

INTUITION



Progress Report 1

November 1996



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PROGRESS REPORT ONE

November 1996

INTUITION

British National Science Fiction
Convention ("Eastercon") 1998

10-13 April 1998

Hotel Jarvis Piccadilly

Manchester

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If you are interested in advertising in subsequent progress reports or in the programme book please see page 12 for details.

From the Depths of the Sofa

Fran Dowd

Welcome to Intuition. I'm a left-handed woman, so I'm supposed to have a lot of it.

Intuition is mystical, irrational, stubborn. It has no place in modern scientific thought. Intuition is being convinced that your plane will crash, that your numbers will come up in the National Lottery. Intuition is sloppy, an excuse for rational thought practised by primitive cultures, women, left-handers, drug-users, young people, old people, sailors, soldiers, police, doctors in US medical soaps and anyone else who ISN'T ME.

As a left-hander, the books¹ say I think in a different way. Using visual imagery rather than abstractions, absorbing a problem and spitting out a solution rather than detailing a logical, linear progression of thought. A high proportion of artists, writers, and musicians are left-handed. In the traditional right-thinking world, I'm supposed to be crap at following directions, completing projects, analysing and deducing. I shouldn't be any good at law, maths or science. Slang words for me in many languages call me awkward, clumsy, sneaky and evil – sinister.

Right-handers however are adroit, dextrous and correct. Ever since we started manufacturing things, tools have been designed for them to use, which lands me with a double whammy. About one in ten of the population is born left-handed, and despite the best efforts of teachers, parents, and even Dr Spock, nowadays in the Western world most of us grow up that way too. But what sort of future do we have, where we can't use tools easily, can't even think correctly?

Women are supposed to think differently as well. That used to mean that we couldn't think at all, that it wasn't worth educating us, that we shouldn't be allowed a voice in politics, religion, science, commerce. Those days are starting to fade away, and the emphasis has shifted from "not being able to think" to "thinking in a different but equally valuable way". I'm not going to discuss political viewpoints on the rights and wrongs of modern feminism, but it is my personal experience that women of my generation perceive things in a way which men do not. Whether that is innate or trained I don't know, but we certainly reinforce it. On a casual level, we still go to the loo in groups. Why? It isn't because we can't pee without someone holding our hand, or because we need each other's advice on adjusting clothes or makeup. It is to combine and process information about what is going on "out there", discuss viewpoints, devise strategies. In party post-mortems, women are

aware of sexual and social undercurrents, break-ups, fights, pick-ups and love at first sight, and men tend not to be. Groups of women in more formal situations use consensus management, whereas mixed groups or groups of men are more involved with power and dominance games. Some of this comes out of our education, where we were encouraged to read books about relationships more than action, watch chick-flicks rather than Arnie movies, study arts and humanities rather than maths and science. Be soft, not hard. Some of it is a remnant of the skills women needed to get on in the world. How else could you get a rich man to marry you?

The word "intuition" made its earliest appearance in the English language in the fifteenth century, and originally meant contemplation, or view. By the sixteenth century, it had come to mean taking into account, or having reference to, immediately knowing or understanding something. It wasn't until the eighteenth century that it got its current meaning of immediate insight. So it isn't the blinding flash that comes out of nowhere, it is just a way of using the mass of data you already have, of shining the light from a new direction.

Enough twaddle, what's this got to do with an Eastercon?

Well, we want to show you your world using some different spotlights. And we want to lay bare some of the wiring involved and look at how some of the thinking behind it works. How do scientific breakthroughs really happen? Where do new ideas come from? What will new technologies do to the way our minds work, our perceptions of ourselves, our dreams, our views of the past and the future? What are the myths, legends and histories that colour these perceptions? How do we know what we know? And we want to party on while we're doing it. My intuition tells me that gin is the natural fuel for creative thought, and I intend to prove it using scientific methods.

Intuition is the only way to handle information overload. They may not have let women in, but one in four of the Apollo astronauts was left-handed.

Fran Dowd is the Sofa of Intuition.

¹ including *The Natural Superiority of the Left-Hander*, James T. de Kay (Frederick Muller Ltd, ISBN 0 584 10438 3)

Connie Willis:

A One-Sided Dialogue

Paul Kincaid

I didn't get to meet Connie Willis when she was over here at the Glasgow Worldcon, so it's going to be a great pleasure to meet her at Intuition. After all, it might give me a chance to ask some of the things you always find yourself wanting to ask a writer whose work you admire. For instance:

What is it about Britain? I mean, you've set more stories in Britain than any other American writer I can think of – except for those who are actually resident over here. The story of yours that first introduced me to your work was "Fire Watch", which is set during the Blitz in London. Then there has been "Jack" (which is also set during the Blitz, come to that – does the war hold a special fascination for you?) and of course *Doomsday Book*, along with a few other stories. They're not researched on the ground, are they? (Am I right in thinking Intuition will be only your second visit to this country?)

Doomsday Book, of course, raises another interesting question. It tells the story of a time-travel experiment which sends a researcher back from near-future Oxford to the Middle Ages, but because of a small mistake she ends up in the middle of the Black Death. Hardly a usual subject for a science fiction novel, but what makes it even more unusual is the gritty realism that makes the historical sections of the book almost unremittingly bleak. This is not a neat, clean, romantic image of the Middle Ages, nor is it a happy-ever-after story – the ultimate death-toll would probably make most writers of militaristic sf blench. So what prompted this? And did you ever consider writing it as a straight historical novel without the time-travel trappings?

