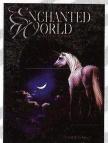
2Kon



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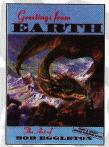
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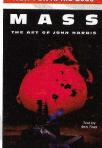


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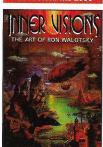
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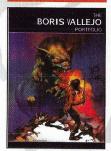
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Thoughts from the Chair

The Chair's bit in the Programme Book for conventions often starts with something like:

"Well, the convention's over. Of course it's over, no one reads the Programme Book at the convention, do they? You all read it on the train home or at home three weeks later..."

I considered this but decided that it's become boring by now, and one thing we've tried to be throughout the bid and the run up to the con, and hopefully through the con itself, is exciting and interesting. From professional a masquerade stunt in the Intuition masquerade to John Salthouse as a guest, attempting to blow the hotel manager's socks off. Oh, and burning books while he's at it. But they'll only be Star Trek books, so that doesn't count, does it?

But you'll have seen all that at the con since you're reading this afterwards. You'll also have danced in our Ceilidh, listened to Guy Kay, Katherine Kurtz and Deborah Turner Harris talk about their work, and generally had a good time while (probably) getting pissed in the any bars dotted around the Central...

Bugger, there I go again writing things in the past tense about a convention that's still weeks away as I write this. It's enough to give one a headache trying to write about it in a way that will be interesting to the reader. "I hate temporal mechanics", to quote Chief O' Brien in Star Trek-DS9. Ooops, that's two mentions of that TV show. Anyone might think we were a media convention.

Well, we're not a media convention, but that doesn't mean we ignore media SF.

The same as we don't mean to ignore any of the other aspects of Speculative Fiction. If we haven't catered to your particular choice of fandom, then that's probably because we don't know enough people interested in it to do something good with it. There are all sorts of aspects of speculative fiction: books, TV, radio, comics. anime. artwork. public performance. The list goes on and on. Running a general con like the Eastercon is always a difficult proposition. You have to try and cater for all these interests in about the right proportions, without knowing in advance the exact mix of people who'll attend. We've got three major fantasy writers as our guests, but to counterbalance that we've got John Salthouse, a safe maniac with indoor fireworks, as well as a focus on the science fact/science fiction crossover.

It's been an interesting experience running an Eastercon. There's so much that people simply expect will happen, will be there or get done, without considering the work that goes on behind the scenes. Even such simple things as the bars being open by 11am need working on to make sure they happen. Sometimes it seems like too much and you wonder why you're bothering with all this stress. It's just a hobby after all. But then you realise that without all this work there wouldn't be an Eastercon to go to and it gives a good feeling of giving something back to a community that's given you so much pleasure: an escape from the mundane world to a place of wonder and welcome. The post-con blues can be intense after an Eastercon. which is why you're reading this booklet

right? (Oh dear, there I go again.) I wonder what it will be like for me after 2Kon? Will the sense of relief that it's all gone well (supposing it does) override the sense of still so much left to do even now that everyone else has gone home and is looking forward to the next one?

Still, once the dust has settled from 2Kon I, and many of the rest of the 2Kon committee, will be moving on to the UKO5

worldcon bid. Are we completely mad? Maybe, but at least it's a madness that's productive. Like a chesty cough: providing it's productive, it's good pain.

Well, that's it from me as the Chair of 2Kon. From the whole committee I hope you have a good time, or had a good time, or are still having a good time, whenever you decide to read this.

See you all next year in Blackpool!

2Kon would like to thank our contributors...

JAP, SMS, Jonathan Cowie, Tim Kirk, Katherine Kurtz & Deborah Turner Harris, Guy Gavriel Kay, Farah Mendlesohn

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This large blank space is dedicated to my daughter,

Danae Aphrael Walker,

who has helped enormously with this

and other 2Kon productions, by staunchly refraining from drooling on the keyboard.

I hope that she enjoys this, her first (post-natal) convention,
and that she makes as many good friends in the years to come as I have in the past.

When we remember with sadness those fans who have recently passed on, we should take hope from all the new fans arrived among us in the past few years.

Here's to them!

Thoughts from the Chair

There follows an excerpt from Deborah Turner Harris and Katherine Kurtz' new collaboration.

1306

A Distorical Foreword

Nearly three hundred years in the future, a King of Scots descended from Robert the Bruce would declare on his deathbed that his kingdom had come with a lass and it would pass with a lass – this, upon learning that his queen had been delivered of a daughter and not the longed-for son: a daughter christened Mary, who would one day lose her head at a place called Fotheringhay, by order of an English queen.

In the spring of 1306, however, the crown of Scotland had but recently been vested – shakily, to be sure – in the man destined to become the distant ancestor of that child called Mary: that same Robert Bruce, survivor of a dynastic wrangle among no less than thirteen contenders for the crown briefly intended for another royal girl-child, this one named Margaret, commonly known as the Maid of Norway, granddaughter and only heir of the last Canmore King of Scots.

On the strength of a childhood betrothal agreed in treaty but never consummated by even a casual meeting of the two principals – the little Maid and the Lord Edward of Carnaervon, son and heir of England 's Edward Plantagenet – said King Edward had used the premature death of the little Maid as license to adjudicate the Scottish succession, with an eye toward at last absorbing little Margaret's kingdom into the realm of England. A client king, John Balliol, had been chosen from among the contending thirteen – and had been deposed but three years later, when he dared to attempt asserting Scotland's independence.

Then had come Sir William Wallace, hailed by some as an Uncrowned King – of common blood, but one whose life and death had given new hope to the Scottish nation and enabled the present king to come forth: Robert Bruce, in whose veins, by way of distaff, also ran the blood of the Canmore kings. Not only had Bruce at last stood against King Edward, but against inhuman forces that would have set an altogether different course for Scotland.

Behind and at the bedrock of this struggle had been an ancient and power-full artifact called the Stone of Destiny, or sometimes the Stone of Scone, for the place where it was kept: mystical palladium, sacred altar-stone, relic of Jacob and of the saintly Columba – the high seat of Scotland's high kings since the time of Kenneth MacAlpin, nearly five hundred years before. Earmarked for seizure by King Edward's men, its power waning, it had been whisked to safety and a lesser copy set in its place, saved through the agencies of men who wore white robes: tonsured servants of the gentle Saint Columba, and Crusader knights of the Temple of Jerusalem, whose inner circle guarded secrets harking back to the wisdom of King Solomon himself, who had built that temple in the land where Christ later walked.

With Providence working through these unlikely allies, the Uncrowned King had given up his life and so re-empowered the Stone – the Stone upon which the Bruce had subsequently undergone a mystical enthronement, bracketed between two public inaugurations upon a lesser throne, that had wedded him to the Land by ancient Celtic rite.

But being hailed and crowned king and actually being king were not necessarily one and the same, as Robert Bruce would soon discover. And not only Edward of England would be seeking to destroy him, as the deed became known. Enemies of the Temple had long been searching for ways to bring it down. Discovery of the Knights' involvement in Scotland's struggle for freedom was likely to place both the Temple and Scotland in grave danger . . . and also Scotland's new king . . .

Chapter One

Late April 1306

"Hail, King Robert! God save Robert the Bruce!"

The roof beams of the smoky great hall in Castle Cupar reverberated with the cheers, and shadows leapt on the lime-washed walls, as men rose from their benches along the boards and lifted their tankards in honor of their liege lord, who occupied the seat of honor at the high table.

Robert Bruce, lately lord of Annandale and but a month ago acclaimed as King of Scots, returned the salutes of his followers with a flourish of his wine cup and with smiling asides to his close companions. As the cheering subsided to good-natured banter, he rose and turned to his host, seated at his right hand: the venerable and ever faithful Robert Wishart, Bishop of Glasgow. Gradually, as it became clear that the king intended to speak, a semblance of order settled on the hall.

"My lord bishop," Bruce declared, bowing slightly to Wishart and pitching his volume so that all could hear him. "I present my compliments again on your newly discovered skills as a man of war. In wresting this keep from English hands, you once again have proven yourself one of Scotland's staunchest champions."

The men signified their endorsement of this declaration by thumping cups and beefy hands against table-tops, and Wishart's blue eyes lit with gratitude beneath grizzled brows as he basked in the praise. For two tumultuous decades and more, since well before the time of John Balliol, he had spearheaded the legal and political battle to secure Scotland's independence. Now owning more than seventy years, he had only lately taken to arms in the field, with a degree of daring and initiative that would have done credit to a man half his age.

"While you're handing out commendations, Sire," he said, with a droll grin for the Bruce, "pray, let us not neglect Edward of England, who so thoughtfully provided us with the means to breach the castle's defenses."

This riposte drew a roar of laughter, for the bishop's statement was precisely the truth. Indeed, his ability to twist the truth to his own ends had long been a potent tool in his crusade to see Scotland independent once more. Having received a grant of English timber to repair the bell tower of his cathedral, Wishart had unblushingly ordered the wood to be converted into siege engines, which he then had turned to less pastoral employment than the ringing of bells. Following a successful assault on the fortress at Kirkintilloch, the bishop had marched next on Castle Cupar, whose English garrison had offered only token resistance before surrendering, utterly daunted by the prospect of heavy bombardment.

"Well said, Bishop," said Christopher Seton, Bruce's close friend and brother-in-law. "But it doesnae hurt to have a pair of engineering experts on hand, either." He cast an admiring glance at the two white-clad men seated beyond Bruce and Wishart. "It seems to me that the good Sir Arnault and Sir Torquil also merit no small vote of thanks for their parts in our recent success."

A murmur of approbation rippled through the hall as all eyes shifted toward the two men named, both of them bearded and white-clad in a room full of mostly clean-shaven men dressed in the harness of war. The elder of the pair merely smiled and inclined his head in acknowledgement, but the younger, a Scot called Torquil Lennox, grinned self-consciously as he raked a big-boned hand through short-cropped red hair going grey. Though the two customarily went about in well-worn leathers and mail like those around them, they tonight had donned the distinctive white livery of their true vocations as Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem, in honor of the day's success. The crusader crosses splayed across the left shoulders of their white mantles much resembled splashes of blood.

"Och, anybody can build a catapult," Torquil said with a self-deprecating shrug. "An' besides, Brother Arnault and I have been doing it for a verra long time."

"That's as may be," Bruce allowed, "but we haven't. once you've built a siege engine, the trick is getting it to score a hit on target. For that, we are much indebted to your crusading expertise – both of you."

