

INTUITION

*49TH BRITISH NATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION
CONVENTION (EASTERCON)*

10–13 April 1998

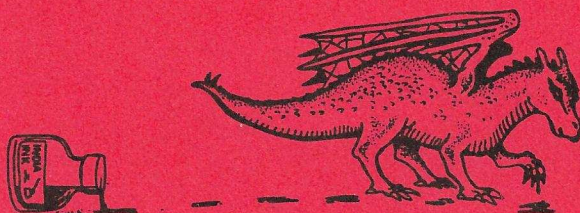
*Jarvis Piccadilly and Britannia Hotels,
Manchester*

GUESTS OF HONOUR:

Ian McDonald

Martin Tudor

Connie Willis



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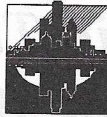


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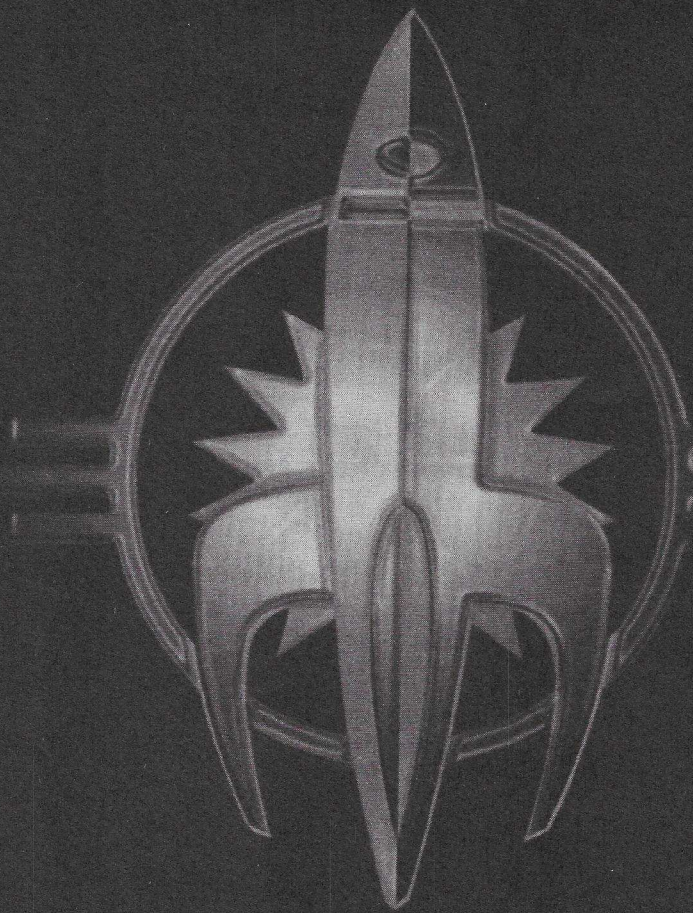
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- Ray Bradbury
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Introduction

It's a difficult business, editing a convention Programme Book. You can never be sure exactly when people are going to read it. Will they scan it eagerly while they're waiting for the convention to get going, or will they wait until they're on the train home, and then discover that they missed vital bits of information because the Programme Book never left its envelope? Just to reassure you... there is nothing in this Programme Book you absolutely need to have read before the convention starts. The programme guide, general information and Manchester guide have all been published separately, for greater portability.

Having said that, you might want to read the profiles of our three guests of honour, Ian McDonald, Martin Tudor, and Connie Willis, and indeed to read their own contributions to get a flavour of their work. You might also want to know a little more about our special guest from America, TAFF delegate Ulrika O'Brien, who contributes an article on her theory about fandom.

We've tried to make the Programme Book into something more than simply a commemoration of one convention by including articles looking at a number of different areas of sf activity during 1997, echoing the format used by Follycon back in 1988. We hope you find something to entertain and inform you, and hope you enjoyed Intuition: the 1998 Eastercon. ✂

—MAUREEN KINCAID SPELLER, EDITOR
ON BEHALF OF THE INTUITION COMMITTEE

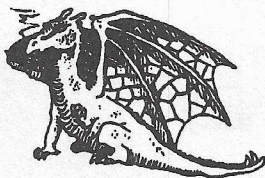
Feryal Rajah Educational Trust

Fans may remember Feryal, who died suddenly in October 1995. She was an active fan, married to John Merry, and was working as a doctor in the Manchester area. A charity has been set up in her name, which we have chosen as one of our con charities for a variety of reasons.

The aims of the trusts are to open doors for local women: to advance their education by providing training facilities for vocational skills; to enhance women's prospects in medical and allied professions; to provide grants and maintenance allowances; and to provide an advice, information and helpline service. The trust is a local one for Intuition, co-ordinated by the city of Salford. Feryal's husband, John, is a local fan, and is involved in education through his position as Chair of the Education Committee for the council of Salford.

Donations will be made to the trust through Intuition, but if you want to contribute individually you can do so via The City of Salford Education Department. Contact Mrs Jean Stanley on 0161 837 1701, or write to David C Johnston, Chief Education Officer, Education Office, Chapel Street, Salford M3 5LT. ✂

—FRAN DOWD



Acknowledgements

The committee of Intuition would like to thank:

Ian McDonald, Martin Tudor, and Connie Willis, our Guests of Honour;

Margaret Austin, Jenny Glover, Jacky Grüter-Andrew, Helen Steele and Laura Wheatly, for their past work as committee members;

Yvonne Meaney, waistcoat-maker extraordinaire;

Sue Mason, SMS and Steve Jeffery for artwork;

Colin Harris for particular assistance with registration matters;

Brian Clarke for donation of comics;

Everyone who worked for the convention, before and during; everyone who contributed ideas to the programme; everyone who appeared on the programme;

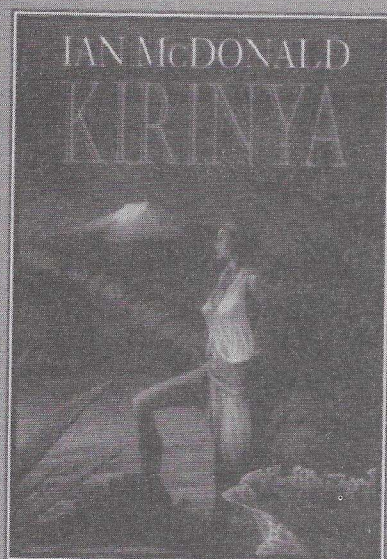
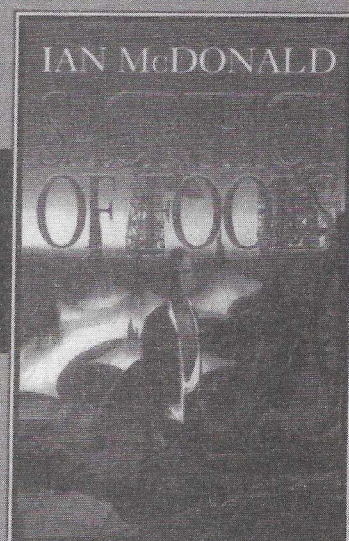
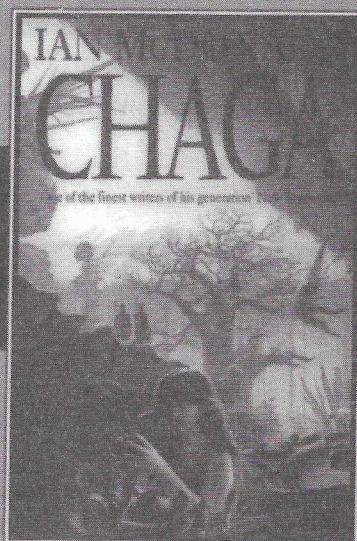
Various chocolate manufacturers around the world (at the special request of the Sofa).

Maureen Kincaid Speller, editor of this programme book, would also like to add her particular thanks to all the contributors; to Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer for numerous editorial services, including layout of the PRs, Programme Book and other convention publications; to Roger Robinson for help with printers and an ISBN, and lastly, to Johann Sebastian Bach, John Eliot Gardiner and Paul Kincaid, for their significant contributions to maintaining her sanity.

Gollancz welcomes highly acclaimed writer Ian McDonald, Guest of Honour at Intuition.

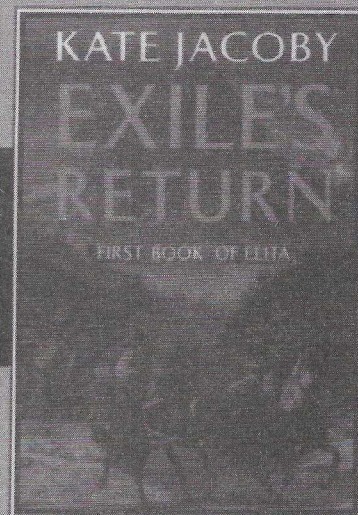
'One of the finest writers of his generation' *New Statesman*

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GOLLANCZ

Ian McDonald

Shadowy Beasts

By Ian McDonald

I'm an appreciator of second cities. I've lived much of my life in them. Their charms are subtle. They conceal themselves, they must be ferreted out, or stumbled upon serendipitously, or a native guide must show you. The magic in London is all tits and ass, the magic in Manchester is a subtler, more feline beast. It clings to the shadow of the wall. It's got Joy Division on the Walkman. In the 'Novel of London', the city is the magic land, the place apart, like Tolkien's Middle Earth. You step from the mundane into the sequined. But Manchester will have none of this. It has a special gravity. The magic can fookin' well come to it.

It's a three-in-the-morning hotel bar game: 'Books that made me want to be a writer/inspired me/warped my personality'. Jerry Cornelius at the age of thirteen, among the latter, Ursula le Guin among the former, and in the middle, Alan Garner. I still get the shadow of the wonderful chill of the escape through the Earldelving, when the children and eldritch guides are squeezing themselves through this rabbit-hole tunnel deep under Alderley Edge and suddenly *it's full of water*. Or the tracing of the owl pattern from the china dinner service in the attic. Or the hunting of the last unicorn through the streets of Manchester in *Elidor*. What gave me that shiver then, and does still, is that you aren't whisked away to glitter and glimmer land. Alan Garner's magic erupts into the real world of streets and corner shops and lock-up garages. And this makes it dark and dangerous. It's out there, in the terraces and the alleys.

I was born thirty-eight years and one week ago in this city, in Middleton, a suburb to the north-west, close to the Pennine hills. In many ways, Manchester is like Los Angeles: no one lives in L.A.; they're Burbankers or North Hollywooders or San Bernadinistos. Mancunians are Middletonians, Broughtoners or Men of Whitefield. We lived in a semi in a cul-de-sac and there was a field at the top of the street with swings where we swang and a tree we fell out of, and beyond that a lane known as the Dog's Delight that led to the main road and the Co-op, where it was my privilege to recite to the butcher our divvy number: 48462. And you got your meat wrapped in grease-proof paper, brown paper and tied with string, thank you. I went to Alkrington Primary, Miss Pinder's class, where I ran a protection racket on the toy sweet-shop and post-office. In the back of our house we had a compost heap the size of Phobos: the one birthday party I was allowed, we ended up playing on it and falling off it. On Firework Night, at the Heywoods next door (my bezzzy mate), my dad set his jacket on fire and ditched it in the goldfish pond. I found this tremendously

impressive. I left when I was five. Writers, I've found, get moved around a lot at the age of five.

My parents split at the other formative age for me, puberty. My dad went back to Manchester. For twenty-seven years I never saw or spoke to him, knew nothing of his life and what he might have done and found, where he might be. In 1995, Patricia and I were doing our Summer of Lurve, travelling around Britain, taking in Worldcon in Glasgow. And suddenly the time was right. But I chickened. Patricia made the call to my Mancunian uncles, who gave me my dad's address—he wasn't on the phone. I sent him a card from Edinburgh—he threw it into the car because he was going somewhere, stopped at lights, saw the words 'Dear Dad' and almost crashed—arranged to stay with old and loved family friends in Middleton, and went down to Manchester.

It was that summer, the hot one. Clear blue sky, simmering heat was moored over the city like a blimp. The old lie about it always raining in Manchester never seemed less true. The reservoirs were grey and empty. Gardens scorched. Cars wore greasy tans of road dirt. A neighbour's cat climbed in through our bedroom window. A burglar alarm went off. I spoke to my dad on the phone: his voice was shaking. So was mine. We met in a red brick bar that looked like a primary school, at the bottom of the road, called the Lancashire Fold. There were three of us in the bar. We talked, we drank incredibly cheap Willy Lee's bitter, we tried to piece together each other's lives. He was retired, he'd been sick—the cigs. Emphysema. He had an oxygen tank in the car. I didn't know then how sick. We spent a long time but not long enough. Afterwards, I went up the road to see if the places I remembered were still there. They were. The Co-op was long gone, but there were still shops there. Then across the road I spied the opening of the Dog's Delight. There's a bit in *The Wind in the Willows* where Mole catches the smell of Dulce Domum. It was as electric as that. And at the far end was the field—no swings, and the tree looked depressed in the heat, and beyond that, our street. I found our old house, looked at it long enough to rouse the suspicions of the Neighbourhood Watch, then found that I had got all dewy-eyed and nostalgic about the wrong house. It was the one next door.

Everything was very much smaller and closer than I remembered. There were burglar alarms and plastic windows. When I found the right house, I tried to see if it still had the mother of compost heaps in the back garden. Nope.

Seven months later my dad died. I'd met him twice in twenty-seven years. We rushed back to Manchester, Patricia driving at her usual ninety-five down the M6. It was as if no time had passed: it was February, but that same clear blue sky hung over the city. It was unseasonably warm. At the funeral, I met cousins and uncles and friends of my dad, who had been his family.

It was after his death that I learned how his life had been. If there's such a thing as a good funeral, it was his. We had several days in the city, discovering things and people: the cricket club where my dad pulled pints on a Thursday night (his ashes were sprinkled over the wicket—make a lump, get some bastard out with a tricky bounce), Hollingworth Lake, Heaton Park—its geography seemingly strangely rearranged from when I was taken there as a kid, but they still had Highland cattle down past the animal pens and the place where the Pope did mass. I hadn't remembered that it smelled of goose-shit. We rode on trams, we drove over the Pennines, we ate in the Best Chinese Restaurant in Western Europe, I had another look at my old haunts and old school. I braved an ancient trauma: the lifts in Lewises, which scared the shit out of me as a five year-old. I still have the odd nightmare about those clanging gates and hurtling counterweights. I learned the subtle magic of Manchester, that comes out of that other world of childhood memories and is impressed on to place like the patina of unwashed cars. Haunting the road junctions and the red brick bars and motorway intersections.

This is the city of hundreds-and-thousands sprinkled on bread and butter. Of fierce and ubiquitous local cricket clubs. Of cheap bitter and a wonderful fake Swiss cottage carvery. I can show you Bernard Manning's house on Mainway. Of grand old department stores, and the shopping mall unlovingly known as the biggest Public Toilet in Britain until forcibly redeveloped by the IRA. Of the Hacienda, and Ian McCullough, and Morrissey. Of my grandfather, after whom I named our budgie 'Sandy', singing Harry Lauder songs to me. I love a Lassie, a Bonnie Highland Lassie... Of great motorways and service stations. I've stood within *this* of Rita from *Coronation Street*, oh true believers. It's a taciturn, sometimes glumly Victorian city, but its charms are true, and like the Wild Magic, they seep from the red brick and sandstone by spiritual osmosis. Take time to look and find delight in the overlooked or under-considered. ☺

—IAN MCDONALD

Ian McDonald: 'a master for a new generation of sf'

By Edward James

Ian McDonald was first published in 1982 in the Northern Irish magazine *Extro*, but effectively made his entry into the science fiction world with 'The Catherine Wheel', in the January 1984 issue of *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*. My review of that story at the time, in *Paperback Inferno*, suggested that 'Ian McDonald has an interesting career ahead of him'. Interesting it has indeed been, and somewhat paradoxical. Unlike most UK writers in recent years, he made his name first in the USA rather than in Britain: his first short story collection, *Empire Dreams*, did not even

appear here. His earlier books were readily accepted in the USA: *Analog* described him as 'a master for a new generation of sf', a quotation repeated on the cover of more than one of his Bantam paperbacks. The accolades were no doubt heaped on him, rather than other British colleagues, because he had happily accepted the traditions and exuberance of the best American sf, yet now he appears as the most Irish writer that the field has so far produced. That evolution would seem perhaps the result of ten years' struggle to find his own voice.

In *The St James Guide to Science Fiction*, I described his first novel, *Desolation Road* (1988) as 'Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* rewritten by Ray Bradbury', which Roz Kaveney (in the Clute/Nicholls *Encyclopedia*) regards as 'a joke limited in accuracy only by its failure to add Cordwainer Smith'. But it was not intended as a joke so much as a comment on MacDonald's tendency towards pastiche of the writers he admires (still evident as late as *Sacrifice of Fools*). Pastiche or not, *Desolation Road* was a splendidly exuberant and evocative romp through the history of a terraformed Mars. Like Márquez and Bradbury, the enjoyment comes more from the atmosphere and the detail than from the narrative as a whole: the end in particular, like so many sf novels, suffers through an excess of pointless action.

The possible flaw in his second novel, *Out on Blue Six* (1989)—the standard wish-fulfilment pulp ending, with an apocalyptic revelation and the handful of rebels taking over the world and freeing it for space-travel—is no flaw at all, but a joyous and conscious reworking of many familiar sf ideas. *Out on Blue Six* depicts the Compassionate Society, devoted to the creation of the greatest possible happiness for all its citizens, thanks to the Love Police, who act against anyone who causes pain to others, and the computers who decide what constitutes anyone's best chance for happiness. The story, of course, focuses on some dissatisfied and cynical outcasts from this society, who explore the sewers and service tunnels of this utopian city, and discover the polluted planet that lies beyond the Edge of the World. So much of the furniture is very familiar; but there is wild invention, considerable wit, and a colourful use of language which make this a highly entertaining book. But it is also a serious, if sideways, glance at the absurdities of political ideologies, and the way in which those affect ordinary people: a theme that has become a leitmotiv of McDonald's work.

It is clear from his work that his political interests are influenced, and perhaps originate, in his experience as someone who has lived in Northern Ireland since the age of six. Ireland first appears as a locale in his short fiction. 'Empire Dreams', republished in the collection of that name as 'Empire Dreams (Ground Control to Major Tom)', was first published in *Asimov's* in 1985. It is about the attempt to cure a boy of leukemia through deep-dreaming, whereby the unconscious boy is computer-fed with dreams based on his own fantasies. The story is made up of passages in the real world, where Thomas Semple lies in his bed in Belfast's Royal

Victoria Hospital, intercut with his dreams, in which he joins his hero, space fighter-pilot Major Tom, as he blasts the enemy Zygons (just as Wee Tom's subconscious blasts his cancerous cells). It is an extraordinarily effective story not only of scientific innovation, but also of the nature of science-fictional fantasy and his relation to the real world.

The technique of interleaving 'official' documents with narratives which McDonald uses here is even more effective in 'King of Morning, Queen of Day' (also in *Empire Dreams*), entirely made up of documents supposedly written in 1909: the diary of an Irish astronomer, who believes he has observed a space-ship bound for Earth; the diary of his young daughter, who believes she has seen the little people; extracts from lectures, from an interview between the girl and W. B. Yeats; and from the reports of doctors trying to explain all these events in terms of the new-fangled theories of Dr Freud. ('Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' is another fascinating portrait of Freudianism, reprinted in McDonald's second collection, *Speaking in Tongues*, 1992.)

It is with the expansion of this story into *King of Morning, Queen of Day* (1991), which John Newsinger regards as the first of the 'Irish Trilogy' ('Myth, War, Contact', *Foundation* 73, Summer 1998, forthcoming), that the Irish locale expands into commentary on the 'Troubles'. To the story of Emily, explored in the story, are added the stories of her daughter Jessica, in the Irish Free State of the 1920s, and her great-grand-daughter Enye, in Dublin of the 1990s. It is an exploration of Irish mythologies, ancient and modern, and of suppressed female sexuality (and a not entirely successful attempt to explain the former by the latter: these three women have the power to bring these mythologies into the real world). If again marred by its ending, the whole is an outstanding fantasy, marked by great imagination and stylistic bravura.

Hearts, Hands and Voices (1992: known as *The Broken Land* in the USA) is about Ireland too, though I suppose that some might miss the closeness of the parallels. It is about civil war in a vaguely Third World country, where the Proclaimers (Protestants) dominate a Confessor (Catholic) province. The Warriors of Destiny (Fianna Fail) are fighting a guerrilla war, in which many people, like the protagonist, the young woman Mathembe Fileli, are innocent victims. Some of the Ourselves Alone (Sinn Fein) counsellors go on hunger strike; eventually a Free State is declared in the south of the province. And so on. All of which makes it sound a soulless allegory; in fact it is one of the most powerful political sf novels of recent years, with all kinds of wonderful sfal devices (in particular the organic technology), and with a hint of hope at the end arising out of the aimless blood-letting.

The third of the 'Irish Trilogy' is *Sacrifice of Fools* (1996), which begins with a team of UVF paramilitaries, on their way to shoot a drugs dealer, hearing on the radio about the arrival of eight million alien Shian in the solar system. By the time the action begins, the Troubles are

over, thanks to the setting up of an Irish/British joint authority. The hatred of many Protestant right-wingers has been transferred to the 80,000 Shian refugees in the province. Some Shian are being murdered and their sexual parts mutilated: the novel tells of the investigations of ex-con Andy Gillespie and Detective Sergeant Roisín Dunbar into these crimes, but the story is less about Northern Ireland itself as about the nature of sexuality and of male aggression. 'Science fiction at its best,' writes John Newsinger.

Scissors Cut Paper Wrap Stone (1994) is McDonald's shortest novel—around 35,000 words—and, in a sense, is his cyberpunk novel: but a cyberpunk novel that at last realises that the Japan of the twenty-first century, however well wired up, will, if any country does, preserve its ancient traditions as far as possible. *Necroville* (1994: *Terminal Café* in the USA), then, would be his horror novel. The premise is interesting enough: the class between the living and those who have, with the aid of nanotechnology, been raised from the dead. The scientific implications of the nanotechnological revolution are not well worked out, however, and for once (and for me) it was difficult to empathise with the main characters or to maintain interest in the (often sadistic) struggles between the living and the dead. McDonald's next novel was not dissimilar. *Chaga* (1995) starts in a very traditional way, redolent of Wells or Wyndham, and ends with Clarke-like revelation. What appears to be a meteor lands in Kenya. It is in fact an alien lifeform, the Chaga, which begins slowly to absorb Mount Kilimanjaro and everything in its path. We see the unfolding story through the eyes of an Irish reporter, Gaby McAslan, who attempts to penetrate the alien jungle that the Chaga is creating in Kenya, to communicate with it and to understand its aims. It is perhaps predictable to readers of Clarke at least—that the Chaga is not going to destroy humanity, but to change and transform it. I have not seen *Kirinya* (1998), which will take this story to its conclusion; we may hope that in the process the unsympathetic McAslan (what parallel are we supposed to draw with Lewis's lion there?) learns to be rather more human.

In ten years and nine novels, not to mention the stories in *Asimov's*, *Interzone* and elsewhere, we have witnessed McDonald develop his style and extend his range to an impressive extent. He is someone steeped in knowledge of science fiction (sometimes perhaps to the detriment of his own individuality), and someone who clearly *still* has an interesting career ahead of him, since he is continuing to learn and develop. When I made that comment in 1984, I should have had the courage of my convictions to say what I really felt at that time, and which has been fully justified in the event: that McDonald was going to be one of the most exciting new writers of the late 1980s and 1990s—'a master for a new generation of sf'. ☞

—EDWARD JAMES

Edward James is the editor of *Foundation*.

Ian McDonald: The Man or, Who Needs a Proper Job?

By Jack Deighton

It was during my introduction to the strange and boozy nether-world of writers en masse, at the joint book-signing for *New Worlds 2* and *In Dreams* in London, that I first met Ian McDonald. He was bus-lagged.

Yer man had just endured the rigours of the overnight coach journey down from Stranraer, sitting in front of one of those phantom tune-warblers, whose humming had time and again verged on becoming something tantalisingly recognisable only for it always to slip away into the realms of complete and maddening tunelessness. Ian had consequently enjoyed very little sleep. Despite this he provided a gracious and entertaining afternoon for myself and my family, only occasionally interrupted by the necessity of having to scribble out names and down the next pint. He's that sort of guy.

I discovered we had a lot in common. He might have dirtied a few nappies in Middleton in this fine city of Manchester—but he's a Celt through and through, having an Irish mother, a Scottish father and Stirling connections (but don't ask him about the castle). This is perhaps the origin of his strong sense of place, the wellspring of his writing, of his adherence to (Northern) Irish themes and use of distinctive speech patterns.

I'm older than him so I'm sure he'll not mind me saying he's of a certain age, one which moulded his musical tastes. Check out that list of men in *Desolation Road*, ponder on an aircraft called *Dostoinstvo* in *Chaga*...

What else can I say about Ian McDonald? Well, I *could* say he's tall, he's blond, he's worth a million pounds, Ian McDonald. But it doesn't scan (nor rhyme). And the fine, lyrical author who is a GoH at this convention is, as far as I know, none of those three things; so you needn't bother looking.

He *is*, though, husband to 'First Lady of the Town' Patricia, 'daddy' to cats Mungo and Martha (well, nobody's perfect,) a son who should 'get himself a proper job' to his mother, a fine example of Belfast irreverence to authority in the matter of car parking fees, proud DIYer and coffeeholic. He'll also undermine your parental threats about putting up your temporarily exasperating offspring for adoption by instantly offering them a home. What's worse, the kids would be happy to accept.

He says his claim to fame is attending the same primary school as Eddie Izzard (I wonder if Eddie knows?) but he has appeared live on Finnish TV immediately after their equivalent of the Spice Girls. While drunk he has managed to christen the pristine white carpet of an embassy in Nairobi with the contents of his coffee cup and on another occasion carried on a complete conversation with Bob Shaw under the

mistaken impression he was speaking to John Brunner. His third birthday party was held on a compost heap.

A few of his 'proper' jobs have included: escorting an African girls' choir round Ireland, marking GCSE Maths papers, and being audio-visual technician for a missionary society. He has therefore enjoyed not only a missionary position but also Irish-Ugandan relations.

He may not be tall, or blond, or worth a million pounds (he's working on that last one though.) He's more likely the one wearing the specs he keeps on a cord round his neck. I don't know if he's any good at fixing cars but what I do know is he is a very, very nice man. Go and talk to him. I'm sure he'll treat you with the unfailing courtesy he did me. (Unless he's drunk, of course.)

Oh, and he cooks a mean barbecue. ☺

—JACK DEIGHTON

Jack Deighton's novel, A Son of the Rock, is short-listed for the BSFA Award.