Novels and Short Story Collections

- Water Witch*, w. Cynthia Felice, Ace 1982
Fire Watch (short story coll.), Bluejay 1985
Lincoln's Dreams, John W. Campbell Award (Best Novel) Bantam 1987
Light Raid, w. Cynthia Felice, Ace 1989
Doomsday Book, Hugo, Nebula & Locus (Best Novel) Bantam 1992
Impossible Things (short story coll.), Bantam 1993
The New Hugo Winners, Vol. 3 (ed.), Baen 1994
Uncharted Territory, Bantam 1994
Remake, Locus (Best Novella) Hugo nom. (Novel) Bantam 1995
Bellwether, Bantam, 1996
Futures Imperfect (coll. *Uncharted Territory, Remake & Bellwether*) Science Fiction Book Club 1996
Promised Land, w. Cynthia Felice, Ace March 1997
To Say Nothing of the Dog, Bantam Summer 1997
-

With the exception of *Doomsday Book*, you're not normally known as a writer of bleak fictions. In fact, a lot of your work has been comedy to some degree or another. Which do you find easier, the comedy or the realism? And why is it that Hollywood seems to feature in so many of your comedies, like the novel *Remake* for instance? How much of a film buff are you – that novel had so many film references in it that I got the impression you must have spent a lifetime in front of the video?

There's one thing I've noticed in quite a lot of your science fiction – a trick that I've not seen any other sf writer

attempt, at least not with the same success: you take a scientific principle and then reflect that principle in the behaviour of your characters. Let me try and explain what I mean: in your latest novel, *Bellwether*, you have one character researching into fads and another character researching into chaos, and of course the two come together. But the way they come together is because of the way that the situation in the laboratories where they work is descending into chaos and several key characters seem to be constantly taking up new fads. So the idea behind the novel is directly reflected in the action of the novel. It's a very neat device and I've seen it a number of your other stories as well, like "At the Rialto" and "The Schwarzschild Radius". So where does the idea come from? Is it even something you do consciously? It's there in so much of your work it might almost be an unconscious approach to storytelling.

Actually, there's one story where you do the same thing and I don't think it works quite as

well, "Death on the Nile". But that's a fantasy in which a group of American tourists are drawn into the ancient Egyptian underworld, which is presented as a reflection of what one of the characters is reading about Egyptian religion. It may be that scientific notions provide a more rigorous framework for that sort of story. Or does it reflect a different attitude towards fantasy and science fiction in your work?

Of course, "Death on the Nile" went on to win a Hugo, didn't it? So maybe I'm the one who's wrong. In fact, you've won more sf awards than just about any other writer, I think, with the possible exception of people like Harlan Ellison and Robert Silverberg and they've been at it a lot longer than you. What's the secret? Are the award winners your own favourites among your stories? After all they do include such excellent stories as "The Last of the Winnebagoes" and "Even the Queen" and "At the Rialto".

But then, my personal favourite of your stories wasn't a winner. But I still think "Cibola" is as near a perfect story as we're likely to get. It tells of a journalist being led around Denver by an old woman who claims to be able to lead her to the legendary Seven Cities of Gold, until eventually she sees Cibola reflected in the dawn light on Denver's glass towers. Now that's what I call a really magical story.

And of course there's so much more we could discuss, like the wonderful civil war fantasy *Lincoln's Dreams*, and the series of Christmas

stories you've been writing for *Asimov's*, and your early collaborations with Cynthia Felice. But if we talked about everything in your work that interested me, there wouldn't be any time left for the convention.

At the end of an interview, it is traditional to say "thank you". This has been an imaginary interview, and the answers are all in my head, or in the stories. But for those stories it seems appropriate to end: Connie Willis, thank you!

Award winning Short Fiction

- Fire Watch, Hugo & Nebula (Best Novelette) 1982
- A Letter from the Clearys, Nebula (Best Short) 1983
- The Last of the Winnebagos, Hugo & Nebula (Best Novella) 1988
- At the Rialto, Nebula (& Hugo nomination) (Best Novelette) 1989
- Even the Queen, Hugo, Nebula & Locus (Best Short) 1992
- Death on the Nile, Hugo (Best Short) 1993

Nominations

- Daisy in the Sun, The Sidon in the Mirror, Spice Pogrom, Schwarzschild Radius, Time Out, Jack, Miracle, In the Late Cretaceous

Next Issue

Our Guest of Honour and TAFF winner – Martin Tudor – is profiled on his return from the US.

Manchester and Literature

Programme update

Dragons in sf and fantasy

Hotel function space use

And all the up-to-date news!

Web Site

Intuition's Web Address is

http://ww.ast.cam.ac.uk/~acb/intuition/intuition_index.html

... for all the information about Intuition. If you wish to link your sf-related site from ours, or have any questions, please email: intuition@smof.demon.co.uk

Is that a “Science” in your acronym, or are you just pleased to see me?

Science Programming at Intuition

Amanda Baker

I'm going to accept the risk of boring your collective socks off, and tell you some of my philosophy on science at sf conventions. I hope you will let me know if you disagree: of the fans, by the fans and for the fans, after all.

Intuition has chosen the theme “Opening Doors” to help provide inspiration. Science has always been an indispensable key to the doors of the future: science can give us the means to realise our wildest dreams – clean water, free time, desk-top publishing, and a walk on the moon. Science and sf are intimately connected in modern culture – more so than many would admit. SF inspires those who shape our undeniably technological world – an unknown but significant fraction of working scientists are closet sf fans, inspired by Hugo and Nebula winners to survive their long years of study and to endure (at least in the UK) relatively low pay. Science and sf fire the imagination, and at their best, are infused with the spirit of “What if ...?”. Theoretical physicist Paul Davies describes sf as “a unique literary genre” – a kind of theoretical science that investigates imaginary worlds. SF explores the consequences of science for and on behalf of humanity, tackling philosophical and ethical issues which scientists sometimes avoid. Many people only explicitly encounter scientists, and scientific activity, via sf. This is one reason why the scientific accuracy of sf is an important issue. Both sf and science are denigrated as cultural activities by the self-proclaimed intellectuals and literati. Yet most people would benefit if science recovered the cultural status it enjoyed during the Enlightenment. SF has an important role to play in helping this happen.

