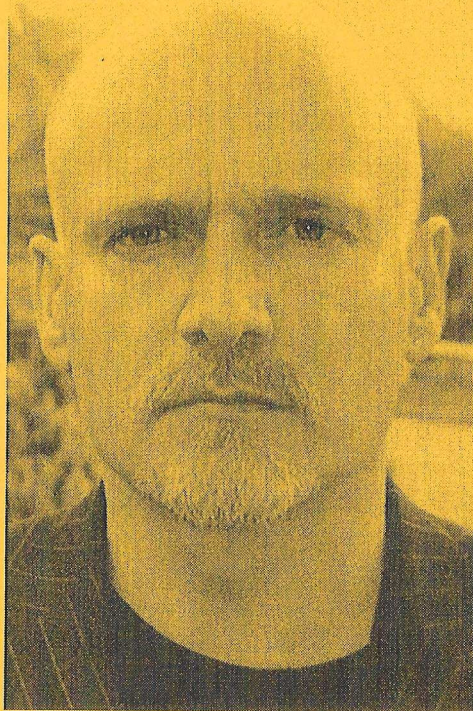


NOVACON 3E NOVACON

Programme Book



Guest of Honour

Jon Courtenay Grimwood

**Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall
7-9 November, 2003**

7-9 November, 2003

Interested in Science Fiction?

Would you like to meet... Brian W Aldiss, Iain M Banks, Greg Bear, David Brin, Ramsey Campbell, C J Cherryh, Simon Clark, John Clute, Dr Jack Cohen, Storm Constantine, Neil Gaiman, Anne Gay, David Gemmell, Jon Courtenay Grimwood, Simon R Green, Joe Haldeman, Peter F Hamilton, David Hardy, Harry Harrison, Shaun Hutson, Mat Irvine, Gwyneth Jones, Graham Joyce, Garry Kilworth, Joel Lane, Prof Lawrence Krauss, Stephen Lawhead, Paul McAuley, Anne McCaffrey, Alan Moore, Chris Moore, "Grant Naylor", Stan Nicholls, Terry Pratchett, Christopher Priest, David Pringle, Robert Rankin, Alastair Reynolds, Kim Stanley Robinson, Michael Scott Rohan, Dan Simmons, Mike Simpson, Ian Stewart, Major John Tate, Sheri S Tepper, Patrick Tilley, Freda Warrington, Ian Watson, Peter Weston, Tad Williams, David Wingrove, "Jonathan Wylie" or those nutters from the Aetherius Society?

If you were a member of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, you could have done! All of the above (and many more!) have spoken to us at least once during our 30+ year history. As well as meeting at least 12 times a year, the Brum Group runs the annual Novacon and produces a monthly newsletter featuring book reviews, genre news and convention reports.

All this for just £16.00 per year! Why not check our website at <www.bsfg.freesevers.com>, or request a copy of the latest news-letter from Pat Brown at 106 Green Lanes, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5JH <bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk>.

The committee of Novacon 33 would like to express its thanks for the continued support offered this year by the event's patrons, the Birmingham Science Fiction Group.

Welcome to Novacon 33

Martin Tudor, Chair

...or, if you're reading this on your way home, farewell from Novacon 33!

The past year has been a fairly grim one for our extended Novacon family, starting in February with the sad loss of Peter Day, a fan for at least four decades. Peter was 73, a quiet, gentle man and a regular at both Novacon and the Birmingham Science Fiction Group: he will be especially missed in the art show, where he was always willing to help.

Then, in May, we learned of the tragic death of fan artist Dave Mooring. Dave produced copious amounts of artwork for Novacon publications (some of which you can see exhibited in our tribute to Dave in the Novacon art show), as well as covers and illustrations for various fanzines, my own *Empties* and the newszine *Critical Wave* included. Dave hadn't been able to attend Novacon for a few years, but we always hoped he would return. He married Sarah Dibb on 21 May, the day he died from pancreatic cancer. We send our best wishes and condolences to Sarah and to Dave's family.

Finally, in August, we lost Martin Smith, whose liver failure followed a recent diagnosis of diabetes. A Novacon regular and frequent participant in various skits, silly games and quizzes on past programmes, Martin was always game for a laugh. British (and American) conventions just won't be the same without him.

Dave was just 42 and Martin only 40, far too young to leave us in these days of longer and longer life expectancies; they should have been with us for decades to come. Fandom is the poorer for their loss, but we're all the richer for having known them.

Despite attending twenty-three Novacons and serving on the committees of fourteen, I've never been too sure exactly what should be said in these introductions. Most of you won't get around to reading it until after the convention, so there seems little point in detailing what's in store for you, wishing you a good weekend, and so on. On the other hand, there might be a few newcomers out

there who have yet to learn the ropes (translation: become old, tired and jaded), so I trust regulars will forgive me if I address the majority of my remaining words to them.

The main thing to remember is, excellent though this publication is, don't waste too much valuable convention time reading it.

I'd recommend you glance through the programme notes by Dave Hicks, which provides context for the items you can see this weekend. If this is your first time, you should also check out details of Novacon's charity raffle; for the eighteenth year running, we are raising money for the Royal National Institute for the Blind's "Talking Books for the Blind" project.

But other than those, I'm sure your time could be spent more usefully in the bar buying drinks for my diligent committee: Cat Coast (operations), Alice Lawson (treasurer), Steve Green (publications), Dave Hicks (programme) and Steve Lawson (registrations & hotel bookings). I'd thank them myself, but I'm sure it would count for more coming from you, especially if it's in liquid form.

However, you should certainly read Maureen Kincaid Speller's profile of our guest of honour, Jon Courtenay Grimwood, as it might help you contribute to Saturday afternoon's interview. Indeed, if you study that piece and read our souvenir booklet (which offers a tantalising taste of his forthcoming novel), you will have lots to talk about to Jon while you're buying him a drink some time during the convention!

And speaking of alcohol, whilst you're at the bar anyway, I'm sure our hard-working Novacon staff would appreciate a drink. Who, you ask? Oh: Tony Berry (dealers' room, beer tasting), Helena Bowles and Richard Standage (the parents' co-operative), Nic Farey (tech ops), Ann Green (art show), Al Johnston (transport), Dave Lally (media: see notices) - all of whom would greatly appreciate a kind word of thanks and a glass of cola (or maybe something stronger: better make Al's a pint!)

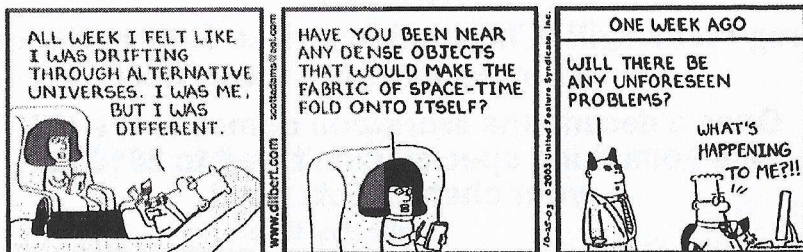
Then again, being new to all this, I'm sure the potted history of Novacon will interest you, as will Steve Green's piece on the Nova Awards, celebrating their thirtieth birthday this year. Hopefully, this brief glimpse into the strange and wondrous world of "fanzines" will prompt you to send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to one of the many editors listed by Steve - or by picking up a fanzine or two from our Freebie Table near the Novacon Registration Hatch (in the lobby outside the main programme).

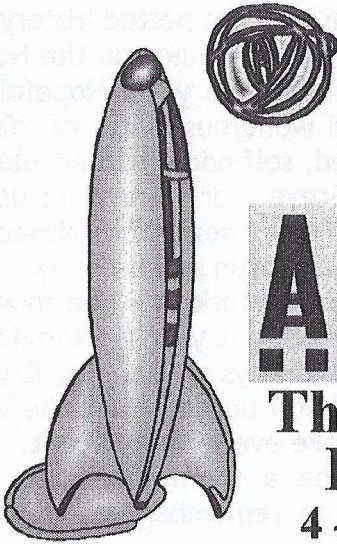
And whilst you're there, you may as well fork over the money to join Novacon 34. Remember: the earlier next year's committee gets your money, the sooner they can find ways of spending it you will enjoy. Leaving your registration or hotel booking until the last minute seriously hampers our work to make every penny count.