THE NOVELS AND SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS OF IAN MCDONALD

Desolation Road, Bantam, 1988

Empire Dreams, short story collection, 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 published as *The Broken Land*)

Kling Klang Klatch, with David Lyttleton, Victor Gollancz, 1992

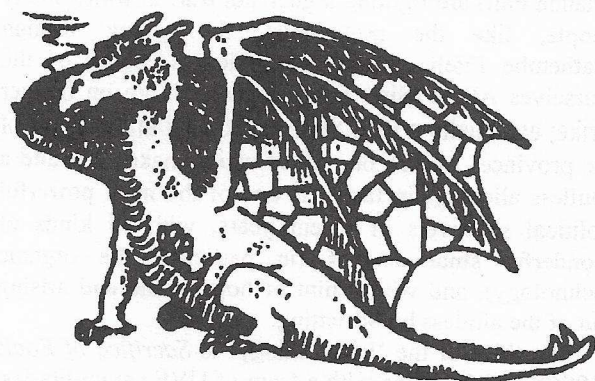
Speaking in Tongues, short story collection, Victor Gollancz, 1992

Scissors Cut Paper Wrap Stone, Bantam (US only), 1994

Necroville, Victor Gollancz, 1994, (also published as *Terminal Café*)

Chaga, Victor Gollancz, 1995 (also published as *Evolution's Shore*)

Sacrifice of Fools, Victor Gollancz, 1996



Martin Tudor

Have Bag, Will Travel Part Five: Brainhammer

By Martin Tudor

The story so far: Martin Tudor, winner of the 1996 UK-US TAFF race, has, after many trials and tribulations, finally reached the United States, and L.A.con III, the 1996 Worldcon in Anaheim, California. Now read on...

We lugged the remaining boxes of TAFF auction material from CC-C1, in the depths of the Anaheim Convention Center, to our room in the Marriott (which in this heat felt like several miles away). By the time we'd popped back to Kinkos to collect *Empties* #17 to distribute we just had time to shower and change clothes before the next fan programme item. Eating would have to wait. Fortunately, it wasn't one I was taking part in but it was one that neither Helena nor I wanted to miss: it being the premiere of Andy Hooper's latest fannish 'radio' drama, *Fannotchka* at 8.30 PM.

I knew the original story best in the form of the Fred Astaire/Cyd Charisse musical *Silk Stockings* rather than the earlier, non-musical, *Ninotchka* starring Greta Garbo; unfortunately, Andy had opted for the non-musical version—such a shame. I'm sure multi-talented globetrotter Christina Lake could've easily equalled, if not surpassed, Cyd's dance numbers. Helena and I arrived as they were still setting up, but things were quickly under way with some mikes borrowed from the filk singers down the corridor. In addition to Andy himself and Christina, the play featured a stalwart cast of fans: Neil Rest, Ken and Aileen Forman, Paul Williams, Cindy Lee Berryhill and Jack Henegham. Andy's version told the story of a young regional convention-runner who falls a-foul of a big city club full of fanzine hacks and how they learn to find room for one another in fandom. The cast performed beautifully and the story gripped the audience until the end—as you can tell by the fact that despite not having eaten for nearly ten hours Helena and I stuck it out until the end. Then we dashed out with Perry Middlemiss, Spike Parsons, John Foyster and Mike Ford, with the intention of trying the Malaysian restaurant that everyone had been raving about.

The Malaysian restaurant which, we discovered as we arrived on its doorstep at 10.05 PM, closed at 10 PM on Saturday nights.

We ate instead in a perfectly reasonable 'Denny's'-style place called Tiffy's. Which, eventually, found something on their extensive menu that Mike Ford could eat. Everyone commiserated with Perry on Australia winning the bid for the 1999 Worldcon, and nodded knowingly as he claimed that he was just the Treasurer and he really wouldn't be taking on too many

commitments... Replete at last, we drifted back to the Hilton to wander around the party floor for a while before crashing out.

Sunday morning dawned a little later than usual for us as I didn't have any programme bits to do until the dreaded Hugo Award Ceremony at 8 PM. So we took it easy, had a decent-sized breakfast via room service and then Helena went down to the pool for a swim and sunbathe while I sorted out the remaining auction material, updated the auction list and packed the TAFF stuff as best I could. I'd still have to sort out the TAFF sales table stuff with Don Fitch on Monday and track down Andy Richards to see if he'd unloaded the Conspiracy books but, I figured, if I could just get through the Hugos the worst would be over!

I had hoped to make it over to the Fan Lounge for the DUFF Party which was on from noon until 2 PM, but by the time I'd finished writing Part 3 of *Have Bag* it didn't seem worthwhile. So I opted instead for relaxing with Helena in the Marriott bar where we smoked and chatted with various people and I desperately tried to forget how soon I'd have to get on stage for the Hugos. After a fairly hefty, late, lunch (which the condemned man ate heartily), Helena wandered back to the pool to see if she could find a spare sun-lounger and I popped over to the Fan Lounge for the tail end of the James White Book Party and distribute more copies of *Empties* #17.

I couldn't find Roxanne but after a few of the excellent speciality beers that Geri Sullivan and Don Fitch had laid on in the Fan Lounge, even the prospect of talking to thousands of people without the aid of nicotine began to seem bearable—but I knew I'd sober up before 8 PM...

After a quick shower I changed into my wedding suit (relieved that it still fitted me five months on) and Helena and I wandered over to the Arena (an ominous, but appropriate, name for the Hugo venue) to find out where we were supposed to be. Eventually we found ourselves in a large waiting room with all the various Hugo nominees and the other presenters. We sat down at a table with a smart-looking chap with a tidy beard and neatly combed hair—who turned out to be an unrecognisable Perry Middlemiss. Helena called Andy Hooper over to join us because he looked merely nervous and she hoped he might calm down Perry and me before we made a break for it back to the bar.

I presume someone must have announced something or other because everyone started drifting towards a set of doors at the far end of the room. So, like sheep to the slaughter, we dutifully followed everyone else. We were led through a maze of corridors (well, it felt like a maze to me, but I was petrified by now) and told to sit in the first few rows. To make it even easier for Perry and I to get up and do our bits we opted for seats near the aisle, but numerous late arrivals forced us further and further towards the centre and then a couple with a toddler took

the aisle seat... Perry suggested that it would be a good idea to make a move for the aisle as the presenter before us began their spiel—I gabbled back at him that that made sense, which was more than I did by now. My hands were sweating, and I was already regretting the light suit I was wearing as I smeared the sweat down the back of my trouser legs for the nth time. By now, it had been well over an hour since my last cigarette and nearly two since I'd had a drink, so I was gasping for both. Still, I thought, it shouldn't be long now—Perry was scheduled to be fifth up with his presentation of the Fanzine Hugo and I was seventh to present the Fan Writer and Fan Artist. Then we could make a break out of the back door and get a drink.

Connie Willis was Toastmistress and she was quite good, not overly intrusive and she kept things moving along at a reasonable pace. First up was Marjii Ellers, presenting the First Fandom Hall of Fame to Erle Melvin Korshak and Frank K. Kelly; then Forrie Ackerman presented the Big Heart Award to Dick Daniels. Next came the Seiun Awards, the Japanese National Awards presented by Masamichi Osako and Fan Guests of Honour Takumi and Sachiko Shibano. This presentation was really funny—at least the Japanese presenters seemed to think so but neither Helena nor I (nor most of the audience) could work out why. Anyway the awards went to *The Fall Of Hyperion* by Dan Simmons and *Timelike Infinity* by Stephen Baxter for novels and 'Robot Visions' by Isaac Asimov for short story. Next up was Stanley Schmidt to present the John W. Campbell (not a Hugo) Award for best new sf writer to David Feintuch, then Perry would be on.

Unfortunately, everything was taking a lot longer than I'd expected because they were slotting in Hugo anecdotes and bits on the history of the Hugos between each item. So, by the time Perry had taken the stage, I was a gibbering mess of alcohol and nicotine withdrawal. Perry, of course, was fine the moment he reached the mike. He chatted, cracked a joke or two (which I'm sure you'll be able to read in his DUFF report any day now) and then he announced *Ansible* had won the Fanzine Hugo—which meant I had to go up and accept on Dave Langford's behalf.

It was a very long walk down the four or so rows to the vast expanse in front of the stage, an expanse which was cunningly criss-crossed with cables and wires for the various TV cameras and mountains of PA equipment and to trip unsuspecting presenters on their way to the stage. Somehow I managed to get across to and up on to the stage without falling flat on my face and there was that evil Australian grin leering at me, as he passed me the enormous Hugo set in its even more enormous moonscape set in an old film reel, knowing I was going to dry up...

Fortunately the wonderful Mr Langford had supplied me with a brief acceptance speech, just in case, so I reeled it off trying to speak to the mike and not rush through it or slur the punchline:

'Hi, I'm Martin Tudor and I'm very pleased to accept the Fanzine Hugo on behalf of Dave Langford for

Ansible. Dave sends his thanks to everyone who voted and everyone who distributes *Ansible*, especially Janice Murray, Naveed Khan, Alan Stewart and some guy called Martin Tudor. (That bastard Langford, embarrassing me in public again.)

'*Ansible's* weird distribution system now reaches so far that microscopic copies have been found in a meteorite from Mars, containing jokes over sixteen million years old.

'Thanks again!'

Whew, I survived that bit. Just one more stint to do before I escaped. Then one of the ushers led me to one side and told me I should stay close to the stage not only for my presentation but afterwards for the photo opportunity. Aarghh, Langford I kill you deadly.

Kelly Freas announced that Bob Eggleton had won the Best Professional Artist and then I was on again. First up was the Fan Writer, which Martin Hoare collected for Langford. Then I had the great pleasure of presenting Bill Rotsler with his second Fan Artist Hugo of the weekend—he'd collected his Retro Hugo on Friday night. Rotsler was almost totally choked up at this, but managed to blink back the tears and graciously accept it. Then we wandered off to the side of the stage to wait for the photo-call.

Fortunately the next few presentations sped past swiftly with Gardner Dozois picking up the Professional Editor, Dramatic Presentation going to *Babylon 5's* 'The Coming of Shadows', Maureen F. McHugh getting the Short Story for 'The Lincoln Train', James Patrick Kelly the Novelette for 'Think Like a Dinosaur' and Allen Steele the award for Novella for 'The Death of Captain Future'. Then the entire ceremony ground to a halt as Neal Stephenson accepted the award for Best Novel for his *The Diamond Age*. I'm sure it wasn't just my desperate need for nicotine and/or alcohol that made it appear this speech lasted for hours. It did. Well, five minutes at least.

Eventually Connie wound up the show with a special award for best utter disregard of science to The O. J. Simpson Jury and then the photographers poured forward and several thousand shots were taken. It was worse than the photo-shoot at my wedding, lasting forever when I was gasping for a drag. Finally it was over. With the group shots out of the way I took my chance and fled, trampling to death probably only one or two people on my way to the doors.

Once outside we regrouped and headed off to the parties on the fifth floor of the Hilton, first stopping off at the Marriott to dump the Hugo, grab my bag and pack some beers in it. We popped in on the Second Occasional Lone Star Con and Chilli Cook-Off in honour of the Hugo Nominees, the Hawaii 2000 Westercon and a few other parties but finished up outside Australia in 1999 again. It was strange to bump into the likes of Chris O'Shea and Henry Balen—I hadn't even realised they were at the con, but with over 6,500 actually attending that's not surprising.

We were relieved when Mike Ford agreed to take Langford's Hugo back with him as we didn't fancy

carrying it on and off planes for the rest of the trip through San Francisco, Seattle and Washington DC—especially given the current state of play with the US threatening Iraq and terrorists threatening the US. ('Is that a rocket in your bag, or have you just collected a Hugo?') We arranged to see him in the Marriott bar Monday lunch time, to pass it over.

Spike Parsons wandered over to join us and discovered she had a rebellion on her hands—neither Andy Hooper nor Christina Lake wanted to get up at 10 AM to take part in 'Wild Wild D West'. With half her panel gone, Spike admitted defeat and went to tell the other two panellists, Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden, it was off. Before she left, she confirmed the time of our ride to San Francisco with Brad Lyau—early on Monday. Damn. There was no way we would be able to finish sorting things out in time—I still had to total up and breakdown the TAFF sales table stuff and get the Hugo to Mike Ford. Regretfully we told Spike we couldn't accept the ride and asked her to thank Brad for us. Instead we decided to fly with Perry, who was also heading off to San Francisco to stay with Tom Becker and Spike. He'd found an 11 AM flight on Tuesday, with South West Airlines, which cost just \$79 per head. Perry agreed to book it for us and so, with the transport of the Hugo sorted and the next leg of our trip arranged, and the comforting thought that there were no more programme items for me to do, we settled down to drink and relax. So we sat around chatting and drinking with various fans until at 5 AM it was just Helena, Andy Hooper and myself.

Monday morning started even later than Sunday. For some reason both of us were moving in slow motion, but eventually we made it downstairs for lunch in the hotel's brasserie. We had a drink by the pool as I worked on Part 3 of this report. Then Mike Ford turned up and announced he'd changed his mind. Having sorted through his luggage he realised he wouldn't be able to manage the Hugo. Oh shit.

So, while Helena settled down to sunbathe, I shot off to the Hilton to see if I could find anyone who could take it for us. I failed. Then it was time for me to get over to the Dealers' Room to see Andy Richards about the Conspiracy books. Although he'd only sold one of them he was happy to buy the others off me—at least that was something less to carry back. I doubled back to the Fan Lounge and totalled up the TAFF sales stuff. When I tracked down Don Fitch I gave him the breakdown and he revealed another box of fanzines which had been donated. I asked if he could arrange for the rest of the material to go to Corflu. He agreed—no more to carry. Phew. After asking around, people suggested various names of people who might be able to transport the Hugo, I made notes of their names and decided to track them down later.

By now time was getting on, so I carried the remaining sales stuff back to the Marriott and had a much needed shower. After I'd changed, as there was no sign of Helena, I carried on working on *Have Bag*. A little later, Helena returned. She was barely recognisable.

Apparently, despite carefully turning herself every 15 minutes or so and swimming in the shade occasionally to cool off and avoid sunstroke, at some point she had dozed off lying on her back on the sun lounger. She eventually woke feeling rather chilly because the sun had gone down. But my surprise at her reddish brown face, arms and legs turned to horror when she undressed to take a shower and I could see the violent contrast of stark white where the bikini had been, compared to the deep, red-brown exposed parts.

When Helena had recovered a bit we went to the hotel's brasserie for dinner, and then stopped off in the Marriott bar for a drink. We were in time to watch the news of the arrest of an alleged terrorist and the announcement of increased security at airports. Great, we still had three internal flights and an international flight left. Anyone want a large metal rocket?

When we wandered over to the Fan Lounge in the Hilton we discovered that everything was more or less closed. The Fan Lounge had been ousted from the Fan Lounge Room, Don Fitch had gone to bed, but Geri, Christina etc had 'hijacked' the filkers area and were attempting to finish the left-over beers. It seemed only fair to help. Helena tried perching on my lap but discovered it was too painful and she had to stand instead. So we took a slow walk around the party floors as I tried to find someone to take the damn Hugo—no luck.

Eventually I had to admit that all the days of running around had taken their toll; I was going to have to crash early. After I'd collapsed in bed, Helena remained awake, puzzling over how to pack the Hugo. The main problem was the size of the box—our bags weren't big enough to take it. So Helena removed it from the box and carefully wrapped it in our laundry—which cushioned all the delicate bits on the base wonderfully. Sorry, Dave—your Hugo has worn my dirty underpants, lèse-majesté indeed.

After an early morning alarm call on Tuesday and a hurried room service breakfast we met Perry outside the Hilton for the shuttle bus to LAX. At the baggage check-in we had no trouble with the bag containing the Hugo, but the attendant balked at the bag containing the fanzines. Eventually he let it through. For a change there was no problem with the laptop—even though it could well have been the radio control pad for the Hugo-shaped missile! As usual they were very concerned about the cameras. Both Helena and Perry had to present their unwrapped cameras for careful inspection. A middle-aged American woman complained vociferously about having to unpack hers and was told by the attendant that it was for her own safety. He explained that the last air disaster had been caused by a bomb concealed in a camera.

Once through check-in Helena discovered that LAX contained the only smelly, shabby toilets we had encountered so far in the US, while I bought some Starbuck coffees and Perry bought an enormous newspaper. Next stop San Francisco.

This has been the fifth of six instalments of Have Bag, Will Travel—Martin Tudor's 1996 TAFF Trip Report; the first four instalments were written and published during the trip. This was completed on 3rd March 1998. The complete report (with an introduction, lots of splendid illustrations and conclusion) will hopefully be available at Martin Tudor's table in the Dealers' Room at Intuition in April 1998 or from Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, (off Clarkes Lane,) Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX, for a mere (minimum) £5 donation to TAFF (or the equivalent of £8 outside the UK), inclusive of postage and packing. Sterling cheques/money orders payable to 'Martin Tudor', US dollar cheques/money orders payable to 'Ulrika O'Brien'.

Have Bag, Will Travel is also available on the World Wide Web, courtesy of Dave Langford, access via <http://www.ansible.demon.co.uk/TAFFrep.html>

—MARTIN TUDOR

Martin Tudor: A Fan for All Reasons

By Tony Berry and Steve Green

Martin Tudor is a Fan. A Fan for all reasons: a science fiction fan, a comics fan, a fantasy fan, a media fan. But above all he is a Fannish Fan. For those not familiar with the term, it means that he is involved in the fanzine scene, writing for and producing those amateur publications which are such an important part of the Fan's social life, as well as hanging around with like-minded people and drinking too much. The centre of any Trufan's convention is naturally the bar, and Martin is usually to be found there. He's very easy-going and approachable, and because he has such a broad range of interests he's happy to talk to anyone (except those bloody Filkers of course). Yep, the very epitome of tolerance and understanding.

I first met Martin at the Birmingham Science Fiction Group in 1980. He was already a hive of fannish activity and soon got involved in the BSFG's APA, *APA-B*, later *The Organisation*, before going on to produce his own fanzine *Empties*. Meanwhile, an informal gathering, the small but perfectly formed Solihull SF Group, met in a local boozer (this introduced me to the joys of Steve Green, but I digress). Plots were hatched, plans were laid, beer was drunk, and the Tudor star rose in the fannish firmament.

So, what's he done since those early days? Well, 17 issues of *Empties*, 30 APA contributions (being a founder member of *Frank's APA*), served on the BSFG committee for 11 years and as Chairman several times, produced 100 newsletters for the Group, chaired 3 Novacons and been on the committee of 15 other conventions, including running the Fan Programme at Conspiracy (that's the bit that actually worked). In 1989 he was Fan Guest of Honour at Finncon in Helsinki and

also at Fantastika in Stockholm. Having narrowly missed winning a couple of Novas, he stood for TAFF (the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund) and lost in a controversial race. Ask him about that one.

In 1987 he began to co-edit, along with Steve Green, a sf/fantasy news and reviews magazine, *Critical Wave*. This was a semi-professional publication which sold internationally and lasted through 46 issues until it folded in 1996. Funny how *SFX* has such a similar format...

Standing for TAFF again in 1996, Martin wiped the floor with the opposition and went to the Worldcon in America. But it wasn't that easy. On taking over as administrator of the fund, he discovered that the previous incumbent, Abigail Frost, had stolen the money. It is an indication of Martin's popularity that British fandom rallied round with loans and donations which made his trip possible, and then helped to refill the TAFF coffers in record time.

As we give Martin a long-overdue accolade this weekend, spare a thought for the lad, because it's hard being a BNF (Big Name Fan)—all these youngsters wanting his autograph or opinion on their latest opus; whether they should use three staples instead of two, and what colour paper; others wanting him to run their con or at least persuade the hotel to lower their charge for function space from £10,000 to 75p; the constant pressure of having to stay in the bar until it closes at 5 AM then sleep, change, eat breakfast and be back in the bar when it re-opens. Work, work, work. So, if you see him around the con, buy him a drink—he deserves it. ☺

—TONY BERRY

Martin Tudor's entry into Midlands fandom was so timely and his involvement with the infamous Brum Group so rapidly realised, you might have been forgiven for suspecting he'd been hammered together from recycled Fifties fans one dark and stormy night upon the assembly line at Pete Weston's knob factory. That, at least, might explain his refusal to be pigeonholed into any particular fannish tribe, remaining as much a fanzine fan as he is a conrunner or a media fan (though, as Tony Berry explains elsewhere, that equanimity doesn't extend *quite* as far as filk-singing). And anyway, Martin himself would no doubt credit his admiration for fannish tradition and past achievement to the fact that he's a 'Fifties child', even if he did squeeze into that decade with less than forty-eight hours to spare.

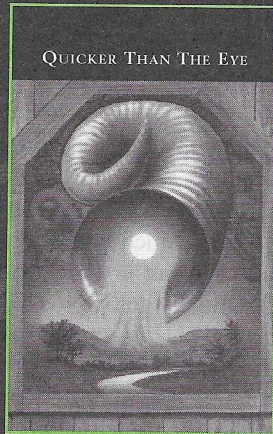
From my own vantage point in those halcyon days, his appearance was rather like a switch being thrown, as if a Tudor-shaped vacuum in the continua of both Birmingham and Solihull fandoms had suddenly been plugged. Pete's 'Birmingham Renaissance' would shortly crawl over the horizon, *APA-B* (latterly *The Organisation*) in its back pocket, and before we knew it, Martin was hurling himself into both with the fixed gaze of the Duracell Bunny.

Empties swiftly mutated from apazine to fully-fledged genzine (with a global mailing list which probably kept at least one clerk on the Post Office's

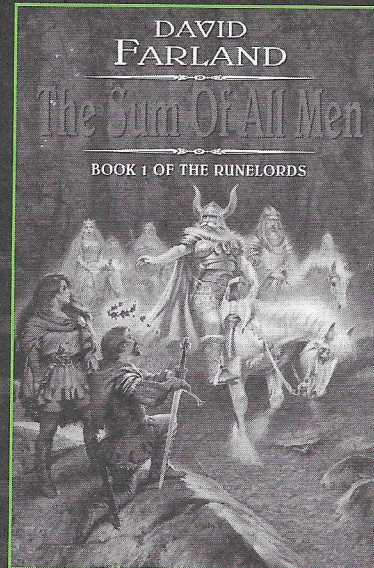
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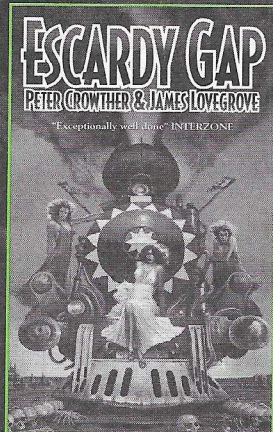


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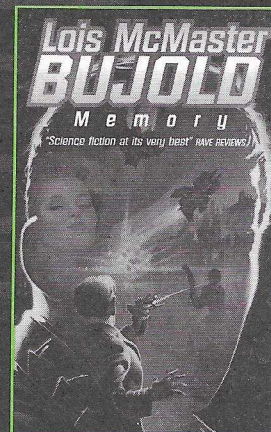
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Here, Now, and in the Future

international desk at Mount Pleasant in permanent employment), but the life of a paper fan wasn't enough for this boy: the 1983 Worldcon in Baltimore would be just the first of his missionary forays into the various colonies and wastelands beyond our fair shores. And now, good grief, Manchester; is there no end to this man's courage?

Martin has his darker side, of course, and I almost hesitate to disquieten those who've shown such faith in his honesty as TAFF administrator by relating how easily he succumbed to its sinister influence and organised the mass stuffing of the Concrete Overcoat Fan Fund ballot box in 1985. But, true to the 'Teflon Tudor' nickname I coined for him, none of this stuck; even the sordid events which resulted in the total destruction of a hotel bed at one 1980s convention haven't prevented him becoming one of British fandom's most famed venue negotiators.

Not that he'd deny any of this. He is, above all, an individual of commendable loyalty and occasionally unsettling honesty. The former has been the backbone of our friendship and professional collaborations, from Novacon 14 through to our nine years together on *Critical Wave* (partners in penury...); the latter shines though in such self-evaluating memoirs as 'I Drink Beer, Me' and 'Stand Up, White Shit!', two of the worthiest examples of fanwriting to emerge in the past fifteen years.

Even discounting *Wave's* legendary fiscal woes, Martin's never been the luckiest of fellows, as the (in retrospect) farcical account of his 1996 TAFF trip bears witness. Indeed, he's the only person I've ever met who's more likely to be sold the wrong ticket, or sent an outdated form, or whose very proximity to any equipment more technologically advanced than cutlery is guaranteed to spell disaster. With the two of us involved, it's little wonder than we left a trail of broken mimeographs behind us before opting for a photocopier which has since had more facelifts and replacement parts than Michael Jackson and Cher combined.

On the other hand, Martin and Helena do have Heloise as proof that not all his collaborations end in chaos. (Her first birthday is a mere fortnight away as many of you read this, but I would suggest anyone feeling the admirable urge to buy her a present keeps it small; Heloise's godparents (two shady figures from Solihull) have already incurred a degree of parental scowling due to their taking up half the available lounge space in the Tudor manse with a pair of giant Muppets.)

So there you have him, the multi-faceted, workaholic bundle of enthusiasm and nervous energy that some are proud to call 'friend', many others 'colleague' and copier engineers across the land 'git', whilst even the newest fan here this weekend can take pleasure in awarding him the title 'fan guest of honour'. Raise your glasses, and please make sure his is filled to return the salute. ☺

—STEVE GREEN

Tony Berry and Steve Green have been involved with numerous fan publications and conventions, mostly in the Birmingham area.

Keeping Busy the Martin Tudor Way

By Mark Plummer

I) Conventions

Strange as it may seem, there was once a time when it was possible to run Novacons without Martin on the committee; they did in fact manage it for thirteen years before enlisting his services for Novacon 14 and 15 (1984 and 1985). He then took a couple of years off before cropping up again for Novacon 18. From 1988 through to 1993 he somehow managed to avoid committee responsibilities all together but returned to the fold in 1994 after which he obviously had such a good time that he stuck it out in 1995 (the 25th anniversary) and 1996 before finally getting to chair last year's Novacon 27.

Now clearly there is evidence of slacking in the above. That gap between 1985 and 1988, for instance? Lounging around in decadent luxury no doubt, watching everybody else do the work. Not quite, unless you count running the fan programme at Conspiracy, the 1987 Worldcon as 'relaxation'. Still some people have funny ideas about that sort of thing...

But that doesn't account for the five year lay-off between Novacon 18 to 24? Putting his feet up? Nope, you could find him doing site liaison for Mexican III (1989) and operations for Mexican IV (1991). You know, just to keep his hand in...

II) Publications

a) *Empties* - 16 issues, June 1983 to November 1995

Fanzines are always good to fill out the odd spare minutes. The first few issues of *Empties* were distributed through *APA-B*, before going general circulation from #4 onwards. Issues up to #14 were A4; #15 and #16 were A5. *Empties* is not dead, but merely resting.

b) *Critical Wave* - (with Steve Green) 46 issues, October 1987 to June 1996 (a final issue is planned)

Launched in the wake of Conspiracy. Issues #1-5 credited Steve Green as editor and Martin as assistant or associate editor, with both as joint editors from #6 onwards. Steve and Martin sold most of their possessions, relatives and several of their more merchantable organs trying to keep the magazine alive.

c) *Have Bag, Will Travel* - 4 issues, August 1996 to September 1996 (a fifth part appears a few pages back)

Mostly written 'on the road', two chapters made it back to Britain before Martin did.

d) *The Tudor Dynasty* - April 1996

Hah, evidence of Tudor Tardiness! This collection of fanwriting, taken mostly from *Empties*, was assembled by Bernie Evans in support of Martin's TAFF campaign. Typical, I just *knew* he'd been shirking somewhere. ☺

—MARK PLUMMER

Connie Willis

Dorothy Sayers, *Have Space Suit, Will Travel*, and Technicolor: An Introduction to Connie Willis

By Connie Willis

As a science fiction writer, the two questions people ask me most are, 'Where do you get your ideas?' and 'Why do you write science fiction?' Truly obnoxious people also ask, 'Have all the things that are in your stories happened to you?' and 'Have you ever been abducted by aliens?' and my personal favorite, 'Are you still writing?'