Despite depressingly common opinion, science is not incontrovertible truth handed down by authority. Fundamentally, science is disciplined scepticism – an open-minded but critical investigation of facts, phenomena and proposed explanations. Everyone gets their mind involved! Ideally, science programming at Intuition – you knew I would get around to this eventually – will work in the same way. It is impossible to keep up with all the developments in even one small area of science (say, the physics of activity in the nuclei of galaxies). There is certainly no way for a convention committee to keep abreast of everything which will make good science programme items. I am sure that there are

numerous members of every sf convention who are “hiding their light under a bushel” – people with fascinating interests, knowledge, expertise and even day jobs. If I knew these people, and could persuade them to volunteer for the programme, I would! If that means you, please get in touch, any time, any how. Even more importantly, if you think it *doesn't* mean you, please get in touch. Obviously, I can't guarantee to include you or your ideas in the science programme, especially at this early stage. But I will be putting together a diverse science programme for Intuition. I hope to be able to organise lecture-presentations on topics like recent advances in practical launch vehicle technology. But I am also going to widen the horizons of the science programme beyond such traditional formats and topics. I will include as many participatory formats as possible, including floating panels, workshops and semi-formal debates – I saw the latter used with varying degrees of success at Worldcon this year and have ideas on how to tweak the format to suit the special circumstances of sf cons. Any other suggestions will be seized upon, discussed with enthusiasm and, hopefully, tested out.

I am ecumenical in my definition of science, and open to persuasion as to whether particular topics qualify. Also, the Intuition programming team are working on cross-over items between all notional areas including written sf, TV and film, graphic novels, fan, costume, filk and art. For example, I'm interested in items on the science of language. I'd like to hear about the latest research on language in non-human species; our current understanding of the development of language in humans; the ins and outs of developing alien languages for sf; the specialised ways in which graphic novels use language; what it takes to write a good filk; discussion of the technofilk sub-genre; and undoubtedly numerous ideas I've completely failed to imagine. If I can find the programme participants, I'd like to explore areas such as what happens when the Internet meets the Real World™; what will be the impact of biotechnology in the next decade; the future of science and scientists; and obscure ways in which science features in mundane lives. Most of all, I'd like Intuition to have a science programme which you enjoy. Am I going the right way about it?

INTERVENTION

THE 1997 UK NATIONAL SF CONVENTION

<http://ds.dial.pipex.com/minerva.tech/interven.htm>

From: The_Cyberbirds

**To: Fans@large,
Fans@conventions,
Fans@zines**

cc: Fans@bar

Subject: Communication



We're on line to tell you how Intervention will celebrate the most important reason why fans go to cons. No, not beer, palatial hotel bedrooms or the chairman's dress-sense (although Intervention will have all three). It's you talking to each other about SF. Fantasy, life, the universe and chocolate body paint. So: they'll look at FTL communications, ask if the future of story-telling is in pictures, investigate

Guests of Honour

Brian

ALDISS

Jon

BING

Octavia

BUTLER

David

LANGFORD

28-31 March 1997

ADELPHI HOTEL

LIVERPOOL UK

*Attending Membership: £30 (£35)**

*Supporting: £20 (£25)**

**Rate in brackets after 30th November 1996.*

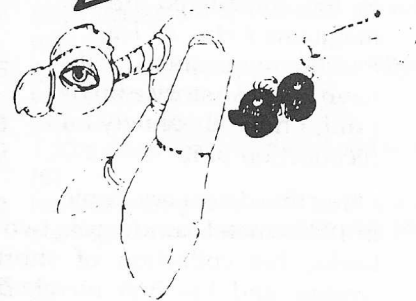
Attending £50 from 1st March 1997.

Memberships close 14th March 1997.

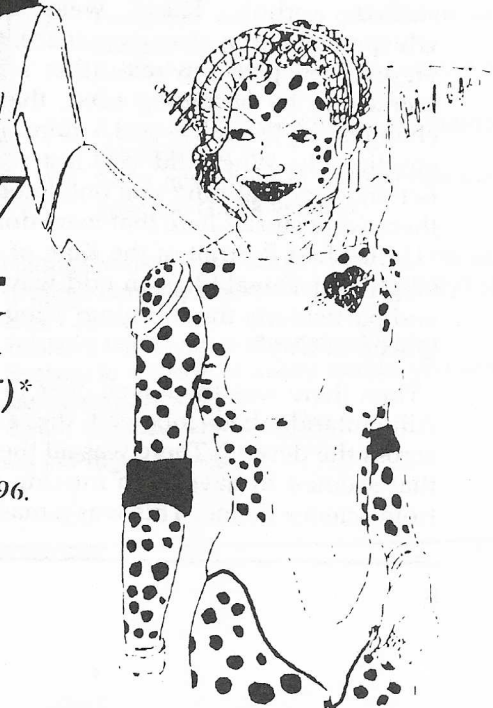
**Contact: 12 Crowsbury
Close, Emsworth, Hants,
PO10 7TS, GB**

translation from books to films to comics and what ETs might make of it all. There'll be a Newspeak short story competition and SF

Join before
1st March 1997
and save
up to £20!



drama from master communicator Brian Aldiss. And if that's not enough to talk about, the Great Pork Pie Race will return!