The committee biographies might be a useful first step to finding out whom "we" all are, but do remember one of our themes this year is alternative realities.

That said, maybe I should forget this book now until after the convention. So, just get out there, get to the bar, buy me a drink (pint of Black Sheep, please) and have fun!

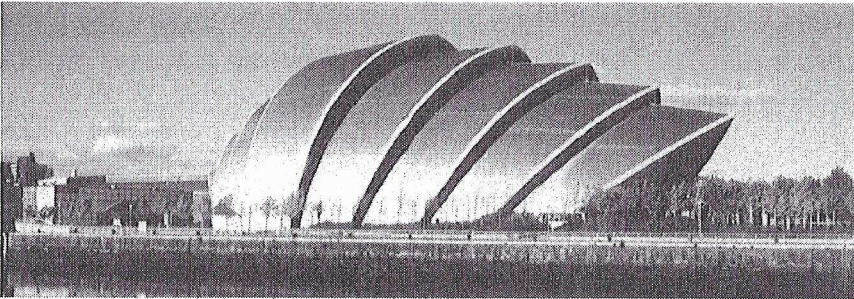
Meanwhile, in the Dilbertverse...





INTER ACTION

**The 63rd World Science
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4 - 8 August 2005
The SECC, Glasgow, Scotland, UK.



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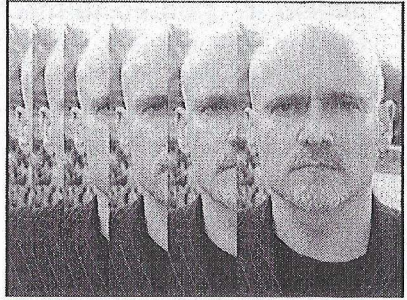
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Online membership and information: <http://www.interaction.worldcon.org.uk>
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Splintering Identity: Jon Courtenay Grimwood

Maureen Kincaid Speller



The epigraph to *Pashazade: The First Arabesk* is a quotation from Richard Dawkins' *The Blind Watchmaker*: "However many ways there may be of being alive, it is certain that there are vastly more ways of being dead..." This, I think, points us towards one of the great themes of the Arabesk trilogy, the nature of identity, what it means to be one person in particular, and how perilous a person's grip is on who they are. It's a theme that seems to fracture endlessly into smaller, ever smaller, shards and fragments of idea: how responsible are you for your actions if you're not sure who you are, if you're inhabiting another body, if someone else inhabits yours? The theme may have been present in Jon Courtenay Grimwood's first four novels, but in *Pashazade* and its successors, it comes to fruition and the reader is obliged to confront the notion head-on.

Ashraf Bey - who *is* he? He thinks he is ZeeZee, freshly sprung from a correctional facility near Seattle, who has somehow found himself on a plane heading for El Iskandriya, with a credit chip in his pocket and a diplomatic pass, literally a *carte blanche*. All of which tells him that he is Ashraf Bey, widely rumoured to be the illegitimate son of the Emir of Tunisia (yeah, right, thinks Raf, except that yes, he really *is* the Emir's son, and also his legitimate heir); oh, and he's on his way to El Iskandriya to marry a woman he's never seen.

He's struggling to comprehend all this, and we readers, hanging virtually over his shoulder, are struggling too. It's a conundrum to be solved, alongside the murder of his truly repellent aunt, Nafisa: cold, calculating, ruthless, more like a machine than a human being. Except that Raf seems to be the machine: he's uncomfortably aware that his body has been augmented, for what purpose he's not at all clear, and that he's not quite like other humans.

That's another theme we need to keep a hold on here; it turns up all over the place in Grimwood's work. What does it mean to be

human as opposed to machine, or artificial intelligence? What are the limitations? Is it worth the effort to try to be more than nature originally expected you to be? And it's closely related to the business of identity; the two run hand in hand throughout the seven novels.

But let's look first at the Arabesk trilogy. They've enjoyed immense popularity since the first appearance of *Pashazade* in 2001. The buzz has been enormous, and it's not difficult to see why. *Pashazade* and its sequels, *Effendi*, and *Fellaheen*, boast a group of extremely attractive protagonists in Ashraf al-Mansur, Zara Quitrimala, his reluctant bride-to-be, and Lady Hana al-Mansur, his rebellious young cousin, who prefers to be known by the masculine version of her name, Hani.

And then there's the setting - El Iskandriya, Alexandria, mysterious as ever, even in the future, even in an alternative world where Bonaparte was never toppled but instead established a dynasty of princes, where Abraham Lincoln wasn't assassinated, and the First World War never really quite happened, so Germany remained in the Middle East. There may be one point of divergence in this world, a world that extends broadly through all of Grimwood's novels, but if there is, I've not spotted it yet. To me, it's more like the temporal equivalent of a handful of gravel scattered on a pond, the ripples overlapping and intersecting. But wherever and whenever it is, El Iskandriya is still a place of refuge, a place of sanctuary, a place where you can be anything you want to be, and where everyone works hard to be different, to be something else.

In many respects, El Iskandriya is the perfect place for Ashraf to be while he sorts out who he really is, why the voice in his head is dying. His eccentric behaviour goes unremarked because exalted status brings him a kind of social immunity, give or take the odd bomb, and having been abroad, his Western ways also excuse him, although, if people knew where he'd been, they might perhaps be more scandalised, less forgiving.. or maybe not. Royalty, after all, has done far worse, but memories in El Iskandriya are like grains of sand, they blow away on the wind. The whole city is built on a foundation so unstable, it seems the only thing that holds it together is the belief that it exists, a perverse cultural *cogito*. But its existence is, in many ways, as fragile as that of the people who

live there. It has made and remade itself a hundred times over, ever-sensitive to shifts in the political climate; its rulers have fought for its autonomy, often against huge odds, and they fight to maintain this every moment of every day, in a delicate dance of manoeuvring.

It is a concrete metaphor, if you like, for the battle in Raf's head between ZeeZee, the identity he made for himself as a young man in trouble in the USA, and Raf, a slightly older man in trouble in El Iskandriya, and that elusive entity, Tiri. Raf's identity is extremely fragile because it is so new to him; ZeeZee has the instinct for survival but Raf needs to parlay this into an understanding of his new surroundings. The 'fox', AI implant or his own divorced consciousness, whichever, can't always guide Raf. He is like a child, like Frankenstein's Creature, a *tabula rasa*, and a lot will depend on who writes on him. In which case it's significant that he strikes up two alliances, with Felix the disreputable chief of police, a father figure who will stay with him even beyond death, and with Hani, who is chronologically and biologically a child, but who is in some ways educated far beyond Raf. Left to her own devices by her aunt, who does not value her, she is another *tabula rasa*, one that has written on itself - it's perhaps significant that Hani's main skills lie in computing, though she also has that ability we associate with children, to cut the crap and get straight to the heart of a matter, relying on that perception of "child" to get away with everything short of murder, and maybe that too.

Children, adolescents, the parentless, the badly parented, all feature heavily in the seven novels, from Maxine de Pomerol Melusine (*neoAddix*), whose grandfather tends towards the immortal, in the old-fashioned 'drinking the blood of virgins' fashion, through Aurelio, the infant Doge, in *Lucifer's Dragon*, to *reMix*'s LizAlec Fabio (whose actual parentage is a bit of a conundrum, come to think of it) and Mai, the kinderwhore in *redRobe*. The young Hamzah, still known as Ka, struggles desperately to keep his band of child soldiers together. The Arabesk trilogy has not one but two child rulers, each struggling to survive in an adult world - Murad, the new young Emir of Tunisia, and the Khedive of El Iskandriya, the latter faintly reminiscent of

Spain's Juan Carlos as a young man, working to avoid being entirely dominated by General Franco.