I am, of course, not the only one who gets asked these questions. Dorothy Sayers, writing in *Gaudy Night* in 1936, has Harriet Vane say: 'Heavens! Here was that awful woman, Muriel Campshott, coming up to claim acquaintance. Campshott had always simpered. She still simpered. She was going to say, "How do you think of all your plots?" She did say it. Curse the woman. And Vera Mollison. She was asking. "Are you writing anything now?"'

And I figure people probably asked Sophocles, 'Did all the things in *Oedipus Rex* happen to you?' It goes with the territory.

And I actually like answering these questions, except for 'Are you still writing?' Has anyone *ever* asked an architect, 'Are you still building buildings?' or a doctor, 'Still practising medicine?'

Anyway, the answers to the questions are, 'No, I have never been abducted by aliens. There *are* no aliens except the ones in science fiction. *Men in Black* is a comedy,' and, 'Yes, everything in my stories has personally happened to me. I have travelled back in time, watched the Martians land in Amherst cemetery and wake up Emily Dickinson's sleeping shade, baptised an orangutan, played the piano on the surface of a star, discovered where fads come from, served as a member of the St. Paul's Fire Watch, found the bishop's bird stump, and gotten the bubonic plague.' (Actually, a woman in a ladies' club I was lecturing to came up afterward to tell me I had gotten all my details about medieval England right and she knew this because she had lived in the Middle Ages herself and had, in fact, died of the Black Death.)

As to the question, 'Why do you write science fiction?', that's a little bit more difficult to answer because it seems to imply I had a choice in the matter. I didn't.

There's this great scene in the movie *Top Hat* where Fred Astaire has been dancing in the hotel room above Ginger Rogers and she comes up to tell him to stop, and

he opens the door and leans elegantly against it and says, as only Fred can, 'Sometimes I just find myself dancing.'

To which Ginger replies, 'I suppose it's a kind of affliction.'

That's what it is, an affliction. Or maybe an addiction. Addicts in twelve-step program always have to tell the sad story of how they got hooked and when, so here goes:

Hi, my name is Connie, and I'm a science fiction writer. When I was thirteen years old, I picked up a yellow book with a guy in a spacesuit on the cover and the title, *Have Space Suit, Will Travel*. I was thirteen, remember, and I thought this was the funniest title I had ever seen, so I opened the book and read the opening lines:

'You see, I had this space suit.

How it happened was this way: "Dad," I said, "I want to go to the Moon."

"Certainly," he answered and looked back at his book. It was Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*, which he must know by heart.

I said, "Dad, please! I'm serious."

There's a scene at the end of *Star Wars*. The Death Star has cleared the planet and Luke Skywalker is going in for one last run. Princess Leia is back at command headquarters, listening intently to the battle. All the other fighter pilots are dead or out of action, and Darth Vader has Luke clearly in his sights.

All of a sudden, Han Solo comes zooming in from left field to save the day. 'Yahoo!' he says. 'You're all clear, kid. Let's blow this thing.'

Princess Leia, who's been listening to all this, doesn't look up from the battle map or even change her expression. But my daughter, who was eight years old at the time, leaned over to me and said in a worldly-wise whisper, 'She's hooked.'

She was right. Princess Leia was hooked.

And when I read, 'You see, I had this space suit,' I was hooked. Like a trout.

And I have been in love with science fiction ever since: immediately read all the other Heinlein juveniles—*The Star Beast* and *Citizen of the Galaxy* and *Time for the Stars* and *Tunnel in the Sky*—and Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*, which I love almost as Kip's father did. Especially the part about the comic songs. And the Hampton Court maze. And the swans.

Once I'd run through all the Heinleins, I started in on Bradbury and Asimov and the short story collections. I read all the Judith Merrill and Anthony Boucher *Year's Best* collections, and fell in love all over again. I think nearly all the best work that's ever been done in science fiction has been done in short stories—'Flowers for Algernon' by Daniel Keyes, and Ward Moore's 'Lot', and Bob Shaw's 'The Light of Other Days', and Kit

Reed's 'Time Travel, Inc', and C.L. Moore and Henry Kuttner's 'Vintage Season', and Harlan Ellison's 'Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes' and John Crowley's 'Snow', and Howard Waldrop's 'Ugly Chickens', and 'A Little Something for Us Tempnauts' by Philip Dick and... the list could go on and on.

I loved all the short stories by Fritz Leiber and James Blish and Zenna Henderson and Ray Bradbury (Have you ever read his 'Homecoming?' It's one of his earliest stories, and it's one of the best things he's ever written) and Robert Silverberg and Brian Aldiss and... I told you the list could go on and on.

One of the things I loved about them was that they were obviously written by people who loved books. Not only was Kip's father reading *Three Men in a Boat*, but Alfred Bester had obviously been reading *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Arthur Clarke had been reading the legend of Medusa; Ward Moore and James Tiptree, Jr. and C. S. Lewis were all familiar with the Bible, John Kessel obviously loved Melville, Fredric Brown loved Lewis Carroll, and everybody loved Shakespeare.

I loved Shakespeare, too, and books, and when I found science fiction, I felt I had finally come home. To this day, one of my favorite things about science fiction conventions is discussing books and authors, not just in science fiction: Dorothy Sayers and Mark Twain and Raymond Chandler and Damon Runyon and P. G. Wodehouse and Trollope and Wilkie Collins and Sigrid Undset and Shirley Jackson and James N. Cain and Charles Williams. How do you think Dickens intended to end *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and what do you think of someone finishing Dorothy Sayers' *Thrones, Dominions*? Don't you think O. Henry is underrated as a writer, and what is it everybody sees in Thomas Hardy? Have you seen the new movie version of *Twelfth Night* and the *Richard III* with Ian McKellen and what did you think of them?

Because, oh, yes, I forgot to tell you, I love movies, too, although the point at which I got hooked on them is much more vague. My grandmother always claimed that after my first experience at the movies, aged three, I gave my own Roger Ebert-style review: 'Guns, popcorn, horses, potty, candy, airplanes.' Which pretty much sums it up.

I don't remember this. What I remember is going to see *The Wizard of Oz* (in re-release. I'm old but not that old) and having a huge argument with my grandmother during the early black-and-white Kansas part. 'It's supposed to be in Technicolor,' I whispered to her. 'It said so in the credits.'

'Don't be silly,' she whispered back, 'they didn't even have colour back then.'

So at the point where the house lands and Dorothy emerges into the brilliant greens and yellows and pinks of Munchkinland, instead of being awed and overwhelmed, I am nudging my grandmother and saying, 'See? I told you so.'

The wonderful documentary, 7-14-28 *Up* says that the personality is pretty much set by seven, and I can see that. At seven I was insufferable, in love with reading

(even movie credits), and crazy about the movies.

My favorite book to write was *Remake*, because it required me to lie on the couch for two solid years and watch old musicals. My favorites are *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, and all the Fred and Ginger movies. I adore screwball comedies like *Walk, Don't Run* and *Bringing Up Baby* and *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, and science fiction movies like *Brazil* and *Bladerunner* and *Men in Black*. And all Buster Keaton movies. And Harrison Ford movies. And John Wayne movies. And movies in general.

I also love history and bulldogs and St. Paul's and orangutans and the mystery of Anastasia (I know the DNA proved Anna Anderson was a fraud, but Anastasia's bones are still missing) and the Titanic and the O. J. Simpson trial and the Twenties and England and Abraham Lincoln and chaos theory and game theory and the theory of history, and science fiction is the perfect place to write about all of the above.

Somebody once said, 'The sum total of human knowledge is contained in any science fiction convention,' and I have always found that to be true. And no matter how obscure the fact or esoteric the subject, I have never heard anyone at a science fiction convention say, 'Why would anybody be interested in that?'

So I guess the real answer as to why I write science fiction is that it lets me be interested in everything. And it requires me to spend my life reading books and watching movies and studying history and going to England. And writing.

And, yes, I am still writing. I just finished writing two Christmas stories for a new collection of all my Christmas stories, including 'Miracle' and 'Newsletter', and I am currently working on a new novel called *Working Cape Race* about near-death experiences.

And I am delighted to be the guest of honor of Intuition and can't wait to meet you all and talk to you. Feel free to ask me anything, anything at all. ☺

—CONNIE WILLIS

Science & Dreams

By Paul Kincaid

There are some writers whose careers can be summarised in a few words, writers with a lengthy career, writing deep and complex works but essentially ploughing the same furrow. There are others who seem to produce a vastly different book every time they set pen to paper, whose short careers are a nightmare for anyone trying to wrap them up neatly. Connie Willis comes somewhere in the middle. She writes complex reworkings of the same sets of themes and books that vary immensely as she dips lightly but fluently into a wide range of topics. She doesn't make it easy for the critic, which may be why she hasn't received as much critical attention as she deserves.

She writes primarily about the past. This, of course, is

obvious in the number of times she has used devices like time travel. It was there, for instance, in early stories such as 'Fire Watch' (1982) in which she sends a researcher back from a future Oxford into the London of the Blitz, one of those stories which marked her out as a writer to be watched. A few years later she revisited that scenario—the same research programme in the same future Oxford—in *Doomsday Book* (1992); in a career that has garnered an impressive shelf of awards, this is the one that really stands out. But though it was a book that straddled future and past, it was notable that the future was slight and uncertain while the past was richly detailed, full of the sharp-eyed grittiness that makes for a totally convincing portrait of an age. It was notable, too, that while the Middle Ages has long had a slack, unconvincing, romantic aura in far too many genre works, Connie Willis picked the darkest, most unforgiving corner of a dark age and presented a portrait that was cruel, filthy and human. Her past was far more real than her future, and far more real than any genre reader would ever have encountered before.

The Blitz and the Black Death are both remorseless, harsh times, and she has tended to show an interest in such moments. There are the dramatic possibilities they offer, of course, but more importantly from her point of view, I think, is that out of such hard times is forged our present. That, surely, is the message in *Lincoln's Dreams* (1987), a novel which engages with the past as directly as *Doomsday Book* or any of a host of short stories, without actually travelling there. For this is a novel specifically about the way the past affects the present, how the events of another cruel anvil of history, in this case the American Civil War, don't end at one neatly defined point in time but continue on, reaching forward to shape our today and our future. When you consider the care with which such strands of cause and effect are evoked within her work, it is easy to see why the past bulks so large in her work.

The past is not all bleak and nasty; we are shaped by lighter things also. Throughout her career—throughout her life, I would guess—Connie Willis has clearly been fascinated by Hollywood, particularly in those old musical comedies that so betoken a particular era in America's past (and very likely in ours too). It's there, as lightweight as the films, in some of her Christmas stories (which seem to have become a tradition over the years), such as 'Miracle' (1991); more powerfully, but also displaying her gift for comedy, in stories such as 'Spice Pogrom' (1986); and her novella *Uncharted Territory* (1994), while ostensibly set on an alien planet with strange creatures in the far future, is actually a replay of innumerable Saturday afternoon cowboy films. It is there, most notably, in her novel *Remake* (1995). Just like *Lincoln's Dreams* before it, *Remake* is about the way the past shapes the future; and just like so many of her other stories, it is set in the future but is really about the past, in this case a future Hollywood where stars of the golden age are digitally recast into new films, but where one of her central characters wants to revert to the past not just by making an old fashioned live action film, but

even more radically by making a song-and-dance movie in the mould of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. In Connie Willis's world, the most dangerous and radical act of all is to turn to the lessons of the past. (That, for instance, is the entire premise of her neat little story 'Ado' (1988), in which political correctness emasculates Shakespeare.)

The past is not the only country that Connie Willis inhabits. She is also, in a very literal sense, a science fiction writer. Time and again—in 'Schwarzschild Radius' (1987), in 'At the Rialto' (1989), in her fantasy 'Death on the Nile' (1993)—she takes a principle such as black holes, quantum physics or the journey of the dead in Egyptian mythology and plays out the idea, not just by explaining the theory within the story, but at the same time by having the behaviour of her characters reflect the theory being described. It is an elaborate dance; the strict pattern of the idea has to find its echoes in the warm humanity of the characters, and no one else writing science fiction today has attempted to write stories in which the science and the fiction are so closely married. It does not make her a hard sf writer, quite the opposite: it makes the science somehow less hard, and if—as we all presumably believe because otherwise why would we read this particular genre—science underpins and explains every aspect of the world in which we must make our way, then this is everything that science fiction was ever meant to do. I make no exaggerated claims for Connie Willis in saying this, only that she has found a unique and uniquely effective way of making the literature work for her—though the elaboration made it a procedure that did not seem capable of sustaining much beyond a short story until she repeated the trick in her novel *Bellwether* (1996), in which chaos theory is recreated, sharply and hilariously, in the behaviour patterns of Flip who works in the mail room of a research establishment.

So, the work of Connie Willis is reduced neatly and unfairly to elaborations of three basic themes: the role of the past, the life-affirming qualities of the Hollywood movie, and the particular human patterns of scientific theory. These themes are there in her work, sometimes overtly, sometimes less so. The storytelling devices of old films can be picked up in stories which have no obvious reference to Hollywood, such as the only award-winning sf story ever about menstruation, 'Even the Queen' (1992); the influence of the past underlies virtually everything she has ever written, even when that story is supposedly about the future, such as 'The Last of the Winnebagos' (1988); and the nature of scientific understanding comes in to play in a lot of her work, including 'In the Late Cretaceous' (1991). Nevertheless, to say that such were primary elements in these three particular stories, or in any number of other works, would be misleading; at the same time, read her work as you might, you just can't get away from them. They are the most persistent, repetitive patterns in work that is as varied in tone and subject as anything being written in science fiction today. They are even there in what I consider to be her finest story to date, 'Cibola' (1990),

which concerns a quest in modern-day Denver to find Cibola, the legendary Seven Cities of Gold. The past clearly influences the present, even though the journalist narrator can find nothing in the history books to support the claims being made by a supposed descendent of the conquistadors. The pattern of exploration, the journeying around Denver, is reflected in the journeying within the character, the self-exploration she undertakes as a response to the quest. And the final discovery, the sight of Cibola in the dawn light that reflects from the glass towers of Denver, is as trite yet as moving and magical as anything you will find in a film like *It's a Wonderful Life*. She may not always have juggled her themes as superbly as she did in 'Cibola'; nevertheless, it is for that little bit of magic reflected in the everyday that we must treasure the work of Connie Willis. ✂

—PAUL KINCAID

Paul Kincaid is reviews editor for the BSFA and Administrator of the Arthur C. Clarke Award.

Connie Willis—The Person?

By John Meaney

They walk among us, you know, disguised as humans: the Willises. How do you detect them, beneath the veneer of ordinariness, the down-to-earth personality? The only clues are the flashing intelligence in the eyes, and the unflinching (and wickedly perceptive) good humour.

'Relentlessly cheerful and normal,' was the way Gardner Dozois described Connie Willis: as someone who chats about Tupperware parties and choir practice, with a mind, not like a steel trap, but 'some much rarer and more subtle device, something with mirrors and lasers perhaps, that would somehow give the mice such a good laugh that they'd never even notice their throats were being cut.'

Perceptive guy, old Gardner.

They invent their biographies, these Willises, as though they had normal human childhoods. Here's Connie, talking of going on a church outing, going for a swim in a lake with some devout young women: 'I felt God was with me in the water,' said one of them, afterwards. 'Funny,' replied the (surely fictitious) young Connie, 'I thought He might have forgotten His swimming trunks.' Stony silence on the return bus trip.

Or Connie and her daughter Cordelia surveying a forest streaked here and there with black, when another family of sightseers appeared, with the husband viewing everything through his camcorder's viewfinder. 'Must have been a terrible fire, don't you think?' said Connie (appearing friendly, as Willises do) to the stranger. 'What fire?' asked the man, putting down his camcorder, having recorded everything but perceived nothing.

Like her short fiction, every one of Connie's light-hearted observations has a deadly sting in its tail.

Here's another story, which is too much about me,

but I'll tell it anyway. Yvonne (my wife) and I flew into L.A. for Worldcon. In the early hours of the first morning, a fax arrived from London: I'd sold two novels to Bantam.

Later that day, I rushed up to everybody I knew, or even vaguely recognised, and thrust the (by now) sweat-stained fax in their faces. Most of them took it in good part, and offered congratulations. Then we spotted Connie.

She glanced over the fax, then held it out to one side and stared off into the distance. 'You know'—there was a musing tone to her voice—'when I sold my first story, I received a letter addressed to me from the magazine, but with a cheque made out to somebody else. And I was petrified that someone had made a mistake, and that it was this other person's story they had bought, not mine.'

Then she held up my fax. 'And you'll probably find that this'—she smiled, innocently—'is a practical joke someone's played on you.'

And my heart stopped.

Luckily, Cordelia (Willis minor) wasn't there. One wouldn't want to have a medical emergency while she's around. Bored with maths lecturing—following her father's footsteps: Connie's husband, Courtney, is a physics professor—Cordelia has recently taken up forensic science. Beware of a younger Willis eyeing you speculatively while her fingers twitch.

Connie, on the other hand, has been brilliantly dissecting the human race's foibles for the last few years, with something rather sharper than a scalpel: sheer wit, in every sense of the word.

Connie Willis is wonderful, and I adore her. When you meet her—the tall, pale-complexioned lady surrounded by laughing people—you will, too. ✂

—JOHN MEANEY

John Meaney's first novel, To Hold Infinity, is published at Intuition.

THE NOVELS AND SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS OF CONNIE WILLIS

- Water Witch*, with Cynthia Felice, Ace, 1982
- Fire Watch* (short story collection), Bluejay, 1985
- Lincoln's Dreams*, Bantam, 1987
- Light Raid*, with Cynthia Felice, Ace, 1989
- Doomsday Book*, Bantam, 1992
- Impossible Things* (short story collection), Bantam, 1993
- The New Hugo Winners, Volume 3* (ed.), Baen, 1994
- Uncharted Territory*, Bantam, 1994
- Remake*, Bantam, 1995
- Bellwether*, Bantam, 1996
- Futures Imperfect* (collection: *Uncharted Territory, Remake & Bellwether*) Science Fiction Book Club 1996
- Promised Land*, with Cynthia Felice, Ace, 1997
- To Say Nothing of the Dog*, Bantam, 1997

To Hold Infinity

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Ulrika O'Brien: TAFF Delegate

Where Everybody Knows Your Name

By Ulrika O'Brien

I have a theory about fandom. No, that's not even remotely true. In fact, I have a *bunch* of theories about fandom. The theories overlap, and intertwine, and interpenetrate each other, but each one sprouts from a kernel of metaphor. There's the 'fandom as refuge' theory, the 'fandom as culture' theory, the 'fandom as community' theory, the 'fandom as protected play space' theory, and so on. But today, since I'm thinking ahead to making a serious Yankee-Viking dent in the pubs and Real Ale of the UK, I'd like to trot out the 'fandom is our local' theory.

In the US the TV series *Cheers* enjoyed a long and popular following. *Cheers*, as you may know, was a sitcom about the employees and regular clientele of a particular bar. Doesn't sound like much of a situation to hang a popular comedy from, in some ways. Yet *Cheers* churned on for years and years, the making of careers for several of the regular cast; its theme song even hitting the charts on popular radio, yodeling chirpily about a place 'where everybody knows your name.' I've long suspected that phrase of harboring the true secret of *Cheers*' popularity—the series did such a good job of creating an ensemble atmosphere, of projecting the sense of camaraderie and people who belong to each other, that we reacted to that, were drawn to it.

We gregarious social animals want, even need, to be a part of something. We want a sense of belonging; we want a sense of place, a place where we have status, recognition, value. We want a place where everybody knows our names, where we're entitled to come and go as we like, and can count on acceptance and appreciation and a little extra license to show our foibles when we do come. Even looking in, with our noses pressed against the cold and flickering glass, on somebody else's amber and sepia fantasy of a belonging place pulls us in like dazzled moths. Thus, we have *Cheers*.

Ray Oldenburg has this theory (not about fandom)—to which my own theory owes a great deal—in *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts and How They Get You Through the Day*—recommended) that your local pub is just such a place, and that pubs and places like them fulfill this sort of vital, socio-ecological niche that keeps us from turning into sociopaths, suicides, and Real Estate developers (well, mostly). You go to your local at your leisure, you get to know the crowd there and they you, you develop your own in-jokes about coypus, giant beaver gods and

wheels falling off things, you relax your guard and start building the sort of easy familiarities that lead to friendships. And then one day, there you are, belonging to the place and it to you—complete with ordering your drinks in goat-units—and everybody really does know your name. I'll try not to do too much icky, over-effusive American gushing about it, but that seems like a pretty fine thing to me, even the goat.

America, of course, has never really developed the institution of the local pub. Local coffee shops, local drug stores (er, chemists you'd call them), malt shops, and such have been the American equivalent. But over here, those sorts of places are getting scarcer. I'll spare you the long rant about the systemic evils of suburbanization, but suffice it to say that when local places to congregate don't make it into the Community Master Plan then they just aren't there, when the last of the stucco is blown into place. The social watering holes have been slowly drying up since the 1950s, and while it's too much to suppose that there's an exclusive, strong causal link to the concurrent growth of organized fandom in the U.S., I think there's some connection.

Because, whether you socialize at club meetings, or conventions, in APAs, or through fanzine letter columns, fandom is another place that gives us that sense of belonging, of having a place where everybody knows our names. Okay, conventions are a cheat, in a way, what with wearing your moniker emblazoned across your chest and all, but in a way they're not, because for most of us, a substantial portion of everybody—enough that we get our fix of belonging—knows our name anyway. It's funny how many fannish first contact stories relate identical sounding epiphanies of recognition and belonging. It's funny, too, how British fan groups tend to meet in pubs, and American ones (the ones I know, anyway) tend to meet in coffee shops, as if we sort of sense that fandom and social watering holes belong together.

I suppose you could wonder why Britain developed a fandom of its own, since it has pubs to go to. I wave my hands suggestively in the general direction of all those other, offstage theories about fandom which I'm not trotting out today. Well, okay, I won't cop quite that far out. I think that even with a social watering hole to go to, people want choices. A social watering hole with like-minded people who share a bunch of your interests is presumably much more attractive than one that just draws a random sampling based on geography. Fandom is not just the local we belong to, it's the local we *want* to belong to. And as for me, I believe I'll have another pint. ☞

—ULRIKA O'BRIEN

Ulrika O'Brien

By John M. Hertz

'Interactive media in fandom are my favorites,' she says; 'these constant conversations.' Right for a TAFF delegate. Born an Anderson in Karlskoga, Sweden, 100 KM west of Stockholm, coming to the U.S. at age 6 and sent back at 11 to improve her Swedish, she is international, too. At 18 she found Icarus at UCLA, S.P.E.C.T.R.E. at Cal Tech, LASFS, *APA-L*, and has lived happily ever after. Hal O'Brien, her chief assistant in doing so, will continue his part by joining her for Corflu at Leeds and the first week of Viking TAFF.

Alas for us in the Greatest APA in the World, Ulrika has been little seen in *APA-L* for a while now. She has not been idle. In the 1980s she began lurking on Usenet, dropped into and out of *LASFAPA*, and ended in *Myriad*, which she joined a year before the 1986 Atlanta Worldcon, to make friends. She did Tech Ops in Atlanta, Program Ops at New Orleans Worldcon, and grew reputed as a rock'n'roll DJ at Loscons and the series of *Dr Who* cons each called Gallifrey One. She was Artist GoH at Atomicon (in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where

else?) and brought afternoon tea to Loscons and Westercons. In '95 she abandoned lurkhood and activated in *rec.arts.sf.written*, *rec.arts.sf.fandom*, *alt.fandom.cons* and *rec.arts.sf.composition*. In '96 she was DJ and Party Tsarina at L.A.con III. She has won the Myriad egoboo poll twice—don't cheer too loud, winning made her President. In '97 she was talked into standing for TAFF, and pubbed three issues of *Widening Gyre*. Some chicken! Some egg!

Fandom reminds her of *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg's 1989 thesis that we each have three: a home; a place of business; and a third like French cafés and British pubs, easier to come and go, more discretion in meeting people. Discretion? Well, no analogy stretches too far. 'On my first look at fandom I saw a concentration of bright, playful, slightly out of kilter people, the kind I like.' Now? 'Some of it is tiresome. But we still have marvelous people here, and non-anti-intellectualism is still hard outside. In our sandbox, it's safe to be witty.' If we can manage. ☺

—JOHN M. HERTZ

John M. Hertz has been a member of APA-L for over 30 years.