Arnault de Saint Clair, the second Templar, chuckled good-naturedly and also made light of their contribution, his manner much at variance with the pride and hauteur often displayed by some of his more worldly Templar brethren.

"If the truth be known, Sire, I must confess that my own experience lies more with trebuchets," he said easily. Though fluent in Scots and English and half a dozen other languages less useful on this island, he had never lost the accent of his native Brittany. "Fortunately, the principles of range-finding are pretty much the same. Consider any debt handsomely off-set by Bishop Wishart's hospitality — and by the luxury of having a roof over our heads for tonight!"

"I thought you Templars made a virtue of sleeping rough under the sky," quipped Thomas Bruce, one of the king's younger brothers.

"Aye, but it doesna rain much in Palestine," Torquil pointed out, "and never the way it rains

here." He grinned. "Why do ye think I joined the Temple?"

Hearty laughter greeted this rejoinder, followed by another round of toasts in honor of the king and his Templar allies and then more toasts to the future they all hoped would herald a new beginning for the Scottish nation.

At least a start had been made in the four weeks since Bruce's inauguration as King of Scots, duly solemnized by a Pontifical high Mass on Palm Sunday. Immediately thereafter, he had dispatched messengers throughout Scotland, proclaiming his kingship and calling upon all loyal Scots to pledge fealty to their new liege. He and a fast-mounted escort had followed in their wake, defying the rough weather of uncertain spring to make a royal progress through the northerly reaches of his kingdom.

With so much ground to cover, and the speed of an English response uncertain, the company had been obliged to press forward at a gruelling pace, rarely halting anywhere for more than one night. But the hardships of the journey had been well repaid by the loyalty of the townsmen and villagers who flocked to greet their new king. Now, after a brief sojourn in Aberdeen, Bruce was on his way south again, to rendezvous with friends and allies and make preparations for the inevitable reaction from the south, once Edward of England fully comprehended what they had done.

Tonight, however, the bloodless taking of Cupar Castle had left everyone in a festive mood, and the fire-lit hall buzzed with eager banter as heaped platters of beef and bread and cheese and pitchers of ale passed from hand to hand. Farther down the table, another of Bruce's allies, Sir John of Cambo, sampled the cup of claret just poured for him by a kitchen boy and heaved a satisfied sigh as he lifted his cup in the direction of Bishop Wishart.

"My lord bishop," he called, "there canna be doubt that you have got the better part of the bargain, by letting the English garrison march away unmolested in exchange for leaving us the castle stores. It seems the castle cellars are particularly fine! I say we set ourselves the task of doing justice to this noble vintage, and drink to Scotland's freedom!"

This toast was heartily seconded by all, amid much cheering and whooping and further pounding of fists on tables, but neither Bruce nor those closest to him had lost sight of the very real difficulties that still lay ahead.

"Well enough to speak of Scotland's freedom," he said to Arnault and Torquil and the others close around him, as the uproar subsided to convivial converse and serious feasting resumed. "But we need time to consolidate our position. I had hoped Edward would be dead before I made my move. God willing, he will prove too weak to make us much opposition — and the son is not half the man his father is — but we cannot count on that."

"Indeed, not," said Bishop Wishart. "I will not be surprised if we hear that the news has killed him – but if it has not, we must be prepared."

"Aye, the English will not stay away forever," said Edward Bruce, the king's eldest brother. "We've done well in securing the support of the folk of Aberdeenshire – and thanks to men

like Robert Boyd and Malcolm MacCulian, we now control the approaches to the Firth of Clyde, in the west. But as long as the south remains divided, we're vulnerable there. It will be difficult to defend the border."

"Best not forget about Galloway, either," Seton observed sourly, "and that's within our borders. Despite everything we've done, that district is still a hotbed of support for the Balliols and the Comyns."

Mutters of agreement bracketed Bruce from either side, sprung from varying degrees of knowledge of the true extent of danger from that quarter. Both families had been powerful contenders for the crown he lately had taken up. John Balliol, head of the Balliol clan, had managed to wear the crown of Scotland for only two years before being stripped of his titular sovereignty by Edward of England. Though he had since retired to comfortable exile in France, declaring never to return, some of his adherents still cherished the illusion that he – or his son – might one day be induced to a change of heart.

The Comyn link was even more dangerous, and came, in part, from the marriage of one of Balliol's sisters to the father of the Comyn slain by Bruce a few months before at Dumfries Abbey – a Comyn whose alliance with infernal forces had nearly cost Bruce his life on that day. As it was little known that Comyn had dabbled in such matters, the majority of his adherents simply viewed the killing as sacrilegious murder – which was a serious enough charge against the new king, even though he had been absolved of the killing within days.

But Galloway neither knew nor cared about absolutions. Small wonder that it remained unstable.

"Aye, that's true enough," Bruce replied, toying with his cup, perhaps recalling some of the circumstances of that killing – for without Arnault and Torquil, his Templar protectors, he himself might have been killed instead of Comyn. "The Gallovidians can be a short-sighted bunch, with old loyalties and old grudges. An alliance with King Edward is always a possibility, especially if they stand to profit from it. I've little doubt but that they'd throw in their lot with the devil himself, if he offered to give them my head on a platter!"

His glance at Arnault and Torquil confirmed that he was well aware of the deeper implications for those who knew the true story.

"It's a pity we had to dismantle the castles at Dumfries and Ayr," said Sir Simon Fraser, who was not among those few who knew. "A strong garrison in either place would have put some protection at our backs."

"Aye, but we haven't the men to spare," Torquil pointed out. "And we daren't leave anything behind that might be useful to our enemies."

"Even if it would be useful to us?" Fraser replied.

"No, because we might not be able to hold it, while we're spread so thin," Arnault said. "Believe me, Brother Torquil and I have seen such tactics used to good effect against us in the Holy Land. After the fall of Acre in 1291, Sultan al-Ashraf's troops swept up and down

the Syrian coastline, leveling orchards and villas and wrecking irrigation systems. When they were done, nothing remained to support an enemy invasion force – for that's how we were regarded. The tactic has enabled them to hold Syria uncontested for the better part of fifteen years."

"So there you have it," Bruce said briskly. "Any fortress we can't defend must be pulled down; any supplies we can't carry with us must be spoiled. The point is to make the English to feel so unwelcome," he concluded, "that they'll give up the fight and go home."

"Amen to that!" Bishop Wishart declared, and signaled his steward to bring more wine. "And now, let us do justice to this very excellent fare provided by the English!"

Again, servants passed along the tables with ewers of wine and platters of food. Torquil, when he had let his cup be filled again, stretched across to spear himself a gobbet of spring lamb with the point of his dirk.

"How long d'ye think it's been since we've seen food like this?" he asked. "Or until we see such again?"

"Too long," Arnault replied, tearing off a chunk from a loaf of fresh bread.

"If we ate this way too often," Torquil responded, chewing lamb, "we'd probably get fat. Probably best that we're vowed to poverty. But if we were allowed to have any personal wealth, I'd give it all to know what's in King Edward's mind right now."

"Aye," Arnault agreed, "one of the hardest parts of this job is waiting, not knowing when the enemy will strike next, or where." "D'you think it would make any difference to him, if he knew what's really at stake?" Torquil asked.

"Edward? I very much doubt it," Arnault said. He drank from his cup as his grey eyes roamed the ball. "Remember that there are good reasons Edward Plantagenet is known as the Hammer of the Scots – and he recognizes no authority but his own. Maybe not even God's.

"As for what we do," he added in a lower tone, "sometimes I'm not even sure I understand it. And how would you even begin to explain something like the Fifth Temple to a man like Edward?"

Torquil shook his head, returning his attention to the meat on his dirk, and both men lapsed into companionable silence amid the buzz and bustle of the feast. The truth was that on this isle of Britain, far darker forces were at work than paid any mind to the wranglings of English or Scottish kings — and the prize was no mere earthly kingdom, but a realm that dealt with the life and death of souls.

Safeguarding that realm was the hidden purpose of Arnault and Torquil and others like them, even though the Temple's avowed public purpose was to win back the Holy Land and safeguard the pilgrim places where God once had walked. Within the Templar Order there existed a hidden inner order called le Cercle, heir to ancient wisdom turned always toward the betterment of humanity's spiritual condition. Its members had worked toward that

purpose from the time of the Order's inception, secretly guiding certain of the Order's work toward a higher purpose than merely retaining a Christian foothold in the Holy Land.

But if the Holy Land once had represented the perfect symbol for the physical and spiritual battlefield whereon the greater struggle of Light against Darkness was being played out, that seemed no longer to be the case. The first intimations of this shift in focus had begun to emerge in the past several decades, as it became clear that physically restoring the Temple of Jerusalem – re-building the so-called Fourth Temple, in succession to the Third Temple destroyed by Titus in AD 70 – was not likely to be possible in the foreseeable future.

So a new home for the Order must be found – and a new battlefield for the forces of Light against Darkness. The superiors of the external Temple had their plans for the greater Order, by means of a new Templar state hopefully to be carved out in France, but the inner Temple must make its own arrangements – and not only in the physical plane. By means of prayer and meditation and the employment of diverse divinatory gifts sometimes accessible to various of their number, the leaders of *le Cercle* had been vouchsafed certain signs and portents pointing to Scotland as the Order's new home – and the future location of a spiritual Fifth Temple, which would anchor the Forces of Light in Scottish soil.

Arnault had been instrumental in discerning these signs; and despite the increasing opposition of dark forces that would have prevented it, he and Torquil had been key players in achieving the first step toward that goal: reviving the ancient power of the Stone of Destiny, focus of the Celtic sovereignty of Scotland, which power had since been vested in Robert Bruce as rightful King of Scots.

Now in progress was the task of making Bruce's kingship effective in practice as well as in law and in declaration, recognized outside Scotland as well as within. Failure would mean the end of Scotlish identity and a foothold for the forces of darkness. But if Bruce succeeded in winning the battle for Scotland's freedom, it was *le Cercle*'s intention that the Stone of Destiny, the Palladium of Scotland, would become both a physical and spiritual cornerstone for a new Fifth Temple enshrining the mystical wisdom of King Solomon himself – a temple not built with human hands.

The clatter of fresh logs being piled on the fire jarred Arnault from his contemplation, and sent waves of heat billowing across the room. Stifling a yawn, Arnault gave himself a shake and pushed his half-empty wine cup to one side.