And there is a floating population of worldly-wise child whores, diminutive bodyguards and hackers scattered across countries and across time, in the world of these novels. It's not that the adults aren't there but somehow they rarely figure as benign parental figures. Parents seem to view their children as raw material, as product, as trade tokens, or property that can be manipulated physically or mentally as necessary. Raf is a case in point, his body augmented at his mother's behest, and he's not the only one. Zara has undergone female circumcision at her mother's insistence and is trying to come to terms with her body as a result. LizAlec is the product of sperm and egg from two people who did not consent to the creation of their child, borne by a woman whose motive in creating such a child is not clear, except that she regards the child as another possession, another tool in a greater battle.

Those that do take on a parental function are not exactly the kind of role models that society might have in mind, teaching as they do survival, independence and personal autonomy, but these are the necessary skills to get by in a world that seems in some ways to be deeply hostile. Raf, Zara, Khartoum, Felix, and, earlier, Razz, Sabine, Axl Borja, Angeli, none of these are obvious parent material, but they provide support for their charges as necessary, and they almost always get them through the crisis. For that matter, the children as often save the adults. Raf could scarcely function without Hani's guidance; there are times when she seems more adult than he does, and without her advice he would be lost. Their relationship is as close as that of parent and child without being made explicit.

In its most extreme form, the need for a home, for a place of sanctuary or refuge sees Passion, for example, building newVenice (and we see later what kind of sanctuary newVenice has become), Brother Michael and Sister Aaron creating their dubious Arc in space, and Samsara, the refugee colony in space that's also a charnel house, invaded by a latter-day United Nations-style peacekeeping force. Yet nowhere is safe, be it exclusive apartment on the Ile Saint-Louis in Paris, a crumbling house in El Iskandriya, or a mud hut in the desert.

Guidance and sanctuary come in many forms; one of the more intriguing themes in Grimwood's work is that of the AI, and one particular AI which seems to surface over and over, assuming (and I think we have to assume this) that Grimwood's novels stretch over a couple of centuries (either that or he's doing something even stranger with time than I'd realised, in which case, is any of this actually, fictionally "real"?). As an aside, it's interesting to see how Grimwood's relationship with the computer as sf trope has developed since *neoAddix*. I remember the two reasons I didn't like *neoAddix* when I first read it were that I found the violence quite unpalatable (I can't say my views on violence have changed in the last seven years, but my perception of violence in Grimwood's work has, to the extent that I see it now as either curiously clinical or else somehow pantomimic, but most assuredly Not Real), and, as I said to a fellow critic at the time, cyberpunk was already well past its sell-by date at that time. Reading *neoAddix* again, I would more austere say that it wears its influences very openly, and I'm not just talking about the character called Gibson. The hacker terminology is purely *Neuromancer* and if there isn't quite the sense of exhilaration we felt as we all jacked in for the first time, there is still a distinct sense of "wow" about the whole thing. Computers were still a Big Deal. Whereas by the time we reach the Arabesk trilogy, Hani seems to own a bewildering array of computer equipment, either masquerading as toys or else coloured Barbie pink, as if to obscure their true potential, though one generally suspects Hani of artlessly subverting anything with a computer chip that happens to come her way.

And yet, alongside that something else was stirring, rather as it did in Gibson's later novels. The computer gee-whizzery was, is window-dressing to obscure our view of something else. In fact, it's made quite clear in *neoAddix*, where we meet Makai, the AI, in "all his glitzy New York cowboy glory", manifested with his feet up on the table. It's only later that he and his ilk seem to go underground, sporadically manifesting in artefacts such as a gun (*redRobe*) or a pair of Raybans (*Effendi*), literally ghosts in the machine, but even then they are a part of something bigger, something we still can't see. Makai acknowledges that he, whatever else "he" is, is a sub-routine, part of something much,

much bigger. It's as though, in subsequent books, we're being given glimpses of other aspects of that "something bigger", which would tie in with a buried but nonetheless ongoing fascination with expressions of religion, implicit in the existence of Samsara in *redRobe* and the AI's manifestation there as a winged monkey deity, and even in Kamil's, Hamzah's bastard son's, adopting the name Avatar. And of course it's entirely explicit in the ongoing presence of the Church of Christ, Geneticist, dedicated to retrieving the DNA of.. well, of who, exactly, and why?

Along the way we flirt with stored memory, and how much one needs in order to recreate the person rather than a container holding a previous set of memories. This is particularly well explored in *redRobe* where Mai, the street-wise kinderwhore fights strenuously to retain her own identity throughout, when others would transform her inside and out into someone she isn't and can never be. And again, we'll see this in the Arabesk trilogy, where, in fact, Raf is taking back a much earlier identity, one defined by status, and then subverting it outrageously.

By the time we reach *Effendi* it seems to me that Grimwood is explicitly demonstrating that the guide in one's head may just have an agenda of its own. This is most clearly expressed in the description of the child soldier Ka's adherence to the advice of Colonel Abad, relayed via a pair of sunglasses, counterpointed by Raf's own faltering ceramic implant, which can no long be relied on for advice, leaving him to figure things out for himself. The need to make a choice about following that advice has already been examined in *redRobe*, where Axl's gun still comes with the option to switch off the voice. Now we're in a time and a place where an Artificial Intelligence can be arraigned for war crimes, which implies autonomous existence and responsibility for actions.

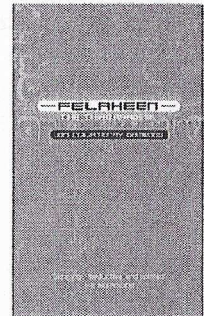
So, by all means, read the novels of Jon Courtenay Grimwood as fast-moving adventure stories if you wish. They're certainly that. But look beneath the surface and you'll find that there is a complex, sometimes bewildering web of issues to be explored, most of which I've barely had time to touch on here. There are essays waiting to be written about the nature of religion in these novels, not to mention further essays on the political ramifications of the alternative history.

But the novels are not without their lighter side. Grimwood has a delightfully mordant wit and his characters are often at their funniest as they beat the shit out of one another: some of Axl's exchanges with the gun with a mind of its own are extremely funny, though I admit that the conversations between Hani and Raf most amuse me. It's all in the timing, I guess: Grimwood is one of those writers who writes dialogue that can actually be spoken rather than merely read. When his characters panic and scramble for safety, it comes through in their speech and their thoughts, the absurdities as well as the practicalities. His characters often have a sharp eye for the inanities of life.

There is also the fascination with food, which has not gone unremarked around here. I've been told that Jon Courtenay Grimwood never includes a description of a meal without first cooking it himself. In which case, I try not to think about the sequence in *neoAddix* involving monkey brains, though it's a well-known piece of culinary folklore. I also nervously watched the progress of the kitten in *reMix* (it's okay, you can look, nothing bad happens). But the Arabesk trilogy, one wants to eat as well as to read. Meals are lovingly described, and remember, what's served and how it's done tells us a lot about the status of those involved and those they seek to impress. Much of the action is conducted in cafés and on the streets, amid the hawkers of food. Even vanilla ice cream can become a symbol of decadence and of the embracing of new ideas. And food, of course, is as much about nurture as it is about status, which takes us back to other themes. To eat is to live, and Grimwood's characters live vibrantly.. even the dead ones.

Selected Bibliography

- Novels: *neoAddix* (1997)
Lucifer's Dragon (1998)
reMix (1999)
redRobe (1999)
Pashazade: The First Arabesk (2001)
Effendi: The Second Arabesk (2002)
Felaheen: The Third Arabesk (2003)
- Chapbooks: *Empereur de L'Ouest* (2003)
- Short Fiction: "Bug" (1999)



Above and Beyond: David Ashford

David Hicks

Like the blues, science fiction is often a riff on a traditional theme: aliens, time travel, artificial intelligence, space travel. In an era when space is still pretty much the sole turf of Big Government, not much attention gets paid to one of those “standards”, the Private Space Programme; but from John Wyndham to Stephen Baxter, writers have turned to the idea of private individuals or corporations venturing beyond our atmosphere. In reality, how feasible is such an idea?