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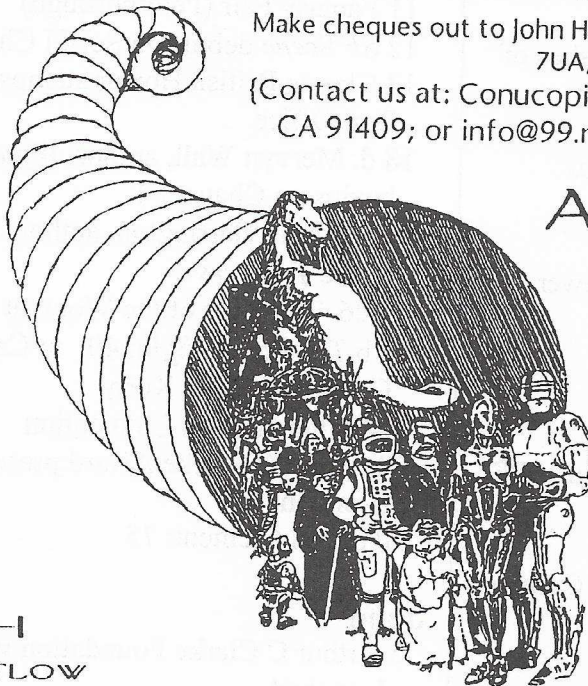
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1997: A Diary of the Year

Inevitably, what follows does not purport to be a listing of every notable sf event of last year. However, I hope it does cover at least a representative sample of what was going on, both within the genre and within fandom itself. Information has been extracted from such news sources as Ansible, Locus, Matrix, SFX, and anything else that happened to be lying around, supplemented by my own doubtless unreliable memory where all else fails. Fount of all knowledge Roger Robinson provided invaluable assistance. In case it's not obvious, b. = birthday, d. = died and m. = married. ☺

—MARK PLUMMER

January

- 3-5 Shinnenkai Convention (animé)
- 10 b. George Alec Effinger: 50
- 17 d. Clyde Tombaugh, discoverer of planet Pluto
- 18 d. Adriana Caselotti, actress
- 20 *253 or Tube Theatre*, an Internet novel by Geoff Ryman, released; *The Lord of the Rings* tops Waterstone's 'Books of the Century' poll
- 23 d. Phil Rogers, fan
- 28 d. Brian Burgess, fan
- 29 d. Daniel P Mannix, author
- 31- 2 February HarmonIX Convention (filk)

February

- 8 Compulsion Convention (gaming); ashes of Gene Roddenberry and Timothy Leary launched into space.
- 9 Terry Pratchett on *Desert Island Discs*
- 14-17 Attitude: the Convention
- 21-23 TrinCo2 Convention (Dublin)
- 23 d. Floyd Clifford Cole, author/reviewer
- 26 b. *2000AD*: 20
- 28 UK release *Mars Attacks*

March

- 1 d. Maurice Goldsmith, author/founder ISPF
- 1-2 Microcon Convention
- 2 Picocon 14 Convention
- 9 d. Terry Nation, TV writer; National Comics Week begins
- 12 HAL's birthday
- 15 UKCAC (comics)
- 18 m. Guilia de Cesare and Steve Davis
- 19 d. Seth Goldberg, fan

- 21-23 AKFT Konvention (ST)
- 22 James Tiptree Jr. Memorial Award presentation (Florida)
- 24 d. Martin Caidin, author
- 28 Philip K. Dick Award presentation
- 28-31 Intervention (Eastercon)
- 28-31 ConnXions (*X-Files*)
- 31 b. Ian McDonald: 37; BSFA Awards presentation (Liverpool)

April

- 2 d. Tomoyuki Tanaka, film producer/creator of Godzilla
- 3 *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (ed: Clute and Grant, Orbit) published
- 14 d. Kit Denton, author/broadcaster/director
- 15 d. Sam Moskowitz, sf historian
- 16 b. John Christopher: 75
- 20 Nebula Awards (Kansas); d. Tong Enzheng, author
- 26 *Bitter Lemmings* (Becon), a Tom Holt filk collection published

May

- 2-5 The Mission Convention (ST)
- 4 d. Lou Stathis, editor/journalist
- 11 Fantasy Fair (Peterborough)
- 12 *SF Scene* debuts on Sci-Fi Channel
- 13 Classic British Horror stamps issued by Post Office
- 18 d. Mervyn Wall, author; *Wyrld Sisters* begins on Channel 4
- 23 ; d. Alan Harrington, author; UK release *Space Truckers*
- 23-26 The Year of the Wombat Convention
- 24 b. *The Sky at Night*: 40; m Carol Ann Green and Steve Kerry
- 24-26 Fantasticon Convention
- 28 Arthur C Clarke Award presentation (London)
- 30 b. Hal Clement: 75

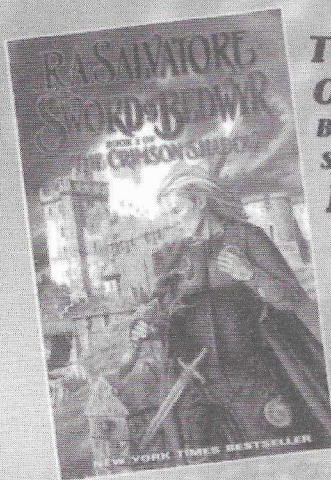
June

- 3 Arthur C Clarke Foundation web site launched
- 6 UK release *Crash*
- 8 d. George Turner, author/critic;

This month's news

Voyager no limits

www.harpercollins.co.uk/voyager



THE SWORD OF BEDWYR

Book 1 of *The Crimson Shadow*

R. A. Salvatore

'Bob Salvatore is a writer to watch'
Terry Brooks

Luthien Bedwyr finds himself a fugitive on a flight that will turn into

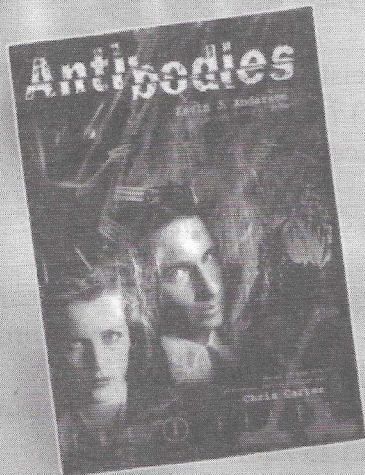
grand adventure, a magical odyssey full of sorcery and danger, as he embarks upon a quest to free the masses from the excesses of the evil Wizard-King Greensparrow.

Paperback original, available 6 April £5.99

X-FILES ANTIBODIES

More spooky goings on with Mulder and Scully, to keep you going until the (no-doubt) 'X' rated film comes out.

Available 16 March £5.99



NIGHT LAMP

Jack Vance

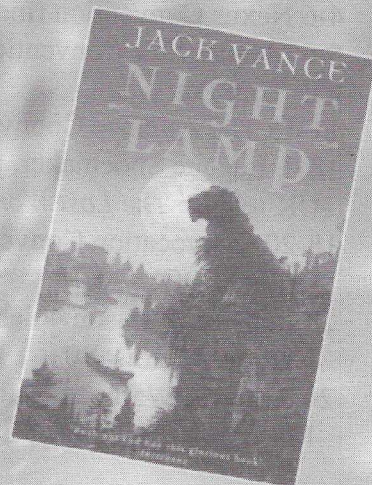
'Jack Vance is the richest of stylists...'

Night Lamp ranks with his very best, the quintessential Vance novel'

Interzone

The story of Jaro Fath unfolds: from wildling orphan to spaceship captain — a tale of adventure and discovery, wittily told. But Jaro is haunted by memories of his dead mother's terror, and he is about to find out why.

Available 16 March £5.99



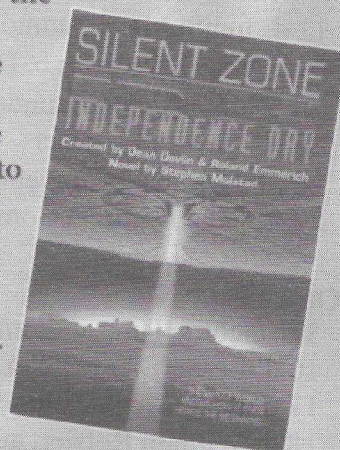
INDEPENDENCE DAY:

THE SILENT ZONE

Stephen Molstad

Independence Day — big, brash, silly nonsense, and one of the top-grossing films of all time, PLUS it's the fastest-selling video ever. Everyone now knows that we managed to kick the aliens' butts back into space, but now find out the story behind the invasion, dating back as far as Roswell. It's a corker.

Available 6 April £5.99



- 13 UK release *The Fifth Element*
 20 last issue (#80) of US fanzine *Apparatchik* published
 21 Bram Stoker Awards presentation (New York)
 22 b. Octavia Butler: 50
 27 UK release *Batman and Robin*

July

- 4 Nexus (media); Pathfinder lands on Mars
 4-6 Nexus Convention (media)
 5-6 MancheXter Convention (*X-Files*)
 8 d. Tom Perry, fan
 11-15 The Alliance Convention (*B5*)
 18 d. Eugene Shoemaker, planetary scientist; UK release *The Lost World*
 18-20 Convocation Convention (Unicon 16 + British RPG)
 23 *Babylon 5* season 4 debuts in UK; b. Gardner Dozois: 50
 24 d. David Warbeck, actor; d. Caroline Macdonald, author

August

- 1 UK release *Men in Black*
 2 d. William S Burroughs, author
 22-25 Terok Nor Convention (ST)
 23 m. Marcia Kelly McCoy and Tim Illingworth
 24 Iain Banks on *Desert Island Discs*
 25 d. Carl Jacobi, author
 27 b. Kelly Freas: 75
 28- 2 September LoneStarCon (Worldcon - Texas)

September

- 5-7 Festival of Fantastic Films
 12 d. Judith Merrill, author
 19 b. Tanith Lee: 50; b. Damon Knight: 75; d. Kathy Keeton, founder of *Omni*
 26 UK release *Contact*
 26-28 Masque 5 Convention (costuming)
 27-28 Hypotheticon Convention

October

- 3 d. George Hay, author/critic
 10 d. Lester Simons, fan
 17 d. Paul Edwin Zimmer, author
 18 d. William Rotsler, author/artist/fan
 24-27 Octocon/Eurocon (Dublin)

- 27 last issue of UK fanzine *Attitude* published
 30-2 November World Fantasy Convention

November

- 1 b. Naomi Mitchison: 100
 2 World Fantasy Awards presentation (London); d. G Harry Stine, author
 5 d. Norman Beswick, critic/fan; d. Ted Pauls, fan
 8 d. Lam Ching-Ying, actor
 11 b. Kurt Vonnegut: 50; d. Ross Pavlac, fan
 14-16 Novacon 27
 16 Iain Banks on *The South Bank Show*
 21-22 Armadacon IX
 30 d. Kathy Acker, author

December

- 6 d. Richard Vernon, actor
 9 d. Ed Cox, fan
 13 Ulrika O'Brien wins TAFF
 13-14 *Babylon 5* Academic Conference
 14 d. Owen Barfield, author
 16 b. Arthur C Clarke: 80
 19 b. Steven Spielberg: 50
 23 b. Chuch Harris: 70
 27 b. Ken Slater: 80
 30 b. Martin Tudor: 38
 31 b. Connie Willis: 52

Anniversaries

25 years ago (1972)

Frederic Brown (d.) 11 March; E. J. 'Ted' Carnell (d.) 23 March; S. P. Meek (d.) 10 June

50 years ago (1947)

Aleister Crowley (d.) 1 January; M. P. Shiel (d.) 7 February; Arthur Machen (d.) 15

December

75 years ago (1922)

Walter M Miller (b.) 23 January; Kingsley Amis (b.) 16 April; Cyril Kornbluth (b.) 23 July
 100 years ago (1897)
 Denis Wheatley (b.) 8 January; Fletcher Pratt (b.) 25 April

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY

Genre Publishing in 1997

Chris Terran

Who cares about tiny advances, vanishing midlists, lousy paper and bindings, marketing departments whose idea of a hard sell is a diffident cough? Publishers issue books, and the rest of us buy them. Some of us even read them; and once in a while something special happens.

John Clute and John Grant's *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* was launched by Orbit at last year's Eastercon. Though it seemed at times less of an encyclopedia and more of an *argument*, Clute—for it was definitely his vision—defiantly mapped out the terrain we all thought we knew. Some disagreed, but with its companion volumes—Grant and Ron Tiner's *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy and SF Art Techniques* and Diana Wynne Jones's *Tough Guide to Fantasyland*—it took an honoured place on our shelves. Clute breathed a sigh of relief and announced he was returning to writing fiction; Grant did too, with the skiffy series 'Strider's Galaxy'.

Legend's sf editor, John Jarrold, was also at the 1997 Eastercon, where he took the opportunity to castigate the Clarke Award judges for ignoring good old traditional sf. When he jumped ship to set up Simon & Schuster's new sf line Earthlight (being launched here), it was good to see him putting his money where his mouth was by signing up such hard-sf luminaries as Guy Gavriel Kay, John Whitbourn, Ray Bradbury and Jane Welch. The subsequent announcement that the Legend list was being sold to Orbit surprised nobody, apart from the public and the authors concerned, who were all cruelly rescheduled.

Also subject to hasty revision was Gollancz's profits forecast, when Terry Pratchett announced he was leaving for the international free-trade zone of Transworld. Though complaints were heard about VG's somewhat unenthusiastic publicity and marketing department, sf editor Jo Fletcher deserves congratulations for maintaining, uniquely, a high-quality programme of reissues. Meanwhile the Discworld industry grows, but ever so tastefully: a diary, quizbook, illustrated editions of the Cosgrove Hall animated TV shows, playscripts.

Perhaps in despair, writers dug out and perused yellowing royalty statements and caught Delayed Onset Sequelitis. Robert Silverberg considered his bank balance and presented *Sorcerors of Majipoor* to a less-than-impressed world, Stephen King's *Wizard and Glass* was a long-awaited—by remainder shops, at least—addition to his 'Dark Tower' fantasy sequence, Greg Bear's *Slant* revisited the world of *Queen of Angels* but lost the earlier novel's complex plot-dance and language games in a flat and over-cinematic conspiracy story. Jeff Noon went home to Manchester after his side-trip to Wonderland and found the *Nymphomation*, Sir Arthur C. Clarke milked his monolith again for *3001*, Gwyneth Jones drank Aleutian tea in the *Phoenix Café*, the Stainless Steel Rat went to Hell, along with the book's readers, and Michael

Moorcock had more fun with loose ends than Ned Sherrin in *The War Amongst the Angels*. Even being dead didn't help: Walter M. Miller (with some help from Terry Bisson) gave us *Saint Leibowitz and the Horse Woman*, and Asimov's 'Foundation' series, already incestuously bred out of control by its creator, was farmed out to Gregory Benford, with more promised from other big-name authors. K. W. Jeter dug up the corpse of his old mate Philip K. Dick (again), mated it with Ridley Scott (again), and necromantically brought forth *Blade Runner 3: Replicant Night* (again).

And it's not over yet. We can look forward to *Dune* sequels from *Star Wars* hack Kevin J. Anderson and Brian Herbert, and *Forever Peace* from Joe Haldeman.

Novelisations continued to attract skiffy writers who like eating and other mundane activities: Elizabeth Hand's *Millennium* tie-in *The Frenchman* (with tiny author credit), Stan Nicholls' *Dark Skies* (with nearly invisible credit), and Mark Morris gave up on horror and got into the TARDIS with Dr Who. The Force chewbacca'ed up Barbara Hambly, Roger MacBride Allen, Kristine Katherine Rusch and Michael P. Kube-McDowell. But *X-Files* spin-offs showed signs of peaking, and not before time.

Single-author collections were very thin on the ground, unless the author had novels to push. Original anthologies were even rarer: the big news was the record \$650,000 advance paid for Robert Silverberg's *Legends*, wherein various fantasists were to contribute new stories set in their characteristic worlds; but gloom descended when it emerged that a similarly-themed collection from sf writers had failed to sell. David Garnett couldn't even sell a star-sodden relaunch of *New Worlds* in the UK; it was left to the US company White Wolf, but further volumes are unlikely. Reprint anthologies included *Cybersex*, *Cyber-Killers*, and *Cyber-Comics*, sorry, various collections of comic fantasy with tiredly Discworldly covers. Prolific editors Mike Ashley and Stephen Jones provided much work for skiffy writers with a number of themed collections on Dracula, King Arthur, Shakespeare, Holmes, H. P. Lovecraft and Uncle Tom Bombadil and all. Dozois' *Year's Best SF* made its annual welcome appearance, and the year ended with David G. Hartwell's highly eccentric (and US-centric) *Science Fiction Century*, which in its search for writers who have shaped the genre in the 20th century managed to miss unknowns like Aldiss, Ballard, Clarke, Dick, Roberts, Sturgeon and Wolfe but made up for it by including such influential sf megastars as Mildred Clingerman, Eddy C. Bertin, Lino Aldani, Wolfgang Jeschke and Adam Wisniewski-Snerg (*gesundheit*).

The ceaseless search for a market did lead to some interesting experiments. Orion's Simon Spanton

commissioned six writers—Stephen Baxter, Stephen Bowkett, Eric Brown, Maggie Furey, Peter F. Hamilton and Graham Joyce—to brainstorm and write a series of near-future sf novels for young adults, built around the ubiquitous World Wide Web; a second series is promised, with Pat Cadigan, James Lovegrove and Ken MacLeod joining the team. Careful research into fannish preferences gave ‘Gabriel King’ the inspiration for *The Wild Road*, a feline fantasy; publicity was helped by the carefully timed revelation that ‘King’ was Voyager’s editor Jane Johnson and former partner M. John Harrison. Diana Wynne Jones also sought a captive market in *Deep Secret*, with its scenes of a convention oddly reminiscent of an Adelphi Eastercon. Rumours of an sf novel concerning an invasion of chocolate-covered alien mushrooms were just that.

Though fantasy continued to dominate the bookshops with a seemingly unstoppable flood of identi-elf trilogies appearing, traditional cortex-blasting sf was still around. Peter Hamilton’s enormous *Neutronium Alchemist* exercised both mind and muscles, Greg Egan’s *Diaspora* took us through uncountably infinite universes, and Stephen Baxter’s very English and very bleak near-masterpiece *Titan* (ignore the last 50 pages) confirmed his place at the head of British sf. Brian Stableford finished off an sf-disguised-as-fantasy trilogy with *Chimera’s Cradle*, and Paul McAuley started an sf-disguised-as-fantasy trilogy with *Child of the River*. Michael Swanwick’s *Jack Faust* recast the tale of Faust and Mephistopheles in an sfnal mode, but for pure feelgood fantasy it was hard to beat Nancy Springer’s hilarious *Fair Peril* and Richard Grant’s heartwarming *In the Land of Winter*.

There were some returns to the scene—Alison Spedding, Carter Scholtz, Andrew Stephenson—and some interesting new(ish) names—Jack Deighton, Stephen Palmer, Jon Courtenay Grimwood, and Mary Doria Russell, whose *The Sparrow*, despite some criticism for the naïvety of its handling of sf elements, won wide acclaim and word-of-mouth publicity not seen since Jeff Noon’s *Vurt*; it was also the only shared point between the shortlists of the two major UK sf awards this year—the popular-vote BSFA Award and the panel-judged Arthur C. Clarke Award.

It was a year of polls, with an eye to the millennium. Waterstone’s prematurely-ejaculated ‘Books of the Century’ survey was led by *Lord of the Rings* and featured a fair quantity of fantasy and sf; but the amount of children’s literature suggested that some books are best viewed from a distance of many years. Their survey of children’s reading preferences was—to no one’s surprise—dominated by Roald Dahl. Offers and promotions were caused, sales were generated, prices were cut.

Publishers jumped into the electronic data sea, got wet and promptly got out again: the problem with the Internet, as they quickly discovered, is that it’s free. Nevertheless there were a few attempts at net publishing, notably Geoff Ryman’s London Underground saga *253*, and net-published stories began to appear on award

shortlists. But the net’s cheapness and world-wide availability caught the eye of marketing departments, and nearly all publishers now have promotional web sites (though of highly variable quality).

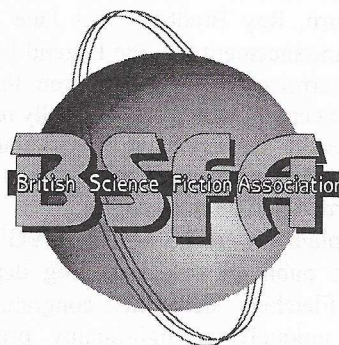
Publishers produce artefacts, and it would be nice to say that 1997 saw an improvement in their physical quality, at least for hardbacks—but it ain’t so. Cheap paper stock and poor binding are common—a glued binding used to be a sign of a cheap book-club edition, but now it’s often used for ‘proper’ books, even prestige ones. And if you think that’s an exaggeration, compare a UK hardback with an American one—it *can* be done. This lack of faith in their product extended to poor marketing and promotion of midlist titles, and an ever-decreasing gap between publication and remaindering but on the positive side, prices remained stable: there were a few attempts to push mass-market paperbacks up to £7.99 but most hovered around £5.99, with hardbacks remaining at £16.99 or so.

Oh yes, writers love publishers. But they only say that to get into bed with them. ☺

—CHRIS TERRAN

Chris Terran is editor of Matrix, the newsletter of the BSFA.

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All it takes is a little imagination!

Science Flicktion

A Year In and Out of Focus

Colin Odell & Michelle Le Blanc

1997 was a pretty good year for films in general, but for science fiction cinema, it was a winner. The number of films made in the genre has been steadily on the increase, and this year they've been bigger, louder and flashier than ever before. But were they better?

The year kicked off with *Mars Attacks*, Tim Burton's gleefully sick homage to bubblegum cards and 50s B-Movies; fast-paced, violent, camp and funny, a non-stop assault on every humour gland in the body. Apocalyptic in vision, it seamlessly blended its large entourage of famous faces with stunning Harryhausen-esque aliens. Where else can you see Jack Nicholson cop it twice? Who would dare have Tom Jones feeding fluffy animals, Slim Whitman saving the world or a troop of boy scouts mercilessly crushed to death? Perfect? Ak ak ak!

Similarly bizarre and almost as satisfying was *The Frighteners* with Michael J. Fox. Before dismissing it out of hand, it should be pointed out that, being a Peter 'Bad Taste' Jackson film, it moved at a cracking pace, full of amusing yet gory touches and expertly sliding from slapstick to slapsick (sic) without missing a beat. Whilst lacking the hardcore gore of *Braindead* or the artistic brilliance of *Heavenly Creatures*, it's nice to see that New Zealand's finest (male) director hasn't sold out to the Hollywood factory and produces quirky yet commercial films.

It could hardly have escaped anyone's attention that all three *Star Wars* films got a long-awaited re-airing, complete with Mr Sheen print restoration, rumblesome THX sound and added CGI pazzazz. Has twenty nostalgic years (in the case of *A New Hope*) treated them kindly? Yes. And no. The restoration is a delight but the 'tweaking' a travesty—slapping the CGI on *Star Wars* is like painting lipstick on the Mona Lisa to make her look nicer; it's tacky. *The Empire Strikes Back* retained its dignity and now looks better than ever but, oh dear; what on Tatooine were they dropping when they approached *Jedi*? Still, for anyone whose formative film-going years were spent in the company of Messrs Solo, Skywalker, Vader et al, nothing can beat the joy of being given the opportunity to catch them on the big screen once more.

Financial success of the year went to *Men In Black*, a likeable comedy without any pretensions; it was fast, funny, original and short. Attention to background detail, as in *Mars Attacks*, was superb and would help sustain repeat viewings. The main faults were an unsatisfactory ending, the woeful underuse of Linda Fiorentino (although one can feel a sequel coming on here) and a feeling that somehow it could have been a lot more manic. Still, a good solid commercial piece of pie.

Of all the films of the year, the most spectacular and yet disappointing was Luc Besson's *The Fifth Element*. Ditching Jean Reno for the box-office chubby charms of

Bruce Willis was not as bad a move as it first appeared (although, let's face it, Jean would have been better) and the film excels on every visual and aesthetic level. Resolutely French, there is not a single design fault on show and it is hard to imagine a more impressive and bizarre range of sets, props and characters. The claustrophobic influence of Moebius is prevalent and the Gaultier costumes scream kitsch style. The action is frantic, the pace swift and the direction assured. All set for film of the year and then, bang, Chris Tucker's immeasurably irritating performance farts the whole thing away. *C'est la vie*.

The only film close to the mighty *Mars Attacks* was Stuart Gordon's poorly distributed *Space Truckers*, finally given a (limited) theatrical release following a number of hassles regarding its making. Grimy, camp, outrageous and far from politically correct, even Dennis Hopper is out-weirded. Big bangs, big gags and even a motorised penis, utter bliss. This is one gem of a film—do not let it slip away, rent it on video and weep that you missed it on the big screen.

Another limited release (although perhaps understandable) was Abel Ferrera's *The Addiction*, a sobering and depressing black-and-white vampire film that deserved far more attention than it received. Not a chuckle in sight but compelling and thoughtful, if occasionally a little pretentious in the philosophy/social commentary department. Not a film to double bill with Cronenberg's masterful *Crash* (unless you are seriously sick), a tight, beautiful and perfectly formed examination of people you really wouldn't like to meet on the motorway—persuasive perversion with Ballard and Cronenberg mixing like blood and semen on a dashboard.

Sadly it was not all good news. The dreaded slack sequel effect was back with a vengeance. Spearheading the megabuck, product placement-enhanced, brain-dead genre, *Batman and Robin* burst onto the scene, eschewing Tim Burton's distorted and perverse vision for a more burger-friendly slice of blandness. Anyone expecting things to improve was in for a very sharp jolt indeed, for what followed was not only the worst film of the year but quite possibly of all time. Edward D. Wood Jr would have begged an Alan Smithee credit if he had helmed the travesty that was *The Lost World*. Spielberg's direction was lacklustre, dull and ineffective, the script was simply 'writing by numbers', the acting dire, the editing slack. There was no tension, no suspense, little sympathy for the characters, and the foreshadowing was painful. The dinosaurs looked good, although they should have done; they cost enough. Two and a half bum-numbing hours of your life spent with a grimace on your face. Beneath contempt.

Paul Anderson's *Event Horizon* was a noisy, nasty *Hellraiser*-in-space, wonderfully made, relentlessly paced and left a very unpleasant aftertaste. It worked because it set out to disturb, and really did induce feelings of tension and nausea. So, although far from enjoyable, the film's approach to its audience was one of the most original seen for a long time, especially in Hollywood, and for that it deserves praise.

Loud but leisurely was David Lynch's long-awaited *Lost Highway* and it was worth every frame. Surreal and disturbing, funny and nasty in equal measure, it's a techno-enhanced version of Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* and just as oblique, bizarre and ambiguous. A visual and aural assault on the senses, no one but Lynch could produce a work of such sheer style. Not, it has to be said, to everyone's taste, but undeniably the work of genius.

Genius was notably absent from *The Island of Dr Moreau*, a Val Kilmer bodged movie that saw much-abused director Richard Stanley (writer/director of *Dust Devil*, probably the most intelligent horror film of the last twenty years) thrown out, forced to return to set as a masked extra and then made to endure the once great John 'Manchurian Candidate' Frankenheimer chewing the cud with his script and kowtowing to Mr Kilmer, Mr Brando and co. Avoid.

Spawn—yawn.

John Woo finally got to make the American film that could compare with his extraordinary Hong Kong output—*Face/Off* is science fiction opera, any realism is purely accidental; its characters whirling through arias of violence and introspective identity crisis. Woo has the rare ability to induce strong audience responses to characters and then blend these with extreme, excessive and beautifully choreographed action, which produces a film that is poetic, religious, emotional and exhilarating. Over two hours in length, it flashes by.

As the year came to a close the spectre of another *Alien* film reared its ugly head. But hang on—isn't that bonkers French artist Jean Pierre Jeunet directing, helped along by most of the *City of Lost Children* crew? Hopes

were high. Sadly, whilst being a vast improvement on *Alien 3*, there was just too much in the way of baggage to save this. Not bad by any stretch, and it looked great, but the unnecessary decision to include every alien and plot idea from the first three made it appear to be no more than an 'Alien' shopping list: chest-burster—tick, face-hugger—tick, android—tick ...

And, to herald the new year (drumroll please) *Starship Troopers*—\$100,000,000 of gratuitous violence with effects that immerse you into their world, not bludgeon you with their showy 'look at me' technique. Director Paul Verhoeven mixes the post-modern fascism of *Robocop* with the visceral 'war-is-hell' theme of his earlier *Soldier of Orange* and then turns everything up to eleven. Never less than entertaining, although it could have been camped up even more, it's a miracle that it received a 15 rating given the disembowelling, decapitations, acid burns and brain-sucking on show. A real hoot, though not for your granny. Is it *Space: Above and Beyond* with visceral excesses, or a savage indictment of fascist propaganda? The jury's still out on this one.

So, a good year for sf films? Certainly from a Hollywood perspective—science fiction is 'in' in a big way, the genre being a perfect medium for big budgets, fast action and special effects that just keep on improving. From a quality point of view, Hollywood still insists on a commercial rather than artistic stance, and this has resulted in many directors compromising their films in order to bring in the box office takings, produce sequels and encourage vast quantities of merchandising. However, this year has also proved that integrity need not be pushed aside, and that talented directors such as Burton, Lynch, Jackson and Woo can produce hugely entertaining and enjoyable films that are also well made and intelligent. ☺

—COLIN ODELL & MICHELLE LE BLANC

Colin Odell and Michelle Le Blanc have contributed a number of articles about film to Vector.

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Shadows, Ghosts, and Very Stupid Pets

The very best comics of 1997

Stephen L. Holland

The two most obvious developments in comics over the past three years are the increasing diversity of comicbook fiction, adult fantasy and humour, and the growth of satisfyingly chunky graphic novels, released as original pieces or as complete collections of previously published stories.