"I think I'll step outside for a few minutes," he said to Torquil, pivoting to swing a leg back over the bench where they sat. "If I don't get a breath of fresh air, I'm apt to nod off and fall face-first into my trencher – though God knows when we'll be this warm again."

"I'll join you," Torquil replied, for the combination of warmth and wine was also making him feel heavy-lidded.

But before either one of them could rise, a muffled disturbance from outside the hall heralded the appearance of a guard from the outer baillie. Murmured speculation grew and

followed the man as he threaded his way toward the head of the hall, subsiding as Bruce signed for silence and nodded for the man to speak.

"Two travellers at the gate, your Grace, with news," the sentry reported. "Templars," he added, with a glance at the two seated near the king.

"Then, fetch them in!" the king ordered.

The sentry bowed himself out, leaving a murmur of tense expectancy. When he returned a few moments later, two closely muffled figures accompanied him, shaking back the hoods from mud-bedraggled dark mantles that parted as they walked to reveal familiar faces and the conspicuous white livery of the Order of the Temple.

Both Arnault and Torquil stiffened as the two approached, for the elder of the pair was Frère Luc de Brabant, their *le Cercle* counterpart from the main Scottish preceptory of Balantrodoch: a wiry, silver-haired man in his early sixties. Bearded like the younger man who accompanied him, Luc looked tense and somewhat preoccupied as his blue gaze swept the room, evidently searching out Arnault and Torquil, for he looked visibly relieved as he spotted them. His younger companion bore himself like a man braced for a possibly hostile reception: Aubrey Saint Clair, one of Arnault's Scottish cousins.

"Well, what's this?" Arnault muttered aside to Torquil, the two of them exchanging apprehensive glances, for only a matter of some urgency would have brought the aging Luc in person, all the way from Balantrodoch--and Aubrey was still very junior in his service to the Temple.

The hall fell silent as the two newcomers advanced to the high table and inclined their heads to the king, who signed for them to speak.

"I fear that the news we bring is not good, Sire," Luc said, flicking another glance at Arnault and Torquil. "Would you rather hear it in private?"

A flicker of misgiving showed in the Bruce's eyes, but his gaze was steely. "Secrecy won't soften the blow," he said. "No, speak out where all can hear."

"As you wish." Luc nodded and squared his shoulders, half-turning to address the assembly as well.

"I regret to report that an English invasion is on its way," he announced in a carrying voice. "By all accounts, King Edward has put not one, but two armies in the field. The eastern contingent, under command of Sir Henry Percy, is expected to arrive at Berwick within the week, with an estimated six hundred horse and two thousand infantry."

As a murmur of consternation rippled through the hall, he paused to glance back at the king, whose face was set like stone, braced for the worse news all of them sensed was still to come.

"That's one of the commanders," Arnault whispered, so that only Torquil could hear it. "And who is the other?"

"Continue," Bruce said quietly.

"The second army, in the west, is commanded by the Earl of Pembroke," Luc said.

A flattened silence followed this announcement, and Arnault and Torquil exchanged wary glances.

"I'll say this for King Edward," Torquil muttered, "he knows how to pick the right man to do his dirty work for him. Percy was bad enough, but Pembroke. . ."

None present needed reminding that Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, was half-cousin to the English king and married to the sister of the slain John Comyn. A few of them had been present to witness Bruce's killing of Comyn in a church in Dumfries, only a few months before, but only the four Templars knew of the conspiracy by certain of the Comyn family not only to overthrow the Canmore dynasty but to renew the worship of the Calleach, a demonic relic of Scotland's pagan past.

In the latter, at least, Comyn had been thwarted; but having Pembroke named to lead one of the invading armies meant that Comyn vengeance would be a powerful factor in the coming conflict. Young Aubrey, standing close to Luc's shoulder and a good hand taller, had not been present, but by his scowl, Arnault could make a good guess as to what was probably on the younger man's mind, imagination doubtless having embroidered on an account only heard, not witnessed. Tight-lipped, he leaned a little closer to Torquil, who, like himself, had cause to know all too well exactly what had happened.

"Fortunately," Arnault murmured, "I very much doubt that Pembroke knows anything about Comyn's . . . shall we say 'darker' involvements. As Comyn's brother-in-law, however, he does have a family obligation to avenge his death. This means there is apt to be a personal edge to the coming campaign."

"That isn't the worst of it," Luc warned, before Arnault could say more. "It is what we all have been dreading. Not content with putting Pembroke in change of one of the armies, Edward has given the order to burn, slay and raise dragon."

Torquil, a native Scot, went a little pale, and several of the men at table crossed themselves while others muttered darkly. The red dragon banner of the Plantagenets was England's most terrible standard of war. Its unfurling on a field of battle signified that no mercy would be shown, no quarter given to anyone on the opposing side, regardless of age, gender, or infirmity. Hearing of Edward's leave to raise dragon, Arnault found himself recalling other English atrocities of which he himself had firsthand knowledge, like the sacking of Berwick and the carnage at Falkirk.

And then there had been the mock trial and grisly execution of Bruce's spiritual predecessor, Sir William Wallace: hanged by the neck until near unconsciousness, then cut down and emasculated, disemboweled, his entrails drawn slowly and skillfully from his body before the removal of his still-beating heart. And though, by then, Wallace himself at least had been beyond caring, the ignominy had not been ended even by the headsman's axe – for they then had cut his mutilated body into quarters, that were sent for eventual display outside the gates of four Scottish towns, as a message to other would-be traitors.

No, temperance, mercy, and even humanity were not in the lexicon of the English king; and allowing his armies to raise dragon would not endear him to the Scottish people.

A sullen mutter spread through the hall, quickly swelling to a rumble of anger.

"If the Plantagenet thinks he can terrorize us into submission, let him think again!" shouted an anonymous voice from the ranks.

"Aye, we'll not be bullied!" another cried.

A roar of agreement went up, and Bruce rose to his feet, his grey eyes as hard as flint.

"Brave words!" he called back, "as long as they come from your hearts, and not merely from wine!" His words brought immediate silence to the hall. "If we have learned nothing else these past ten years, we have learned the high price of freedom.

"And the cost will be higher still, before this fight is over," he continued grimly. "Are you prepared to follow me where William Wallace led?" He leaned both hands on the table and leaned closer to them. "Are you prepared to risk a death like his? Are you prepared to hazard the lives of those you love, for the sake of this land and the welfare of future generations?"

A heated murmur started to rise, but Bruce stilled it with a raised hand.

"If you are not," he concluded, "go now and make whatever peace you can with our bitter enemy. But if your answer is yes, then let us pledge loyalty to one another from this moment onward – and make ready to defend ourselves and this land with the longest and strongest stick we have!"

He swept a challenging look over the now-silent sea of faces upturned before him. Following the king's gaze, Arnault could detect no sign of flinching or wavering among the men who made up the assembly, as they boldly returned his gaze. Slowly the harshness faded from Bruce's face, to be replaced with an expression of pride and even tenderness.

"So be it, then, my friends," he said quietly, nodding. "Henceforth, we must count ourselves as dead men, and every earthly thing we hold dear as lost, trusting in God to crown our sacrifices with victory. Be assured that this land of ours is as sacred as the Holy Land, and the war to preserve her liberty is nothing less than a crusade." His gaze flicked pointedly to the four Templars, in their white robes of purity touched with the red of martyrdom. "We fight to maintain not only the sovereignty of our crown, but also the integrity of our traditions. Remember that both the crown and the traditions are wedded to the land itself—and while we live and breathe, I see that it is, indeed, true that the land shall not lack for defenders!"

A burst of acclaim answered these words, every man on his feet to salute the king with drawn sword or dirk, and it was a long time before the rafters stopped ringing. Meanwhile, the two newcomers were bombarded with anxious questions, given space at table before trenchers mounded high with food, draughts of wine thrust into burly fists.

Much later, after most of the company had fallen asleep, Bruce drew Arnault aside,

withdrawing into the shelter of a deep window embrasure. Torquil was conferring with Luc and Aubrey, closer to the dying fire.

"I must confess that I hardly dared to hope for such a show of loyalty as you witnessed here tonight," Bruce said. "It grieves me more than I can say, to know that many will pay for that loyalty with their lives, once we come to grips with the English. I know you cannot make me any promises, but I would be grateful for any support that your Order can give us."

"I'll convey the message, and add my own appeal," Arnault said.

Bruce raised an eyebrow. "You're leaving us?"

"Not for long, I hope," Arnault replied. "I've yet to confer privately with Luc, but our superiors in Paris must be informed of these latest developments – and committing a report to writing is out of the question. That means someone has to relay the information in person."

"I am loath to lose you – or Torquil, either, for that matter," Bruce said. "Could Luc himself not go?"

Arnault shook his head. "If there were no one else, of course he could. But I think he can better serve if he remains our liaison with the preceptory at Balantrodoch – which must maintain at least the appearance of neutrality. Besides that, none of us are as young as we once were. For his age, he is fit, but the twinges of old battle wounds begin to slow him down."

Bruce shook his head in sympathy. "Strange, but I somehow think of Brother Luc as timeless. What of that young cadet who came with him?"

"No, Aubrey is young yet, and still has much to learn," Arnault answered, declining to be specific about the lessons yet to be learned in disciplines best unmentioned. "If Luc agrees, I thought to leave him here with Torquil – and with you. Did you know he is my cousin?"

"Is he?" Bruce glanced in the direction of the other three Templars. "Well, if he's half as useful as either of you, he'll earn his keep," the king said. "When will you leave?"

"At first light – and so must you," Arnault replied. "Your best strategy will be to stay on the move."

After a beat, the king nodded again.

"I'll ride with Luc as far as Balantrodoch," Arnault said. "And I'll take Torquil with me as far as Earlsferry. We need to discuss some strategy. How will he find you, when he returns?"

"Tell him to rendezvous with us near Perth, if he can," the king replied. "And if he can't," he added with grim humor, "just look for us wherever the fighting is!"

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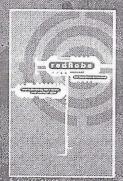


'Earthlight's consistent success over the last two years is derived from both their excellent selection of authors and titles and their strong use of marketing and branding'

George Mann, Editor, Ottakar's SF Newsletter, Outland









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In Memoriam

The following members of the British and international SF community died since the 1999 Eastercon. This doesn't pretend to be an all-inclusive list, but is selected from *Ansible* death notices of interest to UK fans and/or professionals.

John Archer, actor and radio announcer ('The Shadow knows'), died 1999 aged 84.

