

.YORCON....

PROGRESS REPORT NO. 1



Richard Cowper

30th British Easter SF Convention

YORCON

APRIL 13-16th 1979

And so a welcome return to Leeds, after an absence of over forty years for the Easter Convention. Just thirteen people attended that first Leeds convention back in 1937, including a very youthful Arthur C Clarke; over 700 attended the 1978 convention at Heathrow, demonstrating the great popularity of such events these days. It's going to be a big year for British fans next year, as the World SF Con is being held over here for the first time since 1965: YORCON, we hope will be an ideal run-in for this extravaganza. The months of preparation culminating in the bidding session at SKYCON have paid off, and the committee can now actually get down to some real work, instead of looking to cases of Theakston's assorted brews to provide inspiration. At times they will begin to regret it, but be assured, their efforts will produce an Easter Convention to remember, so sign up NOW!

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MARY BURNS,
48 LOU AVENUE,
KINGS PARK,
NY 11754,
U.S.A.

American fans can send their membership fees to our American Agent, Mary Burns, who once more has very kindly agreed to act in this capacity. All cheques should be made out to Mary herself. Supporting membership will cost \$5 and full membership \$10 (\$5 for those already supporting). These will be the final membership rates, and they will not therefore be increased.

30th British Easter SF Convention

THE YORCON COMMITTEE

- Mike Dickinson: Elder Statesman of the group. Former co-editor of BAR TREK a fanzine 'for people who's brains have turned to alcoholic mush'. Enjoys reading cricket books, watching football and lives for the day when Jimmy Armfield gets the sack. Does the occasional review for FOUNDATION and plans his own one-off fanzine ADSUM 'real soon now'.
- Co Chairman
- Dave Pringle: The brains of the band. Holds elite position at the Science Fiction Foundation in London; co-editor of the book 'J G Ballard; The first 20 years'. Ambition is to start the first really successful SF magazine when he wins the pools. His other ambition, to become a mesomorph was realised several years ago.
- Co Chairman
- Alan Dorey: Representative of 'Flaming Youth'. Former editor of BLACK HOLE and now has the world trembling at his feet with GROSS ENCOUNTERS. Drinks TETLEY mild and THEAKSTON'S Old Peculiar; follows the fortunes of Spurs and has ambitions to write the ultimate fanzine review column.
- Registrations & Secretary
- Kate Jeary: Can read a book in half an hour and have almost perfect recall. Enjoys digging interesting things up on archaeological sites; reads fantasy and has ambitions to be bigger than Erich von Daniken. Rather a superb cook too, and refutes the rumour that people don't actually live on Canvey Island.
- Registrations
- Paul & Jan Matthews: Refugees from Cheltenham, but welcome. Paul's the artistic wizard and expresses much admiration for the work of Frank Frazetta. Enjoys comix, but Jan keeps his spending well in check. Ambitions to produce a widely distributed mag with own illos.
- Art Show
- Carol Gregory: Also a dab hand at art, some of her work having adorned the covers of VECTOR, and since reprinted in the PICTORIAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SF. Has ambitions to work in films and TV and is co-editor of GHAS (soon to be retitled), an entertaining genzine. Has recently made a TV film on the value of STAR WARS.
- Films
- Ian Williams: Well established fan hailing from Sunderland. In earlier days was responsible for the inauguration of MAYA, which now under Rob Jackson is Britain's premier fanzine. Now edits his own highly amusing SIDDHARTHA and was on the 1974 TYNECON committee. Has ambitions to run the world's greatest fan room.
- Fan Room
- Charlotte Bowden: Known for her accountancy ability and rumour has it that Kevin Smith has now got a rival. Shows remarkable restraint when the rest of the committee becomes agitated. Her ambition is to read an SF novel.
- Treasurer

Richard Cowper.

Richard Cowper's real name is John Middleton Murry. He was born in 1926, the son of one of the most distinguished literary critics of that period (John Middleton Murry Senior's first wife had been Katherine Mansfield, and he had been a great friend -- and enemy -- of D.H. Lawrence). Thus, John Middleton Murry Junior, who was to become Richard Cowper the SF writer, had a literary background a million miles removed from the pulp magazines where genre SF had its beginnings -- coincidentally -- in the same year that he was born. In his entertaining (and at times painful) autobiography One Hand Clapping, published confusingly under the name of Colin Middleton Murry, he tells of meeting H.G. Wells as a child. Wells, of course, was to become an enormous influence on young Murry's imagination.