Since it is these volumes which have broken most records here at Page 45, we allocate them most of our space both on the web-site and our *Recommended Reading Lists* (genre by genre guides to the finest comicbooks available today, featuring hundreds of reviews with illustrations—if you'd like a copy either visit, phone, or e-mail us with your very real address, and we'll send you the lot).

However, given that you're right here right now (a strange concept since this is, to me, a fine morning in February, smoke whirling from my study's three full ashtrays as I strive with but a modicum of success to type in time to Pills' new *Electrococaine* CD), here's a brief round-up of the latest and greatest which, alas, you may not have heard of previously:

Mutt by Patrick McDonnell. The find of the year, unavailable in general bookstores, these two volumes of short strips featuring the cutest cat and dog in the world are beautifully delineated, perfectly capturing the utter stupidity of your favourite pets. Almost every piece rings true. Whether or not you're suffering from Calvin & Hobbes withdrawal (because that's it, it's over, no more), grab a copy for yourself right now, then come back in November. We've just solved your entire Christmas present hit list. In one go.

Moonshadow by Jon J. Muth & J. M. DeMatteis. My second favourite comicbook of all time (*Cerebus*, in case you're wondering), finally available as a complete volume. Fluid watercolours depict the development of an artist from young boy (born of a flower child and a spherical, alien Father whose sole motive is whimsy), to a roaming minstrel and poet, as he learns first-hand about friendship, love, sex and bloodshed. His best friends are

a cigar-smoking furball, and his black cat, Frodo. This is precisely what it says it is—a fairy tale for adults.

Cerebus by Dave Sim with Gerhard. No one in the history of comics has come close to producing anything as epic or innovative as *Cerebus*, and I fear they never will. Thematically, structurally and visually, it makes *Sandman* read like *Peter and Jane*. And I have to tell you I rate *Sandman* very highly. If I were to tell you that it is, ostensibly, the story of a greedy, egocentric, alcoholic mercenary, then so much would be true. But it's also about society, politics, organised religion and individual faith, power and manipulation, women, men, domestic love, solitary death, exception versus consensus, the act of creation, and the relationship between creator, creation and audience. It's also mercilessly satirical and very, very funny. Just like *Babylon 5*, the whole thing has been planned from the beginning, with the major difference being the medium, the genre, and the fact that this is 26 years of story, told by one man and his background artist! It's no coincidence that this is Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman and J. M. Straczynski's favourite comicbook—read the work and understand why. Everything so far is available in



from *Strangers In Paradise: Love Me Tender*
by Terry Moore

books the size of telephone directories. Last complete release was *Guys*.

The New Adventures Of Abraham Lincoln by Scott McCloud. From the man who brought us *Understanding Comics*, a graphic novel generated on computer, using techniques so complex I seriously suspect a streak of insanity. This is an all-ages comic which reveals the true face of modern America through the adventures of a couple of children trying to expose the ultimate face of personality politics in the form of a seemingly born-again Abraham Lincoln, duping the people with feel-good sound-bites and sensationalist rhetoric. How easily they fall for it. The tone, however, is light, bright and spacious, the imagery stunning, and the wit charming.

Frank vol. 2 by Jim Woodring. There are now two *Frank* books alongside the *Jim* softcover. If you've yet to be delighted and disturbed by one of the few true

visionaries in comics today, well, here you go. If you don't like reading there are rarely any words, just silent strips for you to interpret as you feel fit, Mind-altering, yet legal!

Bacchus: Doing The Islands With Bacchus. Ancient mythology is revisited with an arched eyebrow and one of the finest pens in the business. Eddie Campbell takes his battered old demigod into modern, foreign parts. You're young, free and mingling. What do you do if you encounter the Greek god of wine? You *listen*. Oh yes, and then you romp.

Sandman Dustcovers. Luxurious, oversized hardcover featuring all the Dave McKean Sandman illustrations, a new story by Neil and Dave, plus a running commentary giving detailed explanations of just what the bloody hell each of the covers were all about in the first place.

Strangers In Paradise: Love Me Tender (previous page) by Terry Moore. Francine and Katchoo live together. Francine is unhappy and spends most of her time in the fridge; Katchoo is unstable and shoots alarm clocks. Along comes young David, and upsets every apple cart in sight. Tender, moving, funny and dramatic, this is for incurable romantics everywhere, and one of the finest things in life this side of a first French kiss. Three previous volumes still available.

Complete Lowlife. Ed Brubaker delivers vulnerable and melancholy fictional/ autobiographical musings. Mixed-up and drug-addled, to be sure, but retrospect is a funny old thing. Why do I love this so much? There, but for the grace of god ...

Preacher by Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. Highly blasphemous, very violent, perverse, sexy and absolutely hysterical. Jesse is a former preacher, his companions are his ex-alcoholic, ex-hitwoman, ex-girlfriend, and a vampire with an uncanny resemblance to Shane McGowan. Together they're in search of God who's deserted his throne, and in their way stand insidious religious cults, pathetic vampire-society art students, and Jesse's own inbred family. The comicbook equivalent of Nick Cave. Bloody marvellous.

Girl Crazy. Gilbert Hernandez's first post-*Love & Rockets* series has now been collected. Although his latest work, *New Love*, has finished, the next couple of months sees the release of *Luba*, Gilbert's new on-going series. As for Jaime Hernandez, he's moved on from *Whoa Nellie!* to his own new series, *Penny Century*, featuring Hopey, Maggie, and indeed Penny Century herself.

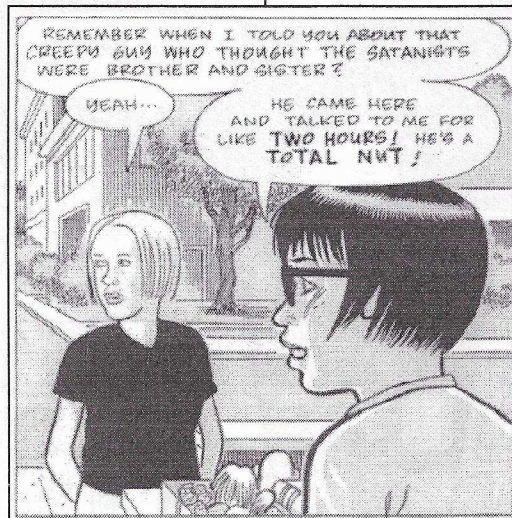
Robert Crumb. Coffee-table hardcover. Essential, all-encompassing, and just what fans of this controversial comicbook creator have been demanding all these years. Plus it's published in England, so Customs have yet to

seize it—a miracle in itself. Parenthetically, you really should be aware that Customs do have the right to stop you reading whatever they deem unsuitable. The very people we fought against in the last World War are now controlling our borders; I kid you not, they literally burn books. Out by the time you read this: Crumb's previously unpublished correspondence, surely a long-overdue step forward for this medium's creators. We are indeed coming of age.

Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels by Roger Sabin. Even if one might disagree with the author's definition of what comprises a comic (I'm with Scott McCloud on this one), this is the finest overview of the history of the medium I've ever seen. Every other tome I've encountered purporting to be the history of comics has lacked basic knowledge or any sense of perspective. Not so this. If Will Eisner's *Comics & Sequential Art* (or its successor) is the definitive book of comicbook storytelling and Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* is the definitive book of comicbook theory (and there are), then this is the closest to the definitive history of US/UK comicbooks as you're likely to see.

Ghost World (left). A truly affordable hardcover which has touched parts of me Dan Clowes' cynicism had previously been unable to reach. Two girls, wracked with neuroses and a desperate urge to be perceived as hip and ahead of cultural trends, leave college with no idea what to expect from the future. Fascinating.

The End by Ilya. New *End Of The Century* club material at last (you might have read the earlier stuff in *Deadline*). And it's also the perfect opportunity to plug



from *Ghost World* by Dan Clowes

our expanding range of mini-comics, including Ilya's *Hermit Crab*, featuring two interwoven tales as moving as an issue of *Optic Nerve*.

Astro, City: The Confession. Exceptional superhero series, soaring high above the prevalent garbage that is this tired and juvenile old genre, delivers its second softcover. I don't want to give the game away, but if you're into gothic, buy it. Trust me.

JLA by Grant Morrison. Likewise, the mercurial Mr. Morrison delivers the goods, this time losing the free-fall psycho-babble which can bloat his otherwise entertaining *Invisibles*. DC's biggest heroes made bigger.

So that's about all I have room for. In the meantime we await the Alan Moore *From Hell* collection, Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess's *Stardust* collection, and, with any luck, more *Beanworld*. Neat!

Stephen L. Holland is a partner and manager of Nottingham's Page 45 comic shop (see advert on page 61).

Satellites, Sheep and Super Cars

The Frontiers of Science in 1997

Amanda Baker and David Clements

Mundania freaked in 1997. The powerful, the influential, and the self-proclaimed ('literary') intellectuals reacted like headless chickens. The US President halted the (non-existent) Federal funding of human cloning research. Obituaries for human dignity abounded, implicitly condemning identical siblings. The most lurid, terrifying and unrealistic cloning Sci-Fi was plucked forth to illustrate the forthcoming horrors. All this because one sheep embryo from a batch of 277 survived to adulthood.

Dolly was created at the Roslin Institute, Scotland. She was created from the nucleus of a cell which had been cultured from udder tissue taken from a six-year-old ewe. This nucleus-donor cell was starved, in an attempt to force its genes into an inactive phase. The recipient egg cell was in a similar inactive state. The udder cell nucleus—containing the precise DNA code of a pre-existing adult ewe—was put in place of the egg cell nucleus. No one knows exactly why this hybrid udder-egg cell was able to develop into an adult sheep but in doing so, that cell opened the minds of millions to the dazzling 'What-Ifs' of cloning, something that sf has been attempting to explore for decades (Robert Silverberg 'Reflects' further on this in *Asimov's*, February 1998). Dolly is our Skiffy Science Breakthrough of 1997, but the frantic pace of advancement continues throughout the multi-dimensional web which is human science. Here are a few more fascinating advances from the past year.

The controversy over the putative Martian nanofossils in the meteorite ALH 84001 has deepened, as international teams have varying degrees of success in reproducing the highly delicate discovery experiments. The putative fossils are small, although living bacteria as small as 80 nm in diameter have recently been discovered. Biologists remain divided as to whether the feature size supports or undermines the Martian fossil hypothesis, and whether they are, in any case, biogenic.

After thirty years, the mystery of the location of astronomical Gamma Ray Bursts (GRBs) may well have been solved, by the discovery of fading X-ray and optical counterparts to the gamma ray emission. Current gamma ray telescopes cannot precisely determine the location of sources, and so there has been furious debate between the Galactic and Cosmological camps: are GRBs a phenomenon in our Galaxy (perhaps comets falling into neutron stars), or are they fantastically luminous sources located far out amongst the galaxies (perhaps associated with colliding neutron stars, or Active Galactic Nuclei)? The optical counterparts to two GRBs have now been found. In the optical spectrum of one, GRB 970508, emission and absorption features are seen which occur in an anonymous galaxy, at a redshift of 0.835. This galaxy may be intervening along our line of sight, or may

actually host the bursting source. This GRB is therefore extragalactic, although a lot more work is needed to determine its nature.

The entire genomes of several microbial life-forms are now known, including yeast, and the bacteria *Escherichia coli*, *Bacillus subtilis*, *Helicobacter pylori* (stomach ulcers) and *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Lyme disease), as well as three archaea. The Human Genome Project (organised by a different HUGO) continues to rumble along, well behind schedule. Such work will certainly improve our understanding of the genetic origins of diseases and more, although such knowledge does not lead directly to cures.

The mainstream media have been intrigued by the suggestion that the age of the Universe might be as little as 10 billion years, and thus less than the age of stars in globular clusters (as much as 20 billion years). In fact, few cosmologists were unduly worried: they have a saying, 'Any cosmological theory may ignore one observational result.' For once, this arrogance appears to have been vindicated: stellar theorists now admit to uncertainties which have artificially increased their globular cluster age estimates. Elsewhere in astrophysics, evidence has been found of 'frame-dragging' by neutron stars and black hole candidates. Searches for extra-solar planets continue enthusiastically.

Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, particularly the bovine and human forms, have generated another huge media circus. At every stage, it has been clear that politicians, journalists and the general public tend to be extremely poor at statistical analysis, and in particular, risk assessment. If the Labour Government are correct that beef on the bone is the source of infection for all the cases of 'new-variant' Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, then their ban will save perhaps ten lives per year. Tobacco cigarettes are far more dangerous to those who do not smoke them!

The first ever supersonic land speed record was set by Andy Green, exactly 50 years after Chuck Yeager went supersonic in the air. The car was ThrustSSC (SuperSonic Car) and the venue, Black Rock Desert, Nevada. The car set the official record of 763.035 MPH on 15 October 1997, and achieved 766 MPH over the measured mile. The ThrustSSC team suffered from journalistic inaccuracies, and worked hard to put complete, accurate technical details on the Web.

A confirmed experiment to reconstruct fossil human DNA suggests that *homo sapiens* is not descended from *homo neandertalensis*. Two groups independently reconstructed a 379 base pair sequence from mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) from the arm bone of the original Neanderthal skeleton (which is about 100,000 years old). The sequence is very dissimilar to modern human

mtDNA, which reinforces the view that this was a cousin rather than our ancestor species. Elsewhere in anthropology, ape fossils showing evidence of upright posture have been found which predate all hominid species by some 5 million years.

High-yield production methods for single-walled carbon nanotubes are advancing rapidly. This has enabled experimentalists to confirm that these relatives of buckyballs can be excellent conductors and semiconductors. Nanotube properties can be manipulated by doping the surface, subtly altering the bond arrangements, and by filling the tubes with gases or solids, which suggests that the use of nanotubes in electronics and materials science is certain to be exciting.

The Mars Pathfinder mission impressed scientists, politicians, economists and the public alike. The Sojourner Rover, which produced science as daily theatre for weeks, was finally considered lost on 4 November 1997. In typically self-conscious style, the Pathfinder lander was renamed 'The Sagan Memorial Station'. Preliminary spectroscopic analysis of rock and soil, after correction for dust contamination, indicate low calcium and iron abundances in the region around Sagan, intermediate between terrestrial basalts and the Mars meteorite ALH84001.

The legalisation of cannabis (marijuana/dope/hash) depends as much on vested interests as upon science. The World Health Organisation has concluded (December 1997) that cannabis would be less harmful to health if it replaced alcohol or cigarettes. Political pressure suppressed this WHO report, which was leaked to *New Scientist* magazine. Smoking home-made joints can cause lung damage, however, because of high tar levels and deep inhalation. Cannabis users show temporary impairment of visual skills and mental dexterity, but no proven long-term damage. Alcohol is definitely more harmful. Whether psychological or physiological, cannabis dependence drops sharply in the 30+ age group (90% of cannabis users eventually quit) which is the opposite trend to nicotine and ethanol. Scientific studies on the impact of cannabis in Holland are only just beginning, but there has clearly been no social disaster there. A worrying thought to close: will cannabis be distributed by tobacco multinationals once it is legalised?

Images from the Galileo probe strongly suggest that the Galilean moon Europa (in orbit around Jupiter) possesses water oceans. The ice shows faults, and a remarkable absence of cratering, which are suggestive of a thin, floating crust. There are also signs of moving icebergs. This leads to the exceedingly exciting possibility that life may have arisen in the putative European ocean!

Two astronomy satellites are providing new insights into the early stages of galaxy evolution. The COBE (COsmic Background Explorer) satellite appears to have detected a diffuse universal background of infrared radiation. This IR background is probably due to many distant, dusty galaxies in the process of forming. Meanwhile, the Infrared Space Observatory (ISO) has surveyed a small part of the sky at far infrared

wavelengths and found a surprising number of point sources. Deep optical and near infrared images and spectroscopy will show whether these ISO sources are responsible for the COBE infrared background.

You can probably detect our biases in this brief review, and there have certainly been many other interesting results in all areas of science and technology. Much of the information in this article was taken from the *Science* and *Science News* magazines reviews of 1997. For further discussion of these and other advances, including Web links, see Science Online.

Apologies to those of you without Web access. Please feel free to contact us for further information about any of the stories mentioned here. ☺

—Amanda Baker and David Clements

Amanda Baker and David Clements were part of the science programming team for Intersection in 1995.

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e-mail: abaker@cea.fr and clements@ias.fr

For more information on:

Dolly the sheep

<http://www2.ri.bbsrc.ac.uk/library/research/cloning.html>

Martian nanofossils

http://cass.jsc.nasa.gov/pub/lpi/meteorites/mars_meteorite.html

Human Genome Project

<http://www.lbl.gov/Publications/TKO/>

Search for extrasolar planets

www.yahoo.co.uk/Science/Astronomy/Extrasolar_Planets
for numerous informative links

Thrust Supersonic Car

<http://thrustssc.digital.co.uk>

Mars Pathfinder Mission

<http://mpfwww.jpl.nasa.gov>

WHO report on the legalisation of cannabis

<http://marijuana.newscientist.com>

Galileo probe

<http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/oss/europa.htm>

Nature

<http://www.nature.com>

New Scientist

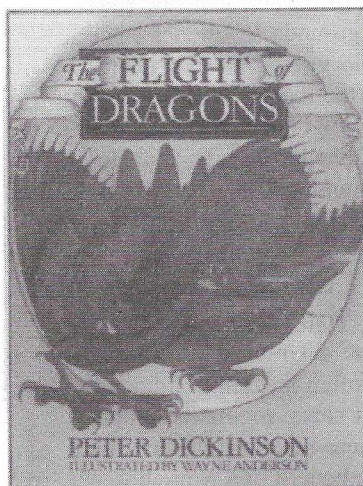
<http://www.newscientist.com>

Science Online

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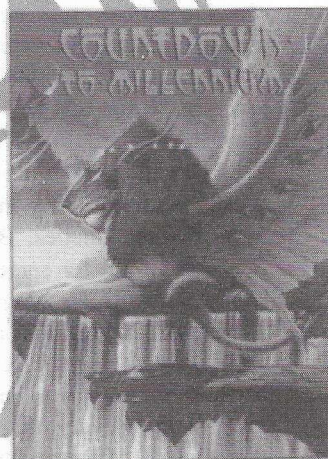


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Wombats and Wallyphones

British conventions in 1997

Mark Plummer

1997 saw another World Convention in Britain, although hardly anyone noticed. The World Fantasy Convention came to these shores for the first time since 1988 yet, despite the cross-genre appeal, its impact on fandom was substantially less than that of its science-fictional cousin in 1995, with most fans opting to do their convention-going elsewhere. And there was the usual selection of hardy perennials and one-offs in which to do it.

In mid-February, taking over the slot at least temporarily vacated by the MiScons, ATTITUDE: THE CONVENTION drew a hundred or so people to the Abbey Hotel in Great Malvern. The fanzine of the same name had been reaching a wide-ranging mailing list for nearly three years, collecting plenty of critical comment and opinion as well as a Hugo nomination along the way, and, probably uniquely, featured a convention as part of its Grand Design. There was an element of a relaxacon about the whole affair—no guests, no dealers' room, no art show, virtually no members of the 'professional' community—but the programme was varied as well as being surprisingly well-attended. As befits a convention born of a fanzine, there was a strong fanzine focus, and this was particularly manifested in a steady stream of single-page one-shot publications from established fanzine editors and newcomers alike. Most attendees spoke highly of Attitude, leading inevitably to calls for an Attitude II (AttiTWode?) although the committee assures everybody that this will not happen which, on balance, is probably a good thing.

From the new to the old, and INTERVENTION, the 48th Eastercon, returned to the Liverpool Adelphi for the third time in the Nineties. BBC camera crews were present throughout but for some reason the assembled multitude was deemed to be inappropriate for the hit documentary series, *Hotel* (although a few excerpts did appear on the Iain Banks *South Bank Show* episode). Still, it was the spate of security problems—the worst yet—that tended to over-shadow everything else, although this didn't prevent the success of Reconvene's bid to host the Eastercon in the same venue in 1999. The Intervention committee, most of whom had been involved in the Wincons, had assembled an impressive international guest list included Brian Aldiss, Jon Bing and Dave Langford but it was Octavia Butler who stole the show, proving to be one of the more entertaining convention guests of recent years and attracting signing queues of Pratchettian length. Programming, however, was commonly felt to be on the thin side and communications between committee and members proved to be somewhat lacking as the 'Chinese Wall', supposed to cover some of the functionality of the newsletter, turned out to be ineffectual.

THE YEAR OF THE WOMBAT definitely wins the prize for most bizarre convention name of the year, and can

probably claim most splendid venue with the rambling Bestwood Lodge Hotel, located in a country park just outside Nottingham. Taking certain philosophical leads from the Incon series of convention (the last being Incon V in 1996), the whole thing was suffused with an air of structured anarchy; there was plenty of spontaneity, but most of it was carefully planned. In a way, it was similar to Attitude only more frantic; programming was rather more extensive and tended to be of the sort that saw eggs being launched into the hotel grounds by model siege engines, but again there were no guests and no science fiction professionals and, on the basis of what was actually going on, the hotel might be forgiven for wondering what on earth any of it had to do with sf at all.

CONVOCATION in July combined the Unicon—dormant in recent years—with the national role-play convention, a pairing that seems less than entirely obvious at first but which worked reasonably successfully. The site—New Hall in Cambridge—brought all the disadvantages of a University location, such as limited bar hours and often spartan conditions, without the attendant benefits of cheap rooms (although, to be fair, the bedrooms were near-hotel standard). Like Intervention, however, it had the benefit of a well-chosen guest, in the form of Steven Brust who was universally popular.

THE WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION, in London over Hallowe'en, used the Britannia International Hotel, scene of the 1995 Eastercon. WFC is substantially smaller than its science fiction equivalent (in terms of memberships, it's somewhere between Eastercon and Novacon) and, in common with its previous British incarnation almost a decade earlier, this one was high on professionals—including unusual guest choices in Joan Aiken and Iain Sinclair—and low on fans, the latter being due to the relatively high membership rates and an overt policy of discouraging fan memberships. Programming was extensive, and arguably disproportionate to the size of the event; there was a tendency towards large panels which, as a result of multi-track programming and low fan attendance, were often only barely outnumbered by their audience. A signing by Christopher Lee attracted massive queues and the evenings offered a seemingly endless round of parties.

And finally NOVACON, with GoH Peter Hamilton, closed the year and brought it full circle by forsaking the traditional Birmingham location for ... the Abbey Hotel in Great Malvern. With a higher membership than Attitude, Novacon used more of the hotel's function space, necessitating epic treks through long corridors and up and down stairs. The programme placed its emphasis on lighter items, largely following the form of previous Novacons.

So, are there any lessons to be learned from the conventions of 1997? Well, it is worth noting that it seems to have been a good year for guests. Octavia Butler and Steven Brust were popular choices who pulled good audiences for their programme items and almost certainly improved awareness of their work as a result (dealers were doing a roaring trade in Butler novels immediately following her guest item at Intervention). The perceived wisdom is that the choice of guests has little bearing on an individual's decision to attend a particular convention; the presence of Steven Brust at Convocation almost certainly pulled in members and justified the added expense of an overseas guest.

However, the professional sf community in general—the writers, artists, editors and the like—seemed to be less in evidence, continuing a trend of the last five years or so (WFC is obviously an exception but as it has more in common with a trade show than a 'conventional' sf convention it probably shouldn't be treated as indicative). This is only a perception and it's not easy to tell whether it is in fact accurate; many such people join conventions late, often on the door, so they don't necessarily show up in the membership lists published in the programme books. However, Novacon in particular which, as recently as the early Nineties, would attract maybe twenty writers only managed half a dozen this year. Obviously it's important to consider *why* this is happening. Are publishers being forced to cut back on their promotional budgets? Is it connected with the fact that the contemporary generation of sf writers have not emerged from within fandom, as was often the case at least up until the Seventies? In the case of Novacon, was it simply that it followed on two weeks behind the WFC? Whatever the reasons, it's a disturbing trend—if trend it is—and one that will, ultimately, be harmful for conventions. Sf is, after all, what it's all about.

Of course, some of the new names in the convention calendar have deliberately eschewed the involvement of professionals, unless they wanted to attend as fans, and opted for a more fannish approach. Attitude and Year of the Wombat were both conceived as one-offs. Typically, both generated enthusiastic calls for a follow up although, to their credit, both convention committees resisted the urge to immediately announce sequels and show every sign of continuing to do so, something which is probably all to the good as much of their initial appeal was in their originality.

As well as the actual event, both of the previously mentioned conventions attracted praise for their venues which, it was commonly felt, should be re-used (Attitude's hotel has already hosted Novacon although a prior booking sent Britain's second-longest running convention house-hunting again in 1998). Great Malvern, with an interesting selection of shops and restaurants, demonstrates that an attractive locale can be a distinct benefit although, ironically, a full and strong programme at Attitude made many people disinclined to leave the hotel. The Bestwood Lodge, home to Year of the Wombat, was remote—effectively, non-drivers were confined to the hotel and its admittedly extensive

grounds—but worked well as the committee had organised a decent range of food and drink facilities on site and, importantly, secured exclusive use of the hotel for the duration of the convention.

And yet there doesn't seem to be a rush of new smaller conventions for 1998 taking advantage of venues such as these or even seeking out new ones. Hardened convention-goers whose tastes run to literary-type conventions might find that, on contemplating the long gap between Eastercon and Novacon, they are driven to investigate non-UK options or, alternatively, the more media-focused events such as Lazlar Lyricon II, Infinity, The Wrap Party or Albacon. In particular, as with last year, 1998 shows no signs of sprouting a fannish/literary convention in the style of the old Mexicons. When the series self-destructed at its tenth birthday party in 1994, it was assumed that there would be space for some form of successor which would be to the mid- and late-Nineties what Mexicon was to the mid-Eighties. Occasional conspiratorial huddles have debated the idea but as yet there's no announcement. Watch this space...

1997 was, in many ways, a typical convention year: every event had its plus and minuses and, of course, every individual attendee is likely to have his or her own ideas about what they were. Yes, it was a British Worldcon year but, because it was a World Fantasy Convention, its impact on other British conventions and convention goers was minimal. The Eastercon goes on, and of course, there's the prospect of another British bid for the World Science Fiction Convention some time next decade, but there's still plenty of space for anybody who wants to get out there and do their thing, whatever it may be. ☺

—MARK PLUMMER

Mark Plummer is co-editor (with Claire Brialey) of the fanzine Banana Wings.

Addresses

Reconvene: Eastercon 1999

3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol BS6 6SZ

Novacon 28

14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY9 8SS

Memory Hole Annex

Started by Pat McMurray last year, this seeks to do for convention publications what Gregory Pickersgill has been doing for fanzines. The aim is to create an archive of convention publications and memorabilia for research purposes and also to recycle items for collectors on a non-commercial basis. All donations of convention-related material are welcome.

28 Plaistow Grove, Bromley, Kent BR1 3PB
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Please contact us for more details. We couldn't fit in: instalment membership, disability access and membership, room sharing, USA agent info, gaming, fan programming, dealer's info, filking, the Millennium Ball, workshops and masterclasses, volunteer details, and information about the con charity - WaterAid.