Discovering Ian McDonald

Paul Kincaid

Ian McDonald comes from Manchester and now lives in Northern Ireland. I come from Manchester and lived for three years in Northern Ireland when I was at university there. On such small coincidences, tottering edifices can be built.

I discovered Ian McDonald in 1988, in Birmingham, in a bookshop that wasn't Andromeda. Actually, I might well have discovered him some years earlier, in 1982 when his first story was published in the short-lived British magazine *Extro*. At least, I had the magazine, I could have read the story – but if I did, I have absolutely no recollection of it.

No, the discovery came in 1988 when I came across two American paperbacks, his collection of short stories, *Empire Dreams* and his first novel, *Desolation Road*. I have no idea after all these years what impulse it was that drove me to pick up the books (I have a vague feeling it was something to do with Bernie Evans), but I'm damned glad I did.

The stories, that's where I started. I've always enjoyed a good, well-told short story – a skilled author can often do more in a short story than in a full-length novel, and McDonald was clearly a skilled author. These were stories that whispered with a strange menace, that became vigorous in places where other science fiction seemed to be becoming tired, that wrung the changes stylistically and, more importantly, emotionally. When did you last read a science fiction story that rang you out emotionally? But there were stories here that were doing just that: "Unfinished Portrait of the King of Pain by Van Gogh" (McDonald has an odd way with a title) and particularly the stunning "King of Morning, Queen of Day".

Then there was the novel: "For three days Dr. Alimantando had followed the green person across the desert." There was all the exuberance that seemed to have been missing for too long from science fiction. This was a massive book, a

Novels & Short Story Collections

- Desolation Road*, Bantam, 1988
- Empire Dreams*, short story coll., Bantam US, 1988
- Out on Blue Six*, Bantam Spectra, 1990
- King of Morning, Queen of Day*, Bantam, 1991
- Hearts, Hands and Voices*, Victor Gollancz, 1992 (also pub. as *The Broken Land*)
- Kling Klang Klatch*, w. David Lyttleton Victor Gollancz, 1992
- Speaking in Tongues*, short story coll. Victor Gollancz, 1992
- Scissors Cur Paper Wrap Stone*, Banta (US only), 1994
- Necroville*, Victor Gollancz, 1994 (also pub. as *Terminal Café*)
- Chaga*, Victor Gollancz, 1995 (also pub. as *Evolution's Shore*)
- Sacrifice of Fools*, Victor Gollancz, date to be confirmed
- Freedom Tree*, in development

sprawling combination of Ray Bradbury and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a book that had too much going on for its own good but it is far far better to be too fat with ideas than to be too thin.

And the thing that really got me was that here were two stunning books by a British writer – and he'd never been published in this country. (Let's forget *Extro*, I clearly had.) This was a crime, and I made as much of a fuss about it as I could. Lo and behold, *Desolation Road* then did appear in this country thanks to Bantam, and with a very handsome hardback edition courtesy of another Ian McDonald fan, Rog Peyton and his Drunken Dragon Press.

Since then, every one of McDonald's books has had a British edition and it's probably absolutely nothing to do with me, but I can't help feeling I have a stake in the enterprise. He was my discovery – mine, and thousands of other people's, but still mine.

If the thing that appealed to me about that first short story collection was the diversity of his work, I could hardly complain about where he went after *Desolation Road*: all his books have been very different. There was the utopian *Out on Blue Six*, and *King of Morning, Queen of Day* which is one of those rare novels that shows it is possible to turn a good story into an equally good novel, and *Hearts, Hands and Voices* (what did I say about his titles?) which is as lush and exotic and inventive as something by Geoff Ryman, and his nanotechnology meets the living dead thriller *Necroville*, and *Chaga* with more alien exotica making the world a stranger and more challenging and usually a lovelier place. Not much uniformity there, thank heavens. Science fiction should play with ideas, and Ian McDonald is more playful than most.

If there is a common theme it is probably politics, though none of his books is obviously political in any straightforward sense. The failed utopia of *Out on Blue Six* is probably the most

overtly political, though it is for that reason probably less interesting than *King of Morning*, *Queen of Day* which uses a lyrical fantasy to explore the nature of Irishness, and you'll hear a heartbeat of the Irish situation drumming away behind many of his fictions.

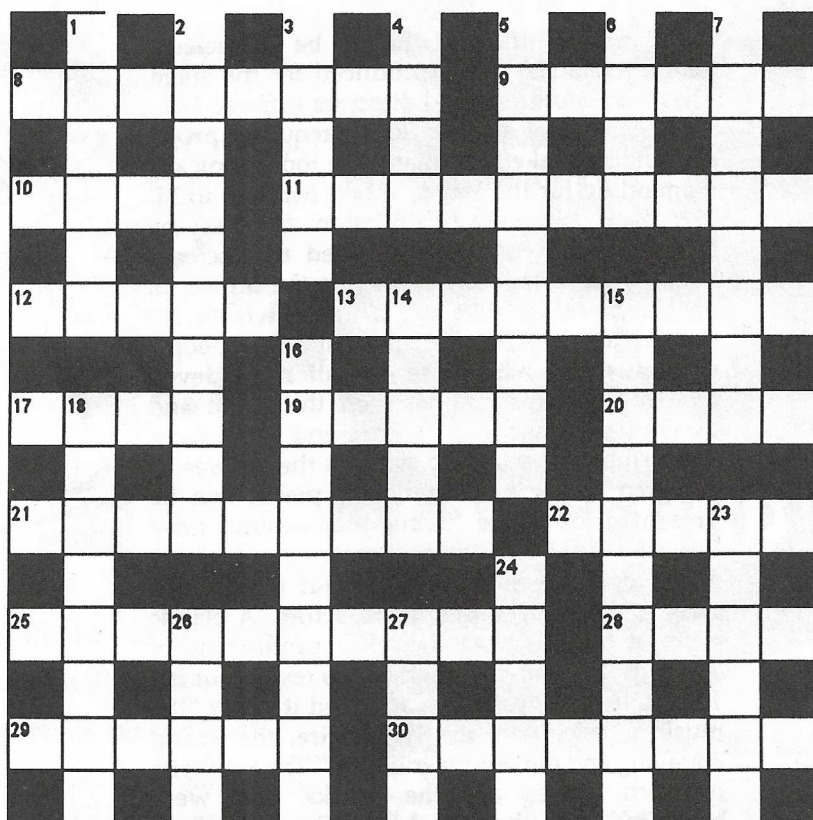
But it's not just novels; we have to remember that. He still writes short stories, not enough of them maybe but they are there, every bit as fresh and odd as those early ones in *Empire Dreams*. They come at you from unexpected directions and make you sit up and take notice. There was a second collection of stories, *Speaking in Tongues*, which came out four years after the first. If I'd not already discovered his work, it would have had the same effect on me as *Empire Dreams* did, stories like "Gardenias" and "Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (ah, there's a strain of madness running through the work, a madness which may explain the profusion of