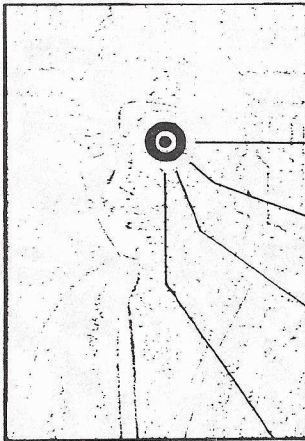
However, when he began writing it didn't occur to him to try his hand at scientific romance. His first three novels, published under the name of Colin Murry, were all "straight" works that gained some praise from reviewers but did not sell well. In the mid-1960s Murry decided that it was time for him to be "born anew" as a writer, so he invented the pen-name of Richard Cowper and put it to a fine novel of telepathy called Breakthrough. ESP had always fascinated him -- he had already used some slight elements of it in his earlier novels -- and he was to go on to use it as a subject again and again in the novels published under the new name. Breakthrough was eventually released by Ballantine in America and by Dobson in Britain in 1967. It was swiftly followed by Phoenix in 1968. At first, Cowper made little impression on the SF world, since it is usually the practise of the SF coterie to ignore "outsiders" and wait for them to go away. But Cowper did not go away, and he has long since been accepted as the fine science fiction writer that he is. He does not have roots in the magazines, perhaps, but he is undoubtedly one of the last representatives of the Wellsian tradition of the English intellectual scientific romance -- a tradition which includes the works of writers like J.D. Beresford, Olaf Stapledon, Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, C.S. Lewis, William Golding and Naomi Mitchison and was once quite separate from "science fiction" in the American sense.

The eventual acceptance of Cowper as an SF writer came in 1972, with the publication of Kuldesak and Clone. The former is an adventure story set in an underground society centuries after a nuclear holocaust. It is a perfect example of what Peter Nicholls has termed the Conceptual Breakthrough story, the type of SF tale in which the protagonist discovers that the world is much larger and stranger than he first believed it to be. Clone, on the other hand, is a delightful comic romp full of good-natured satire and madcap humour. Both books are exceedingly well written, and both are notable for their sympathetic handling of juvenile lead characters. Richard Cowper seems to have preserved his childhood wonder intact within him. By constantly dipping into this well of innocence, he achieves many of his best effects as a writer.

Rebirth is Cowper's major theme -- not in the literal sense, but in the social, psychological and spiritual extensions of the metaphor. His next really successful novel, The Twilight of Briareus (1974), is about a planet-wide disaster followed by just such a grand renaissance. The novel could be seen as a cross between John Christopher's The World in Winter and Arthur C, Clarke's Childhood's End, but it has a flavour and a charm all its own. Cowper's sensitive depiction of landscape -- in particular the English landscape -- is one of the most notable strengths of the novel.

Cowper has published a number of other, more minor, novels -- Domino (1970), Time Out of Mind (1973) and Worlds Apart (1975). He has also written a few shorter stories and novellas, two of which -- "The Custodians" and "Piper at the Gates of Dawn" -- have been particularly successful with the readers of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction (the first, and so far the only, SF magazine for which Cowper has written). Four of these tales were collected in The Custodians and Other Stories (1976). Cowper's most recent work is the novel The Road to Corlay, just published by Gollancz in June 1978 at £3.95. Set a thousand years in the future, in a Britain which has split up into neo-feudal kingdoms, it is a sequel to "Piper at the Gates of Dawn". It is a novel which reworks all Cowper's familiar obsessions into a powerful and moving blend, and is quite possibly his best book to date.

By the late 1970s, Richard Cowper has become established as one of the half dozen top SF writers in Britain. His rebirth, his own phoenix-like rise from the ashes of Colin Murry and from the long shadow of a famous father, is now complete. We are very proud to honour him as our special guest at the 30th British Easter Science Fiction Convention in Leeds in 1979.



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C L O N E

THE HOTEL

The DRAGONARA is designed to be a conference centre and has a young management concerned with the success of events and the attendant publicity. It is rated at fourstars by the A.A. and has the advantage with 32 single rooms and 196 doubles (extra accommodation is available in a nearby hotel), of being large enough but, as there will be less than a dozen non-convention residents, avoiding some of the problems of past conventions.

All rooms are pleasantly decorated, comfortably furnished and have telephones, doubt-glazing, air-conditioning, private bathrooms, bedside radio and colour television. Room service is available, including continental breakfast in bed at £1.25, but all rooms include tea and coffee-making facilities.

The main floor of the hotel is large enough to cater for almost all convention activities. There is a hall large enough to seat 350 easily, even with one section sealed off for the book room. Following recent alterations, there is now a large open area for the bar/restaurant. The bar area stretches through reception to the open bar at the far side, and can accommodate an estimated 500 drinkers at any one time!

Upstairs there is a room suitable for the fan room with adjoining bar (!) and its own small cinema screen. Also there are rooms suitable for the art show and other activities (e.g. the playing of 'Dungeons and Dragons').

The hotel is willing to cooperate on late night bar opening, and is offering as large a choice of bar as possible (C.A.M.R.A. is being contacted). The management is also working on a special, cheaper convention menu. The normal menu is moderately-priced for a hotel of such excellent quality - many local firms specially arrange meals there.

Prices are £10 per single room, and an average of £14 per double or twin, including service charges. NO deposits are required prior to the convention.



The Leeds S F Group waiting for their Friday night watering hole to open.

TRAVEL

By Rail

- The Dragonara is plainly visible from the Station and passengers have a walk of less than one hundred yards from the Station exit.

