NOVACON FOURTEEN PROGRESS REPORT ONE

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I bet you all thought you had heard the last from me and my Hot Waffles. In fact, so did I! But no, this year's chairman Steve Green used a new tactic to get me to write this. He dognapped Zoltan. "Write summit for PR1 or you will never see this dog again." I hadn't the heart to tell him Zoltan was only a drawing, so I gave.in. Yet what was I to write about? What qualifications did I have? "You were chairman last year, that's good enough. Rêmember I still have your dog," Steve snarled. Quite clearly Steve was taking his job very seriously.

I remember Novacon 13 as if it were only three months ago. In fact it was only three months ago (I wondered why I was still having nightmares). Yet some things stay in my memory fresh as ever. Like on the Monday morning when two of the hotel's cleaning staff came out of the lift on the second floor and sniffed the air.

"This place smells like a brewery," the first said.

"Naw. A brewery smells better than this place.

And from my own experience from working in a brewery they were right. I recently found out that the Royal Angus has now taken the unusual measure of sending the cleaning to Sellafield. I always thought some of the beer was rough! What I enjoyed most about that weekend was seeing the faces of the hotel staff

go through varying degress of expression as they came upon new extremes of fannishness. Such as the Mexicon party on the Saturday night in the lower Angus. I'm told the manager was thinking of contacting the Guiness Book of Records to try and get a figure on how many people were down there that night. Even now fans are still being found pressed against the wall.

From what I can remember of that weekend, there was an awful lot of beer going round. Far more than usual. In fact, there were an awful lot of things going on all over the place. Which gave rise to one comment: "I didn't think you could over programme a Novacon."

All of which brings me to this year's shindig. (After all, I do have to get Zoltan back). Yet I am not here to tell you how wonderful, super, great, terrific Novacon 14 will be. So I won't. What I will tell you is that knowing this year's committee, they will want to make this Novacon as good, if not hetter, than any other. Mercifully I am not involved, so this is the very last you will get from me. Look, Steve, do I have to go on? Can't I have Zoltan back now? Please.....

Phill Probert

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Well, since Phill has copped out on telling you how wonderful, super, etcetera Novacon 14 will be, I guess the task is left to me. But do I honestly have to tell you all what an excellent guest of honour we have in Rob Holdstock, whose dual nationality as both fan and pro makes him a doubly relevant speaker? Or discuss at length the superb facilities now offered through our change of venue from the Royal Angus to the Grand? Or even blow our own trumpet by mentioning the £1 reduction in membership costs achie**r**ed by massive cuts in our progress report printing bills?

membership costs achieved by massive cuts in our progress report printing bills? I'd rather take this opportunity to pick up Phill's gauntlet and promise you the best ever Novacon - and after 13, that's no idle boast. Also to thank all those who helped make that such a successful con, to Kev Dixon for our front cover mascot "Buck Rodent" and to Linda Pickersgill for her conrep, to Phill and Rob for their contributions, and last - but by no means least - those who have already signed up 'or Novacon 14. Everyone else will find the details at the back of this progress eport. Look forward to seeing you all at the con. A renovated Victorian hotel dating back to 1876, the Grand Hotel is just five minutes' walk from New Street Station and twenty minutes' drive from the Birmingham International Airport and rail station complex.

The main convention hall will be the historic Grosvenor Suite, once described by the Poet Laureate, Sir John Betjeman, as "unique and superbly beautiful". Seating 450 with ease, the Grosvencr is backed onto by the massive Barwick Room, which will act as the main convention bar and ground floor lounge. A cheap food facility will be laid on by the Grand, but for those with a taste for more lavish meals, the ground floor also houses the city's justifiably reknowned Carvers Table and Penny Plack restaurants and bars, offering good food, fine wines and excellent value for money. Alternatively, all rooms include tea and coffee making facilities, and a 24hour snack service.

The remaining convention facilities will be housed on the mezzanine floor, one flight above (a lift is available for disabled members): the massive artshow gallery, idec room, fan lounge (with its own bar and display/meeting space for groups or sf concommittees; anyone interested should contact Kev Clarke at 438, Station Road, Dorridge; Solihull (please include an s.a.s.e.)) and book room.

The fan lounge will not follow the established "fan lounge" format ; this would be inappropriate at a convention as overtly fannish as Novacor. Nor will it feature a formal alternate programme, such as was run at Novacon 13. Rather, it will act as a meeting place for old friends and new acquaintances alike, a forum for informal discussion and an introduction to sf fandom for those attending their first convention. Not to mention the venue for innumerable parties, of course.