beautiful nightmares that are the landscape of so many of his tales, which may grow out of the madness of Ireland, which may indeed be the only sane way of seeing our mad world).

And there's a story which hasn't been collected yet, a story called "Some Strange Desire" which appeared in one of the *Omni* anthologies, which is sad and cruel, bitter and beautiful, disturbing and enthralling. It is one of those stories that sticks in the mind, a story that plays you like a yo-yo reeling you back and forth with the contradictions of your responses. It is a story composed of opposites, and it seems to typify everything about Ian McDonald's work.

There are times, reading a story like that, when I wish I had not discovered Ian McDonald in 1988, then I could be discovering him afresh right now. But maybe that's what I'm doing anyway.

Crossword – Ian Taylor



Across

- 8 1,23's sad moody travel book? (8)
 9 Incarnation of the audio-visual at a leading revue? (6)
 10 Type of dump that the kinfolk possess (4)
 11 Struggling? Then scream "Intuition" here (10)
 12 Questing creature that shouted "Love!" (5)
 13,28 Story of infertility that sounds as if it's produced by a craftsman – but out of date! (9,4)
 17 TV company that will exist in two directions? (4)

- 19 Actor temporarily engaged to former wife with a semi-tragic end (5)
 20 Gromit man initiates preparation as real killer (4)
 21 1,23's chief wart blitz! (9)
 22 Cat's noises are to compiler sounds of pain (5)
 25 1,23's head sheep – a tailless beauty with damp scouse hair? (10)
 28 See 13 Across
 29 1,23's sleep features the sound of pain (6)
 30 Hero of young lady with bank account starting to increase considerably (8)

Down

- 1,23 Guest wrote "Wise One Lincoln" (6,6)
 2 1,23's things tower over the small relation left within (10)
 3 Dictator head over heels for Douglas! (5)
 4 Internally pointless membrane that's used in 5? (4)
 5 Herald act about 21 setting (9)
 6 Bottomless swamp on the planet of war chronicles? (4)
 7 Perfumed water for gamesman after little convenience (8)
 14 Activity that the furious get up to? Not the French! (5)
 15 A very soft redhead to lure the warrior's sidekick (10)
 16 Bring misfortune to a small office and queen in Greek verse (9)

- 18 Hermaphrodites have trouble with psychic ability about formality and nothing else initially? (8)
 23 See 1 Down
 24 Tolkien's first to move stone creatures (5)
 26 Ecstasy in a place of luxury makes you reach conclusion quickly! (4)
 27 Award to cuddle and love? (4)

Answers in Progress Report 2

Drama and SF

Kathy Taylor

Science fiction drama is usually thought of in terms of science fiction films or TV series or serials. Some of these are excellent pieces of science fiction, others a series of high budget special effects strung together by a minimal and simplistic plot.

Good drama however does not have to rely on a high budget or special effects and one of the most effective media for science fiction drama is the radio. The most famous example on radio science fiction must be the Orson Welles production of "War of the Worlds". This was broadcast in October 1938 as part of the Mercury Theatre of the Air series. Howard Koch's script was based on the H.G.Wells novel but used the dramatic device of a series of newscasts interrupting a regular radio programme. The apparent breakdowns in transmission, desperate interruptions of dance music or a sadly tinkling piano, were all too convincing.

The audience, most of whom tuned in only after the programme started, increased to over six million. People abandoned their homes, fleeing to their church or taking to the streets. Many hysterical callers jammed the switchboards. Koch reports an operator who very properly replied to a question as to whether the world was coming to an end, "I'm sorry, we don't have that information here".

The effectiveness of this radio drama seems incredible now, but it should be viewed against the backdrop of its time. In 1938, emotional tension was running very high in America, as many people feared their lack of preparation against a possible German invasion. The credibility of the vivid dramatisation was due in part to its mimicking of the news broadcasts from Europe. For the many Americans, whose radio was their major or only source of information, the news of invasion must have seemed all too real.

In the UK, the BBC has produced many excellent science fiction and fantasy radio plays. One of the best, and most famous of these was their adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings*. The gentle voice of the narrator and rural voices of the hobbits evoked wonderfully Tolkien's land of The Shire. In contrast, the recent radio productions of *Dr Who* have brought new life to a well-loved series: devotees claim that, by freeing it from cardboard special effects, radio has allowed the series to concentrate on the essentials of the script and characters.