Thus, we are delighted to welcome David Ashford of Bristol Spaceplanes to Novacon 33. In business since 1991, providing advice to companies interested in the commercial possibilities of space, Bristol Spaceplanes has been exploring the opportunities that might be available to businesses and individuals.

David's also been involved in plans for the “Ascender” space plane: designed to operate like an aeroplane, it would reach an altitude of 100 kilometres; you'd experience weightlessness and simultaneously see a sunlit earth beneath you and stars against a pitch black sky.

This is just the first projected stage towards full-blown space tourism. David has projected the possibility of earth-to-orbit system costing \$10,000 per person. Bristol Spaceplanes also runs a supporter's club for the Ascender project.

Space travel by public subscription: now there's an idea no science fiction writer has dared to touch for a while!

[David Ashford debated the future of supersonic transport with Andrew Nahum of the Science Museum in the Guardian on 25 October. It's reprinted at <www.guardian.co.uk/comment>.]

Programme

Dave Hicks

Note: At time of writing, we don't expect any major changes to the programme. Last minute amendments will be announced at the opening ceremony and/or widely publicised both via notices and by the tried and tested method of a man shouting in the bar.

Friday

7:00pm: Opening Ceremony

Meet the Guest of Honour and the Committee. Last minute announcements. Followed by...

7:30pm: Publishers be Damned!

We're all familiar with the idea of the struggle of the creative process, but what about the trials and tribulations of actually getting published? What sort of health is sf publishing in? Dare anyone mention "market forces"? Our panel explores the tough journey between that brilliant idea and seeing your work on the booksellers' shelves. *Claire Brialey, Jon Courtenay Grimwood, John Jarrold, Martin Sketchley*

9:00pm: The Illustrated Fan

We've a special tribute in the artshow this year to the late Dave Mooring, former Nova Award winner and much loved for his fan art. But what *is* good fan art? Is it unique to fanzines? Does it have to be funny? Do editors appreciate the work artists put in? Do artists give editors what they want? And have you ever tried to produce a likeness of Nic Farey to a deadline? Fan artists and editors discuss. *Jae Leslie Adams, David Hicks, Sue Mason, Martin Tudor*

10:30pm: Friday Night Without Jonathan Ross

No flashy fashion or rock bands. No knee touching or Yorkshire wit. No internet smut or gay sex gags. No on-air marital bickering. In other words, none of the tricks which make every other chatshow a success. Guess we'll have to rely upon the surprise guests to drag you away from the bar, then. *Steve Green*

Saturday

11:00am: David Ashford, Special Science Guest

The man behind Bristol Spaceplanes describes plans for practical, commercial space flights that he believes could be with us within the next decade. *David Ashford*

12:30pm: Book Auction

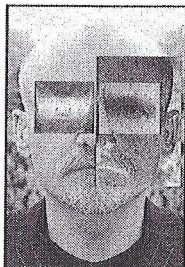
From bargain prices for doorstep trilogies to gems which haven't been in print for years: your chance to pick up something special and unexpected. *Chris Morgan, Rog Peyton*

2:00pm: Lunch in Zero Gravity - Space Tourism

Echoing themes from this morning's science talk. How much would you pay to go above the atmosphere? What would such a trip be like and would it change you? How might it change society? *David Ashford, Julian Headlong, Ken MacLeod, Gerry Webb*

3:30pm: Jon Courtenay Grimwood

Our Guest of Honour, interviewed by *Farah Mendlesohn*



5:00pm: The Panel of the Film of the Book

We've all imagined the perfect films of our favourite novels, scripted, cast and shot them in our heads, only to be disappointed by the reality. Are the right books being adapted? Which books should be filmed? What does the film industry want from sf? *Tony Berry, Steve Green, Steve Jeffrey, Dave Lally, Ian Sorensen*

6:30 pm: Crime and Science Fiction

Noticed how often the protagonists of sf novels are on one side or the other of the law? Crime seems common in the imagined future of almost all sf writers, as something we'll never be rid of, or as too useful a tool for plot and character to ignore. We've asked the usual suspects to tell us more... *Jon Courtenay Grimwood, Andy Sawyer, Maureen Speller Kincaid, Ian Watson*

8:00pm: Dark Volumes by Tony Keen

A smaller cast than Dave Wake. Fewer songs than Ian Sorensen. Not as many robots as SMS. Less funny than Hicks and Siddall. But more fish than all of them put together. A Türkmenbashi Production. *Tony Keen and a cast of thousands*

9.30pm: *The True Knowledge of Ken MacLeod*

The Science Fiction Foundation launches its new book about the work of Ken MacLeod, joined by the man himself.

10:15pm: Fan Fund Auction

An opportunity to take home things the like of which you never knew existed. Followed by...

Music and Dancing with *Smokie's Roadshow*

Sunday

11:00am: GUFF

Voting for the Get Under Fan Fund (GUFF) closes just after this convention. Hear out the candidates who want to meet antipodean fandom, and the feedback of past winners (one of whom now has an Australian partner), plus an actual Australian. *Justin Ackroyd, Paul Kincaid, Joseph Nicholas; candidates Doug Bell, Pat McMurray*

12:30pm: Art Auction

Your chance to take home one or more of the fine pieces of work displayed in the artshow this weekend. *Chris Morgan, Rog Peyton*

2:00pm: The Turn of Fate - Alternative Histories

Are alternative histories the “new black” for sf writers? As sf and mainstream literature bleed into one another, more authors seem to be writing “what if?” than “could be” novels. And what the hell is “slipstream” anyway? *Jon Courtenay Grimwood, Paul Kincaid, Ken MacLeod, Charles Stross*

3:30pm: Test the Fandom - Find your “FQ”

After the success of BBC1’s *Test The Nation* quizzes in establishing levels of IQ and general knowledge, we finish off with a mass participation test of your sf and fannish knowledge. What will your Fandom Quotient be? Statistically dubious conclusions will be drawn about where the brightest fans come from.

5:00pm: Awards Ceremony

The Nova Awards will be presented. Our Guest of Honour and all those who’ve made the convention possible will be thanked. The raffle will be drawn (a full list of all winning tickets will be displayed by the Novacon Registration Hatch, in the lobby outside the main programme). The mad fools who’ve agreed to do this again next year will be pointed out and jeered at.

7:00pm: The Arabesk Experience / Novacon Beer Tasting

North African cuisine, chosen by our Guest of Honour, plus many of the best bottled beers from this or any other timeline. Tickets are available all weekend from the Novacon Registration Hatch (in the lobby outside the main programme).

Committee Notes

Eddie Trenchcoat

A lifetime teetotaler and fireworks fan, *Martin Tudor* makes up for his relative inexperience in convention organisation with an enthusiasm for “sci fi” first demonstrated when he founded the Dublin *Blake’s 7* Society. ♦ Since his horrific murder five years ago at the hands of the evil Lord Westamort, *Dave Hicks* has been forced to communicate via a complex computer array linking his cryogenically-frozen, lightning-scarred bonce to a thirty year-old Etch-a-Sketch. Many claim his artwork has improved. ♦ Surprisingly agile for a one-legged septuagenarian, *Steve Lawson* attended his first science fiction convention in Kettering in 1957, shortly after completing three years’ national service in the King’s Own Fusefitters. ♦ Following well-publicised recent court appearances, Steve will be accompanied this weekend by his fulltime carer, grand-daughter *Alice Lawson*, internationally renowned Gummo Marx impersonator and former Exotic Tap dancer in Residence at the Andromeda Bookshop & Bondage Boutique. ♦ Abandoned by gypsy royalty at the age of five, *Cat Coast* divides her time equally between knitting chainmail, her collection of rare Amazonian tree ferrets and freelancing as a hired killer for H M Customs & Excise’s black ops & wetwork division. ♦ Since early 1975, the transparent pseudonym “*Steve Green*” has been utilised by a well-respected journalist and presenter for those articles she was either too drunk or too idle to fashion into coherent prose. ♦ *Tony Berry* isn’t on the committee this year, but will be making amends by buying drinks for anyone who catches him in the bar on Tuesday morning.