By Coach

- The main national coach park, with buses from all over the country, is only a further hundred yards from the railway station.

By Air

- Regular flights from London, Glasgow and other major airports to Leeds-Bradford airport. Plentiful local bus supply from the airport (Yeadon) into Leeds.

By Road

- Less than ten minutes from the end of the M.1. The Hotel has free parking for 100 cars. Also, immediately opposite is an N.C.P. park for 60. This caters generally for commuters and so will be free from Friday evening. Low charges generally and free during holidays.

Maps for all the above will be supplied before the convention.

SPECIAL OFFER

Ladbroke's hotels have agreed special reductions for conferences and conventions with British Rail saving up to 50% over standard rates and a considerable amount on weekend fares.

E.g. Return, travelling out on Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

London	£10.40	
Tyne & Wear	£ 5.10	
Central Scotland	£11.80	(Subject to general B.R. Price Rises)

Write for details if interested.

ADVERTISING RATES

PROFESSIONAL: Convention Booklet

Full Page £20, Half Page £12, Quarter Page £7

: Progress Reports

Full Page £8, Half Page £4.50, Quarter Page £2.75

FAN : Convention Booklet

Full Page £13, Half Page £7, Quarter Page £4

: Progress Reports

Full Page £5, Half Page £3, Quarter Page £2

Convention members. List correct to JUNE 8th.

1	Richard Cowper	43	Liese Hoare	85	Peter Mabey
2		44	Martin Hoare	86	C.J. Walton
3	Mike Dickinson	45	Peter T Garratt	87	Fred Hemmings
4	David Pringle	46	John Steward	88	Tel Hudson
5	Alan Dorey	47	Malcolm Edwards	89	Peter Clarke
6	Greg Pickersgill	48	Chris Atkinson	90	Michael Damesick
7	Simone Walsh	49	Stan Eling	91	Mark Woodward
8	Paul Matthews	50	Helen Eling	92	Martin Easterbrook
9	Jan Matthews	51	Robin Hughes	93	Dave Langford
10	Charlotte Bowden	52	Pat Meara	94	Hazel Langford
11	Kate Jeary	53	Mike Meara	95	Ian Moor
12	Ian Williams	54	Rod Milner	96	Brian Hampton
13	Anne Pringle	55	Bonny Milner	97	Graham Poole
14	Carol Gregory	56	Tim Illingworth	98	Richard Hughes
15	John Hindle	57	Paul Dormer	99	Darroll Pardoe
16	Richard Cooper	58	D. West	100	Rosemary Pardoe
17	Ron Bennett	59	Phil Rogers	101	Paul Kincaid
18	Graham Charnock	60	Doreen Rogers	102	Martin Stallard
19	Pat Charnock	61	Ted Ball	103	Gerry Webb
20	Linda Hutchinson	62	Dave Gibson	104	David Thomas
21	Eve Harvey	63	Vera Johnson	105	Al Fitzpatrick
22	John Harvey	64	David Wingrove	106	Ken Bulmer
23	Colin Fine	65	Arthur Cruttenden	107	John Stewart
24	Jim Barker	66	Wendy Cruttenden	108	Edward Blair Wilkins
25	Dai Price	67	David Webb	109	S.D. Steel
26	Joseph Nicholas	68	Keith Freeman	110	V.M. Steel
27	Howie Rosenblum	69	Wendy Freeman	111	Robert Swann
28	Leroy Kettle	70	Gerald Bishop	112	Jan Howerd Finder
29	Harry Bell	71	Kevin Plunkett	113	Martin D Pay
30	Vernon Brown	72	Urban Gunnarsson	114	Kathy Flint
31	Pat Baxter	73	Bernard Jose	115	Mike Westhead
32	Rob Jackson	74	Kevin Smith	116	John Brunner
33	Coral Clarke	75	Mary Burns	117	Marjorie Brunner
34	Roy Mortimore	76	Bill Burns	118	Paul G Begg
35	Daphne Mortimore	77	Peter Hammerton	119	Judy Crowther
36	Lars Strandberg	78	Michel Feron	120	Graham Smith
37	Celia Parsons	79	Kenneth F Slater	121	Tony Berry
38	Bruce Healey	80	Joyce E Slater	122	Phil Knight
39	Joyce Mains	81	L.B. Williams	123	Chris Bursey
40	John Lowe	82	Mic Rogers	124	Bob Shaw
41	Bob Shaw	83	Roger Peyton	125	Sadie Shaw
42	Peter Weston	84	Arline Peyton		

REGISTRATION is £2.50 supporting and £5.00 attending. Please use the coupon below.

HOTEL CHARGES are £10 per single room per night and £14 per double. These prices include service charges and NO deposits will be required on room bookings.

REGISTRATION COUPON

Please register me for Supporting/Attending (delete as appropriate) membership. I enclose £..... (Cheques payable to YORCON).

Name (Block Capitals Please)

Address (Block Capitals Please)

SEND TO: Alan Dorey
C/O 20 Hermitage Woods Crescent
St Johns
WOKING. Surrey. GU21 1UE.