Also on the mezzanine floor will be the convention's creche, a new feature at Novacon and one we are certain will be welcomed by parents and fellow fans alike. Anyone interested in making use of this facility should contact Ann Green at 11, Fox arten Crescent, Acocks Green, Birmingham, as soon as possible.

The Grand Hotel has 145 bedrooms, totalling 249 beds ; overflow facilities will be organised at the nearby Midland Hotel if necessary. Booking forms will be issued with the second progress report in April.

We have negotiated a single room rate of £15 per night ; this is identical to that at the Royal Angus last year and less than half the Grand's normal tariff. All win/double rooms will be rated at £30.

THE VENUE

One of the highlights of any Novacon is the artshow, a showcase for the talents of professional artists and fans as well as a preview for the popular art auction. As at Novacon 13, the artshow will be organised by fellow artist Dave Haden ; the major difference will be the venue - the Coronation Room, more than 1,400 sq.ft. of floorspace (132 sq.metres).

Artists wishing to exhibit should contact Dave at Shottery P.O. & Stores, Shott-9. y. nr. Stratford-on-Avon, listing the total space required and any special needs.

NOTE: All exhibits entered by non-professional artists will qualify for our annart competition, to be judged by our guest of honour, Rob Holdstock. Full details the next progress report.

These are the lies that are told about me.

By the time of the convention I shall be thirty six years of age. I was born in a damp, dismal house that stood so deeply on the Romney Marsh of Kent that it was in the Romney Marsh. My earliest memory is of an invasion of small frogs int. the kitchen, which caused much hysteria. My brother, a mere mewling infant, ate one. These days I expect similar behaviour from my adult friends, for I am, indeed...

A fan ! My first convention was Bristol, '67. I knew nobody, when I arrived. I knew nobody when I left. I had been as popular as a wart on a beauty queen's bum. I've only missed one Novacon (through being broke and depressed) and to me they're the highlight of the year. My fannish activities -- I was an original Ratfan -- began with producing a fiction fanzine, <u>Macrocosm</u>, which ran stories by several people who went on to become very famous. In other fields. Later, with Welsh Optimist and Wellie-Boot Specialist Chris Evans (a fellow Celt), I edited Focus for the BSFA. And did no other work. And got broke and depressed.

Before this, however, I read zoology and parasitology at Bangor University, North Wales, Good honours, long since reduced to the point of uselessness. I specialised in tropical worms of human beings at the London School of Hygiene, attained an MSc, but quit my PhD in disgust at the number of cats I was made to dissect. Only eighty a year! Others were savaging hundreds.

1976: year of Holdstock the professional layabout. And writer. Produced fifteen books between '76 and '81. Fifteen more in the last two years. Reason? Sad but mutual break-up of marriage, followed by sudden panic. No steady money coming in any more (something I'd overlooked). Nervewracked, hysterical, furniture destroyed by head, nails chewed to elbows, etc. So pulled finger out and went out and <u>made</u> work for myself. Biggest deal of my career signed with Arrow Books: a series of occult novels, NIGHT HUNTER. These have been keeping me going for two years, and almost certainly a third.

Seem to spend a lot of time collaborating with Malcolm Edwards. Can't understand why. We are now preparing our fifth illustrated tome, a follow up to REALMS OF FANTASY and ALIEN LANDSCAPES. Our book MAGICIAN was a monumental flop. Also, with the same boy, am halfway through a script for an interactive theatre production (sf) for a Canadian concern.

Big moment of 1984, for me, the publication of MYTHAGO WOOD (the novel) coming from Gollancz in July.

+ 17. Statistic

MY WORK: The True Facts			
Science Fiction:	EYE AMONG THE BLIND (Faber) EARTHWIND (Faber) WHERE TIME WINDS BLOW (Faber) IN THE VALLEY OF THE STATUES (Faber NECROMANCER (Futura) MYTHAGO WOOD (Gollancz, forthcoming		1976 1977 1981 Lection) 1982 1978 1984
As Robert Faulcon:	NIGHT HUNTER: THE STALKING " : THE TALISMAN " : THE GHOST DANCE " : THE SHRINE	1983 1983 1983 1984	(Arrow, occult)
As Chris Carlsen:	BERSERKER: SHADOW OF THE WOLF " : THE BULL CHIEF " : THE HORNED WARRIOR	1977 1978 1979	(Sphere, historical fantasy)
As Richard Kirk:	RAVEN, SWORDMISTRESS OF CHAOS " : TIME OF GHOSTS " : LORDS OF THE SHADOWS	1978 1979	(Corgi, fantasy