Chris Boyce, Glasgow author, 1943-1999.

Marion Zimmer Bradley, US author, 1930-1999.

Mary Brown, UK author, 1929-1999.

Howard Browne, pioneer US author and editor, 1908-1999.

Adolfo Bioy Casares, Argentine author, 1914-1999.

John Colicos, Battlestar Galactica actor, died 2000 aged 71.

Alex Comfort (1920-2000), UK author.

Ed Connor, US fan, died 1999 aged 77.

Marc Davis, US Disney animator, died 2000 aged 86.

Martin Davis (1942-2000), UK fan.

David Duncan (1913-1999), US author/screenwriter.

Gerald A.Facey (1919-1999), British artist.

John Glashan, Scots cartoonist, 1927-1999.

Charles Gray, British actor and *Rocky Horror Picture Show* narrator, died 2000 aged 71.

Chuck Harris, UK fan, 1927-1999.

Sir Rupert Hart-Davis, former UK sf publisher, died 1999 aged 92.

Joseph Heller, US novelist, 1923-1999.

Joy Hilbert, UK fan, 1959-1999.

Jean Hoare, UK fan, 1948-1999.

Carl Johan Holzhausen, Swedish author and translator, 1900-1999.

Charles D. Hornig, pioneer US editor, 1916-1999.

Laurence James (1942-2000), UK author under many names.

Eddie Jones, UK artist, 1935-1999.

Madeline Kahn, US actress, died 1999 aged 57.

Gil Kane, US comics artist, 1926-2000.

DeForest Kelly, US actor, 1920-1999.

Petet Kuczka, Hungarian critic and publisher, 1923-1999.

George "Lan" Laskowski, US fan, died 1999 aged 50.

Roger Erskine Longrigg (1929-2000), UK author who wrote horror as Domini Taylor.

Sture Lnnerstrand (1919-1999), Swedish author and founder of Swedish fandom.

Clarissa Luard, UK agent and Arts Council officer, 1948-1999.

Don Martin, US cartoonist and sf illustrator, died 2000 aged 68.

Patrick O'Brian, non-sf novelist much loved by fans, 1914-2000.

Ludek Pesek, astronomical artist, 1919-1999.

Oliver Reed, actor, died 1999 aged 61.

John D.Rickett, UK fan, died 2000.

John Roles, UK fan and bookdealer, died 1999 aged 70.

Ray Russell, US author and editor, 1924-1999.

Charles Schulz, US cartoonist of *Peanuts* fame, died 2000 aged 77.

Norman Shorrock, Liverpool fan, 1929-1999.

John Sladek, US author, 1937-2000.

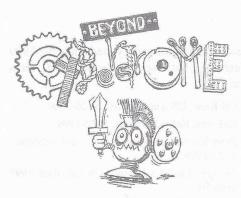
Mae Strelkov, fan artist long resident in Argentina, died 2000.

Jim Turner, US editor and publisher, 1945-1999.

Roger Vadim (1928-2000), movie director of *Barbarella* fame, died 2000.

A.E. van Vogt, Canadian-born US author, 1912-2000.

James White, Irish author and fan, 1928-1999. Walt Willis, the most celebrated Irish fan of all, 1919-1999.



Apology:

During Beyond Cyberdrome: IV: "One We Made Earlier": Matt and Sms suffered hallucinatory flu. Since we can't remember a thing of what actually happened (aside from the original venue burning down), we submit this story instead.

LIVERPUDLIAN TIME-SLIP.

By Sebastian M Stubb

On cue with the script, Rugg Gravelling felt his hand wave. As his voice joined those of the other two in the cheery chorus of "Hello!", he thought, My body doesn't need me. Seconds ago, we were performing a pastiche of a 1960's puppet show. It's the virus. Eating away each layer of our media archetypes, weltenshaung by weltenshauung...

The timeframe moves, but hypothalamus is missaligned. Always those mid-twentieth century references. Our Jungian Eden. Consulting the bones of dead childhoods as a meta-voodo... Autonomically, he swallowed a Fruit-E and watched the other two go though their pre-scripted enthusiasm. "And welcome to Beyond Cyberdrome Four!" chanted Bob, the traditional screemgreen Crumpleshirt and Wideankle pants of the

Peter Friendly figure. Only a machine rattle came from his throat. They've taken my voice! he thought. I'm being excised from the noosphere, sense by sense.

"And in this instalment, I'll be showing you how to make your very own mechanical pet!" enthused Neige, the girl dressed as the Perky Val archetype; pure, clean lines, and leatherette boots.

The crowd coalesced, caffeine-hungry, awaiting the first tiny mechanical deaths. Not the 20th century, thought Rugg. Above, he felt pillars rise to Corynthian decadence and the hands of the crowd formed down-stabbing thumbs. Catharsis is an invalid therapy, he thought grimly. It only feeds the neurosis. Is this Bob's damned plan? Becoming ever simpler, from ourselves, through a copy of halfforgotten telescreen Newsclowns and then what? Some spastic dummies made of wood and string? Setting down the first sacrificial robot, Neige felt it twitch spasmodically. I am Perky Val, she thought. And through this fetish figure She is more real than me. She dropped her Antiflu handkerchief as a signal for the mechanical pets to tear at each other. I'm Virally proofed, she thought. My female empathy is picking up the delerium of the other two. I must be the control for the group. The Superego. Without me they are lost. Smiling, reassured, she walked back towards the others. Above, a telescreen showed her from a split second in the past. "This certainly is very exciting!" enthused Bob. From the corner of his eye, he thought he saw someone gluing faces onto plastic ninepins... another reference to the puppetshow or a precog vision of a future event? He concentrated on the Friendly Peter patter about the things in the pitch

and yet found himself drifting. This event should have happened in the Discopit but it burnt down. Coal black wiring and mirrors shattered by the heat. The last time we saw Ewok, was in there. Suddenly he realised that he had no idea where Ewok was. Perhaps it was us that died in the fire? Are we still there, underground, whilst these simalucra follow the script we left. "It certainly IS Bob!" grinned Rugg. No change. Like clockwork trains. Below them, the inanely grinning orange thing with polka dot spheres surrounding its lower section was grotesquely coupling with the Dog-thing (again, echoes of the Mid C20th!). Decorticate actions, blindly following its last instinct. "Gubble Gubble" said the orange thing. I shouldn't be here, thought Rugg as he mouthed the pre-written phrases. I'm not the John Archetype. I'm not trained for it. I'm a Tynkyn Spinner. I know how to hold Entropy at bay with Gaffa, But there's always that telltale crack somewhere inside. This is an attempt to Exorcise the battle between man and Kipple. Entropy always wins in the end. That's what we want to see really... the cogs and springs of our mortality artfully drawn out of these totemic little bodies whilst we pretend that death and decay is beneath us. Ritualised Transference, it leaves a bad taste in our mouths. A sacrament turning into our own worm-ridden flesh. God, thought Rugg. We truly are corrupt to make such a world of decay and destruction without even the faintest hint of redemption. Cheerfully introducing the robot creatures as the script directed, Neige realised, the Hanglammer Thing will never stop. It's so unnaturally young, and yet so strangely serious... Seeming to play the game yet

slowly inching its way towards the centre of the world. As it said in the script, Neige picked up a cottonreel. Perhaps the Hanglammer isn't the thing made from cogs and wheels, but us. Perhaps it's our Gnossos. Perhaps it built us from the remnants of the things in the Discopit for this, to introduce another Cyberdrome. And then - what? She opened her hands, a tiny robot tumbled out onto the bench and crawled away. An intricate mechanical bug was attempting to evade all the others. Its Guiding Monad gave it the semblance of free will. Rugg watched it scuttle blindly into the waiting jaws of a Knex Advertbot and thought grimy, that's us. An amygdala response, the tiny animal at the top of the spine that screams eternally in denial of mortality. Swallowing another Ee-Z, Bob ransacked the buzzing colours for some solidity. Even the place isn't real, he pondered. It's based on a telescreen program about a Hotel. Even that is just a twin to another structure. But the mirrortwin hotel was destroyed by ice. somewhere in the Arctic, the submerged home to fish-nibbled corpses. Titanic. Their lives, re-enacted as a film with computer-scenery. And this twin; destroyed by fire. And now there is us. Are we any more real than those American actors pretending to be British Edwardians? The corpses of insectmachines formed piles upon the ground. Avoiding the sight, Bob looked up. Signs of age-old decay crept over the plaster of the ceiling. This Hotel is falling apart, he realised. Christ, look at us, thought Rugg. How can we ever pretend to be the original Peter Friendly and the Friendly Friends? They had Old-style class. We're simalucra of the Clowns themselves.

Looking down at the spilled multicoloured Knex sticks, he discerned a reading: K'an. The Abysmal. It makes sense when you think of it, Rugg decided. It depends on sincerity. I'm exactly the sort of person who would put some poor copy in my place. But then, if I'm a copy of that self, I should be able to place a copy in my place in turn... A line of stooges like Russian Natasha's. No, no. The copy must be incapable of constructing its own salvation. It would have to have no memory of doing such a thing. Ergo; sum. Did this happen to Ewok? Neige arranged Mousetraps in patterns. Little unthinking teeth, she thought. The blind universe, empowered through our Hubris. Ignoring the distant voices of Rugg and Bob shouting for her to return, she concentrated on her task. There was a rightness in the patterns. A wabi. "For god's sake Neige; come back! It's too dangerous!" From far, far off, Bob watched Neige walk unconcerned through the Vulvus Dendata. Something, thought Bob, is stalking us. Pushing us into the future, like embryos forced to their first taste of oxygen without the chemicals to volatalise them safely. Thank god we weren't here at the time of the fire or we'd be just more ash mixed in with the black mess that now lies deep beneath our feet. The scene of last year's battle. They're preventing it happening again, to return to somewhere we'd made our own. The darkness of the original hotel beneath the ice, forgotten years ago, is breaking through, down in the Discopit. Ready to bubble up under our feet as we are trapped in this recreation of an almost mythical game... The Wagnerian symbolism of it is too obvious. Someone had to be behind this. Someone who hates us. Watching Neige throwing out skeins of wool, Rugg thought of spiders. She's so assured, he thought. She seems to sit in the middle of all this change. Awaiting her time. Listening for the thing that jars with the world. As I sit here, paralysed with doubt, nothingness comes quietly to me, like stagefright. With mounting dread, Bob counted the flecks missing from the mirrored doors. The Bell contract should have protected us from this, he thought. Everyone knows Bell's the best money can buy in Anti-Entropic services. We shore up the main pressure of chaos down there, but it erupts elsewhere, bubbling up in a sink like ooze around a milk pack. It's Karmic balance. We avoid the fire but the disaster will follow. Only our gestalt delusion would consider hiding from the Noumena. We tumble, unstuck into the nail-scarred walls of the present. Mad. Rugg watched a large box give geometric birth to a rectangular house-like machine. I can make this move by my will, thought Rugg. A symbol of home, of security. It can eat up all the other half-living things and cleanse the world anew. Like a giving mother. The house-machine sat immobile. It's my fault, thought Rugg. I lack the will to make it move. I unconsciously wish us to fail. Suddenly Bob knew their enemy. My excommonlaw wife, he thought. Still here from the last time! I feel the castrating bitch through the floor... spreading her bleached white, mitochondrian tendrils throughout the fibres of the treated wood. Something very old and yet very young, very hungry to grow. It's me she's after, he thought. The others are just in the way.

