dead for over 30 years Eddie still manages to have an active social life and claims that women seem to be fascinated by him, and he can rightly say that they are not after his body (unless they are medical students). During his brief, and some say unhappy, life Eddie accrued millions of pounds from his top ten hits and his platinum selling albums which he invested, in a string of unsuccessful companies. He made history in 1960 when he left his entire estate to himself in his will. This was followed by the now infamous Ghost Tax trial where he was acquitted on a charge of tax evasion, because he was, technically, dead. In recent years Eddie has returned to the limelight - this time on TV where he has been playing a leading role in the Scotch video tape adverts.

Phil Race

Occupation : Innovator and Inventor
 Born: Won't say
 Hobbies: Author baiting, Yogic Flying
 Famous Quote : I'd go for MS DOS 0.1 Mr Babbage

Philip Race was born into abject poverty in the early years of the 19th Century. The last of 12 children, Philip was the butt of all the neighbourhood jokes as his parents forced him to wear hand me downs and he was their only boy. At school Philip was hindered by a congenital defect that had left him with an enlarged ego, however he was soon accepted by the rest of the pupils when he designed and built an automatic line writing machine. After graduating from the University of Life Philip accepted a job programming Jacquard looms it was at this time that he met Babbage who was fascinated by his idea of using Jacquard cards to control the gas lighting in his house. After Babbage's fall from grace Philip returned to solo projects, and it is from this period that his most successful and famous inventions came.

Steve Atty

Occupation : Catering Adviser to the Court of Ming the Merciless
 Born: Mongo, 1932
 Hobbies: Frog Hunting
 Famous Quote : Give me a steak, medium rare

Universally recognised as the inventor of the Syrup and Jam Double Decker Doughnut and a moving force behind "GastroPod" the worlds first orbiting restaurant Steve is an internationally acclaimed gastronophile. He has appeared on several TV programs and is a major contributor to the Good Food guide. A founder member of the Sacred Order of Wombats he was ousted from power in a vicious coup led by the current Worshipful Master it was after this that Steve invented his most controversial dish wombat flambé. He was once described by Lloyd Grossman as "a wonderful chef and close personal friend" however Steve has repeatedly denied the second part of the statement. When he isn't hard at work cooking food he is hard at work eating it proving his motto: "You can have your cake and eat it".

Places to Eat

Manchester is a cosmopolitan city and even in the centre there are restaurants to satisfy every taste.

China town has many Chinese restaurants, all of a high standard and the best strategy is to go there and browse until you find one that suits. Also in the area are Vietnamese, Thai (Siam Orchid - Portland St), and Malay - the Panang Village on Faulkner St is expensive but very good. There are also a range of Indian restaurants. The Kailash on Charlotte St, the Ashoka on Portland St, the Katmandu on Sackville St, and the Gaylord off Spring Gardens all offer a good meal at about 15 pounds.

More down market is the Deansgate which is actually on a little street (Artillery St) behind Deansgate, and has an all-you-can-eat for about 6 pounds. There are of course a whole range of Italian. Apart from the usual chains the Pizzeria Italia and the Bella Pasta on Deansgate are worth visiting. More upmarket, Cesare' on South King St is very good.

There are other offerings as well - the Dutch Pancake House in St Peter's Square, the El Macho is Mexican and the Beaujolais is an excellent French restaurant, both on Portland St.

Places to Eat

The idea of the wine tasting is for a fun occasion and an opportunity to try some truly excellent (and pricy!) wines, and to explore the contrasts between them - without getting too much into the subtleties. To this end we have (with professional help) selected 6 wines which should make for a good tasting.

1st First we have Salinger - a sparkling "methode champenoise" wine from SW Australia (Victoria). It is a 50/50 blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Described as the best fizz under 10 pounds (even if only by a penny!).

2nd a white from Northern Burgundy - St Romain. A blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc, It is a medium bodied wine described as having an honest Chardonnay style.

3rd the final white; Krondorf - another Australian wine. It is a big, rich, oaky Chardonnay from a premium winery. A multiple wine show medal winner. It has a toasty citrus style.

4th Wild Horse - a pinot noir in a Burgundian style but from Santa Barbara, California. Described as ripe, deep and softly structured.

5th Chianti Paglierese - a classic 'oak aged' 'riserva' chianti 'classico' from a Siena based company. Ripe cherry flavour and firm acidity. Supreme food wine. Made from 80% Sangiovese, 5% Canailo, 15% Trebbiano.

Finally a real piece de resistance. Wolf Blass Grey Label Shiraz. From Australia's top medal winning wine maker - Wolf Blass makes this wine from prime areas: Barossa; Clare; and Eden Valley fruit. Rich with complex flavours of blackcurrant, leather, pepper and spice.

The Cabaret

By Stephen Atty

The cabaret is one of the long standing traditions of the "-asm" conventions dating all the way back to Iconoclasm at Leeds in 1989. With its main emphasis set squarely on fun the cabaret is the place where the would be stars of tomorrow start on the long and rocky road to obscurity!

The entertainment starts in the early evening and finishes late but leaves enough time for visiting a restaurant before, or after, the show. One of the attractions of the show is its wide range of material: from filk via poetry to comedy routines, there is bound to be something to amuse even the most staid attendee. One major component, and indeed one of the most popular, in the past has been the slave auction where willing volunteers have allowed themselves to be sold to the highest bidder with the money raised from their sale going to charity. So if you fancy being a slave or buying one you should definitely be there.

Unfortunately, we haven't been able to arrange waitress service, but don't worry - the bar in the main function room will be open for the duration of the show so the next drink is only a short walk away, and you won't even have to miss any of the items.

During the day there will be a cabaret workshop where we hope to match performers with no material to writers with no performers. This is where you should come if you wish to discuss your technical requirements, or have any general queries about the show.

CONTRAPTION

Protoplasm has asked the committee of CONTRAPTION to run some games during the con. But what is CONTRAPTION?

CONTRAPTION is the 1992 UK role playing convention, the official successor to Conjunction (held in 1990). The main objective is to provide a con atmosphere for roleplayers. Thus, it has a real guest of honour; Steve Jackson from the USA, creator of GURPS, Car Wars, Illuminati, and many other games. There will be a few programme items to stimulate discussions, and other con-like things.

CONTRAPTION will begin on Friday September 11th and run until Sunday September 13th, at the University of East Anglia in Norwich. For more information or to join the convention (£18 attending and £9 supporting), contact one of the CONTRAPTION team at Protoplasm or write to:

CONTRAPTION, 4 Haddon Close, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 6DP