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As Steven Eisler:	SPACE WARS, WORLDS AND WEAPONS THE ALIEN WORLD	1979 1980	(Octopus, ill.)
Malcolm Edwards:		1982	(Pierrot, ill.) (Pierrot) (Dragonsworld, illustrated)
Novelisations:	LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF (film) THE SATANISTS (film) THE PROFESSIONALS # 10,13-15 (tv) BULMAN (tv)	1980	(Sphere) (Futura) (Sphere) (Futura)

Plus 36 stories published from F&SF to AD ASTRA, SF MONTHLY to ANDROMEDA, VORTEX to STOPWATCH, to ARIES, to FR GHTENERS, to PAN HORROR, to NEW WRITINGS IN SF, etc. etc.

There is more, of course, but no one will ever know what !

Rob Holdstock

/(And now for something completely different: a view of last year's Novacon by Linda Pickersgill, voted the fan most welcome on a desert island at the last Silicon as well as a strong contender for the fan-writing Nova Award...//

CONNED INTO A CONREP

There I was, standing at the Cymrucon bar, wondering why I was at another con soon after the atomic-blast-to-the-brain known as Novacon 13, when up walked with Tudor, Birmingham's latest fan-on-the-go, handing out flyers for Novacon 14 already. These fans-on-the-go don't fool around and waste time. I focussed my eyes on the print: da da da Novacon 14, da da Robert Holdstock guest of honour, hmm hmm omm Grand Hotel. doo doo doe dee con report by Linda Pickersgill. Huh ? I tugged on Martin's sleeve and pointed to my name. "What's this then, eh ?" That's a Novacon 14 flyer," reported the smart ass fan-on-the-go. "No, no. My ame. Why is my name there next to the words 'con report by...'?" "Oh; that's bepause Steve said you'd agreed to write a report on how triffic Novacon 13 was for our progress report. Bon't you remember ?" I didn't remember. I cast my feeble memory back to the event of only two weeks previous and tried to remember said agrtement with Mr. Green.

The first primal memory which surfaced was that of dancing. Seemed like I danced all weekend long: the Barr Dance, the Brum Group and Mexicon parties, the People's Disco on Sunday night in the disused book room, not to mention all the general betopping in room parties. No, I would have remembered if someone had tried to interupt as special display of thrust and wiggle boogey with questions about con reports. Could he have asked during a panel? Not during Lisa Tuttle's guest of honour speech, nor during any of the other programmed is panels. It wasn't during any of the silly gemes or quizzes in the alternate program room either, 'cause Steve was far too busy hosting those events to bother with trivial talk about con reports. Could it have been during a film? Nah, a dumb place to hold a conversation. What about over the freat English Breakfast I'm afraid that the long days and even longer nights am-packed with meeting people, sitting in on panels and dance dance dancing didn't loave much time for the vital necessities and in the long run I chose sleeping over ceting.

Unable to figure it out I turned back to the Cymrucon bar and ordered a brandy to help get the old synapses working. The bar! That's it! He must have cornered the in the bar sometime. I certainly spent a lot of time there drinking with friends I hadn't seen in a year, meeting new people, watching all the faces come and go as the Con-Circus carried on, I bet he forced a drink in my hand then asked me real

sweet: "Linda, I'd love to have you do a con report for me." Ocococo. The little sneak. Hitting me at a weak moment when I was having so much fun I'd have agreed to writing anything. In a huff I turned to Martin and pointed my brandy at him. "You" just tell that Steve Green what he did was unfair. He knew what a good time I was having. And he knew just how to catch me in a good enough mood to promise to write triffic things. You just tell him to call me. I want to know when he asked me to write this report." Somewhat baffled by the brandy sloshed down the front of his shirt, Martin dutifully agreed to pass the message on.