In accordance with the script, they filled the Time Capsule with momentoes of their corporeality. A carton of milk, one of Rugg's socks, a Clanger-blood soaked posing pouch. It's just a cardboard box, thought Rugg. But we see it as a prayer box. A intercessionary with the future. Our gleichgeltend intrusion into the Phenomenal world.

"Where can we hide it?" asked Bob.

"Under one of the chairs!" suggested Rugg. Christ, I'm sweating like a pig. Can the others tell? It's like I'm on fire! His script swam into focus again in his hands. Only a page to go. And then? On the wooden polished floor there seemed to be a whirl of mud and straw. Naked forms and a drumming noise. Blood of a knitted childhood architype stained the varnish. Then it was gone and only the award ceremony remained. Each award we give out, is a little proof that we exist, thought Neige. A little ontological time-bomb that echoes of us in another einginstaat. I am Tiamat, she thought, the begetter of worlds. "Wear this," she muttered, "in remembrance of me". Don't let me become an echo, she prayed. A word that means less with each repetition.... Like Ewok. There were only a few lines left of the script. Soon, thought Rugg, we shall be fighting each other for that last scrap of secondhand reality. "Goodbye!" they said, cliché-sweet, as chloroform. Then, the paper was blank.

The day was their own. As free and empty as their newfound lives. Sitting about in the bar, the three of them idly watched the ebb and flow of fans leaving for the Mundane World. By a distant pillar, a man pulled down posters, revealing the Hotel's true structure. "Do you think we'll see Ewok again?" asked Neige. Rugg exhaled

thoughtfully, the smoke curling over the chairs like a thing seeking shelter. "He's still in the Disco Pit with us, or at sea" he said. "Your round Bob". Rifling through his pockets for his billfold, Bob found a piece of folded paper. "Sorry, not money" he muttered as he unfolded the unfamiliar white material. On it was written; "Script: Beyond Cyberdrome V".

sms





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Rates Received Before 25th April 2000 £35 Full £10 Supporting

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Accounts from Previous Eastercons

Intuition

(The 1998 Eastercon)

Income	
Memberships	£27,751.00
(992 members, 26 free, 964 paying)	
Interest	£372.98
Merchandise	£886.50
Dealers	£1,275.00
Advertising/Sponsorship	£2,396.00
Auctions	£821.23
Contributions/Donations	£171.98

Contributions/Donations		£171.98
		£33,674.69
Expenditure		
Programme	Film Programme	£971.57
	Masquerade	£581.00
	Speakers' Expenses	£128.99
	Art Show	£488.73
	Green Room	£1,410.00
Publicity	Fliers, Parties, Advert	s £1,529.34
Publications	PRs	£1,785.00
	Programme Book	£2,045.00
	At con Publications	£901.50
	Newsletter	£632.19
Guests (Travel	/Hotel/Hospitality)	£2,135.58
Ops	Ops Room	£829.78
•	Tech	£3,342.31
	Logistics	£764.51
	Gopher Hole	£1,735.70
	Security	£234.77
Hotel	Function Space	£8,976.65
Finance	Insurance	£669.44
	Bad Debts	£51.00
Registration	Badges	£180.76
- Fatorous as as	Bags	£342.11
Administration	1	£2,313.12
Merchandise		£1,596.72
Donations		£28.92
	on 8085 challett bleen t	£33,674.69
Summary		

David T Cooper, Treasurer, Intuition

£33,674.69

£33,674.69

£0.00

(The 1999 Eastercon)	
Income	
Memberships	£25,773.50
Merchandising	£1,021.81
Advertising	£1,300.00
Dealers' Room	£855.00
Donations	£50.00
Loans	£550.00
Interest	£65.32
Miscellaneous	£575.21
	£30,190.84
Expenditure	ran na [*] 150 kaon
Publications	£3,029.56
Stationery	£290.83
Publicity	£62.10
Merchandising	£855.95
Post/Phone	£766.00
Hotel	£3,727.34
Guests	£3,258.64
Expenses	£3,596.52
Repayment of loans	£550.00
Equipment	£5,554.19
Insurance	£264.20
Badges	£230.00
Drinks	£346.45
Films	£858.73
Gophers	£1,180.70
Gratuity	£1,300.00
Transportation	£384.83
Newsletter	£550.00
Theft of cashbox at Evolution	£346.00
Miscellaneous	£522.50
	£27,674.34
Uncleared cheques	£172.50

This leaving a projected surplus of £2,344.00; of which £1,000.00 is to be donated to Armageddon Enterprises, to fund a fireworks display at Paragon, and the balance to Sight Savers.

Total projected

Roger

£27,846.84

Income

Expenditure

Balance in Hand

Little Robots, Big Business

I was swimming in the pool at the Radison when I first became aware of Cyberdrome. A group of people were cheering at the exploits of lot of mobile junk turning itself into immobile junk. It looked like fun and for the year and three quarters I was one of many who talked robots, but never produced.

This changed in Manchester, I decided to build something, but had been too busy before the con so took the chaos option. A box of K'Nex construction kit that I'd had for a few years had a motor added to it, and a robot was built during the quieter spells of a Green Room shift. All it did was lurch round in a wonky circle, but it did it with a certain Heath Robinson style and survive everything that drove into it to win a prize (though not for aggression).

Eleven months later, my job had vanished and I was left with nothing to do a few weeks before Reconvene. Then a brain-wave hit and I started to phone construction toy manufacturers. Lego had their robot programmable brick fairly new on the market but were simply not interested in actually letting the great unwashed play with it, "we have none of our trained builders to spare" was one of the responses they gave, Hasbro on the other hand could not have been more helpful.

Within an afternoon of moving up the corporate ladder I was talking to the people who made the decisions, and they made them quickly. The next day I had a contact with a PR firm who handled shows and we took it from there. Hasbro actually viewed it as a good thing that we did not need anyone to show us what to do, and were happy to let us play with their toys.

The boxes were sent directly to the Adelphi, and then were used to build various things –

by adults and children alike. Around half a dozen K'Nex robots (including a tank with an elastic powered catapult produced by Bazooka) were entered and much fun was had. Alison Scott recently told me of the large amount at Corflatch in Seattle, so Hasbro US have also noticed that fandom buys toys. The K'Nex is back this year, and will be Blackpool next year. In between they are being taken to Plokta.Con, and if anyone other convention is interested then just let me know (easiest way is to find me this year is to volunteer for Green Room...). Who knows, with some more good feedback maybe we build upon this; last time I asked K'Nex robotics was being thought seriously about and surely fans could give this a serious beta-test one Easter...

Tim Kirk

Pushmi-Pullyu Rides Again...

Well, that's it. Done, finished, finito. Please accept our apologies for the odd bit of blank space in this Souvenir Book... but putting it together has been a choice slice of hell. If you're reading this, it means I managed to get it printed in time, too; which is going to take something of a minor miracle. Ah well, I live to spend more than 24 hours sitting at a computer that's about six sizes too small for the task at hand...

Nevertheless, it's been fun, if in a rather masochistic way. Hope you enjoy it!

Eurocon 2000

2nd-6th August 2000 Tricity, Poland

Writer GoHs:

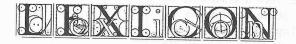
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Eastercon UK Tour, 1948 - 1999

Whitcon, London 1948 Loncon, London 1949 Festivention, London 1951 London SF Con, London 1952 Coroncon, London 1953 Supermancon, Manchester 1954 Cytricon, Kettering 1955 Cytricon II, Kettering 1956 Cytricon III, Kettering 1957 Cytricon IV, Kettering 1958 Brumcon, Birmingham 1959 London, London 1960 LXIcon, Gloucester 1961 Ronvention, Harrogate 1962 Bullcon, Peterborough 1963 Repetercon, Peterborough 1964 Brumcon II, Birmingham 1965 Yarcon, Yarmouth 1966 Briscon, Bristol 1967 Thirdmancon, Buxton 1968 Galactic Fair, Oxford 1969 Scicon '70, London 1970 Eastercon 22, Worcester 1971 Chessmancon, Chester 1972 OMPAcon, Bristol 1973 Tynecon, Newcastle 1974

Seacon, Coventry 1975 Mancon 5, Manchester 1976 Eastercon '77, Coventry 1977 Skycon, Heathrow 1978 Yorcon, Leeds 1979 Albacon, Glasgow 1980 Yorcon II, Leeds 1981 Channelcon, Brighton 1982 Albacon II, Glasgow 1983 Seacon '84, Brighton 1984 Yorcon III, Leeds 1985 Albacon III, Glasgow 1986 BECCON '87, Birmingham 1987 Follycon, Liverpool 1988 Contrivance, Jersey 1989 Eastcon, Liverpool 1990 Speculation, Glasgow 1991 Illumination, Blackpool 1992 Helicon, Jersey 1993 Sou'Wester, Liverpool 1994 Confabulation, London 1995 Evolution, Heathrow 1996 Intervention, Liverpool 1997 Intuition, Manchester 1998 ReConvene, Liverpool 1999

Paper Tiger Art Award

Inaugurated in 1998, the Paper Tiger Art Award is an annual award presented to the piece of artwork on display in the art show which is deemed the best by a panel of three independent judges. Previous winners of the award have been:

1998 Brightness Reef by Fred Gambino

1999 Of Clockwork Men by Tom Abba

The award – sponsored by the fantasy art publisher Paper Tiger – is intended to encourage the already high standards of Eastercon art shows as well as greater diversity in artists' approaches to the treatment of the fantastic. It is therefore, by design, open to all the forms of art on display, including 3D, the decorative arts and photography as well as straightforward 2D art, either representational or abstract. Similarly, the award is open to amateur and professional artists alike and on a level playing field. The award consists of a cheque for £100 and a framed certificate.