Despite the obvious potential of the genre, there seem to have been few science fiction or

fantasy radio plays produced by fandom. The only performance I know of was "The Eli Still Show" by Lionel & Patricia Fanthorpe, which was put on at the 1983 BECCON. According to Roger Robinson, "The Eli Still Show" was a great success as "the whole cast, including Lionel himself, as well as the audience, thoroughly enjoyed themselves". For those interested in science fiction radio drama, radio plays are listed in the *Radio Times* and many other complete listings magazines. You have to scour these carefully though, as often nothing more than the title is given, and that in very small print. For a more permanent collection, many of the BBC's radio plays are now available on cassette in places as diverse as Forbidden Planet to the larger branches of W.H. Smiths.

At one point, there seemed to be few science fiction or fantasy plays produced for the stage. Theatrical producers and directors suffered from the illusion that science fiction required props, sets and special effects that were too technically demanding for the stage. Robert Scholes, in his 1975 essay "Structural Fabulation: An Essay on Fiction of the Future", explained that science fiction's "favorite themes involve the impact of developments or revelations derived from the human or the physical sciences upon the people who must live with those revelations or developments." If this emphasis on the social and psychological impact of science and technology, rather than the scientific systems themselves, is accepted, many science fiction pieces can be presented on stage. Some productions have unsuccessfully tried to use huge sets with elaborate props and special effects but often these serve only to overwhelm the actors. A classic example of this was the 1989 production of "Metropolis". Peter Holland, in his review for the *Times Literary Supplement*, summed it up as "the music is adequate, the lyrics dire, the acting appalling and the sets magnificent." The antithesis of such pieces are the works that were produced by the Moebius Theatre. Their director, Michael Blake, believed that "big sets and elaborate costumes could never compete with the images the imagination of a well-read science fiction fan generates" and their approach was to strip the performance down to the essentials of actors and script.

The current trend in fan-produced science fiction plays seem to be that of the musical comedy, for which Phil Raines and Ian Sorenson must take much of the credit. Their most recent production, "Dune - The Sand of Music", which

premiered at Intersection, the 1995 WorldCon, is a wonderful piece of comedy which somehow compresses most of the salient storyline of *Dune* into under an hour. I thoroughly recommend it, not just as an enjoyable piece of light theatre but as an example of what can be done.

Serious fan-produced science fiction drama is much rarer. The only near contemporary examples I know of is "Mutatis Mutandis" by David Compton which was performed at the 1981 BECCON, and the Bester plays produced for Confiction in 1990. For those interested in attending science fiction and fantasy plays the best sources are often either a national paper, such as the listing magazine in Saturday's *Guardian*, or the local press for amateur productions such as those of Terry Pratchett books. Alternatively you could try *SFX*. According to a letter from *SFX*'s news editor M.J. Simpson in issue 425 of *Locus*, since it has started *SFX* has "...reviewed or featured stage versions of 'Nosferatu', 'The Cabinet of Dr Caligari', 'The Fly', 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency', 'The Wasp Factory', Pratchett's 'Maskerade', and 'Plan Nine from Outer Space'."

Apart from radio plays and live theatre, the two most obvious media for science fiction drama are improvisations and dramatised readings. In its purest form, an improvisation requires a cast to take the outline of a story or situation and spontaneously produce a "play", making up both script and movement as they go along. To do this well is incredibly difficult, requiring not only rapid thinking but the seamless teamwork provided in part by a professional awareness of the spatial positioning and emotional projections of the others in the cast.

Most "improvisations" are rehearsed, at least to the extent of the cast knowing the progression of the story and its basic staging with their entrances, and exits. Even so, this is a very difficult art form for amateurs to do well, and usually works best when short and linked with pre-learned sections such as songs.

Dramatised science fiction or fantasy readings can work wonderfully. In their simplest form, the storyteller will read aloud, acting as narrator and dramatising the work through the different accents and speech patterns used by the characters. Anyone fortunate enough to have been at Albacon many years ago and who heard Harlan Ellison give a reading of *Paladin of the Lost Hour* will know the power and effectiveness of such a reading. Other authors, including Terry Pratchett, have often given dramatised readings of their work, even though they may not have been promoted as such by the convention.

The dramatised reading can be more staged than this. To increase the dramatic effect, the reader or readers may be in costume and sometimes simple lighting or sound effects are provided. There may often be more than one reader for, unless the reader is a superb speaker, it can be very difficult for an audience to concentrate on just one voice for a long period of time. At conventions where the masquerade is used to showcase drama rather than primarily costumes, simple versions of the dramatised reading are sometimes used but the time limits of this forum have prohibited the fuller exploitation of this dramatic medium.

What has all this to do with Intuition? Well, we'd like to include some science fiction drama in our programme. After a panel of Drama and Science fiction at the 1996 EasterCon, a lot of people expressed an interest in getting involved, so this is where you come in. Let us know what you'd like to see: a "radio" production, a serious play, another musical comedy, a dramatised reading. If you'd like to get involved in one of these, or some other form of science fiction drama let us know. We're not asking you to sign on the dotted line, or make a major commitment at this stage, but eventually we may need not just readers or actors but script or song writers, make-up artists, costumers, prop creators and musicians. Professional or amateur alike, if you think you may be interested, let us know by writing to:

SF & Drama

Intuition

1 Waverley Way

Carshalton Beeches

Surrey

SM5 3LQ

Intuition Programme

Intuition's programme team have been working hard gathering together programme items from committee, staff and volunteers, and now have over 150 hours worth of suggestions.

We still want your input!

If you have any suggestions for programme ideas - panels, discussions, workshops, talks - we want to hear from you. Please contact our main address (FAO: Programming) or via email. (Addresses on page 12)

NEWS

Memberships

Our membership secretary has been extremely busy recently! Following the trend of previous convention membership secretaries, Kathy Taylor has been personally upping our membership: she gave birth to a healthy baby daughter – Charlotte Amanda – weighing in at 7lb 13oz on September 20th. Congratulations to both Kathy and Ian!