Back home, as soon as enough time had passed for me to forget the whole incident yet again, I got a phone call from Steve. "Will you have that con report ready for me soon?" It all came rushing back. "Uh, yeah, Steve... Uh, exactly when did we agree that I would write this report? 'Cause to tell the truth I really don't remember. Was it at the Royal Angus bar? Huh? I bet it was in the you say ?" "I said that it wasn't at Novacon that I asked you to write a con report' for the progress report." I was thrown for a complete loop. Not only had I forgo-tten him asking me to write, but I was totally off **I** when the asking took place. "Well then, when? I mean, where? Where and when?" "Don't you remember the con-versation we had last August about Novacon?" "Uh, yes. I think so." I was lying. "Well, I said then that I'd like you to write a con report on Novacon 13 for our progress reports to Novacon 14." "And I said yes ?" "Uh huh." "Well, I guess ... I mean, well yeah. Right. I see I was trying to bluff my way around the inevitable next line. "Then you'll have the report to me in two weeks, OK? Thanks a lot, Linda. Bye."

Ocococ. What a sneak. I'll get you for this this, Steve Green. leal where the state of the second state of th 41 1

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//(Rumours that a certain Friends in Space veteran has put out a contract on an ... unnamed convention chairman are, of course, entirely untrue ... W to point and the second s

Despite what some of you may have read in recent issues of Dave Langford's excellent (if not always 100 percent accurate) newszine Ansible, Novacon 14's dates remain the second weekend of November (ending in the wee small hours of Monday, for those who want to book their 24-hour flu or food poisoning early), and the main bar is anything but "small, closed, poky" (1400+ sq.ft). The correct COFF adress appears overpage. Special thanks to Ving Clarke for his efforts in

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The next issue will be out April, all contribution welcome at the address on the back page.

Membership update (as at 22.1.84):

9. Phill Probert 10. Viné Clarke 109. Mark Brantingham

Steve Green (Chairman):

Ran the alternative programming at Novacon 13, which included such dubious spectacles as normally same fans pouring pints of beer over their own heads and downing brews best reserved for de-greasing the waste disposal; entered fandom circa '74 and has edited numerous fanzines since; founder member of the British APA, Apa-B and the Solihull SF Group; BSFA committee 1981-.

Martin Tudor (Vice-Chairman, Programming):

Founder member of the Britain in '87 worldcon bid following shelving of the earlier '89 bid ; several fanzines to his credit, including one for Apa-B ; his contacts in the Post Office may ensure these progress reports arrive intact.

Paul Vincent (Treasurer):

Fanzine editor and yet another member of the Apa-B underground ; with Martin and Steve, founded the abandoned '89 worldcon bid ; ran Novacon 13's varied and highly-applauded film programme.

Ann Green (Registrations):

Entered fandom through the Welsh rock fanzine Cygnet Committee, following up with appearances at the Solihull and Birmingham Groups ; "wonderful, charvitty, eloquent and modest" (A.Green).

Eunice Pearson (Co-Editor, Novacon publications):

Yet another Apa-B veteran, as well as a member of the Women's Periodical team ; current editor of the Birmingham SF Group's monthly newsletter ; edits personalzine as well as the fiction fanzine <u>Calaban</u> ; ran the registrations desk at Novacon 12 and co-edited Novacon 13's progress reports and programme book with chairman Phill Probert (the partnership was further consolidated at their local register office on December 21) ; Eunice will be responsible for the 'fanzine style of future progress reports.

Dave Haden (Artshow):

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Kev Clarke (Fan Programming):

Founder member of both the Solihull and Exeter SF Groups, serving on the former's Microcon in '82; ran the damper sections of Novacon 13's alternative programme; the 'brains' behind the evil COFF Award (see below).

Two major fannish awards are presented each year at Novacon. The first is the howh, awarded in three categories: best fanzine, best writer and best artist; all veres are cast by active fans. In 1983 the winners were Dave Bridges, whose work in the superb fanzine <u>A Cool Head</u> gained him both the writer's and editor's Nova, and Margaret Welbank, who received the artist's Nova. Full voting details will be given in the final progress report by the award's new administrator, Paul Vincent.

The second, more light-hearted, is COFF, the Concrete Overcoat Fan Fund. This Cubious 'honour', founded and administered by Kevin Clarke, is bestowed upon the "an most deserving of a concrete overcoat and a swim in the nearest canal. Previous ccipients have been Bob (Fake) Shaw and Simon Polley ; votes are 10p each, with proceeds split between the TransAtlantic Fan Fund and Get Under Fan Fund, founded to foster international fan contact. Votes can be cast at Novacon 14, at major UK cons where a COFF table is set up, or via Kevin himself at: 438 Station Road, Dorridge, Solihull, West Midlands.