On Myth

It is, I hope, a boring truth by now to suggest that SF as a genre embraces more than 'pure' science fiction, but what might need a moment's reflection is considering how myth can be, and is, a central component of all genres, however we define them. Essentially, myths are a component of *us* as a species, and we are ones shaping and defining all modes of art – until it's proven that we're just some computer's dream.

But having said this (flippantly or otherwise) the questions that arise have to do with *what* the myths are, and how they've endured, and – importantly, to my mind – what they are *not*.

'Mythology is what never was, but always is.' It was probably Sallust, the philosopher of late antiquity, who said that. Or it might have been Stephen of Byzantium. Or someone else entirely. One of the first things learned in the study of myth is that the earliest version of a legend isn't always the most important. All renderings matter, and in the changes, the shiftings, we find truths about evolving worlds and societies.

In the early Celtic tellings of the Arthurian legends, Arthur's friend and companion is Bedwyr and the stories of the king's faithless wife Guinevere are deeply entangled in 'pagan' myths of summer and winter and fertility. But later, the great figure of Bedwyr recedes, becomes the marginal Sir Bedivere, and Lancelot comes into the tale, replacing and eclipsing him. The Arthur-Guinevere-Lancelot story is played out against a

powerfully Christian myth of the quest for the Holy Grail.

Which is better? The question is silly. We have both these renderings, and many more, old treatments, newer ones, and very recent tellings by authors of historical romance and fantasy and science fiction. The figures of the legends have easily enough power and weight to endure any and all such changes and shiftings.

Does that mean the myths are anything we want them to be? Hardly. It does mean that as generations pass and cultures change the resonances of the stories will sometimes shift. The wonderful thing is that the resonances endure. Myths of the devouring flood. Prometheus bringing fire to men. The Norse god Loki roaring in pain under a mountain. earthquakes. Coyote the Trickster. The terrible voyage of Odysseus returning home from Troy (retold yet again by Charles Frazier in Cold Mountain as a iourney home from the American Civil War). Initiation myths. Journeys towards adulthood and one's own emerging identity (the voyage we all make). Isn't Luke Skywalker's unknowing pursuit of his father powerful precisely because it taps into the mythic power of this sort of tale?

The myths are all around us, sometimes trivialized, hugely distorted, but if they've endured for thousands of years they are likely to be able to survive Xena and Young Hercules, or a few "Mystic Knights" in the pseudo-Irish hills of American childrens' television.

What is more worth thinking about - and

combating – is a shift in the *idea* we have of myth. Consider the word itself. Myths began as an attempt to explain core elements of the world, by men and women beset and beleaguered by mortality and fragility. They aspired to be – as Sallust or Stephen or whomever the hell it was, said – eternal truths couched as stories. But what of today? How do we use the word? Well, consider a television newscaster. The vivid, excited announcement: 'When we come back, Tony Blair, the reality and the myth.'

We use the word to mean untruths.

Deception. The lie that masks reality. The shift is stunning, actually. No longer is 'myth' a reaching for undying truth, it is a spin doctor toying with us from the stairwell of the House of Commons or the Pentagon briefing room.

We need to shift back. To redefine. We risk losing so much when we use the word and see the tales in this trivial way. We can lose thousands of years of power and majesty and awe. And the stories that always are.

Guy Garriel Kay

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The 2Kon Programme Guide

Friday

1300 - 1400

Surviving your First Con. (Workshop)

Old timers give you the benefit of their years of experience, from remembering to have breakfast every morning to the need for at least 2 hours of sleep a night. Tips to help you enjoy your weekend.

1400 - 1500

Opening Ceremony (Logie Baird)

The guilty stand up to be recognised. Sparks has promised us something spectacular this year.

1500 - 1600

What Research? I Write Fiction! (Logie Baird)

Have you ever been jolted out of a good story because of some niggling bit of historical inaccuracy? This panel looks at the importance of doing your research so you can diverge with purpose. With **Guy G Kay**, Scott MacMillan, Mark A Simmons and A.N. Other.

Bidding for an Eastercon. (Arran)

The problems and pitfalls facing a committee trying to put on an Eastercon. (Including: Why do we only use the same 3 hotels?)

1600 - 1700

Dance of the Planets (Arran)

Astronomy basics. Suitable for the younger member

Dirk Bontes discourses on the orbital parameters of the planets: inclination, eccentricity, oblateness and obliquity.

Video Promos (Workshop)

David B Wake shows us how to put together a promotional Video; ably assisted by Fee Keenan

1700 - 1800

The Anglo Saxon Bards (Logie Baird)

The Bard is a central figure in our view Celtic literature. **Debora Turner Harris** looks at the Bard from the Anglo Saxon perspective.

The Other Nostradamus (Arran)

Mandics Gyorgy profiles the Eastern European counterpart to the famous astrologer [translation by Antuza Genescu]. Gyorgy and Antuza are at 2Kon as a part of the Anglo-Romanian Science and SF Cultural Exchange and are the guests of the South Kent SF Society, the Phoenicians.

1800 - 1900

If I ran the Z/o/o/ Con (Quiet)

Part One, the Bid Phase. This is one of the most talked about games in Conrunning circles and will be played in 3 parts throughout the weekend. You and your team will face operational difficulties like "The Lost Snake", "The Poorly Baby" and find out if "I punch the Banqueting manager" is ever a valid answer.

1900 - 2000

Martial Arts in SF (Arran)

2000 - 2100

Fabulous Brighton (Arran)

A new SF anthology is launched with readings from Peter T Garrett, Liz Williams and Liz Counihan.

2000 - 2100

Bed Time Stories (Workshop)

We all have favourite bedtime stories. Now is your chance to introduce them to the next generation. This item is aimed at the younger members; Pyjamas and Teddy Bears are welcome.

Son et Lumier (Logie Baird)

The first of two showings of Professor Salthouse's Alchemical mayhem. Regular Albacon members will know how popular this show is so this is a ticket only event. Remember to collect a ticket at Registration. The second show is Saturday morning.

2100 - 2200

Reading (Arran)

Guy Kay reads some of his own work.

James White Memorial Award Launch (Quiet)

The inimitable James Bacon has taken on the pleasant task of inaugurating an Award to remember James White in a suitable manner.

2230 - 0000

Reductio Ad Absurdam: JRR Tolkiens' 'A Fistful Of Hobbits' (Logie Baird)

A lonesome wind blows through the deserted street. Tumbleweed rolls past a creaking saloon door. In the distance, a lone rider approaches the edge of town, adjusts his poncho and cigarillo and spits into the dust. "God damn," he whispers — "looks like that Reduction Ad Absurdam bunch have cleared out another con with one of their shows." An hour of spaghetti and weed starring Jackie McRoberts (the Good), Phil Raines (the Bad) and Ian Sorensen (the... erm...), with Yul Brynner as Gandalf and John Wayne as the fair Galadriel.

2200 -

Filk (Arran)

This room is open for Filk.

Saturday

0900 - 1200

Masque Tech/ Rehearsal (Logie Baird)

All Masquerade participants are reminded to turn up at 0900 to get your rehearsal time

slot allocated

1000 - 1100

State of the Universe (Arran)

John Richards scours the daily news to bring us the relevant bits.

A Rough Guide to Identifying Old Bits (Workshop)

Ever wanted to be an Archaeologist? Children's introduction to archaeological finds, including real artefacts to sort, touch and find out about. Fun and informal workshop lasting about 40 minutes, suitable for children from 7 years and up (parents/carers too!). Run by Museum education officer, Mark Simmons.

1100 - 1200

Daily Feedback (Arran)

How are we doing so far? This is your public chance to let us know if there are things that need fixing. It is also permitted to let us know if we have got things right.

1200 - 1300

The Arthur C. Clarke Awards (Arran)

(Sponsored by the SF Foundation)

(Past Judges) Edward James, Andy Butler, Tanya Brown, Paul Billinger and Farah Mendlesohn discuss the 2000 Arthur C. Clarke short list.

The Challenges of a Worldcon Bid – UK05, Make or Break (Quiet)

KIM Campbell and Vince Docherty set out the current situation with the UK bid to hold the 2005 Worldcon in Britain and open out the discussion. They really want to hear your opinions.

1300 - 1400

Pilots, Planets & Plasmas (Arran)

General interests, and hopefully not too confusing, skim over the possible future of the aerospace industry to 2050 and beyond, including the visions, the technologies, the products, the companies, the customers, the

tactics. We should cover a bit of the new ground that has appeared since Hypotheticon last year, as well as seeing how real life is copying science fiction. Alastair (Smurf) Stewart

13:30 - 14:30

Son et Lumier 2 (Logie Baird)

The second and final Salthouse show. Have you collected a ticket?

1400 - 1500

Fimo Jewellery (Workshop)

Sue Mason shows us how to create our own wearable works of art with that wonder of modelling clays, Fimo.

1500 - 1600

Reading (Quiet)

Debora Turner Harris reads her favourite bits.

1600 - 1700

An Interview with Katherine Kurtz (Logie Baird)

Everything fans of Katherine want to know. Katherine is put under the spotlight.

Behind the Scenes at Time Team (Workshop) or "Tony, we love you, but you've only got 24 hours to dig the earth..."

Despite its difficult birth, Channel 4's "Time Team" has become the most popular archaeology programme on British Television. But just how true to real-life archaeology is it? What exactly does it take to produce and make a programme? Let Mark Simmons take you behind the scenes at a recent dig, and discover what happens when the media meets the past... and what you don't see on the telly.

1700 - 1800

They Think I Have News for You All Over In the style of Have I Got News For You and They Think It's All Over. Nige and Sabine Furlong, Simon and Bug Bradshaw, Gary and Linda Strattman Chris O'Shea

BSFA AGM (Quiet)

BSFA members are invited to gather together and set the world to rights.

1800 - 2200

Robot Building (Workshop)

Here is the time to finish off your Robot for tomorrow's War. Help is available from M@, Tim Kirk and SMS. You have until 2200.