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Behind the Masque

Costuming in 1997

Miki Dennis

The first main event of the year for costumers is, of course, the Eastercon and 1997 was no exception. Activity for costumers, outside the competition masquerade, centred around the costume workroom. This was a room in the hotel, complete with sewing machines and other equipment, where you could finish off a costume, or even create one from scratch. The latter are known as Chaos costumes as they are made rapidly (1-2 days) from whatever is available in the room; fabric, wire, dud CDs, cardboard boxes, cardboard poles, sequins, etc.

The masquerade took place in the evening, with about twenty entries, many of which were Chaos costumes. One of these entries featured two angels, one white, one black, with huge wings, that 'fought' on stage, all made and choreographed at the con! An entry based on Kosh, the Vorlon in *Babylon 5*, had been made by five people using their every free weekend for a year, and was visually spectacular with various flashing lights and noises as it 'talked'. It was awarded Best Alien. The Best in Show was awarded to an entry conceived the weekend before but not completed or cast before the con. It was entitled 'The Spice Women' and was a wicked parody of the Spice Girls based on *Dune*. The group entry substituted Melange Spice (Princess Irulan), Arrakis Spice (Lady Jessica), Geriatric Spice (Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Moahim), Iban Spice (Chani Atrides) and Water of Life Spice (Lady Alia Atrides) for Ginger, Posh, Scary, Sporty and Baby. They utilised all the mannerisms of the originals including ending the piece with 'Chani' cartwheeling. Each character was suggested by appropriate striking colour combinations and Hawkwind supplied the backing track.

Many costumers don't enter general masquerades but still spend a great deal of money and time on reproducing their favourite characters for specialised cons focusing on series such as *Babylon 5* or *Star Trek*. These fans don't often come to costume meetings which is a pity as the quality of these specialised masquerades has been very high. An example of this was the Shinnenkai Masquerade at the UK Japanese Animation Convention in the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, London in January. Japanese animation, comics and games are fertile sources of inspiration and interest in costuming has been growing in British animé fandom for the past couple of years. All except one entry were re-creation costumes and overall the standard was remarkable, especially since over half the entrants were complete novices. The eventual winners of the Best Novice award were two fifteen-year-olds who had created their first ever costume, made their own accessories and choreographed their own spoof fight. Best Performance went to Brechje van der Tol as 'Cutie Honey' and Best in

Show to Geraldine Chu as 'Candy' from 'Fighting Vipers.'

The United Kingdom Chapter of The International Costumers Guild (ICG), The Costume Guild (CGUK), exists to promote the advancement of costume design and construction, and to provide a public forum for the discussion of costume and related subjects. Interest covers all types of costume; historical, science fiction, fantasy, theatrical, live role-playing, etc. They published a newsletter, *Cutting Edge*, eight times last year, which included news of their own and other costuming events, ICG news, and other items of interest. They also organised weekend meetings, including costumed trips to museums, stately homes or other places of interest to costumers (such as the trip to Little Moreton Hall), and workshops where costumers could share skills. Their quarterly publication, *The Mantle*, aims to provide material of interest for costumers of all persuasions. Each issue includes a selection of articles on the making or presentation of costumes, as well as news and reviews.

The links with America made through the Guild and by e-mail enabled some fans to enter the postal competition run by the American Costume Convention (open to all). This competition for designers is for inclusion in the Costumecon Future Fashion Folio from which the designer, or makers who apply to do so, may make up the designs for display at the convention later in the year. This year two British designers were included. It is hoped to try and start a similar competition in Britain and to increase the British submissions to the American contest. In May, Miki Dennis organised a get-together, in Godstone, Surrey, for anyone remotely interested in costuming. This was an informal day intended to help people engaged in projects to find assistance or just to talk costume. Various fans gave informal talks and showed off their new pieces while some people turned up just to chat. This, and the meal following, was a great success and we plan to do it again around May 1998. It will be open to anyone, not just guild members.

Costumers have also been served by the new edition of *The Garter*. A fan-run publication, this is a directory that supports costuming, being a source book for fabric shops, booksellers, accessories, societies, haberdashery, advisors and events. Available to the general public, this has helped to bring the high standard of work in fandom to a wider audience. Several fans have received inquiries and commissions from the 'Real World' thanks to this directory, and it is one way in which fandom is attempting to show that we should not be discounted as 'loonies' when we have great skills and expertise to offer.

The most important venue for any kind of costume fan is Masque, the annual British Costume Convention. In 1997 this took place in Sheringham, Norfolk, in a youth hostel. This was a very suitable building but the dormitory sleeping arrangements and the difficulty in getting there by public transport proved less popular. The weekend started with a 'Miki Dennis Retrospective' (Miki was awarded the first British Mastership in Glasgow). This was an opportunity to see again many of her costumes from past conventions and was a very informal event with Miki describing important features and explaining the ideas behind them. Workshops were varied and well attended on a range of subjects such as a hands-on session on wiring up LEDs. There was also an energetic Chaos Workshop and a first-rate technical crew and set-up to help contestants. The Masque usually features three shows. Two of these are competitive while the third is just for fun. The two major masquerades were 'Historical' and 'The Main Event', the latter being the competitive Science Fiction and Fantasy event. They were held in a converted chapel (the hostel was formerly a Victorian workhouse), and as such had lots of character. There were few entries for each of these, which was disappointing, but the competitors made up for lack of numbers with a very high quality of entries.

The Historical Masquerade featured Maggie Percival's 1540 Court Tudor gown, Avril Lansdell and Penny Hill with 'Fourteenth Century Merchant's Wife and maidservant,' Enid Fairbourn with an item from Lady Jane's wardrobe (1560), Tom Nanson's 'Gentleman in Green' and Teddy's quartered cotehardie of red and gold (a handy way to use up four corners of an old curtain). The Science Fiction and Fantasy event included Miki Dennis's 'Princess of Birds', inspired (loosely) by Barry Hughart's book, Avril Lansdell's fantasy 'Dancing Mistress', straight out of Hollywood-Middle East, and Sheila MacAulay's 'The Magic of Colour' ('Inside every boring black witch there is a bright sparkly person trying to get out...'). Alan Cash's 'Cyberiad' won Best Novice and Best in Show. The Main Event wound up with Felicity Fletcher's 'An Audition'—more concept than costume!

The 'Anything Goes' Masquerade was the name given to this year's Sunday lunchtime less competitive free-for-all. Many entries came straight out of the chaos room. Notable were Felicity Fletcher's 'Batty Girl' (Black Plastic Fandom meets hi-tech, with LED adornment on a bin-bag bra), and Tom Nanson's 'Centauri bad hair day'.

The thanks of all who attended go to the organising committee, especially Gytha North, and the tech crew for a great weekend. The next Masque will be over the first weekend in October 1998, at The Albany Hotel in Eastbourne. ☺

—MIKI DENNIS

Miki Dennis is a medievalist, artist and bad singer who has been costuming for twenty years.

Addresses

Miki Dennis

15 St Catherine's Cross, Bletchingley, Surrey RH1 4PX
Tel: 01883 742143
e-mail: mikidennis@aol.com

Costume Guild UK

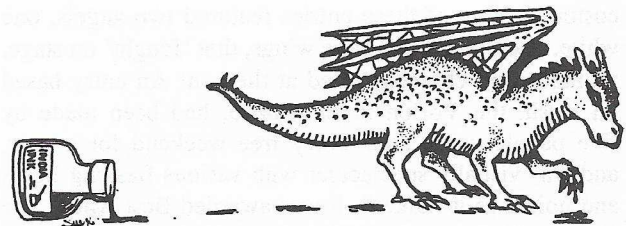
212 Albert Road, Leyton, London E10 6PD
Tel: 0181 539 9182 (ask for Teddy)

or

Maggie Percival, 4 Ednaston Court, Ednaston,
Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 3BA
e-mail: CGUK@ireadh.demon.co.uk

The Garter

Redcote, 228 Sydenham Road, Croydon, Surrey
CR0 2EB



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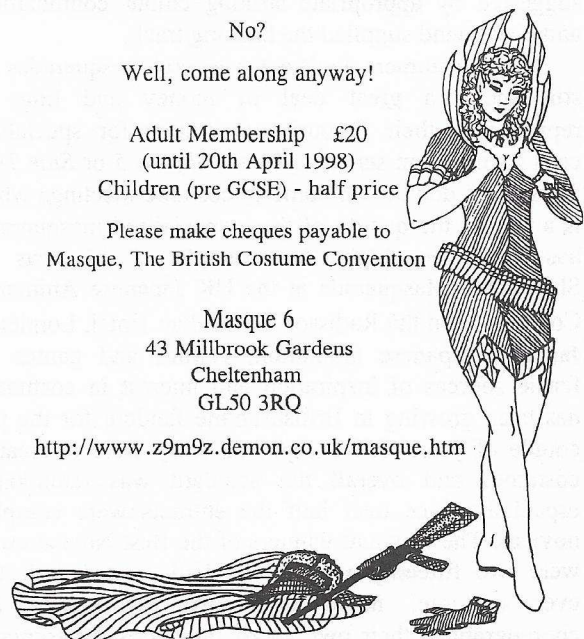
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How I Review the Year in Fanzines:

A Worked Example on 1997

Michael Abbott

The first thing you need to get an article going is a good opening sentence. How about: **In 1997, the fanzine scene continued to be as healthy as ever.**

Well, it kind of assumes a lot, doesn't it? For instance, when I say 'fanzines', I mean UK fanzines (because I was asked to survey the UK scene), and I mean sf fanzines (because, well, *Intuition* is a science fiction convention), and within that I'm excluding media-related fanzines (because I don't know anything about them, and because they should probably be discussed in a separate category anyway). And when I say sf fanzines, they needn't necessarily have any sf in them either. And saying 'as healthy as ever' is a bit presumptive given that the fanzines I am discussing claim a history that goes back to the 1950s or earlier, well before I was born.

Even so, it seems to be generally accepted that for the last few years there have been plenty of fanzines around, and for a change the endless are-fanzines-dying arguments have shut up. So, how about: **In 1997, the fanzine scene continued its recent revival.** The trouble with that as an opening sentence is that the phrase 'the fanzine scene' implies a relatively small group of people, all of whom read one another's zines. This may have been true before the recent 'fanzine renaissance' (a favourite phrase in discussions these days), but one thing that comes with a healthier hobby is a more diverse group of people, not all close personal friends or engaged in bitter feuds. Glancing through the lettercolumns of current fanzines shows a wide range of correspondents. All of a sudden, fanzines have become something that anyone can produce, and give to anyone else they think might be interested.

Take, for example, Croydon Fandom. A group of young sf fans in Oxtarline started doing their own little magazines (*GERALD*, *OUR DOG'S BASKET* etc) for reading in their own particular circle, and then some of them started producing slightly *bigger* fanzines. The highest-profile is Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer's *BANANA WINGS*. After they produced four full-size issues in 1997, as well as a few thin *BW* issues, it won the Best Fanzine Nova easily, and Mark Plummer was, as easily, winner of the Best Fanwriter Nova. No one was at all surprised by these results, as *Banana Wings*, as well as being prolific, is edited by two excellent and funny writers, who even have the generosity to let other people write for them sometimes. But I guess the Novas demonstrated that, really.

So, perhaps my opening sentence should be **1997 was the year the Croydon Block Vote demonstrated its complete dominance of fanzine fandom.** Hmm, that's not bad; it's got a bit of punch to it, but unfortunately *Banana Wings* won the Nova in 1996 as well. Which makes their winning it again all the more impressive, but

means I still haven't got an accurate opening sentence. Maybe I should go for: **In 1997 fanzine fandom carried on much as in 1996.** Not as punchy, but nearer the truth, if only a few major fanzines hadn't folded in 1997. The first of these was Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas's unlamented *FTT* (whose variable title most often stood for *Fuck The Tories*). One of the longest-running UK fanzines, it's almost the archetype of the personal zine, perzine for short, exclusively discussing the favourite subjects of the author/editors—in this case, gardening, environmental issues, grassroots politics and practical history. (In contrast, most perzines make more of an effort to find subjects of common interest with the reader, particularly by talking about fandom itself, as the only automatic common ground. *FTT* did fall short of the archetype by having a number of guest writers, though typically dealing with the same set of subjects.) Provided any of the subjects in *FTT* were at all of interest to you, it was an immediately engaging and thought-provoking read. The only reason it's 'unlamented' is that it's already been replaced by the first issue of *INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GARDENER* (incorporating *Socialist Allotment Worker*): same editors, same subject matter, and, in fact, same zine in all but name. Which works for me.

Those major fanzines that folded in 1997 arranged quite neatly for their own replacements. It's hardly a keynote description of the year, is it? It's also false in the case of *ATTITUDE*, edited by John Dallman, Pam Wells and, er, myself, which rather constrains my comments on it. *Attitude* set out to produce exactly twelve issues, a total it achieved in 1997, after which it stopped, as planned. I think 1997 was generally recognised as the year *Attitude* was past it, just as in our first year we were seen as amateurish upstarts. There was a period in the middle, though, when we were regarded as boringly establishment, which is a source of some personal pride to me. In February 1997 *Attitude: the Convention*, partner to the fanzine, was held; its chief feature of interest in this context was that it included a well-stocked repro room, as a result of which a dozen or more short fanzines were produced at the convention itself. More proof, perhaps, that fanzines today are a genuinely open field.

Aha! New proposed opening sentence: **1997 was the year in which fandom mourned the loss of *Attitude*.** No, I understand the Big Lie technique is frowned upon. How about something observing a genuine trend: **In 1997 fanzine editing became a group activity instead of a solo one.** Once again, this is a phenomenon that dates back a few years, but the trend was reinforced this year by Dave Hicks and Mike Siddall's excellent *SHOOTING STARS*; Dave and Mike can be thought of as

fandom's own Peter Cook and Dudley Moore (sorry lads, but you're too self-deprecating to be Reeves and Mortimer). Northern Irish fandom's *GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG* is one of the longer-running group-produced fanzines, and hasn't really had the attention it deserves.

The most extreme case of a group-published fanzine today, of course, is *PLOKTA*, with two editors (Steve Davies and Alison Scott) and at least four other adult humans on the 'cabal'. *Plokta* is the only fanzine today apart from *Banana Wings* that is appearing frequently enough to be expected, rather than a surprise. It's odd how important that is (to me, at least); very soon a momentum builds up, and the fanzine becomes part of your view of what's happening, a friend instead of a casual acquaintance. *Plokta* itself is definitely friendly in nature, being a fast-moving collection of superfluous technology jokes, humorous personal anecdotes and (Nova-winning) Sue Mason artwork. There's nothing in it that isn't meant to be funny, and practically nothing that fails in that aim. Paradoxically, it obviously—and successfully—goes to a lot of effort to appear to have been casually thrown together. Some people find it a little disposable, but it suits many others, including me, just fine. Ah, there's a possible first line: **Fanzines are so subjective a medium that no one individual can possibly hope to describe the field to the satisfaction of even one other person.** No; it's honest, but maybe it wouldn't leave me many readers for the second sentence.

Despite the high-profile group fanzines, maybe I could begin: **A few old-fashioned fans continued to publish fanzines on their own.** Good examples, all well worth reading in different ways, are Ian Sorensen's *BOB*, Christina Lake's *NEVER QUITE ARRIVING* or Maureen Kincaid Speller's *SNUFKIN'S BUM*. Steve Green produced a few issues of his rapid-turnaround argumentzine *RAILINGS* on his own, but then teamed up with his wife Ann for the first issue of *THUNDERBOX*.

Unfortunately for that opening sentence, Bridget Hardcastle, like the *Banana Wings* and *Plokta* teams relatively new to fanzines, is also working solo, on the small but perfectly-formed *SQUIGGLEDY HOY*. Everyone is invited to draw a Squiggledy Hoy for Bridget, and most of them then appear in the fanzine. It's a nice way of encouraging the participative all-join-in nature of fanzines, arguably their best feature.

How about a different tack: **To limit a survey of UK sf fanzines to specific examples is to miss the opportunity to survey the field as a whole.** But then again, no. Maybe that would work if I were writing for *Foundation*, but then I'd have to get in a reference to Levi-Strauss as well. But some other sweeping generalisation could be a good way to start: **1997 was the year of the perzine.** Not quite true; how about: **1998 will be the year of the perzine.** No, this is meant to be a review, not prophecy. But both of these sentences are half-right about something: the fanzines listed above are published by a wide range of people, and cover a wider range of subjects, but each one is essentially written by a small group. Letters are encouraged, but in the rest of the fanzine it's the same faces again and again. Despite

Attitude's failings—and to an extent causing some of them—it did feature a wide range of writers, because the editors (I happen to know) went to some trouble to chase up contributions from different people. I think this is an important element of the 'community of fanzines', and one that I don't see being well supported at present. The other lack is that there is only a little support at present for real sf discussion in fanzines: it crops up here and there, but it would be nice to have at least one regular fanzine substantially devoted to the subject. Of course, it's important that people do fanzines for pleasure (of one kind or another), not to fill a marketing niche, so both lacks will have to stay around till someone feels like doing something about them.

On the other hand, **There is a healthy sense that UK fanzines today are forming a real community**, instead of being lone voices lacking the ability to communicate with one another. This shows up in fanzine reviews, in casual references to other fanzines and in the letters written in (Steve Jeffery, at least, deserves mention here, as his yearly output in letters is as large and as interesting as many people writing their own fanzines).

But I still don't have the right opening sentence. How about this: **It is impossible to review UK fanzines, in 1997 or any other year, without mentioning ANSIBLE?** Unfortunately, I nearly managed it, simply because Dave Langford's regular and amusing newszine has been around for so long, and so reliably, that it's easily taken for granted. But whatever my quibbles above about fanzines I'd like to see that don't exist, I'd miss *Ansible* far more if it stopped. Its combination of prompt news reporting and wit makes it the nearest thing to a necessity in fandom today.

Actually, I've just realised: the last thing I need is a good opening sentence. How about: **I enjoyed fanzines in 1997, and I think some other people did too.**

Yeah, that covers all the important points. ☺

—MICHAEL ABBOTT

After the demise of the Nova Award-winning fanzine Attitude, Michael Abbott has decided to do something else.

Addresses

If you want to take an interest in fanzines, most of the people listed above will be happy to give a sample issue in exchange for a 'show of interest', after which a letter in response should get you the next issue or issues. The two most obvious places to write off to—because of both their interest value and frequency—are:

Banana Wings

c/o Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 6JE; and

Plokta

c/o Alison Scott, 42 Tower Hamlets Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4RH.

An A4 SAE would undoubtedly be appreciated in each case.

Noises, Sounds and Sweet Airs

A Filking Year

Valerie Housden

So write for us a History
A filking fandom History
Write for us a History
We need it by today.

(After *Publish and be Damned* by Phil Allcock to the tune of *Red Tape and Sealing Wax* by Chris Bell)

The message from Maureen Kincaid Speller arrived in my mailbox, saying that they needed someone to write a short article about what's been happening in filk over the past twelve months, and so 'naturally' they thought of me! Why me? I wondered. This 'naturally' business sounds ominous. As someone once said: 'Infamy! Infamy! They've all got it in for me!'

Also, Maureen didn't say when the twelve months should begin or end. After all, I'm writing this long before *Intuition*, and the earliest you will be reading it, if you read it at all, will be on the train home from Manchester. So I've taken the (slightly stretched) twelve months from the 1997 annual filkcon to the 1998 one. If anyone disagrees with this, please write your objections on a postcard and address it to yourself, preferably in eight-part polyphony. Points will be awarded for the most imaginative orchestrations, and you know what points mean?

HarmonIX, the ninth Annual British Filk Convention, was held at the beginning of February 1997 in Weston-super-Mare, the first time the filkcon has returned to a hotel used for a previous filkcon. The choice of guests for HarmonIX marked a slight change in emphasis, as both are better known within filkdom as popular performers and interpreters of other people's material than as songwriters in their own right. And of course British guest Sue Mason is very well known in fandom as an artist and Masquerade presenter *par excellence*. So, with the emphasis very much on performing, it was fitting that a significant number of less well-known filkers were given programme spots; that the phenomenon known as 'Instabands', pioneered by Dave Clements in Canada and currently very popular at the US filkcons, was introduced to the UK; and that US guest Mary Ellen Wessels (MEW) ran a well attended workshop on performance techniques at HarmonIX. And a number of new filk recordings by British, German, Austrian and US filkers were released at the con, including an excellent CD by MEW.

There was a significant filk presence at Intervention, the 1997 Eastercon, with a general filk concert and individual one hour concerts by the filk band Patchwork, the filk choir The n'Early Music Consort, and Separated At Birth, a not quite *ad hoc* band (i.e. they've played together before) consisting of British filkers Mike and Anne Whitaker and visiting US filkers Bill and Brenda

Sutton, who toured around the country afterwards for a few days and dropped into Nycon—a twice-yearly attempt, courtesy of Zander Nyron and the Countess Axlides, to cram as many filkers and their instruments as possible into a small 4-bedroomed house in the middle of Wiltshire—which was held the following weekend.

British filkers were featured guests at North American filkcons, courtesy of Interfilk, a US fan fund which is also a registered charity (so that US fans can get a tax deduction for any contributions they make to it). Talis Kimberley was the Interfilk guest at FilkOntario, the annual Canadian filkcon, in April 1997 and Phil Allcock entertained East Coast filkers at Concerto in June 1997. Interfilk is bringing more European filkers to FilkOntario in 1998.

The European dimension of filkdom became more pronounced in 1997, with the addition of a new event to the calendar. FilkCONTinental, the German national filk convention, was held in September 1997 in a youth hostel in a medieval castle overlooking the picturesque town of Blankenheim in the mountains near Cologne. Of course a small but noisy group of British filkers attended, who reported they had a really good time and will be going back next year. Definitely! (This is an in-joke. If you want to find out more, grab a filker and demand that he/she lets you listen to the first track of side 2 of the official FilkCONTinental tape, *Definitely*. It's called 'Ereghtei Khukhed'. No, the track, silly!) The British rock-filk band, Phoenix, will be guests at FilkCONTinental 2 in October 1998.

Apart from the conventions and the two Nycons, the WiGGLE—the monthly meeting of filkers based in London and the South East—celebrated its tenth year. It currently meets in the Toad in the Hole in the City of London on the last Friday of the month, unless that clashes with a popular convention or Christmas and New Year. (See Rafe Culpin for more details.) And singing WiGGLeS (SWiGGLeS) were held on Saturdays in April, July and October in the Archway Archery club in North London. These are continuing at similar three-monthly intervals in 1998.

Filk: The Next Generation™ went from strength to strength during the year. Having prevented her parents, Lawrence and Nicky Dean, from going to HarmonIX, Caitlin Dean made her premature debut the Sunday after the filkcon. Alan and Alice Braggins' son was so keen to make his first appearance on the filkstage that he arrived while his father was phoning for an ambulance, and Omega and Harry Payne's son Hal made his entrance in November.

The summer saw the eagerly awaited release of the CD *Tom Smith Plugged*, a mixture of serious and amusing songs by a totally barmy and very talented US

filker who was a very popular guest at Vibraphone, the sixth filkcon, held in 1994 in Brighton. And on the subject of CDs, during the year US filker Eli Goldberg announced a project to produce an album of new pro-space songs to be carried in the NASA Space Center shop to replace the no longer available tape, *Minus Ten and Counting*, which was made over fifteen years ago. He invited submissions from filkers of all nationalities and of course several British filkers sent in suitable songs. And writer and hitherto closet filker Tom Holt produced a book of hilarious parodies and other songs, called *Bitter Lemmings*, published by Becon Publications.

Having started with the ninth filkcon, the filk year ended with Decadence, the tenth annual British filkcon held in Eastbourne. Guests were Valerie Housden from the UK and Mitchell Burnside-Clapp from the US (via Australia!). Mitch, whose best known song about an asteroid falling down on New Jersey got translated into English as 'Falling Down on Milton Keynes' and who is a former test pilot with the US airforce, told us he was once interviewed by NASA for astronaut training. Unfortunately it seems they were not impressed by his confessed greatest weakness—Kryptonite!

Many filkers took the con's decadent theme to heart and wore some very fine costumes, particularly on Saturday. However, and by general consent, the ultimate picture of Decadence was provided by little Caitlin Dean, who celebrated her first birthday at the con, and who at one point was seen looking very satisfied with her face, hands and arms covered in chocolate from her cake. Definitely decadent!

The British Filk Awards were presented—for the first time since Vibraphone—at Decadence, with prizes for runners up in categories where the voting was unfairly close, i.e. the loser lost by one vote. These produced some surprises, especially the award for Best Serious Song which went to a filker better known for his rip-offs.

Best Serious Song since Vibraphone: 'Anna' by Phil Allcock

Runner Up: 'This Lady isn't Leaving' by Valerie Housden

Best Humorous Song since Vibraphone: 'Suddenly Eeyore' by Chris Malme

[No runner up in this category.]

Best Rip Off since Vibraphone: 'Men's Laundry Song' by Tom Holt

Runners Up: 'Bang Today (Ranger at Midnight)' by Anne Whitaker and Anne Walker;

'CMOT (Pies)' by Phil Allcock

Best New Song First Performed at Decadence:

'Suddenly Igor' by Brian Biddle

Runner up: 'Nu San Fellani' by Anne Walker

Best Dressed Filk: Brian Biddle

And finally:

Awarded at the discretion of the the committee:

Best New Filker at Decadence: Oliver Thornton

Looking into the future, various British and German filkers are currently working on new albums, which

should hopefully be available at the eleventh annual filkcon XIylophone to be held in Slough ('Come, friendly bombs!') in February 1999, with guests Lawrence Dean from the UK and Dave Clements from Canada. There will probably be a significant British filk presence at Bucconeer, the Baltimore worldcon, and a very noisy British presence at FilkCONtInental 2. And perhaps there might possibly be a new general British filk anthology. Hey! Was that a filking pig I just saw flying overhead? ☺

—Valerie Housden

Valerie Housden was the UK Guest of Honour at the 1998 Filk Con.

'MEN'S LAUNDRY SONG'

Tune: 'Song of the Women' by Zander Nyron.

[Chorus]

Turn the dial, close the door, set the socks tumbling.
Spin the sock, lose the sock, dye the shirt pink.

Here the men read in the book of instructions
Seeking to learn what it's striving to say;
Thus it befalls when the men do the laundry
Washing their clothes when their wives are away.

[Chorus]

Here in a pile they have heaped up the coloureds.
Here are the whites in a pile of their own.
Cotton and linen and wool and synthetics;
Each must encounter the waters alone.

[Chorus]

Every man dreams of a supercharged turbo,
Something Italian that runs at high speed.
Here the men load up the mighty Zanussi,
Scratching their heads as the labels they read.

[Chorus]

Here in the kitchen the lino is sodden,
Soapsuds like carpet all over the floor.
Menfolk are learning by trial and by error;
Hard you must push when you're closing the door.

[Chorus]

Here on the clothes line the men hang the washing,
Drying their smalls in the warmth of the sun.
Sunlight is blazing and washing is drying
Making them dry when the laundry is done.

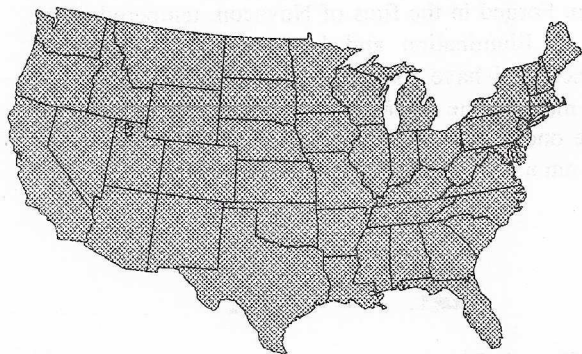
[Chorus]

Whiter than white are the whites of the women,
Splodgy and grey are the whites of the men.
Too late they learn not all fabrics are colourfast.
Wives will not trust them with laundry again.