The History of Novacon

The first Novacon was organised in 1971 as a one-off event by the Aston University Science Fiction Group, but its success led to the convention being adopted by the neighbouring Birmingham SF Group from 1972 onwards. For the first seven years, the choice of guest of honour alternated between pro authors and leading fans,

In the list below, the figure in brackets relates to membership numbers at the time each programme book went to press, rather than the final attendance (in addition, problems with the printing of Novacon 14's programme book meant an entire month's new members were effectively excluded). Committee details appear beneath the guest(s) of honour; the chair's initials are shown first. Note: the Excelsior changed its name to the Forte Post House.

Trivia time: Dave Langford, David Hardy, Rog Peyton and Jack Cohen all held committee posts before appearing as guests. Martin Tudor has chaired the most Novacons: this year's is his fifth.

Novacon, 1971 (144)	Imperial Centre Birmingham	James White VB, RB, AD, AD2, PD
Novacon 2, 1972 (144)	Imperial Centre Birmingham	Doreen Rogers PD, SE, JH, RN, MP, HR
Novacon 3, 1973 (146)	Imperial Centre Birmingham	Ken Bulmer HR, SE, GF, MP, GW
Novacon 4, 1974 (211)	Imperial Centre Birmingham	Ken Slater JC, PD, SE, GF, RH, AP, RP, HR
Novacon 5, 1975 (272)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Dan Morgan RP, RB, PD, RH, LM, AP
Novacon 6, 1976 (317)	Royal Angus Birmingham	David Kyle SE, HE, LM, AP, RP
Novacon 7, 1977 (278)	Royal Angus Birmingham	John Brunner SE, LH, MH, IM, JM, DL

Novacon 8, 1978 (309)	Holiday Inn Birmingham	Anne McCaffrey LM, DH, KH, CW, JW
Novacon 9, 1979 (290)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Christopher Priest RP, HE, SE, CM, PM, PO
Novacon 10, 1980 (495)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Brian W Aldiss RP, JN, KO, KO2, PO, CW
Novacon 11, 1981 (362)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Bob Shaw PO, HE, SE, JN, PP
Novacon 12, 1982 (373)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Harry Harrison RP, CB, DH2, EP, PP
Novacon 13, 1983 (339)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Lisa Tuttle PP, CD, EP, SG, DH3, JH, PO, PV, JW2
Novacon 14, 1984 (333)	Grand Birmingham	Robert Holdstock SG, KC, AG, DH3, EP, PP, MT, PV
Novacon 15, 1985 (340)	De Vere Coventry	James White Dave Langford PP, TB, CP, EP, GP, MT
Novacon 16, 1986 (257)	De Vere Coventry	E C Tubb Chris Evans TB, NM, DP, RP2, GP, MP2
Novacon 17, 1987 (315)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Iain M Banks BE, ME, DH2, GP, SR, GW2
Novacon 18, 1988 (336)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Garry Kilworth TB, BE, RP, GP2, LP, MT
Novacon 19, 1989 (426)	Excelsior Solihull	Geoff Ryman MT, TB, HB, BE, NM, PW

Novacon 20, 1990 (330)	Excelsior Solihull	Dr Jack Cohen BE, AJ, AL, SL, NM, RS
Novacon 21, 1991 (200)	Forte Post House Ex. Excelsior Solihull	Colin Greenland NM, DC, BE, AJ, AL, SL, CM2
Novacon 22, 1992 (300)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Storm Constantine HB, TB, BE, JG, SG2, CM3, RS
Novacon 23, 1993 (350)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Stephen Baxter CM3, HB, BE, TM, RS
Novacon 24, 1994 (214)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Graham Joyce RS, HB, SF, CM3, TM, CM2, MT
Novacon 25, 1995 (338)	Chamberlain Birmingham	Brian W Aldiss Harry Harrison Bob Shaw Iain M Banks TM, TB, CM3, CM2, RS, MT
Novacon 26, 1996 (281)	Ibis Birmingham	David Gemmell CM3, SF, TM, CM2, RS, MT
Novacon 27, 1997 (277)	Abbey Great Malvern	Peter F Hamilton MT, CM3, TM, CM2, MS
Novacon 28, 1998 (265)	Britannia Birmingham	Paul J McAuley MT, SL, PM2, CM3, TM, CM2
Novacon 29, 1999 (239)	Britannia Birmingham	Ian Stewart CM3, MKS, SL, PM2, TM, CM2, MT

Novacon 30, 2000 (224)	Britannia Birmingham Special guest: Guest artist:	Christopher Priest Rog Peyton David A Hardy TB, MKS, SL, PM2, DC, CM2, MT
Novacon 31, 2001 (219)	Quality Walsall	Gwyneth Jones TB, CC, DC, DH4, AL, SL, MT
Novacon 32, 2002 (252)	Quality Walsall	Ian McDonald MT, CC, DC, SG, DH4, AL, SL
Novacon 33, 2003 (203)	Quality Walsall	Jon Courtenay Grimwood MT, CC, SG, DH4, AL, SL
Novacon 34, 2004	Quality Walsall	To be announced...

Past committee members (chairs shown in italics): Chris Baker, *Tony Berry*, *Helena Bowles*, Ray Bradbury, *Vernon Brown*, Kevin Clarke, Cat Coast, *Dr Jack Cohen*, David Cooper, Alan Denham, Chris Donaldson, Alan Donnelly (AD2), Helen Eling, *Stan Eling*, *Bernie Evans*, Mick Evans, Gillon Field, Sarah Freakley, Jenny Glover, Steve Glover (SG2), Ann Green, *Steve Green*, Jeffrey Hacker, Dave Haden (DH3), Dave Hardy (DH2), Dave Hicks (DH4), Liese Hoare, Martin Hoare, Robert Hoffman, Dave Holmes, Kathy Holmes, Jan Huxley, Al Johnston, Maureen Kincaid Speller (formerly Maureen Porter, MP2), Dave Langford, Alice Lawson, Steve Lawson, Ian Maule, Janice Maule, *Lawrence Miller*, *Nick Mills*, Chris Morgan, *Carol Morton* (CM3), *Tony Morton*, Chris Murphy (CM2), Pauline Morgan (formerly *Pauline Dungate*), Pat McMurray (PM2), Richard Newnham, Joseph Nicholas, Keith Oborn, Krystyna Oborn (KO2), *Paul Oldroyd*, Meg Palmer, Darroll Pardoe, Rosemary Pardoe (RP2), Carol Pearson, Eunice Pearson, Arline Peyton, *Rog Peyton*, Greg Pickersgill (GP2), Linda Pickersgill, Graham Poole, *Phill Probert*, *Hazel Reynolds*, Stephen Rogers, Mike Siddall, *Richard Standage*, *Martin Tudor*, Paul Vincent, Chris Walton, Pam Wells, John Wilkes (JW2), Geoff Winterman, Geoff Williams (GW2), Jackie Wright. Seventy-five, that's not too many.