1900 - 2000

What About England? (Quiet)

In discussing "Celtic" Fantasy, much is made of the Scots, Irish and Welsh story tradition. And yet, the one story most people think of as a Celtic fantasy, is the Arthur myth. Where does that come from again? John Richards explains.

2000 - 2100

TechnoBabble - Game (Arran)

Is it a real word? or is it TechnoBabble. Teams from ReConvene and Paragon compete to see who has the better grip on the language of today, lead by Dave O'Neill.

If I ran the Z/o/o/ Con (Quiet)

Part 2. Once you have won your bid, you move into the tricky phase of planning the Convention.

Tim Illingworth stars as Murphy, whose Law may not be ignored.

2000 - 2200

Masquerade (Logie Baird)

Gytha North and a cast of thousands

2100 - 2200

The Bardic Inheritance: Is Giles the Modern Merlin? (Arran)

We are accustomed to the idea of a Bard who is a keeper of knowledge and all the great Heroes have one to call upon. So if Giles is the Merlin Figure, does that make Zander Guinever and Cordeila, Lancelot? Ben Yalow and Pete Sneddon.

Story Telling (Arran)

Last night we had Stories for the younger members. This is your chance to tell tales of a more adult nature. From Ghost stories to your best Fish-that-got-away tale.

Role Playing as a Story Telling Means (Workshop)

Clear the Logie Baird, get a drink or two and get ready for ...

2300 - 01:30

Ivan's Disco

The People's Disco. A chance to boogie the night away

Sunday

1000 - 1100

Daily Feedback (Arran)

As yesterday. If we can fix it for you, we will.

Archers Omnibus

It's Sunday morning, there is a comfy chair. Sit back and catch up with the goings on in Ambridge, the longest running 'everyday story'.

Robot Building (Workshop)

Last chance to put those finishing touches on your robot. The room is open for this until 1300.

Masquerade debrief – (Chaos Costume)

Costumers and Technical talk about what worked and what didn't and what to remember for next time.

1100 - 1200

Site Selection (Logie Baird)

Your chance to influence History. Listen to presentations from bidders for Eastercon 2002 and vote for your choice.

State of the Universe (Arran)

"Japan Lands Manned Mission on Mars!" If it has happened while we partied, John Richards will let us know.

1200 - 1300

Future Cons (Logie Baird)

So what does the future hold in the way of conventions? This is the time to take the mic for five minutes to advertise your upcoming convention. Starting off the presentations is Mary Branscombe for Lexicon, this years' Unicon in Oxford.

1200 - 1400

Art Auction (Arran)

"Open your wallets and repeat after me..."
Original art for sale to enhance your life.

Sparks Rennie and Rog Peyton keep the auction fast and furious.

1300 - 1400

GoH -Guy Gavriel Kay (Logie Baird) On Myth, history and fantasy.

British Grand Prix (Workshop)

Coverage of this years British Grand Prix. Will the loss of the in car electronics cause loads of 10 second start stops? Will the Maclarens' both finish the race? Will it be 4 in a row for Schumacher? Margaret Austin hosts this year's race.

1400 - 1500

Best Science Fiction of the Year (Quiet)

(SF Foundation Sponsored event) The Clarke Judges talk about the books they loved and lost. Edward James, Andy Butler, Tanya Brown, Paul Billinger and Farah Mendlesohn

1500 - 1600

The George Hay Foundation Memorial Lecture (Logie Baird)

(SF Foundation Sponsored event)

Take one Hydrogen Cloud... Cooking up Life and the Universe

Amanda Baker talks about an aspect of her work.

Poetry Reading (Quiet)

I keep being told that the reason I can't buy an SF poetry anthology is because there isn't any interest in Poetry in SF. Jo Fletcher, Ken MacLeod, Peter T. Garrett, (Toastmaster) Kluggers the Barred are here to show us differently. This is n audience participation item. Feel free to bring something of your own to read.

1700 - 1900

Cyberdome/Robot Wars (Logie Baird)

Chills and spills as the ingenuity of mind meets the indescribable force of mechanics in the Cyberdome. Compered by the inimitable SMS.

1800 - 1900

Tolkien the Modernist.(Arran)

A discussion broke out on Usenet this spring, which put forward the idea that Tolkien was a Modernist poet. Guy Kay, Ken Macleod Peter T Garrett and

World Premier – Captain Tartan the Video Directors Cut (Workshop)

David Wake presents the first showing of Captain Tartan as first seen at ReConvene.

1900 - 2200

Book Auction followed by UFF Auction (Arran)

Brian Ameringan and Roger Robinson try to sell books to fans.

1900 - 2100

If I ran the Z/o/o/ Con (Quiet)

Part 3. You have won the Bid, Planned you convention, and successfully thwarted Murphy, now you have to go live for the con. Who will end up with the best balance of People, Goodwill and Finance points?

2000 - 0000

Ceilidh (Logie Baird)

You have been to the bid events and learned all the dances. Now is your chance to pace the measures, Strip the Willow and find out the truth about the Gay Gordons. Dance the night away with the sounds of Steep the Feet. (BSFA Awards during interval (21:30-2200)

2000 - 2100

Technical Tall Tales (Workshop)

Strange things are happening in the lab. Tell us about them.

2100 - 2200

Reading (Quiet)

Katherine Kurtz reads from King Kelson's Bride.

2200 - 2300

"The Cute Kid Has to Go" (Arran)

A look at why children on the bridge are a nuisance and why cuteness in space is a waste of such. The panel devise plots to do away with Wesley, Jake, Naomi and the whole lot before they reach the solution that again saves the Universe. Sabine Furlong Eddie Cochran, and A.N. Other.

2300 - 0000

Ultima Thule (Arran)

Dirk Bontes was looking at maps in the Amsterdam Library one day and discovered the location of this fabled land. This talk is illustrated and sound tracked.

Monday

1000 - 1100

State of the Universe (Arran)

Does London still exist? Or have the Martians taken over. Are the trains running? Has Blair resigned in a fit of pique at Ken Livingston's Mayoral campaign? John Richards has the full story.

1100 - 1200

We worry about the size of names on name badges. Imagine the difficulties if the person you want to identify is in armour and headed your way. Scott MacMillan shows us a way of telling people who you are from across a football pitch.

Feedback (Logie Baird)

Hosted by next years' sitting committee, Paragon. What went wrong this year that can be improved upon next? What went right that you want to see again?

1400 - 1500

Closing Ceremony (Logie Baird)

We say goodbye, thank you for coming and pass the torch to Paragon. During this time we also announce the winner of the Doc Weir and Ken MacIntyre awards, present the Masquerade Certificates and the Lexicon Quizz prize.

1600 - 1700

Giulias' Post Con Quiz (Kintyre)

Giulia De Cesere has been taking notes and will see who has been paying attention.

1700 -

Greats Wake (Carradale)

We have lost a lot of favourite faces this year. This year the traditional Dead Dog party is names the Greats Wake to give us a chance to celebrate the lives of those who have gone.

Captain Tartan the Video Directors Cut reprise

Great Moments in Cyberdome

SMS hosts a showing of our amateur videos, including some of the historical events of our time. I have heard rumours of a copy of "Spock in Manacles", but sadly, no confirmation as yet.

News from the Science Fiction Foundation.

It may seem a little quiet at the Science Fiction Foundation lately, but far from indicating a lack of activity, we have been engaged in long term planning and laying the ground work for a two-year flurry.

In the wake of the successful publication of our first book *The Parliament of Dreams: Conferring on Babylon 5* (Foundation Studies in Science Fiction 1), we decided to continue in this direction. There isn't that much good science fiction criticism out there, and far too much of what is available is inaccessible to the committed science fiction fan. As the journal has always been keen to bridge the artificial divide between the fan and the academic so we hope our future book publications will do the same. The next book in the series, available soon after this

convention, is Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature. Josh Kirby has very generously donated the cover art, and we are donating £1 of the cover price to the Orangutan Foundation for every copy sold. The rest of the profits go towards supporting the activities of the Science Fiction Foundation, in particular support of the library. The cover price of the book is £10, but we are selling it to members of the Science Fiction Foundation at the discounted price of £7. Sadly, we don't have it ready on time for the Convention, but order forms are available at the SFF stall, and orders received this weekend benefit from a fixed price of £9 (including p+p).

We will of course continue publishing the journal (hopefully on time, but do bear in

mind we are all volunteers here). The Journal, in addition to being committed to actually being *readable*, is also committed to supporting and publicising science fiction outside of Britain and the USA: by the time this piece is in your hands we will have published a special issue on Australian science fiction which will be with you this month, or, if you aren't a regular subscriber, it is available from booksellers like Andromeda and New Worlds.

One of the major difficulties for young sf academics is how to maintain continuity of research. We have already lost far too many promising young scholars to the need to write that book on Shakespeare (or, in my case, anything that my colleagues deem "proper history") in order to get permanent posts. Although we can't do much to alter this trend, we can indicate that someone regards the work as important. We took our first step along this path by offering a £500 bursary to assist someone in research in Liverpool. If you think you might have a research project we would be interested in funding, contact Andy Sawyer A.P.Sawyer@liverpool.ac.uk.

Science fiction thrives when people talk about it, so as part of our small contribution to this activity we will be running three conferences over the next two years. The first is a day conference on the publishing and marketing of Science Fiction which will take place at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery on June 10. The topic is "The Profession of Science Fiction", and those helping to lead the discussion include Rog Peyton, Peter Hamilton and David Pringle. Members rates are £5, non-members £20 (contact E.F.James@reading.ac.uk). The second, a

three-day conference on "Television and the Fantastic" at the University of Reading is in April 2001 and third, and most important in this list, in June 2001 we will be holding a Convention to celebrate postwar British science fiction in Liverpool (see http://www.liv.ac.uk/~asawyer/2001.html. We want this to be a combination conference and convention: we will be having a number of writer Guests of Honour - at the time of writing Brian Aldiss, Stephen Baxter, Nicola Griffith, Gwyneth Jones and Ken MacLeod - and as we raise more money through sponsorship and memberships we hope to invite more authors to give readings and signings - and we will also have a collection of international academics presenting some of their insights into British science fiction since 1945.

Finally, and rather further in the future, for 2002 we have persuaded the Science Fiction Research Association to leave the North American land-mass and hold their conference in Britain. Here we have achieved rather a coup. To my knowledge the SFRA has never gone overseas before and this is an unprecedented opportunity to boost both their membership in Europe and ours in the USA and Canada. The conference is taking place in New Lanark, near Glasgow, the site of Robert Owen's first utopian experiment, before he founded New Harmony in America; a suitable site for a joint American/British SF conference. We trust we will have some papers offered on utopian fiction!