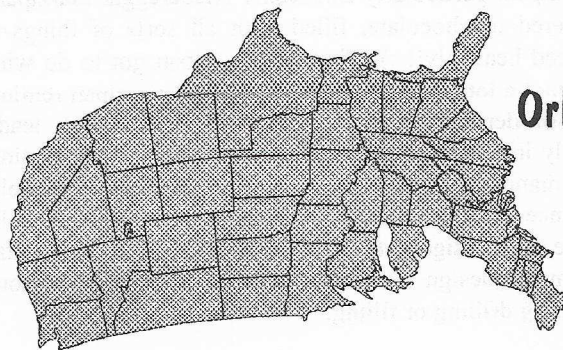
[Chorus]

This song is taken from *Bitter Lemmings: Several Good Songs Spoilt by Tom Holt* which is available for £4.00 from Becon Publications, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 0RG, or in the dealers' room at Intuition. All the profits from the sale of this go to the Filk Fund.

**Sometimes, a Worldcon bid
is all a matter of perspective.**



Boston



Orlando

Orlando in 2001

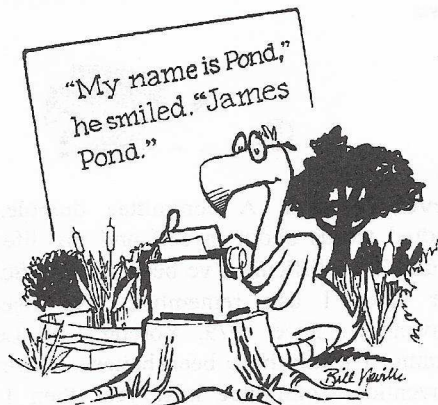
The bid formerly known as Noreascon 4.

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for Orlando in 2001
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the Worldcon
of the Millennium.**

**Flamingo
Feature #21**



IAN FLAMINGO

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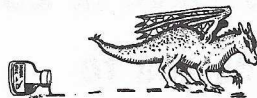
The Committee

by themselves

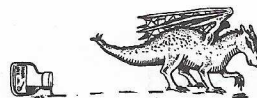
Fiona Anderson: I could go on about the wonders of marzipan, particularly Luebecker Niederegggar marzipan, covered in chocolate, filled with all sorts of things—indeed heavenly!! :) What has marzipan got to do with sf—not a lot, except that chocolate and marzipan remind me of dentists, drills, fillings, and caps, which leads easily into Piers Anthony's book about a dentist treating all manner of alien teeth... And teeth are definitely science-fictional theme—no sane human being could have ever designed teeth! I look forward to the day that scientists design teeth that last all life through without needing drilling or filling.



Amanda Baker: I came to sf via sunspots and *The Hobbit*. I made it to fandom and conrunning by falling for an Astrophysicist on his way to the (Welling)'Tun. That landed me on the committee of Illumination: my first Eastercon. I was in the Intersection Science Programming Junta. I will give up conrunning after Intuition. Maybe then I'll develop into fanzines, so I don't have to work at conventions. I'm looking for a new job (UK, please): will calculate redshifts for food. I'm a nerd felinophile. I'm fantastically happy with my love life! I want more time, more books, and more chocolate.



Claire Brialey: Describe yourself in 100 words, she said... I co-edit the fanzines *Banana Wings* and *BW*. I'm half of the BSFA's publicity machine. I appear to be at least partly responsible for Croydon Fandom. But what has all this to do with Intuition? This is the sixth convention I've run in seven years, albeit the first Eastercon. I've been attending cons for eleven years and reading science fiction for twenty. I like books, Laphroaig, coffee and amusing animals; I hope one day to be disgraceful. And to make 100 words, I'll pick a few at random: count tile compliment slip...



David Cooper: The Gnomes of Zurich are an ancient people. Lurking in the shadows of history, they have influenced the rise and fall of dynasties and empires through their financial dealings. There are few trained in

the mysterious and esoteric knowledge. I am one so chosen. Forged in the fires of Novacon, tempered in the glare of Illumination and bent under the might of Intersection, I have risen to the challenge of being the token male on the Intuition committee and taken on the mantle once again of convention treasurer. In my spare time I am a civil engineer, husband and father.



Fran Dowd: Comfortable. Big sofa, loads of cushions. Food, quality ingredients, extravagant, lovingly prepared, far too much and too rich. Truffles. Red. Warm and smoky, smelling of sandalwood, vanilla and ginger. Music, swooningly climactic. Inappropriate laughter. Flowers, blown roses and sense-engulfing broom. Love, lavished on dogs. Impulsive long journeys, not always ending in disaster. Swift friend, ever unforgiving enemy. Change the world, right the wrongs. 'And not by Eastern windows only, when daylight comes, comes in the light. In the front the sun climbs slow, how slowly, but Westward, look, the land is bright.' Po.



Alice Lawson: My life as a fan started in 1986. Like most, it was discovering people who read books (other than cowboy or romance novels) that attracted me. Another attraction is talking to people who have different views and do not just agree with each other. This gave me confidence in myself; it is OK to be different. At Conspiracy I discovered the Masquerade which is close to my other love, the theatre. I like helping to put on displays for people to enjoy. I like to see people have fun. Of course, I did get something else out of fandom: Steve.

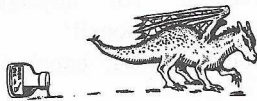


Steve Lawson: A committee drabble, that's one hundred words about myself and my life in Fandom, shouldn't be difficult. I've been reading Science Fiction ever since I can remember, I've been going to Conventions since 1979, Yorcon 1 in Leeds in fact. Hmmmm, it would have been better to have been on the Convention Committee next year then I could have written about my twenty years in Fandom: nineteen

doesn't seem to have the same kick. I met my wife Alice at Conspiracy '87. So you can see that Fandom has had a major effect on me, for which I am most thankful.



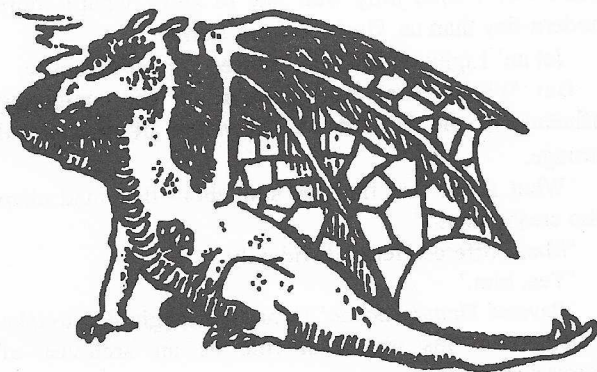
Maureen Kincaid Speller: Can 100 words do justice to a life? Can they encompass the fact that I've been in fandom for nineteen years, making friends, pursuing a love for books, learning my trade as an editor and critic, writing for APAs and producing my fanzine, *Snufkin's Bum*; running the British Science Fiction Association, proselytising the joys of good fiction and practising good con programming? How do I explain the passion for cats, Paul Kincaid, classical music, for cooking Indian and Chinese food, for embroidery and gardening? And what about the multiplicity of names, not to mention the outlandish earrings? Words *can't* do...



Kathy Taylor: Darkness fell and I stood in a circle of light. The voice called out 'Who are you?'
'Kathy Taylor.'

'Wrong answer, try again.'

'Well, all right. How about... *Babylon 5* fan, Biologist, Board Game player, Book reader, BSFA reviewer, Charlotte's mother, Cider drinker, Classical music fan, Computer expert, Computer game player, Con attendee, Cook, Counsellor to troubled adolescents, Cross stitch embroiderer, Daughter, Fanzine reader, Friend, Gardener, Godmother, Gopher, Ian's wife, Net user, Occasional filk listener, Poetry reader, RPGer, Sister, Student, Teacher, Theatre-goer, Traveller, Wine drinker? Oh yes, and for just a bit longer, Membership Secretary for Intuition.'



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'Little Robots ... Hitting Each Other!'

An invitation to 'Beyond Cyberdrome'

SMS

Eastercon '97: noon.

By rights, all sensible people (especially those with money) should have been in the Art Auction, buying ridiculously low-priced artwork (well, mainly mine) for as much money as possible. They weren't. The 1997 Art Auction will go down in history as one of the most poorly attended since the '95 Worldcon cunningly banned all the bidders from attending. Instead of sensibly waving cheque books at exquisitely-framed phlosque, they were in the main hall of the Adelphi, baying for the spilt oil of cute little robots locked in deadly combat.

As part of my continuing 'pay for conventions by flogging bits of card with ink on' campaign, this must count as a spectacular Own Goal.

A year and two weeks before, it had seemed such a good idea. Perhaps I could blame this on an inability to grow up and face financial reality, preferring instead to mess about with kids' stuff. Perhaps I could blame reading too much Heinlein at an impressionable age. Perhaps it's even more basic. Perhaps it's the influence of reading 'William and the Robots'.

WILLIAM AND THE ROBOTS

William blamed the licorice water—that and Henry enthusing about his project to construct a robot he could teach to paint.

The Old Lads sat together in the Old Werkhaus rolling up bits of paper and burning them. A happy few years attempting to teach semaphore to the parrot in the local pub had concluded with the landlady throwing them out. Now their thoughts had been engaged by Henry's plans for Dadaist AI.

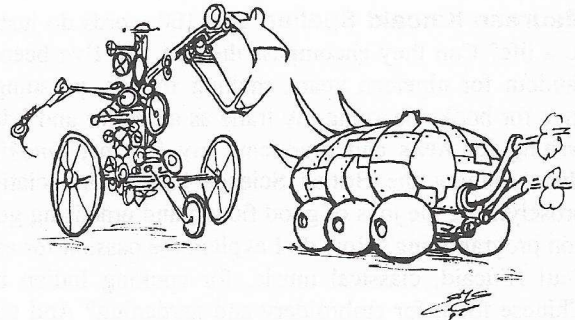
'Wouldn't it be brilliant to have opposing art schools compete in a cybernetic medium?' said William.

'Gosh, yes! Stylistic development through combative synthesis!' said Ginger.

As the originator of the painting robot concept, Henry was more cautious. 'I'm not sure we're up to programming for comparative aesthetic feedback,' he said dubiously.

But William had found a new project and was not to be so readily deterred by mere practicality. 'It'd be Evolution!' he expostulated. 'Same's the theme for the next Eastercon. They wouldn't even have to draw. They could just sort've fight each other.' His tone veered towards his familiar sarcastic mode of argument. 'Gosh, it's news to *me* if people wouldn't want to see a bunch of robots fightin' each other rather than an ol' Art

WHEN KLANKY-THINGS
RULED THE...ER...
FLOOR?



instillation.' Dimly he remembered something from the 'Evolution' Progress Reports and their grand promises of intellectual stimulation. 'An' anyway,' he finished triumphantly, 'it'd be educational!'

'An' people could lay bets,' concluded Ginger, more pragmatically.

Henry was lost to a phrase he had heard in a history lesson on Napoleon. 'Little robots hitting each other,' he mused thoughtfully as he considered a shelf-ful of plastic Cyberman models.

William's appreciation of the conflicts of antiquity was less philosophical.

'It'd be like those gladiators in Ancient Roman times,' he enthused, warming to his subject. 'One could have a net and a fork thing and the other could have a shield an...'

'They din't have robots in ancient Roman times,' objected Henry, determined to uphold historical verisimilitude. 'P'raps steam engines, *p'raps*. But,' he completed with leaden emphasis, 'not robots.'

However, once William had the bit between his teeth, he was loath to relinquish it for mere technical details.

'It'll be a modern-day one then,' he replied with disarming simplicity; then, emboldened by this triumph, 'Of *course* it'll be a modern-day one. *We're* modern, aren't we? I shud jolly well like to know what's more modern-day than us. Gosh! If there's any—'

'Jet an' Lightnin' an' that,' mused Ginger dreamily.

But William was not sanguine to the tempering influence of the fair sex in his vision of mechanical carnage.

'What about that film we saw about that mad chap who crashes cars?'

'Max,' offered Henry diffidently.

'Yes, him.'

'*Beyond Thunderdome*.' Henry was beginning to take a delight in his unofficial role as an archivist of aggression.

'Yes, we'll be that, an' I'll be the bloke what introduces the fights an' shouts at people strange.'

'We'd guessed,' muttered Ginger, acquainted with William's thespian tendencies for longer than he could

remember. 'And people could bring their own robots too.'

'An' we'll call it "Beyond Cyberdrome",' concluded William, with unassailable logic, ' 'coz it's robots.'

Two weeks later, the vigour with which the Evolution Tek Crew (delighted to show their skills at something beyond the usual constraints of wallyphones and lighting arrangements for chiffon and tinfoil Mystic Empresses) embraced the task William had set them with only a few days warning, was daunting.

'We've found you a room.'

The Tek Crew's pride was evident as they threw open the doors to a modestly-sized conference room. William considered the expanse with the tactical precision of a manager at the Circus Maximus.

'Trouble is, it's a side-room,' he mused. 'We'd end up givin' the impression that the aim of the event is the development of cybernetic skills for serious Tekkies.' Unabashed by his possible tactlessness, he embellished his grand plan. 'What we want is crowds of ord'nary fans bayin' for blood and laughin'. What we really need is somethin' central where there's lots of drunks.' He concluded innocently, 'Like the main hall.'

'No problem,' mused the frighteningly efficient Tek in the PsiCorps uniform. 'We'll just get them to cover up the pool and hold it on that.'

The pool formed the centrepiece of the glass-ceilinged central hall of the Radisson Edwardian hotel, at which the 'Evolution' Eastercon was held. Upon a more sober appreciation of the wrath of the *Plokta* editorial committee at being removed from this pool, a compromise was made. The contest would be held on the bar area above the pool, with the proviso that if any robots fell into the adjoining fishpond and electrocuted the fish, then the Master of Ceremonies and Chief Engineer would be thrown in after them. This seemed only fair and, soon, William and Ginger could be seen frantically improvising a barricade out of chairs and gaffer tape around the proposed arena.

By high noon, a satisfactory number of drunks had turned up, with no interest whatsoever in the finer developments of robotics; but, intrigued by the little snippets and cartoons William and Ginger had put into the daily newsletters, they were ready to giggle inanely and shout at little machines that had never done them any harm. Some even brought more sacrificial robots.

William, resplendent in an old raincoat and sundry bits of rubbish he'd managed to find in the bins, strode on as the Master of Ceremonies.

Half an hour later (sadly, there weren't enough robots to last the full allotted hour), William strode into the newsletter office to write the results of the first carnage. After half an hour of shouting to fill the swimming pool-sized hall, he was barely able to whisper, 'I've got the results of...'

'It's OK,' the editor reassured him, 'we sent a reporter. This is exactly the sort of stupidity that is to be encouraged.'

Flushed with success, free beer and the Tek Crew's announcement that 'If they want a Tek Crew next year, tell 'em this event is compulsory,' William approached the mandarins of the next Convention.

'We've gottan event,' he slurred enthusiastically, his throat miraculously lubricated. 'It's robots an' they beat each other up an' people bring 'em an' watch an' the winner's the last one to work, an' it doesn't have to be evolution, it can be innovation.'

The mandarins considered the incoherent proposition carefully as they rolled in their environment of beer and planning schedules. Though this scruffy apparition with unkempt hair employed syntax akin to his knotted scarf, much of what he said contained fannish buzzwords.

'Sounds OK,' they said. 'But we're planning next year's con. You'd need a couple of years to organise a thing like that.'

In a welter of giddy euphoria that comes only to those who realise they have successfully underestimated public taste, William replied:

'We've just dun it, and the Bimblebot won.'

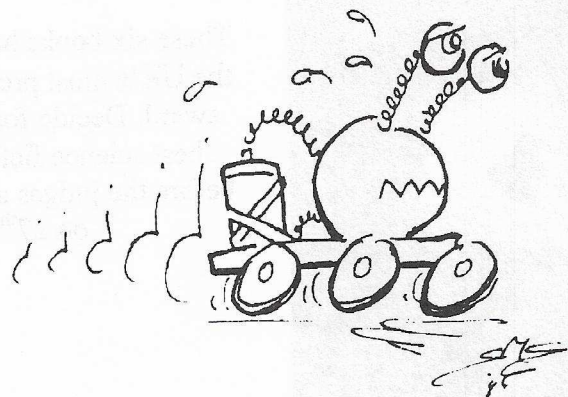
'Beyond Cyberdrome' is presented by Ewok, Eira and SMS.

Thanks are due to: T'Tek Crew; Matt for major gophering and Tek; Kryb for saying, 'I'm building a robot that paints'; Innovation Exec for last year's scheduling; Ewok for saying, 'Yeah, I was serious too,' the next morning *and* building most of the prototypes; Eira for graphics and '80s Californian-Fashion-Punk-Bimbo-Robot-Presentation ... but mainly to anyone who builds a robot.

In 'William and the Robots', names have been changed to protect the street-cred of some con members, though Ewok does have ginger hair, and Kryb knows a historical analogy when he sees one, an' ... *z*

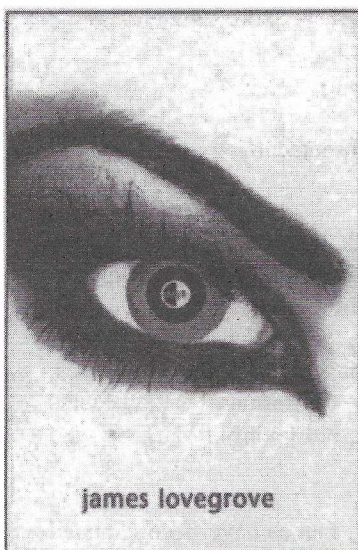
—SMS

SMS's cover painting for Interzone 116 is short-listed for the BSFA Award.





TITAN
Stephen Baxter
Voyager, £16.99



DAYS
James Lovegrove
Phoenix, £6.99



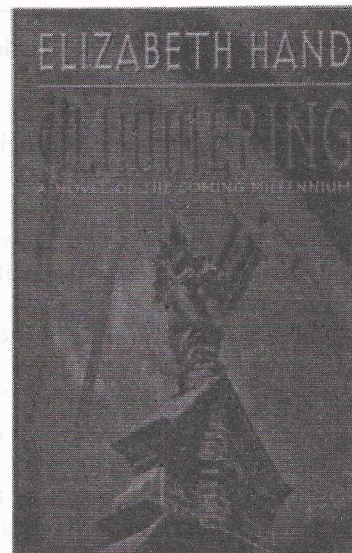
THE SPARROW
Mary Doria Russell
Black Swan, £6.99

THE
Arthur C Clarke
AWARD

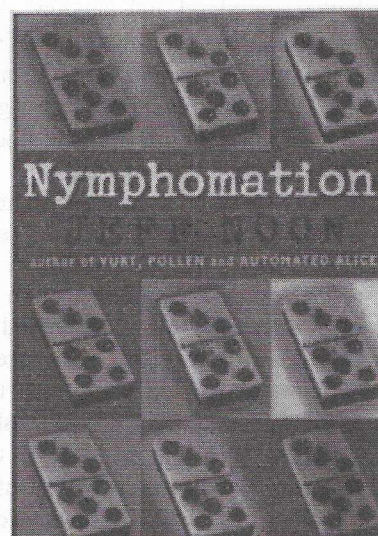
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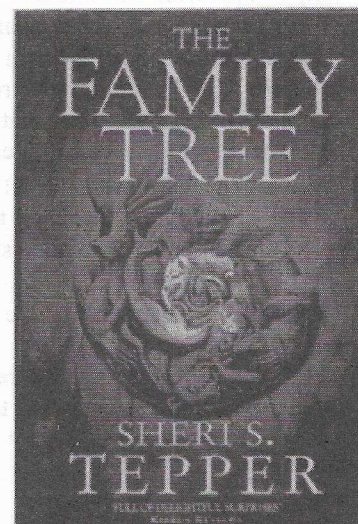
The Arthur C. Clarke Award is jointly administered and judged by:
The British Science Fiction Association and the Science Fiction Foundation.



GLIMMERING
Elizabeth Hand
Voyager, £5.99



NYMPHOMATION
Jeff Noon
Doubleday, £15.99



THE FAMILY TREE
Sheri S. Tepper
Voyager, £11.99

Awards

Upcoming UK Awards

BSFA AWARDS

The shortlists are decided by members of the British Science Fiction Association. Final voting takes place before and during Intuition and is open to all members of the Association and attending members of the convention. The shortlists are:

Best Novel:

A Son of the Rock by Jack Deighton
Signs of Life by M. John Harrison
Earthquake Weather by Tim Powers
The Sparrow by Mary Doria Russell
Jack Faust by Michael Swanwick

Best Short Fiction:

'War Birds' by Stephen Baxter/*Interzone* 126
 'Thigmoo' by Eugene Byrne/*Interzone* 120
 'The Emperor's New Reality' by Pat Cadigan/*New Worlds*
 'The First Man Not to Walk on the Moon' by
 Richard Kadrey/*Back Brain Recluse* 23
 'Last Day of the Carnival - 36 Exposures' by
 Paul Kincaid/*Back Brain Recluse* 23

Best Artwork:

'The Wood Wife': Brian Froud/cover *The Wood Wife* by
 Terri Windling
 Page 27, *Interzone* 124: Dominic Harman/*Interzone* 124
 (for 'Secrets' by Ian Watson)
 'The Black Blood of the Dead': SMS/cover *Interzone* 16
 'The Golden Key': Michael Whelan/cover *The Golden
 Key* by Melanie Rawn, Jennifer Robertson & Kate
 Elliot
 'Child of the River': Paul Young/cover *Child of the
 River* by Paul McAuley and cover *Interzone* 123

ARTHUR C. CLARKE AWARD

Presented annually, this is for the best science fiction novel receiving its first publication in Britain. It is a jury award, decided by two representatives each from the British Science Fiction Association, the Science Fiction Foundation and the International Science Policy Foundation (the latter has withdrawn with effect from this year following the death of Maurice Goldsmith).

The 1998 shortlist is:

Titan Stephen Baxter
Glimmering Elizabeth Hand
Days James Lovegrove
Nymphomation Jeff Noon
The Sparrow Mary Doria Russell
The Family Tree by Sheri S. Tepper

The 1998 Jury consists of Tanya Brown and Andrew Butler (BSFA), and John Clute and Farah Mendlesohn (SFF). The Award will be presented in late-May.

Previous Winners (with year of presentation) are:

1987 *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
 1988 *The Sea and Summer* by George Turner
 1989 *Unquenchable Fire* by Rachel Pollack
 1990 *The Child Garden* by Geoff Ryman
 1991 *Take Back Plenty* by Colin Greenland
 1992 *Synners* by Pat Cadigan
 1993 *Body of Glass* by Marge Piercy
 1994 *Vurt* by Jeff Noon
 1995 *Fools* by Pat Cadigan
 1996 *Fairyland* by Paul McAuley
 1997 *The Calcutta Chromosome* by Amitav Ghosh

DOC WEIR AWARD

On 4th March 1961, Arthur Rose 'Doc' Weir died. Though a relative newcomer, he was already old when he discovered fandom. He had been a dedicated worker for the BSFA and so, on 15th March, John Phillifent wrote to Ella Parker and Peter Mabey suggesting that the BSFA could help out his widow by making an offer for his sf collection. This was believed to be of high quality and Phillifent thought it would be a useful addition to the BSFA library.

However, it transpired that the collection was less extensive than was first thought and at the 1962 BSFA AGM it was decided to hold a vote on what to do with the money collected by the Doc Weir Memorial Fund. The vote was on whether to give the money to Mrs Weir, or to use it to establish the 'Doc Weir Fan Recognition Award'. The vote was overwhelmingly for the award which, it was decided, would be in the form of a trophy to be awarded annually and engraved with each recipient's name. The trophy ultimately bought with the funds raised was a silver cup, mounted on a plastic base.

The 1963 Eastercon, Bullcon, was held in April at the Bull Hotel in Peterborough and attracted over 130 fans, the highest turnout at a British convention since the 1957 Worldcon. Peter Mabey was the first recipient, *in absentia*, of the Doc Weir Award, for his work with the BSFA lending library.

The Award has been presented in most subsequent years.

(Information extracted from *Then, a history of British fandom* by Rob Hansen) &

Previous winners are

1963 Peter Mabey
 1964 Archie Mercer
 1965 Terry Jeeves
 1966 Kenneth F. Slater
 1967 Doreen Parker
 1968 Mary Reed
 1969 Beryl Mercer
 1970 J. Michael Rosenblum
 1971 Phil Rogers
 1972 Jill Adams
 1973 Ethel Lindsay

1974 Malcolm Edwards
 1975 Peter Weston
 1976 Ina Shorrock
 1977 Keith H. Freeman
 1978 Gregory Pickersgill
 1979 Rog Peyton
 1980 Bob Shaw
 1981 John Brunner
 1984 Joyce Slater
 1985 James White
 1987 Brian Burgess
 1989 Vinç Clarke
 1990 Roger Perkins
 1991 Pat Brown
 1992 Roger Robinson
 1993 Bridget Wilkinson
 1994 Tim Broadribb
 1995 Bernie Evans
 1996 Mark Plummer
 1997 John Harold

Awards in 1997

BIG HEART AWARD

John L. Coker III

BRITISH FANTASY AWARDS

Best Novel (August Derleth Award): *The Tooth Fairy* by
 Graham Joyce
 Best Short Story: 'Dancing About Architecture' by
 Martin Simpson
 Best Anthology/Collection: *The Nightmare Factory* by
 Thomas Ligotti
 Best Artist: Jim Burns
 Best Small Press: *H. P. Lovecraft: A Life* by S. T. Joshi
 Special Award (Karl Edward Wagner Award): Jo Fletcher

FIRST FANDOM AWARD

Hal Clement

JAMES TIPTREE JR. MEMORIAL AWARD

The Sparrow by Mary Doria Russell
 'Mountain Ways' by Ursula K. Le Guin
 Special Award: Angela Carter

JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD

Michael A. Burstein

HUGO AWARDS

Best Novel: *Blue Mars* by Kim Stanley Robinson
 Best Novella: 'Blood of the Dragon' by
 George R. R. Martin
 Best Novelette: 'Bicycle Repairman' by Bruce Sterling
 Best Short Story: 'The Soul Selects her Own Society...'
 by Connie Willis
 Best Non-Fiction: *Time and Chance* by
 L. Sprague de Camp
 Best Dramatic Presentation: 'Severed Dreams'
 (*Babylon 5*)

Best Editor: Gardner Dozois
 Best Professional Artist: Bob Eggleton
 Best Semiprozine: *Locus*
 Best Fanzine: *Mimosa*
 Best Fan Writer: Dave Langford
 Best Fan Artist: William Rotsler

LOCUS AWARD WINNERS

SF Novel: *Blue Mars* by Kim Stanley Robinson
 Fantasy Novel: *A Game of Thrones* by
 George R. R. Martin
 Dark Fantasy/Horror Novel: *Desperation* by
 Stephen King
 Best First Novel: *Whiteout* by Sage Walker and
Reclamation by Sarah Zettel (tie)
 Best Novella: *Bellwether* by Connie Willis
 Best Novelette: 'Mountain Ways' by Ursula K. Le Guin
 Best Short Story: 'Gone' by John Crowley
 Best Non-Fiction: *Look at the Evidence* by John Clute
 Best Art Book: *Spectrum III: The Best in Contemporary
 Fantasy Art* ed. Cathy Burnett, Arnie Fenner
 and Jim Loehr
 Best Collection: *None So Blind* by Joe Haldeman
 Best Anthology: *The Year's Best Science Fiction:
 Thirteenth Annual Collection* ed. Gardner Dozois
 Best Artist: Michael Whelan
 Best Editor: Gardner Dozois
 Best Magazine: *Asimov's*
 Best Book Publisher: Tor

NEBULA AWARDS

Best Novel: *Slow River* by Nicola Griffith
 Best Novella: 'Da Vinci Rising' by Jack Dann
 Best Novelette: 'Lifeboat on a Burning Sea' by
 Bruce Holland Rogers
 Best Short Story: 'A Birthday' by Esther M. Friesner
 Grand Master: Jack Vance

PHILIP K. DICK AWARD

The Time Ships by Stephen Baxter

WORLD FANTASY AWARDS

Best Novel: *Godmother Night* by Rachel Pollack
 Best Novella: *A City in Winter* by Mark Helprin
 Best Short Story: *Thirteen Phantasms* by
 James P. Blaylock
 Best Anthology: *Starlight 1* ed. Patrick Nielsen Hayden
 Best Collection: *The Wall of the Sky, The Wall of the Eye*
 by Jonathan Lethem
 Best Artist: Moebius
 Special Award/Professional: *The Psychotronic® Video
 Guide* by Michael J. Weldon
 Special Award/Non-Professional: Barbara and
 Christopher Roden for Ash-Tree Press
 Lifetime Achievement: Madeleine L'Engle
 Committee Award: Hugh B. Cave

Sources: *Ansible*, *Locus*, *Matrix* &

—COMPILED BY MARK PLUMMER

The Memory Hole

Way back when, there was this guy called William Atheling Jr who used to write a critical column called 'The Issues at Hand'. It appeared originally, back in the 50s, in a Redd Boggs fanzine by the name of *Skyhook* and later in Larry and Noreen Shaw's *Axe*. Now, as any fule kno, 'William Atheling Jr' was actually the late great James Blish and so it's unsurprising that the columns—together with other pieces from Dick and Pat Lupoff's *Zero*, Richard Bergeron's *Warhoon* and Peter Weston's *Speculation*—found their way into book form. There are two volumes, called *The Issues at Hand* and *More Issues at Hand* (Advent: Publishers of Chicago). Get copies if you can—they're worth it.