Nova Awards 2003

Steve Green, Administrator

The following UK and Irish fanzines are eligible under the newly revised Nova Award rules, which appear on page twenty-six:

Album, CD-Rom, John Dallman, 92 Lichfield Road, Cambridge, CB1 3TR • *Ansible* #183 (Oct 2002), #184 (Nov), #185 (Dec), #186 (Jan 2003), #187 (Feb), #188 (Mar), #189 (Apr), #190 (May), #191 (Jun), #192 (Jul), #193 (Aug), #194 (Sep), all A4, 2pp, Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU • *Banana Wings* #18, A4, 48pp, Claire Brialey, 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, CR0 7HA, & Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road, Croydon, CR0 6JE (two copies in trade) • *Bogus* #6, A4, 8pp, Sandra Bond, 7 Granville Road, London, N13 4RR • *Brum Group News* #373 (October), A5, 12pp, #378 (Mar), A5, 12pp, #379 (April), A5, 8pp, #380 (May), A5, 12pp, #381 (June), A5, 12pp, #383 (Aug), A5, 8pp, #384 (Sept), A5, 8pp, Rog Peyton (for the Birmingham Science Fiction Group), 19 Eaves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham, B32 3QL* • *Convers[at]ions* #1, #2, A5, 8pp, Douglas Spencer, 51 Fountains Garth, Wildridings, Bracknell, RG12 7RH • *The Convertible Bus* #12, #13**, both A4, 2pp, Tony Keen, 48 Priory Street, Tonbridge, TN9 2AN • *Earisheen* #1, A5, 28pp, James Bacon, 123 Carnlough Road, Cabra, Dublin 7, Eire • *Erg* #161 (April), 162 (July), both A5, 16pp, Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, YO12 5RQ • *Fontzine* #6, A5, 16pp, Gavin Long, 21 Stanway Road, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 8EX • *Floss!* #3, A4, 48pp, Lilian Edwards, 39 Viewforth, Edinburgh, EH10 4JE • *Gnat's Testicles*, A4, 4pp, Max, 20 Bakers Lane, Peterborough, PE2 9QW, & Ang Rosin, 26 Hermitage Grove, Merseyside, L20 6DR • *Halo of Flies* #2, A5, 24pp, Tony Keen, address above • *Head* #5, A4, 26pp, #6, A4, 36pp, Doug Bell & Christina Lake, 12 Hatherley Road, Bishopston, Bristol, BS7 8QA • *Joie de Vivre* #3, A4, 10pp, Yvonne Rowse, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimply, DY12 1NP • *Old Rat's Almanac*, A4, 4pp, Peter Redfarn, 14 Box Tree House, Gosterwood Street, London, SE8 5PA • *Once More With Fanfunds*, A5, 12pp, Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, ML3 7HY • *Plokta* #28, #29, A4, 14pp, Steve Davies & Alison Scott & Mike Scott, 24 St Mary Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 9RG • *Quasiquote* #5, A4, 42pp, Sandra Bond, address

above • *Snapshot #2*, A4, 2pp, #3, A4, 6pp, Ian Sorensen, address above • *The Tiptree Comes to Britain*, A4, 7pp, Maureen Kincaid Speller (for the James Tiptree Award), 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, CT19 5AZ • *They Made Us Do It*, A4, 10pp, Max, address above • *Tortoise #15*, A4, 20pp, Sue Jones, Flat 5, 32/33 Castle Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2BQ • *Vibrator #7*, A5, 16pp, #8, A5, 8pp, Graham Charnock, <graycharnox@blueyonder.com> • *Zoo Nation #2*, A5, 20pp, #2.1, A4, 2pp, #3, A5, 28pp, Pete Young, 62 Walmer Road, Woodley, RG5 4PN. [*#385 and #386, 12pp and 4pp respectively arrived after the deadline. **#13 was received after the 1 October deadline, but Tony confirmed copies were initially distributed in London in September.)

All the above are available upon request for return postage, your own fanzine in trade (a copy for each editor is customary, unless they share an address) or a promise to respond with a substantial letter of comment; in certain quarters, this is known as “the Usual”. Electronic fanzines are only eligible if hardcopies are available for those without internet access.

Ballot forms are enclosed; the deadline at the convention is 23:59 Saturday. Do vote if you can: this is the thirtieth anniversary, after all, and it would be fantastic to have a record turnout.

Those interested in slightly older fanzines are reminded that Greg Pickersgill’s long-running Memory Hole project offers an astoundingly cheap introduction to the field. As Greg himself points out, “This is a great opportunity to find out which are the good fanzines - the old-fashioned way, by reading through a goddamned lot of them and making your own mind up.”

For a random bundle, send him a fiver (purely to cover postage) at 3 Bethany Row, Narberth Road, Haverfordwest, SA61 2XG. And don’t forget to say Novacon sent you.

For listing on next year’s ballot, fanzines should be sent to:
Nova 2004, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7LQ.

Nova Award Rules

The Nova Awards for achievement in the field of British science fiction fanzines were created in 1973 by the late Gillon Field, and decided somewhat undemocratically by a panel of leading fans.

When the ballot was opened up to the Novacon membership as a whole, new rules were drawn up in March 1978 by Dave Langford, and later revised by him in September 1983. They were further revised in February 1987 by Martin Tudor, before being extensively expanded and revised last November by the current administrator.

The Nova Awards celebrate fanzines, fanzine writing and fanzine artwork produced by science fiction fans resident in the UK or Ireland, providing a friendly pat on the back to those whose efforts gave the greatest pleasure to Novacon members during the previous year. They have no vast cosmic significance. Should any difficulties arise in interpreting the rules governing the Nova Awards (henceforth referred to as the Novas), those concerned are urged to follow the course most in keeping with this spirit.

1. The Novas shall be announced at Novacon, the convention organised annually by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group.
2. The categories shall be "Best Fanzine", "Best Fan Writer" and "Best Fan Artist".
3. A trophy shall be supplied in each category by the Novacon committee, for presentation at the awards ceremony on Sunday afternoon.
4. The trophies shall be presented by Novacon's guest(s) of honour (or, if unavailable, by the Novacon committee chair), on behalf of the convention membership.
5. In the event of a tie, the joint recipients shall be asked to share the trophy unless the Novacon committee is willing and able to fund a duplicate trophy.
6. As the Novas are awarded by popular vote, there is no mechanism for eligible editors, writers or artists to withdraw their work or themselves from consideration. A winner determined not to be honoured can always refuse to accept his or her award.

7. In the event that Novacon should not be held in any given year, the Birmingham Science Fiction Group shall be requested to underwrite a ballot in early October of the preceding Novacon's membership, using established criteria and deadlines. Winners shall be notified by e-mail and post, with the full results publicised through fanzines and electronic noticeboards. If the Birmingham Science Fiction Group is willing and able to fund trophies, these shall be presented at the next Eastercon or similarly major event.
8. Should Novacon be cancelled for a second year in succession, the Nova Award Administrator (henceforth referred to as the Administrator) shall meet with the committee of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group to decide as a matter of urgency whether to discontinue the Novas or allow another convention to take over Novacon's role.
9. For the purposes of the Novas, a fanzine shall be defined as an amateur publication concerned with science fiction and / or fantasy, fans of science fiction and / or fantasy, and / or related subjects, copies of which may be obtained in exchange for other such publications or in response to letters of comment. In the event that eligibility is unclear, the decision of the Administrator shall be final.
10. The "Best Fanzine" category shall be open to any fanzine published in the UK or Ireland, provided at least one issue has been published between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year. In cases where a fanzine has two or more editors, at least one must be resident in the UK or Ireland.
11. Electronic fanzines ("e-zines") shall be eligible in the "Best Fanzine" category, provided each issue is a distinct entity and a printed copy is available if preferred. A file copy must also be lodged with the Administrator, whose decision on eligibility shall be final.
12. The "Best Fan Writer" category shall be open to anyone resident in the UK or Ireland who has contributed a piece of writing to an eligible fanzine published between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year.
13. The "Best Fan Artist" category shall be open to anyone resident in the UK or Ireland who has contributed a piece of artwork to

an eligible fanzine published between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year.