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1. Rob Holdstock 2. Steve Green 3. Martin Tudor 4. Ann Green 5. Eunice Pearson 6. Paul Vincent 7. Dave Haden 8. Kevin Clarke 11. Joy Hibbert 12. Dave Rowley 13. Allan Boyd-Newton 14. Charles Mawdsley 15. John Styles 16. Margaret Austin 17. Martin Easterbrook 18. Steve Davies 19. Bob Shaw (Glasgow) 20. T.M. Henir 21. Chris Southern 22. Jenny Southern 23. S. Booth 24. J. Sheward 25. K.H. Allan 26. George Ternent 27. Linda Bagler 28. Helen Eling 29. Stan Eling 30. Mickey Poland 31. Jai Price 32. Roger Robinson 33. Johnathon Cowie 34. Tim Illingworth 35. Katie Hoare 36. Martin Hoare 37. Roger Perkins 38. Owen Whiteoak 39, Alex Stewart 40. Dave Symes 41. Fay Symes 42. Andrew Hall 43. Martin Stallard 44. Tony Rogers 45. Bernie Evans 46. Maureen Porter 47. Colin Fine 48. Marcus Rowland 49. Caroline Mullan 50. James Steel 51. Kathy Westhead 52. Mike Westhead 53. Peter Tyers 54. Chris Davenport 55. Peter Wareham 56. Animal 57. Brian Ameringen 58. Duncan Booth

59. Paul Stewart

60. Pam Wells

61. Roy Macinski 62. Dave Ellis 63. Eric Bentcliffe 64. Katie Davies (D) 65. Joyce Slater 66. Ken Slater 67. Christine Dewis 68. Edward Ward 69. Jack Cohen 70. Martin Smith 71. Urban Gunnarsson 72. Marion Van Der Voort 73. Richard Van Der Voort 74. Rory McLean 75. Rog Peyton 76. Bruce MacDonald 77. Mike Damesick 78. Mike Walshe 79. John Wilkes 80. Ye Gerbish 81. John Paul Smit 82. Larry Van Der Putte 83. Harry Bell

84. Rob Hansen

85. Ken Worrall 86. Peter Worrall 87. Sue Worrall 88. Greg Pickersgill 89. Linda Pickersgill 90. Howard Rosenblum 91. June Rosenblum 92. Gwen Funnell 93. James White 94. Peggy White 95. Paul Dormer 96. John Steward 97. Pete Weston 98. Kev Williams 99. Sue Williams 100. Phil Barnard 101. Alan Dorey 102. Rochelle Dorey 103. Andrew Stephensen 104. Lesley Ward 105. Tony Berry 106. Dave Wood 107. Simon Rudyk (D) 108. Barbara Rudyk (D)

Memberships listed as at 1.1.84 ; all are attending memberships except those marked (D), which are valid for Saturday attendance only but can be converted to full attending on payment of a further £2.50.

Memberships will be available on the door at £7, but further progress reports will only be mailed out to those who take out attending membership NOW.

See page two for full membership details.

The success of a convention depends as much on the contribution of the behind-the-scenes brigade as the committee itself, and Novacon is no exception. Even if the task in question is one as simple as rearranging chairs or transporting equipment from the car park to the main hall, your help could easily prove a vital element in the effectiveness of this year's programming. It's a lot of fun, too.

Anyone interested in joining Novacon 14's team of gophers (rewards not in Heaven but at the bar) should write to vice-chairman Martin Tudor at: 845, Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham.

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Guest of Honour: ROBERT HOLDSTOCK

NOVACON FOURTEEN

Venue: THE GRAND HOTEL, BIRMINGHAM

Dates: NOVEMBER 9-11, 1984

Attending Membership: SIX POUNDS

Convention Committee: STEVE GREEN, MARTIN TUDOR, PAUL VINCENT, ANN GREEN, EUNICE PEARSON, DAVE HADEN, KEVIN CLARKE.

Room Rate: FIFTEEN POUNDS PER PERSON

Inquiries:

Membership:	11, Fox Green Crescent,
Artshow:	Acocks Green, B'ham 27. Shottery P.O. & Stores,
	Shottery, Nr. Stratford-
Programme:	on-Avon. 845, Alum Rock Road,
	Ward End, B'ham.
ran Lounge:	438, Station Road, Dorridge, Solihull, W.M.
Con Creche:	As for membership.

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> If undelivered, please return to: 11, Fox Green Crescent, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 7SD, England.