But what about all the *other* stuff that appeared in *Skyhook* or *Axe* or *Zero* or *Warhoon* or *Speculation*, stuff that wasn't written by professional or aspirant professional sf writers and which wasn't necessarily about sf anyway? Sure, every so often there's somebody who takes a few fine examples of fanzine writing and turns them into book form—NESFA Press are a good example of this—but for most purposes all we have are the original fanzines themselves. And that can be a problem, because by their very nature there probably weren't that many copies in the first place and as time goes by—as people move house, drop out of fandom, die—the number of copies still in circulation gets smaller and smaller until some of these titles just vanish altogether.

Remember the way that the BBC used to wipe the tapes of old episodes of *Dr Who* because it never occurred to them that anybody would still be interested? Well, just as there are indeed still plenty of people out there who are interested in those old episodes of *Dr Who*, there are plenty of people out there who are interested in those old copies of *Skyhook*. A substantially lesser number, for sure, but enough to make it worth trying to

do something about preserving old fanzines. Which is where MEMORY HOLE comes in.

MEMORY HOLE is about fanzine recycling. If you have fanzines for which you no longer have a use, pass them on to the MEMORY HOLE. Costs of postage can be refunded; collection can be arranged if needed.

And if there are old fanzines which you'd like to acquire, again get in touch with the Memory Hole where the highly trained staff (G. Pickersgill) will try to help. If you're after a complete run of *Skyhook* you'll probably be out of luck as—let's face it—they're pretty damn scarce, but there's plenty of good stuff that is available, whether it was produced in the 1930s or last week. Maybe as a result of attending Intuition and reading this book you'd like to check out some Martin Tudor or Ulrika O'Brien fanzines. Maybe you don't know precisely what you want but you're kind of curious and would like a representative selection, in which case try sending along a fiver to cover the postage on a big bundle.

And postage is all you pay for. This isn't a commercial venture—it's just Greg Pickersgill and an awful lot of old fanzines. There's no charge for this material. If it's available, it's free for the cost of getting it to you. It's that simple. No catch.

So it's got to be worth a look, hasn't it? ☺

—MARK PLUMMER

MEMORY HOLE can be contacted at
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e-mail: MH@gostak.demon.co.uk

The MEMORY HOLE ANNEX deals with convention publications and memorabilia. Details on page 37.

The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund

As you may have noticed, the term 'Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund' (TAFF) crops up a fair bit in this book. Martin Tudor was the most recent recipient of a westbound trip in 1996 and this year an eastbound trip brings us Ulrika O'Brien.

TAFF was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic. Since that time, TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and European fans to North American conventions. TAFF exists only through the support of fandom. The candidates are voted on by interested fans all over the world, and each vote is accompanied by a donation of not less than \$2 or £1. These votes, and the continued generosity of fandom, are what makes TAFF possible.

For further details, please see the TAFF ballot form in your membership pack, or talk to the current administrators Martin and Ulrika.

Previous trip winners are (⇒ indicates an eastbound trip and ⇐ a westbound):

1954	⇐	A. Vincent Clarke ¹
1955	⇐	Ken Bulmer
1956	⇒	Lee Hoffman ²
1957	⇒	Bob Madle
1958	⇐	Ron Bennett
1959	⇒	Don Ford
1960	⇐	Eric Bentcliffe
1961	⇒	Ron Ellik
1962	⇐	Ethel Lindsay
1963	⇒	Wally Weber
1964	⇐	Arthur (ATom) Thomson
1965	⇒	Terry Carr
1966	⇐	Tom Schluck
1968	⇒	Steve Stiles
1969	⇐	Eddie Jones
1970	⇒	Elliot Shorter
1971	⇐	Mario Bosnyak

1973 ⇨ Len and June Moffat
 1974 ⇨ Peter Weston
 1976 ⇨ Roy Tackett and Bill Bowers (tie)³
 1977 ⇨ Pete Roberts
 1979 ⇨ Terry Hughes
 1980 ⇨ Dave Langford
 1981 ⇨ Stu Shiffman
 1982 ⇨ Kevin Smith
 1983 ⇨ Avedon Carol
 1984 ⇨ Rob Hansen
 1985 ⇨ Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden
 1986 ⇨ Gregory Pickersgill
 1987 ⇨ Jeanne Gomoll
 1988 ⇨ Lilian Edwards and Christina Lake
 1989 ⇨ Robert Lichtman
 1991 ⇨ Pam Wells

1992 ⇨ Jeanne Bowman
 1993 ⇨ Abigail Frost
 1995 ⇨ Dan Steffan
 1996 ⇨ Martin Tudor
 1998 ⇨ Ulrika O'Brien

Footnotes

- 1 Unable to make trip
- 2 Declined funds
- 3 Election tied; funds insufficient to send both; Bowers withdrew

A westbound race is also scheduled for 1998, to take a delegate to the Worldcon in Baltimore in August. Candidates are Chris Bell, Bridget Hardcastle and Maureen Kincaid Speller. Voting deadline is 25 April 1998.☞

—MARK PLUMMER

PEOPLE OF EARTH, YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE: **LAZLAR LYRICON II**

**THE 20th ANNIVERSARY HITCH HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY CONVENTION
 at THE QUALITY SCOTCH CORNER HOTEL, DARLINGTON, 22nd - 25th MAY 1998**

1998 is the 20th Anniversary of the first broadcasting of *The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* on Radio 4. To celebrate this fact, **ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha**, The Official Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy Appreciation Society, are holding - **Lazlar Lyricon II**. This will be a fun packed weekend of games, panels, competitions and er... games, all with a *HHGG* theme. And afterwards the Universe will explode for your pleasure.

LL2 will feature all the usual things you get at a Con. A main programme, second programme, 24 hour video room, a dealers' room which will include Dave Hodges' "Real Hitch Hikers Guide", Saturday night disco and a games area. But it will be loads more fun than something like an Eastercon. Guests: Dirk Maggs, Kevin Davies (TV series animator, director on *Space Island One*, etc) and Mike Cule (Vogon Guard). Our Convention Hotel has been used before, for *InCon V Inconsistent*, but the Manager is prepared to allow us back despite "the room 217 incident" and the goldfish.

If this sounds too good to miss then send an SSAE to: **ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha**, 67 South Park Gardens, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 1HZ. Or find our Con Table at this Convention! The registration fee for LL2 is £30 until Easter Monday (April 13) at which point it goes up to £35. **ZZ9** members get a £5 discount on this price so it is worth joining **ZZ9** (UK sub is £6) to get the £5 discount (honest guv, would we lie to you?). So what are you waiting for? Register now, this weekend, before the price goes up!

BE LIKE THE TWENTY SECOND ELEPHANT WITH HEATED VALUE IN SPACE -

ATTEND LAZLAR LYRICON II

From the Depths of the Sofa

Reprise

Fran Dowd

Eastercons are a reflection of the ideologies, methodologies and tastes of the people who run them. This one was first mooted a few years ago, and made more concrete in a bar in Glasgow at the Worldcon. We were all women, and biased towards literary criticism, hard sciences and political theory. We wanted to run a strong, serious programme, party hard, eat lots of chocolate and drink a lot of Laphroaig and Gordons, though not necessarily out of the same glass.

We also wanted to go somewhere new and exciting. Manchester was an obvious choice. A city which hadn't hosted an Eastercon for a long time, with loads of interesting stuff to do, see, eat and buy. Really strong feng-shui. A cultural city, with a strong connection to sf literature.

Basing a convention of up to a thousand people inside one hotel is a big pain, and not just for fannish events. A lot of modern hotels limit their function space, expecting larger groups to use purpose-built convention halls—look at where political parties and trades unions go. Birmingham, Eastbourne, Brighton, Torquay, Cardiff. Lots of smaller hotels around one big centre. The alternatives all present their own problems. There's the 'take over Butlins' option—a complete booking for somewhere like CenterParcs—but that gets expensive, and a lot of them won't take block bookings from groups with large numbers of single adults. You can go to campus universities that offer lots of function space and accommodation—but then the bedrooms are limited to singles, the food and bar arrangements aren't flexible, the lounge areas are often uncomfortable, and the function spaces are aimed at academic-type use. So, although they each have their own problems, we end up with the same venues over and over again. We knew that the Jarvis Piccadilly hotel would limit us, and eventually refused to compromise and work with those limitations but instead break out. We had always intended to use the Britannia, just across the road, as an overflow hotel, and when we found ourselves longingly coveting its function space as well, we looked at the implications of running a split-site convention and decided to go with it. It was important to us that the hotels serve different but equal functions, and that one wasn't perceived as a ghetto space. So we spread the main programming between each hotel, and allocated specific groups the space that we hoped would best suit them, without regard to which building it was in. Think of it the way we did, as one large space that happened to have a road running through it.

The balancing act also applied to our choice of guests. We wanted writers, two pros and one fan, with the pros being a man and a woman, one European and one American, and all of them with a wide range of

interests, a good sense of humour, people we felt would contribute not only to the programme but also to the atmosphere of the convention: hence Ian McDonald, Martin Tudor and Connie Willis. We were also lucky in having an unexpected TAFF guest, Ulrika O'Brien, who nicely balances Martin, who is also a TAFF winner.

We also wanted to bring in programme participants from other areas, people who weren't necessarily in fandom, or didn't normally attend conventions. So we had some 'guest speakers', particularly in the science elements of the programme. We looked at some things people do over convention weekends, which weren't normally part of the programme, and formalised them—so if you want to listen to the *Archers* omnibus, there is a place where you can go and do that with like-minded people.

We were quite determined about what was convention time and what wasn't; so the convention would start with the Opening Ceremony, and end with the Closing Ceremony. I know that doesn't sound very radical, but there has been a tendency for conventions to spread to the nights before and after. So many of the workers are there to set up, so many people travel long journeys and want to be in the hotel refreshed and relaxed. Then the con atmosphere starts earlier and finishes later, and people want to be a part of that, and then they want con bar prices, parties, and general con activity to be happening as soon as they arrive.

Within the convention timetable, we also made some changes. The Masquerade was moved to Saturday, mainly at the request of the costumers, so that they had more time to relax and enjoy the convention afterwards. We took the Awards out of the Closing Ceremony, and turned Sunday night into Awards-Cabaret-Ceremony (unfortunately, handwriting is a lost art, and so Howard's Cabernet Sauvignon was born). The Opening and Closing Ceremonies themselves reverted to just that, a few minutes of ceremony to mark an occasion rather than protracted announcements. We kept the tradition of having no programme items running against the keynote guest events, because we thought it was good manners, as well as because we believed they are seriously interesting people. On the other hand, we replaced the traditional video programme with a Film Festival, tying it more into the rest of the programme.

We also changed the feedback and evaluation systems, with no Gripe Sessions but instead an RTFM (Read the F-ing Manual) session on Friday night, to incorporate the announcements that are usually in the Opening Ceremony, welcome New Bugs, and explain generally how things work and; on Monday, a Feedback Session to examine the changes we made, things we got right and things we got wrong, with the primary purpose

of informing planning for future conventions. For more immediate matters, there is an Information Desk (with a Suggestions Box), hotel reception and our Site Liaison Team, or you can just find us and tell us. The waistcoat system acts as an identifier: red dragon waistcoat with a black back indicates staff, with a red dragon back—you've found a committee member, or indeed a Guest of Honour! And if there's a blue kimono under it, you've found me—probably on a sofa somewhere.

Our internal structure and working patterns reflected our origins. Instead of line management systems, we had a webbed subgrouping pattern so there wasn't one person responsible for programme, one for publications etc. Instead we had a working group, the Pod, containing all the Peas. P for programme, publications, publicity, productions. There were e-mail bounces for the committee, staff, Pod, and our second subgroup, Bourse. Some of the things we chose to do were expensive and we started looking for money outside our normal sources of income. Bourse was set up to explore income from sponsorship and to encourage traditional supporters, such as publishers, to contribute to the convention in more interesting ways than plain advertising. The third subgroup, the Ops Empire, monitored the activities of all the others, pointed out practical problems, and suggested solutions.

My role as Sofa was to co-ordinate all this activity, adjudicate if necessary, and keep us all working as a team. We are a geographically disparate group, so as well as regular meetings, I instituted Happy Tuesdays, aiming to phone the majority of the committee at least

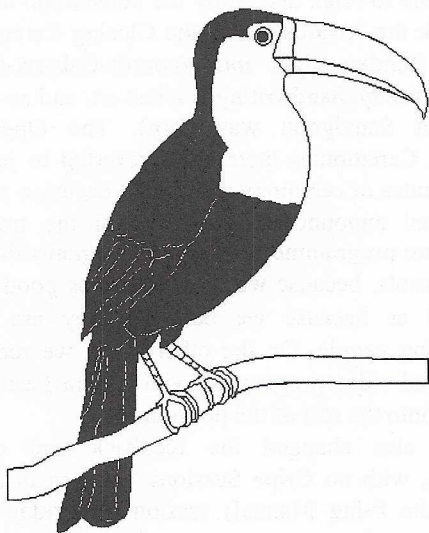
once a week, for a gossipy natter as much as on con business. There was also a chair's newsletter, *From the Depths of the Sofa*, which appeared on an irregular basis.

Writing this now, which in my time is early February, has prompted me to step back for an overview. The Pod and Bourse are working well, though Bourse would have benefitted from starting earlier, being in the system from the beginning. Next time I'd add a Secretariat, combining minute-taker, decision-recorder, organisational mapper and IT co-ordinator.

So why did I write all this down? Because I couldn't find the information when it was my turn, that's why. It's easy to see from past convention publications what they planned. You can see from published accounts how they managed to pay for it. You can read con reports to see what people thought about it. But as it's all careering along, it's difficult to talk to the people involved about why it was done. Some of them forget. Some of them weren't actually on the committee when those decisions were made, and can't remember who was. For some of them it was such a stressful experience that they don't want to discuss it at all. Some of them want to keep things secret, because con-running is a competitive sport. Some of them want to help, some want you to learn the hard way. Some of them think things did or didn't work because of the personalities involved, and that way lies a great bitching session, but little practical advice. And things change—what was excellent practical strategy even just a few years ago might be completely irrelevant now. ☺

—FRAN DOWD

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PREVIOUS EASTERCONS

Early Conventions

1937	Leeds	
1938	London	
1939	London	
1943	Leicester	Midvention
1944	London	Eastercon

Eastercons

1	1948	London	Whitcon	Bertram Chandler
2	1949	London		
	1951	London	Festivention	Forrest Ackerman; Lyell Crane
3	1952	London	Loncon	
4	1953	London	Coroncon	
5	1954	Manchester	Supermancon	John Russell Fearn
6	1955	Kettering	Cytricon	
7	1956	Kettering	Cytricon II	
8	1957	Kettering	Cytricon III	
9	1958	Kettering	Cytricon IV	
10	1959	Birmingham	Brumcon	
11	1960	London		E. J. 'Ted' Carnell; Don Ford
12	1961	Gloucester	LXIcon	Kingsley Amis
13	1962	Harrogate	Ronvention	Tom Boardman
14	1963	Peterborough	Bullcon	Edmund Crispin
15	1964	Peterborough	Repetercon	Ted Tubb
16	1965	Birmingham	Brumcon II	Harry Harrison
17	1966	Yarmouth	Yarcon	Ron Whiting
18	1967	Bristol	Briscon	John Brunner
19	1968	Buxton	Thirdmancon	Ken Bulmer
20	1969	Oxford	Galactic Fair	Judith Merrill
21	1970	London	Scicon '70	James Blish
22	1971	Worcester	Eastercon 22	Ethel Lindsay; Anne McCaffrey
23	1972	Chester	Chessmancon	Larry Niven
24	1973	Bristol	OMPAcon	Samuel R. Delany
25	1974	Newcastle	Tynecon	Bob Shaw; Peter Weston
26	1975	Coventry	Seacon	Harry Harrison
27	1976	Manchester	Mancon 5	Peter Roberts; Robert Silverberg
28	1977	Coventry	Eastercon '77	John Bush
29	1978	Heathrow	Skycon	Roy Kettle; Robert Sheckley
30	1979	York	Yorcon	Graham and Pat Charnock; Richard Cowper
31	1980	Glasgow	Albacon	Jim Barker; Colin Kapp
32	1981	Leeds	Yorcon II	Tom Disch; Dave Langford; Ian Watson
33	1982	Brighton	Channelcon	Angela Carter; John Sladek
34	1983	Glasgow	Albacon II	Marion Zimmer Bradley; Avedon Carol; James White
35	1984	Brighton	Seacon '84	Pierre Barbet; Waldemar Kumming; Josef Nesvadba; Chris Priest; Roger Zelazny
36	1985	Leeds	Yorcon III	Greg Benford; Linda Pickersgill
37	1986	Glasgow	Albacon III	Joe Haldeman; John Jarrod
38	1987	Birmingham	BECCON '87	Chris Atkinson; Keith Roberts
39	1988	Liverpool	Follycon	Gordon Dickson; Gwyneth Jones; Greg Pickersgill; Len Wein
40	1989	Jersey	Contrivance	Avedon Carol; Rob Hansen; M. John Harrison; Don Lawrence; Anne McCaffrey
41	1990	Liverpool	Eastcon	Iain Banks; Anne Page; SMS
42	1991	Glasgow	Speculation	Rob Holdstock
43	1992	Blackpool	Illumination	Geoff Ryman; Paul McAuley; Pam Wells
44	1993	Jersey	Helicon	John Brunner; George R. R. Martin; Karel Thole; Larry van der Putte
45	1994	Liverpool	Sou'Wester	Diane Duane; Neil Gaiman; Barbara Hambly; Peter Morwood
46	1995	London	Confabulation	Lois McMaster Bujold; Roger Robinson; Bob Shaw
47	1996	Heathrow	Evolution	Jack Cohen; Colin Greenland; Paul Kincaid; Maureen Kincaid Speller; Bryan Talbot; Vernor Vinge
48	1997	Liverpool	Intervention	Brian Aldiss; Jon Bing; Octavia Butler; David Langford
49	1998	Manchester	Intuition	Ian McDonald; Martin Tudor; Connie Willis
50	1999	Liverpool	Reconvene	Peter Beagle; John Clute; Jeff Noon

Evolution

(The 1996 Eastercon)

Accounts

Income

Memberships	£ 22,258
Advertising	£ 1,052
Bookroom Tables	£ 1,250
Auctions	£ 370
T-Shirts	£ 263
Sou'Wester	£ 2,088
Interest	£ 48
Total	£ 27,329

Expenditure

Guests	£ 2,194
Hospitality	£ 1,400
Hotel	£ 454
Gratuity	£ 600
Publicity	£ 1,750
Publications	£ 8,918
Admin/Expenses	£ 3,895
Insurance	£ 389
Badges	£ 200
Parties	£ 790
Films	£ 114
Transport	£ 220
Equipment	£ 4,000
Programme	£ 445
Donations	£ 1,960
Total	£ 27,329

Summary

Income	£ 27,329
Expenditure	£ 27,329
Balance In-Hand	£ -

—MIKE WESTHEAD, TREASURER, EVOLUTION

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S Supporting Member
C Coypu

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Dawn Abigail	A460	Simon Bisson	A264	Jack Cohen	A754
Andrew A. Adams	P33	Annie Blackburn	A652	Malcolm Cohen	A260
Iain Alexander	A322	Paul Blackwell	A393	Peter Cohen	A164
J Alexander	A712	Paul Blair	A577	Peter Coleman	A597
Lissa Allcock	A507	Hans-Ulrich Boettcher	A309	Robert Collier	A433
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John Anderson	A397	Michael Braithwaite	A629	Kate Cooper	A410
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Andy Armstrong	A499	Nils Helge Brobakk	A714	E. M. Costelloe	S390
Helen Armstrong	A500	Ben Brown	A219	Graham Coulton	A408
Sion Arrowsmith	A35	David Brown	A641	Gail Courtney	A209
Erik Arthur	A691	John David Brown	A523	Chris Cowan	A491
Sarah Ash	A694	Molly Brown	A449	Robert Coward	A394
Margaret Austin	A79	Tanya Brown	A383	Adrian Cox	A92
Graham Auty	S162	E. D. Buckley	A190	Dave Cox	A178
		Bill Burns	A108	Paul Cray	A376
Mark Bailey	A68	Jackie E. Burns	A345	Jon Crew	A698
Amanda Baker	A9	Mary Burns	A127	Andy Croft	A210
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Rachel Baker	A748	Martin Burroughs	A481	Nichola Crowther	A521
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Iain Banks	A651	Andrew Butler	A281	1/2r Cruttenden	A308
Katherine Banks	A713	Brandon Butterworth	A450	Michael Cule	A192
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John Bark	A147			Tony Cullen	A317
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Lewis Bear	A456	Scott Campbell	A620	John Dallman	A6
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Chris Bell	A170	Stuart Capewell	A579	Dee Davey	A466
Douglas Bell	A627	Peter Card	A337	Mike Davey	A467
Kenneth Bell	J172	Anders Carlsson	A256	Christine Davidson	A662
Rachel Bell	J171	Carolyn Caughey	S634	Michael Davidson	A663
Rowan Bell	J173	James Cawthorn	A464	Huw Davies	A518
Alan Bellingham	A389	Joy Chamberlain	A722	Jack Davies	P17
Jess Bennett	A156	Arthur Chappell	A371	Malcolm Davies	A569
Ron Bennett	S529	Mike Cheater	A251	Steve Davies	A246
Austin Benson	A226	Ewan Chrystal	A214	Paul Davison	A682
Meike Benzler	A30	Fiona Clark	A750	Martin Dawe	A284
Johannes Berg	A305	Susanna Clarke	A395	Guy Dawson	A236
Kjersti Thunem Berg	A407	Vincent Clarke	A193	Sue Dawson	A235
Michael Bernardi	A158	Dr David Clements	A64	Peter Dawson	A732
Tony Berry	A459	Norman Clinton	A363	Robert Day	A100
Elizabeth Billinger	A199	Elaine Coates	A484	Giulia de Cesare	A247
Paul Billinger	A208	David Cochrane	A644	Jim de Liscard	C32
Peter Binfield	S405	Paul Cockburn	A575	Simon Mark de Wolfe	A419

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Ben Dessau	A592
Zoe Deterding-Barker	A118
Gillian Dickson	A482
James Dickson	J312
Martin Dickson	A47
Chad Dixon	A76
Michael Don	A519
Paul Dormer	A140
Frances Dowd	A11
John Dowd	A227
Tara Dowling-Hussey	A94
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Terry Drury	A756
David Drysdale	A177
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Martin Glassborow	A131
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Steve Glover	P75
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Clare Goodall	A611
Sarah Goodman	P21
Michael Grant	S693
Simon Grant	A125
Roy Gray	S440
Colin Greenland	A396
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Penny Heal	A595	Peter Kieivits	A299	Ian McDonald	G2
Niall Hedderley	A212	Jane Killick	A593	Duncan McGregor	P78
Lee Hendley	A300	Paul Kincaid	A207	Simon McGrory	A687
Alastair Hepburn	P45	Tom Kingston	A361	John McKendrick	A666
Marcus Herniman	A699	Annette Kirk	A259	Pauline McKendrick	A665
Richard Hewison	A342	Tim Kirk	A258	Richard McKendrick	J667
Stephen Higgins	A696	Paul Knibbs	A479	Lorna McLaren	A546
Anthony Hilbert	A321	Alice Kohler	A169	Bobby McLaughlin	A205
Joy Hilbert	A331	Jens Kuhn	A608	Rory McLean	A292
Joanna Hilken	A211			Alex McLintock	A65
Angela Shackleton Hill	A654	Karin Lagesen	A678	McMahon	A501
Chris Hill	A446	David Laight	A385	Kate McMurray	A563
Geoff Hill	A189	Christina Lake	A567	Pat McMurray	A13
Penny Hill	A447	Dave Lally	A24	Rona McMurray	A562
Richard Hill	A655	Dave Langford	A71	Simon Meacock	A673
Martin Hoare	A350	Andrew Langhammer	A442	Hazel Meades	J373
Katherine Hodges	A506	Eira Latham	A280	Rob Meades	A168
Liz Holliday	A753	Peter Lavery	A311	John Meaney	A234
Shelley Hollingsworth	A728	Peter Lavery	A743	Yvonne Meaney	A233
Anders Holmström	C290	Alice Lawson	A36	David Melling	A639
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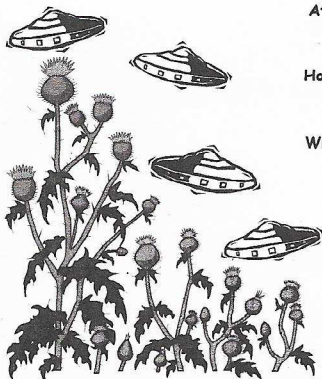
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