14. Voting shall be open to any member of that year's Novacon, provided he or she has received at least six different fanzines published in the UK or Ireland between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year (separate issues of an individual fanzine or various organs of a group / society shall not be considered as different fanzines for the purposes of this total). Voters are not required to be resident in the UK or Ireland.
15. Ballot forms shall be circulated with the final Novacon progress report each year, to facilitate voting by post or e-mail prior to Novacon. The deadline for postal and electronic votes shall be 23:59 GMT on the Saturday prior to Novacon; the deadline for voting in person shall be 23:59 GMT on the Saturday of Novacon.
16. Only one ballot form shall be accepted from each member, and votes for themselves or their own fanzines will be disallowed (should a duplicate form be received, it should be clearly marked "Invalid" and exempt from the count).
17. Valid ballots should include the voter's name, address and Novacon membership number, plus the titles of six different fanzines published in the UK or Ireland between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year (separate issues of an individual fanzine or various organs of a group / society shall not be considered as different fanzines for the purposes of this total).
18. Ballots sent by post or handed in at the convention should be signed. Those sent electronically should emanate from the voter's known e-mail address.
19. Production of ballot forms, organisation of the count and general promotion of the Novas shall be the responsibility of the Administrator, appointed by the preceding year's Novacon committee. The Administrator should have a good basic knowledge of British fanzines but, to prevent dispute, it is preferable he or she should not edit a fanzine likely to qualify.
20. The Administrator shall in turn nominate two Novacon members to assist with the count on the Sunday of the convention; again, they should have a wide knowledge of fanzines but

preferably not edit a fanzine likely to qualify. During the count, they shall also assist the Administrator with issues of eligibility and ballot validity. The decision of this group shall be final.

21. First-, second- and third-place votes shall be available in each category. First-place votes shall be allocated three points, second-place votes two points and third-place votes one point.
22. In the event of a tie on points, the Nova in that category shall be awarded to the nominee with most first-place votes. In the event of a tie on first-place votes, the award shall be made to the nominee with most second-place votes. Only in the case of identical voting patterns shall a formal tie be announced.
23. The identity and choices of individual voters, as well as any discussions during the count, shall remain confidential. A complete breakdown of nominees and points received shall be released within one month of the announcement of the winners.
24. The Nova Awards ballot form shall comprise a short introduction to the aims of the award and appropriate footnotes on definitions and eligibility, plus space for the voter to identify themselves and indicate their receipt of at least six different fanzines published in the UK or Ireland between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year (separate issues of an individual fanzine or various organs of a group / society shall not be considered as different fanzines for the purposes of this total).
25. Further, the ballot form shall list the three categories, "Best Fanzine", "Best Fan Writer" and "Best Fan Artist"; in each case, space will be allotted for first-, second- and third-place votes.
26. Finally, if he or she wishes, the Administrator shall include a shortlist of known eligible fanzines, making clear this is intended as an *aide memoire* and is in no sense definitive.
27. Once the winners in all three categories have been decided, the ballot forms and any related notes shall be placed into an envelope and sealed, to be retained by the Administrator for one calendar month in the event the results are challenged. If no such query is raised during this period, the envelope and its contents shall be destroyed. Should the results be called into

question, the envelope - still sealed - shall be handed over to the chair of the relevant Novacon committee for further investigation.

28. The rules shall be posted on the Novacon website and hardcopies made available for a reasonable fee (covering printing and postage) upon request from the Administrator.
29. Any amendments to the above rules shall be made by the current Administrator in conjunction with the committee of that year's Novacon.

SG: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the previous Nova Award administrators for their input during the recent updating of the rules for the electronic age.

Nova Awards: The History

For its first eight years, only one Nova Award was presented each year, for "Best Fanzine". Peter Weston's *Speculation* took the inaugural award in 1973, followed by Lisa Conesa's *Zimri* (1974), Rob Jackson's *Maya* (both 1975 and 1976), Dave Langford's *Twll-Ddu* (1977), Alan Dorey's *Gross Encounters* (1978), Simone Walsh's *Seamonsters* (1979) and Dave Bridges' *One-Off* (1980).

From 1981 onwards, two further categories were introduced, "Best Writer" and "Best Artist". Although these do not technically need to be UK residents (so long as they have had work published in a UK fanzine), no non-UK fans have so far featured; this may change following the inclusion of Irish fanzines from 2003 onwards, as well as the increasing number of international collaborations.

1981: *Tappen*, edited by Malcolm Edwards (best fanzine); Chris Atkinson (best fanzine writer); Pete Lyon (best fanzine artist).

1982: *Epsilon*, Rob Hansen; Chris Atkinson; Rob Hansen.

1983: *A Cool Head*, Dave Bridges; Dave Bridges; Margaret Welbank.

1984: *Xyster*, Dave Wood; Anne Hammill; D West.

1985: *Prevert*, John Jarrold; Abi Frost; Ros Calverly.

1986: *Pink Bedsocks*, Owen Whiteoak; Owen Whiteoak; Atom.

1987: *Lip*, Hazel Ashworth; D West; D West.

1988: *Lip*, Hazel Ashworth; Michael Ashley; D West.

1989: *VSOP*, Jan Orys; Simon Polley; Dave Mooring. This was the first of Dave's four Novas; please come along to the display of his work, both fannish and mainstream, in this year's art show.

1990: *FTT**, Joseph Nicholas, Judith Hanna; Dave Langford; Dave Mooring. [*A polite acronym for *Fuck The Tories*.]

1991: *Saliromania*, Michael Ashley; Michael Ashley; D West.

1992: *Bob?*, Ian Sorensen; Michael Ashley, Dave Mooring.

1993: *Lagoon*, Simon Ounsley; Simon Ounsley; Dave Mooring.

1994: *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk*, Greg Pickersgill; Greg Pickersgill; D West.

1995: *Attitude*, Michael Abbott, John Dallman and Pam Wells; Simon Ounsley; D West. Intriguingly, *Attitude* was intended both as a fanzine and a thematic progress report for the 1996 convention.

1996: *Waxen Wings & Banana Skins*, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Alison Freebairn; D West. This year's "best fanzine" was a partnership of two initially separate titles; by the following Nova ballot, they had merged for a winning combination.

1997: *Banana Wings*, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Mark Plummer; Sue Mason.

1998: *Banana Wings*, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Maureen Kincaid Speller; D West.

1999: *Barmaid*, Yvonne Rowse; Yvonne Rowse; Sue Mason.

2000: *Plokta*, Alison Scott, Steve Davies and Mike Scott; Yvonne Rowse; Sue Mason.

2001: *Head*, Doug Bell and Christina Lake; Alison Freebairn; Dave Hicks.

2002: *Plokta*, Alison Scott, Steve Davies and Mike Scott; Claire Brialey; Dave Hicks.

2003: Entirely up to you. Ballot forms are available throughout the hotel. So long as you can satisfy a few minor criteria, everyone can vote. The more who do, the better the accolade; anyone who can't be bothered, but complains at the outcome, is an idiot.

For listing on next year's ballot, fanzines should be sent to:
Nova 2004, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7LQ.

The "Best Fan" Nova

Martin Tudor

Unlike the other three Nova Awards, the Nova for "best fan" is an occasional award presented by the Novacon committee in order to honour fans who have made outstanding contributions to this event, but are not necessarily fanzine producers, writers or artists.

It was created in 1995 and presented to veteran fan Brian Burgess, who was unable to attend Novacon 25 due to ill health. When Bob Shaw died, we felt we had to acknowledge his special contributions over the years; even though Bob was a "filthy pro", he was also a true fan and easily worthy of 1996's award.

Ken Slater was the recipient in 1997, celebrating not only his many years in fandom but also his 80th birthday. No nominations were made in 1998 or 1999, but 2000's award went to Vernon Brown for not only creating Novacon but for his continuing contribution through the GCSfE. There has been no award for the last two years.

This is an occasional honour and is not awarded *every* year, but we are always open to nominations from fellow fans. Remember, recipients can be sf professionals - that's no problem - but first and foremost, they must be a *fan*.