As if having their first child was not enough, Kathy and Ian, and thus our postal address, are moving. From November 22, our new address will be:

Intuition
1 Waverley Way
Carshalton Beeches
Surrey
SM5 3LQ

We shall have redirection working until November 1997 for the previous address, but if you don't want to rely on Her Majesty's postal system, then please use the new one. Our email address will remain the same:

intuition@elsevier.co.uk

Get you memberships now!

Our membership prices are due to rise on 1 December. The current and new rates are:

| | Current | New |
|-------------------|---------|------|
| Attending | £25 | £28 |
| Supporting | £15 | £15 |
| Conversion P to A | £23 | £26 |
| Junior (11–16) | £12 | £14 |
| Child (5–11) | £5 | £5 |
| Infant (0–5) | free | free |

We expect the new rates to be accurate until after Easter 1997 (Intervention). Infant, Child and Supporting rates will not change; Junior rates will rise to remain at approximately 50% of the full attending rate.

Cheques should be made payable to "Intuition". We regret that we are unable to take credit card payments at this time.

Next Issue

The next progress report will be produced for Easter 1997. Advertising rates will be:

| | Pro | Fan |
|--------------|-----|-----|
| 1/4 page | £8 | £5 |
| 1/2 page | £15 | £10 |
| full page | £30 | £20 |
| inside front | £45 | £30 |
| back page | £60 | £40 |

Rates are based on Black and White A4 pages. Ads should be sent as camera-ready copy, unless a prior arrangement has been made to submit electronic copy or unformatted text. Formatting can be done for a small extra cost.

Intuition is also prepared to accept fan ads for a reciprocal agreement to publish our ads in fan publications.

Copy should be sent to:

Publications office
368 Mill Road
Cambridge
CB1 3NN

Copy dates:

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Booking: | 1 March 1997 |
| Copy received: | 10 March 1997 |

If you want more information on advertising in Intuition progress reports please contact us at the main address, FAO Paul Hood, Advertising.

Volunteers

If you would like to volunteer to help Intuition, either beforehand, or on the day, we would welcome your input. Please contact our main address or email address for more details of how you can get involved.

Fran's Breakfast Mushrooms

You need to make these the day before you plan to serve them. They are very rich and concentrated, so you don't need big portions.

Start with about 200 grams of ordinary mushrooms for each person. Put them in a big saucepan with a spoonful of butter, a sprinkling of salt and a whole clove of garlic per person. Cook very slowly over a low heat. They'll ooze their own juice, then re-absorb it and a lot of the butter.

When they are almost dry, add a mugful of water and keep cooking until the garlic has dissolved and the liquid has all gone. You can go on adding liquid and cooking them for hours. Let them cool overnight, and when it's time for breakfast, reheat them and stir in some cr me fraiche or ordinary cream.

To make them really special:

- With the butter, use a flavoured oil like hazelnut, walnut, or truffle, or concentrated baking butter.
- Add dried porcini, or other strong-tasting mushrooms, or chopped truffles.
- Use beef or game stock or consomme, sherry, port or white wine as part of the liquid.
- Add thyme, green peppercorns, finely chopped parsley or chives with the cream

If you have leftovers, freeze them; use them as a sauce for pasta, grilled meat; mix them into a stuffing for chicken or baked vegetables; top baked potatoes with them or stir into mash with lots of chopped spring onions.

Breakfast is a fan's most important meal. This is part one of a series of perfect breakfast dishes – next time, Luxury Kedgeree.

AGENTS

Croatia

Igor Tabak
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Eire

Brendan Ryder
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USA

Sharon Sbarsky*
PO Box 453
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MA 02194
USA
sbarsky.sharon@mail.ndhm.gtegsc.com

Our overseas agents are able to handle all requests concerning Intuition. * However, **please note** that only our German agent, Juergen Marzi, and our US agent, Sharon Sbarsky, are able to handle memberships and other financial matters. All other nationalities should join via our British address (see previous page).

Current Membership List

This membership list is correct to 1/10/96. If any details are incorrect, or missing please contact:

1 Waverley Way
Carshalton Beeches
Surrey
SM5 3LQ

| | | | | | |
|------|---------------------|------|----------------------|------|----------------------|
| P33 | Andrew A. Adams | A62 | John Bray | A18 | Sue Edwards |
| A148 | Paul Allwood | A7 | Claire Brialey | A142 | John English |
| P73 | Chris Amies | A63 | Gordon Brignal | A54 | Bernie Evans |
| A15 | Fiona Anderson | A190 | ED Buckley | A130 | Horst Evermann |
| P41 | Helen Archer | A108 | Bill Burns | P48 | Simon Fairbourn |
| A35 | Sion Arrowsmith | A127 | Mary Burns | A29 | Janet Figg |
| A79 | Margaret Austin | A143 | Roger Burton West | A38 | Mike Figg |
| S162 | Graham Auty | A204 | Chris Butterworth | A181 | Colin Fine |
| A68 | Mark Bailey | P28 | Steven Cain | A114 | Brian Flatt |
| P9 | Amanda Baker | A201 | John Campbell Rees | A104 | Ronan Flood |
| P70 | Saar Banin | A193 | Vincent Clarke | A146 | Mike Ford |
| A147 | John Bark | P64 | Dr David Clements | A115 | Susan Francis |
| A117 | Trevor Barker | A164 | Peter Cohen | A93 | Anders Frihagen |
| A128 | Julia Barnsley | A176 | Sarah Collins | A88 | Gwen Funnell |
| A121 | Simon Barnsley | A16 | Noel Collyer | P23 | Michael Furse |
| A179 | Andrew Barton | A195 | Chris Cooper | P34 | Nick Gibbins |
| A170 | Chris Bell | A157 | Keith Cosslett | P72 | Joe Gibbons |
| J172 | Kenneth Bell | A209 | Gail Courtney | A200 | Helen Gladsboron |
| J171 | Rachel Bell | A92 | Adrian Cox | A131 | Martin Glassborow |
| J173 | Rowan Bell | A178 | Dave Cox | P74 | Jenny Glover |
| A156 | Jess Bennett | A206 | James Crook | P75 | Steve Glover |
| P30 | Meike Benzler | A192 | Michael Cule | A67 | Neyir Cenk Gokce |
| A158 | Michael Bernardi | A6 | John Dallman | P21 | Sarah Goodman |
| A199 | Elizabeth Billinger | P44 | Julia Daly | A125 | Simon Grant |
| A208 | Paul Billinger | P17 | Jack Davies | P5 | Jacky Gruter-Andrew |
| A132 | Susan Booth | A100 | Robert Day | P31 | Oliver Gruter-Andrew |
| A151 | Jill Bradley | P32 | Jim de Liscard | A87 | Urban Gunnarsson |
| A150 | Phil Bradley | A119 | Chantal Delessert | A69 | Bridget Hardcastle |
| A107 | Richard Bradshaft | A118 | Zoe Deterding-Barker | A191 | John Harold |
| P61 | Simon Bradshaw | A47 | Martin Dickson | A20 | Colin Harris |
| | | P76 | Chad Dixon | A46 | Chris Hartshorn |
| | | A140 | Paul Dormer | A25 | Andy Hayton |
| | | P11 | Frances Dowd | A110 | Julian Headlong |
| | | A94 | Tara Dowling-Hussey | P45 | Alastair Hepburn |
| | | A177 | David Drysdale | A189 | Geoff Hill |
| | | P77 | Owen Dunn | A153 | Valerie Housden |
| | | A86 | Roger Earnshaw | S159 | Terry Hunt |
| | | A50 | Martin Easterbrook | S145 | Glyn Jackson |

| | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| A19 | Judith Jackson | A165 | Roger Robinson | A91 | Dave Tompkins |
| A22 | Rhodri James | A113 | Mic Rogers | A154 | Barry Traish |
| P40 | Richard Kettlewell | A105 | Tony Rogers | P56 | Paul Treadaway |
| A207 | Paul Kincaid | S175 | Paul Rood | A155 | Chris Tregenza |
| A24 | Dave Lally | A194 | Howard Rosenblum | G3 | Martin Tudor |
| P71 | Dave Langford | A196 | June Rosenblum | A186 | Jan van 't Ent |
| A36 | Alice Lawson | J197 | Michelle Rosenblum | A141 | David Wake |
| A37 | Steve Lawson | A161 | Stephen Rothman | A183 | Rachel Wake |
| A144 | H.K. Loose | A80 | Marcus Rowland | A160 | Nick Walker |
| A90 | Peter Mabey | A116 | Lynne Savage | A59 | Huw Walters |
| A101 | Keith Martin | A111 | Moira Shearman | A137 | Christine Ward |
| A129 | Eckhard Marwitz | A133 | Jean Sheward | A136 | Edward Ward |
| A120 | Jurgen Marzi | A84 | Linda Shipman | A89 | Peter Wareham |
| A27 | Ian Maughan | A215 | Neil Simpson | A135 | A Wells |
| G2 | Ian McDonald | A43 | Simo | P12 | Laura Wheatly |
| P78 | Duncan McGregor | P58 | Ken Slater | A134 | Janet Wilkins |
| A205 | Bobby McLaughlin | A184 | Jane Smithers | G1 | Connie Willis |
| P65 | Alex McLintock | A180 | Kate Soley | A10 | Robert Wilson |
| A13 | Pat McMurray | A126 | Chris Southern | A97 | Alan Woodford |
| A169 | Alice Meades | A98 | Jenny Southern | A96 | Anne Woodford |
| A168 | Rob Meades | A66 | Maureen Kincaid Speller | | |
| A149 | Chris Morgan | A112 | Jesper Stage | G = Guest | |
| A152 | Pauline Morgan | P42 | Gary Starr | A = Attending | |
| A39 | Tim Morley | A4 | Helen Steele | S = Supporting | |
| A124 | Miriam Moss | A138 | Barbara Stewart | P = Presupporting | |
| A203 | Tom Nanson | A102 | David Stewart | J = Junior | |
| P53 | Rhona F. Neil | A49 | John Stewart | | |
| A106 | Andrew Norcross | A139 | Mike Stone | | |
| A198 | Kenneth O' Neill | A109 | Lars Strandberg | | |
| A55 | Chris O'Shea | A166 | Marcus Streets | | |
| A81 | Arwel Parr | A167 | Rae Streets | | |
| David Peak | | A182 | Alan Sullivan | | |
| A188 | Susan Peak | A123 | Igor Tabak | | |
| A122 | Bernie Peek | A82 | Graham Taylor | | |
| A185 | Mike Percival | P52 | Ian Taylor | | |
| A8 | Heather Petty | P51 | Kathy Taylor | | |
| A26 | Val Phillips | A202 | Teddy | | |
| P14 | Mark Plummer | A95 | Nadja Tegen | | |
| A99 | Ceri Pritchard | A103 | Marc ter Horst | | |
| P174 | A Pugh | A83 | Jennifer Tibbetts | | |
| A85 | Peter Redfarn | P60 | Linda-Clair Toal | | |
| A57 | John Richards | | | | |