While all of this activity serves to promote science fiction, in the end, our primary aim is to raise the money which allows us to support and expand the Science Fiction Foundation Collection which is housed at the University of Liverpool. Recent

purchases for the library include a number of works of criticism and bibliography, some early British science fiction and a run of Unknown, which makes our holding of the magazine fully complete. We are always very grateful to our donors who present us with material otherwise unavailable or unaffordable. Colin Smythe has donated copies of English and foreign editions of Terry Pratchett, including some very rare material from Terry Pratchett and Josh Kirby; Roger Robinson has donated a large number of Robert Hale books as well as anthologies; and over the year we have received important donations of Mexican, Argentinean and Cuban sf from Miguel Angle Fernandez-Delgado, Polish books from Pavel Frelik and Czech/Slovak sf from Cyril Simsa. Other Eastern European material has been donated by Bridget Wilkinson. Perhaps our rarest item is an Ethiopian sf novel written in Amharic (donated by Jaroslav Olsa). It does take time for items to be catalogued, so please don't get impatient if these books don't show up when you go through to the web site. We *are* very pleased to be able to announce that our holdings of John Brunner's manuscripts are all now catalogued.

On the whole, we have had a good year, but for this trend to carry on we do need your support. If you have books to donate, please talk to Andy Sawyer or to Roger Robinson. Sign up for membership if you haven't already, and come to our events.

Farah Mendlesohn Chairman

Meet the Committee...

The View from the Chair. KIM Campbell

Many fans wear black. Black is forgiving of fat, doesn't clash and hides most food stains. Black is the fan's friend when it comes to dressing for the day, the week, the year, the lifetime. KIM is not one of these many fans in black. KIM may usually be spotted a full convention bar length away (a technical unit of length that varies in inverse proportion to the amount of alcohol imbibed and how many days it's been since you last slept more than three hours in any twenty-four hour period). She'll be the fan sporting a sequin hat, bright pink shirt, purple trousers and maroon DMs. This may sound like a

hideous combination, and on most of us it would be. KIM, however, carries this off with such aplomb that you're never really sure if they go together. You just can't see KIM as anything other than fitting in, however. KIM has been responsible for the programme at 2Kon, battling her way through adversity to bring fun, frolics and frothy purple things into the structured part of the convention activities. KIM has been in fandom for too long to mention, if one's being polite, and too long to remember if you're not.

Sparks

Sparks is an ex-squaddie. He once destroyed 3 million pounds worth of taxpayers' money by plugging 2 million volts over a 2.5 volt circuit and had it

chalked up to the experience of not making the techies go four days without sleep. He therefore tries to get enough sleep at conventions so that he doesn't blow the whole hotel's power system while producing holograms for the opening ceremony. Sparks has grandiose ideas but the technical knowledge to often pull them off. If they don't quite work it's not due to lack of trying. He'll also sell you anything for the shirt off your back. Unless you're a budding naturist make sure you bring your cheque book to any auction with him presiding, otherwise you'll be buying artwork with your 501s and Calvin Klein Y-fronts. Sparks' first convention was the previous Glasgow Eastercon and since then he's been far too responsible for much of the conrunning activity in the city, before running away to York to pursue more letters after his name.

Par

Pat is mad keen on getting involved. He's frequently on too many convention committees for his own good, but soldiers on trying to do his best for all of them. His small house South of London is chock full of old convention material, storing the wisdom, folly and fickle whims of old conventions to be re-discovered in years to come, in his role as Memory Hole Annex curator. Since he won't be at the convention due to unavoidable real life intrusions, you're not at risk this weekend of ending up in the collection, but if you hang around for too long in the bar at the end of another con you might one day be revived by the aliens wondering what this strange collection of programme books, badges, fliers, PRs and the odd pickled fan was for. Although he only discovered fandom in 1993 Pat's been a fixture ever since, with people always fitting him up for new jobs.

Mad Elf

The Mad Elf has a very simple personality. Unfortunately it shares the same body with a number of very complex personalities. Get him drunk in the bar one night and you'll see a very different Niall Jackson. Able to survive in mundane camouflage within those bowels of mundania known as BT, The Mad Elf can beat a font to within a pica of its lift to make an article fit on the page. Despite a recently arrived committee sproglet Niall and his flatmates saved the day with PR4, collating and stapling 1000 copies quicker than a printer on cocaine. While known to imbibe upon occasion Niall never gets drunk. Arato the Mad Elf is a different matter, of course, so if someone waves a metaphorical can of worms under your nose in the bar, that will be one of the other sides of that many faceted entity that is... Niall Jackson.

Nikkums

Nik is one of a dangerous breed: an intelligent exiled scouser. With too many letters after her name, she's nevertheless working on some more in her spare time, little though there is of it. Nik once managed to make Joe Straczynski speechless with the immortal line:

"I love roleplaying in the Babylon 5 universe because as a GM I get to play the best character: You!"

A veteran, or should that be inveterate, Traveller and Star Fleet Battles player, her many facets come out roleplaying characters as diverse as Molly Harper, pirate ship's quarter-mistress, and a cyborg assassin with a briefcase nuke. Nik has edited the content of our publications to within a column inch of their Irish river. Always remember, you can take the scouser out of the city, but you can't take the city out of the scouser.

Cuddles

Cuddles, as her name suggest is very cuddly. Well, she is to us fans. To the hotel trade in Glasgow she's both a valued customer and a horror to their profit margins. Only the vast capacity of fans to imbibe and inhale decently priced drink and food allow her to squeeze the pips dry. While not cutting deals with the hotels, Cuddles is the UK co-ordinator for Electrical Eggs, the charity which aims to make cons accessible to the less able fan. A sufferer from ME who doesn't let that get her down, you'll find her doing her bit to make the profit margin less important than the bottom line, when she can get a minute away from people asking her advice on HSE, hotel liaison or disabled access.

Brought to you by the Phoenicians...

(2Kon is pleased to be playing host to 2 fans from Romania who are here as guests of the Kent SF group, the Phoenicians – Nik)

In the dim reaches of space, beyond TAFF, SEFF and GUFF, there lies another far-flung fan fund. For nearly a decade the Anglo-Romanian Science & SF Cultural Exchange has been involved in fanac bringing western and eastern European fans together on both sides of the former iron curtain. Thanks to the tremendous generosity of fans (mainly financial in the west and resources in the east) past

A3

"It's his responsibility!" has been the cry aimed at A3 ever since 2Kon won the bid at Intuition. The fact that the steward crew at dinner on the Sunday evening of Intuition were using this excuse to make him sort out the bill wasn't enough to put him off being an Eastercon chair. This man is obviously mad as a hatter. Since he regularly wears a black hat this is an entirely appropriate phrase to apply, of course. Not only is he mad enough to want to run an Eastercon he's an academic working in computer science, which means he earns less than half what he's worth, proving his madness yet again. Finally, he's working with KIM and Sparks to bring another Worldcon to the shores of the UK. Mad isn't sufficient anymore. This man is "completely bonkers": "a very sophisticated diagnosis". If you can recognise where those quotes come from then you're obviously as sad, and maybe as mad, as A^3 .

activities have consisted of facilitating pen friend contacts, east-west visits, and west-east, organising SF events, producing bilingual zines, BBC World Service broadcasts, and civil functions such as Mayored receptions and book donations to civic libraries. However to date for many such 'Exchange' activities have been introductions to a new SF clan, such has been former barrier between east and west. They have been proverbial 'first contact' experiences. Indeed last summer saw over 50 fans gather for an international week of SF and exotic science for the eclipse in

Timisoara. For many of the western fans this was their first such eastern fan experience. Fans from half a dozen countries gathered for that thrash. Today, though, it is the turn of 2Kon to welcome two of the leading personalities in the Romanian SF community; if not, in the case of Mandics Gyorgy, also the Hungarian SF community. So who are Mandics and Genescu? Well they do not bite. but perhaps the following information will help you in your own eastern European first experience...

Antuza Genescu.

Antuza is an English translator of a wide range of books including, of course, SF. Her greatest challenge was translating Gene Wolfe's Book of the New Sun. She is also Secretary to the Romanian SF Association and a member of her principal local SF group, the H G Wells Society, in Timisoara. Antuza was one of two from Romania sponsored by the Anglo-Romanian Exchange to visit the Festival of Fantastic Films in 1995. Her husband Silviu is a journalist who translates overseas news for Timisoara's leading daily newspaper. By day (because being a journalist he works at night) Silviu writes. His book of short stories D is for End has received considerable critical praise both from Romania's mainstream writing community (having been the first SF book ever to have been nominated for the Romanian equivalent of the Booker Prize) as well as SF fans. So, with an author in the house Antuza knows just how to

handle Guests of Honour. Indeed, if you want to know how to overcome conrunning problems in a country emerging from the shadow of revolution, or as how complicated language really can get when translating SF, then ask Antuza.

Mandics Gyorgy (who being Hungarian Gyorgy is his Christian name).

Gyorgy originally studied mathematics at Timisoara before teaching mathematics and physics at Uivar and Jimbolia. (The latter, which I can say having visited it, being a pleasant little town close to the Hungarian border and actually on the border with Serbia itself.) More recently he has been a researcher for Hungarian TV as well as being a leading reporter for the Hungarian newspaper in Timisoara (which has a significant Hungarian community). He has written both SF and non-fiction books including a mini-encyclopædia on mythical creatures and alleged encounters with aliens. His novel Vasvilagok (Worlds of Iron) has had around 100,000 copies printed and in 1987 he won Hungary's Golden Meteor Prize. Gyorgy is one of those rare creatures, a 'polymath', which itself helps him explore his Fortean and cryptozoological interests. As such he is a mine of information both scientific and historical. Do therefore take the time to talk to him. If stuck for words, a good opening line might be, 'What do you think of British beer?' and then hand him a pint.

Jonathan Cowie
UK Exchange Co-ordinator

Membership List

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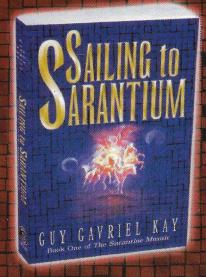
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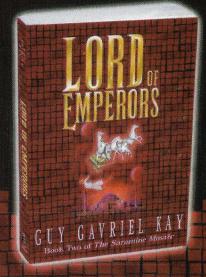
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