The Novacon Raffle

We've supported the Royal National Institute's "Talking Books for the Blind" project since Novacon 18, when then-chair Tony Berry first suggested it, and raised funds for a number of books in the fifteen years since.

Raffle tickets will be on sale throughout the convention and there are number of wonderful prizes to be won. All proceeds from the raffle will go to the RNIB.

[For further information on the project, or to make donations directly, send a self-addressed, reply-paid envelope to Roger Robinson at 75 Roslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG. Any cheques should be made out to "Beccon Publications".]

Novacon Membership

as at 30 October, 2003

A15 Michael Abbott
A146 Justin Ackroyd
A32 Andrew A Adams
A127 Jae Leslie Adams
H139 Brian W Aldiss
A29 Brian Ameringen
C31 Meriol Ameringen
A151 Diane Anderson
A150 John Anderson
A21 Margaret Austin
A10 Barbara-Jane
A106 Doug Bell
A118 Tony Berry
A163 Elizabeth Billinger
A164 Paul Billinger
A109 Kate Bodley
A166 Sandra Bond
A134 Helena Bowles
A135 Ray Bradbury
A120 Jill Bradley
A119 Phil Bradley
A159 Bridget Bradshaw
A158 Simon Bradshaw
A64 Claire Brialey
A194 Pat Brown
A160 Tanya Brown
A195 Vernon Brown
C188 Jonathan Cain
C187 Marianne Cain
A186 Steven Cain
A76 Diane Capewell
A75 Stuart Capewell
A3 Cat Coast
A152 Elaine Coates
A98 Noel Collyer
A46 David T Cooper
A47 Jane Cooper
A25 Steve Cooper
A101 Del Cotter
A137 Enid Crowe

A28 Arthur Cruttenden
A128 Tony Cullen
A83 Julia Daly
A91 Malcolm Davies
A27 Steve Davies
A37 Teresa Davies
A73 Peter Day
A26 Giulia De Cesare
A14 Vincent Docherty
A63 Chris Donaldson
A38 Paul Dormer
A177 Fran Dowd
A176 John Dowd
A77 Tara Dowling-Hussey
A61 Stephen Dunn
A22 Martin Easterbrook
A145 Lilian Edwards
A125 Lynn Edwards
A113 Sue Edwards
C154 Ethan
A132 Bobbie Farey
A131 Nic Farey
A149 Vikki Lee France
A11 Susan Francis
A56 Gwen Funnell
C173 Karen Furlong
A171 Nigel Furlong
A172 Sabine Furlong
A197 David Given
A66 Niall Gordon
A141 Roelof Goudriaan
A13 Wendy Graham
A8 Ann Green
A7 Steve Green
G1 Jon Courtenay Grimwood
A111 Helen Hall
A142 Judith Hanna
A104 Dave Hardy
A82 Colin Harris
H140 Harry Harrison
A50 Eve Harvey
A51 John Harvey
A58 Julian Headlong

A182	Karen Hetherington	A71	Pauline Morgan
A4	Dave Hicks	A42	Carol Morton
A192	Martin Hoare	A43	Tony Morton
A34	Andrew Hobson	A30	Caroline Mullan
A35	Sue Hobson	A36	Chris Murphy
A169	Dave Holmes	A143	Joseph Nicholas
A161	Tom Hunter	A193	Lisanne Norman
A122	Edward James	A170	Krystyna Oborn
A126	John Jarrold	A102	James Odell
A148	Steve Jeffery	A62	Paul Oldroyd
C155	Joel	A202	Omega
A130	Al Johnston	A23	Chris O'Shea
A12	Sue Jones	A201	Harry Payne
A178	Steve Jones	A18	Mali Perera
A108	Tony Keen	A138	Rog Peyton
A189	William Keith	A65	Mark Plummer
A87	Debra Kerr	A107	Sherrie Powell
A52	Paul Kincaid	A167	Liam Proven
A110	David Laight	A203	Mike Rennie
A105	Christina Lake	A33	Roger Robinson
A129	Dave Lally	A59	Tony Rogers
A144	Colin P Langeveld	A9	Marcus Rowland
A115	Dave Langford	A67	Yvonne Rowse
A5	Alice Lawson	A99	Andy Sawyer
A6	Steve Lawson	A185	Alison Scott
A74	Erhard Leder	A70	Mike Scott
A40	Gavin Long	A69	Gavin Shorrock
A39	Caroline Loveridge	A68	Ina Shorrock
A103	Peter Mabey	A175	Mark Sinclair
A168	Ken MacLeod	A174	Sally Sinclair
A49	Sue Mason	A156	Martin Sketchley
A198	Max	A24	Ken Slater
A136	Ian McDonald	A153	Mark Slater
A191	Martin McGrath	A84	Adrian Snowdon
A165	Vron McIntyre	A92	Kate Solomon
A183	Pat McMurray	A45	Ian Sorensen
A162	Claire McSkelly	A53	Maureen Kincaid Speller
A93	John Meaney	A44	Douglas Spencer
A94	Yvonne Meaney	A133	Richard Standage
A121	Farah Mendlesohn	A60	Tim Stannard
A190	Kostya Milayev	A100	Chris Stocks
A179	Cheryl Morgan		
A72	Chris Morgan		

C80	Andrew Stovold	A41	Dave Tompkins
A78	Brian Stovold	A114	Paul Treadaway
A79	Fiona Stovold	A2	Martin Tudor
C81	Heather Stovold	A147	Lennart Uhlin
A112	June Strachan	A196	Tobes Valois
A180	Lars-Olov Strandberg	A157	Paul D Voyce
A95	Marcus Streets	A123	Jim Walker
C97	Mathilda Streets	A57	Peter Wareham
A96	Rae Streets	A184	Ian Watson
A181	Charles Stross	A19	Alan Webb
A48	Neil Summerfield	A17	Gerry Webb
A124	Jennifer Swift	A86	Laura Wheatly
C90	Calvin Ternent	A199	Bridget Wilkinson
A89	George Ternent	A200	Peter Wilkinson
A88	Linda Ternent	A16	Anne Wilson
A20	David Thomas	A55	Alan Woodford
A116	Alison Tomkinson	A54	Anne Woodford
J117	Rachel Tomkinson	A85	Pete Young

A = Attending C = Child G = Guest H = Honorary President
J = Junior

Don't forget: Novacon 33 members can join Novacon 34 this weekend at a specially discounted rate. Full details will be posted at the Novacon Registration Hatch (in the lobby area, outside the main programme). Not only will you save money, but also you'll provide invaluable cash flow; better still, fill out a hotel booking form and really strengthen the committee's hand in its ongoing negotiations with the hotel management.

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For listing on next year's ballot, fanzines should be sent to:
Nova 2004, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7LQ.

The "Best Fan" Nova

Martin Tudor

Unlike the other three Nova Awards, the Nova for "best fan" is an occasional award presented by the Novacon committee in order to honour fans who have made outstanding contributions to this event, but are not necessarily fanzine producers, writers or artists.

It was created in 1995 and presented to veteran fan Brian Burgess, who was unable to attend Novacon 25 due to ill health. When Bob Shaw died, we felt we had to acknowledge his special contributions over the years; even though Bob was a "filthy pro", he was also a true fan and easily worthy of 1996's award.

Ken Slater was the recipient in 1997, celebrating not only his many years in fandom but also his 80th birthday. No nominations were made in 1998 or 1999, but 2000's award went to Vernon Brown for not only creating Novacon but for his continuing contribution through the GCSfE. There has been no award for the last two years.

This is an occasional honour and is not awarded every year, but we are always open to nominations from fellow fans. Remember, recipients can be sf professionals - that's no problem - but first and foremost, they must be a *fan*.

The Novacon Raffle

We've supported the Royal National Institute's "Talking Books for the Blind" project since Novacon 18, when then-chair Tony Berry first suggested it, and raised funds for a number of books in the fifteen years since.

NOVACON