

*Guest of Honour:*

*Ian Watson*

*5th - 7th November 2004*

*Quality Hotel, Walsall*

# NOVACON 34

# *Novacon 34* The Vital Statistics

Attending membership is: £33 until the end of Eastercon

- £36 until 26<sup>th</sup> October 2004. Then £40 on the door.
- Supporting membership costs £15 throughout.

(*Full* members get: Souvenir Book, Special by Guest of Honour, PRs, Read-Me and admission to whole convention. *Supporting* members get all publications, but have to convert at current rate for admission. *Day* members get: Read-Me and Admission)

Postal registrations should be received by 26<sup>th</sup> October 2004, after this time please join on the door. Daily rates will be available on the door at £10 Friday, £20 Saturday and £15 Sunday. Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to "Novacon 34" and sent with your completed form(s) to the Registration Address...

**Please note that we are in the process of setting up PayPal on the web site.**

Accommodation: £35 per person per night for double or twin rooms and £47 pppn for singles (inclusive of full English breakfast). A deposit is required of one night's stay per person (£35 per person twin/double or £47.00 per person in a single). Cheques payable to "The Quality Hotel" **MUST** be enclosed, or details of your credit card, and sent to the Registration Address by **15<sup>th</sup> October 2004**:

THE REGISTRATION ADDRESS IS:

Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

e-mail enquiries to xl5@zoom.co.uk, or tel. 0114-281-1572.

Further information from <http://www.novacon.org>.

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# Novacon 34 The Flies of Memory

## Chairman's Address by Martin Tudor

The first hardback SF books I bought were my five introductory offer books with the Science Fiction Book Club around 1978 which, if memory serves, were: Clifford D. Simak's *Shakespeare's Planet*, John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar* and *The Stone That Never Came Down*, and *The Jonah Kit* and *The Martian Inca* by Ian Watson. If ever there were a couple of books capable of evoking that legendary sensawunda it was these novels by Ian Watson. As an already confused teenager these totally fascinated me - what was he on? The award-winning *The Jonah Kit* features a whale comforted by the sight of the sky and haunted by memories of being inside a submarine and of making love in open air. While a young Russian boy with the mind of a dead astronaut imprinted on his own turns up in Japan and, deep in the Mexican desert a Nobel Prize winning scientist and his team are debating how to announce their latest discovery which surpasses their previous discovery of a sister galaxy to our own. While, as you might guess from the title, *Martian Inca* was an even stranger book: Julio and Angelina awake on a remote Bolivian mountainside after salvaging a wrecked spacecraft and believe themselves reborn as godlike creatures, the Inca and his Queen; as a transformative virus invades Earth.

My initial feelings of fascination, bemusement and confusion continue to this day in relation to Ian Watson's work. His stories, like the man himself, are dynamic, intense, passionate and controversial.

Certainly the last - Ian has always been controversial. He was one of the guests of honour at the first Eastercon I attended - Yorcon 2 (which was only my second convention, my first being Novacon 10). It was there, in Leeds in 1981, that during his GoH spot he called upon the membership of the convention to vote in favour of unilateral disarmament! As Kevin Smith later reported in *Ansible*:

"In the con hall Ian Watson politicised the convention by demanding, and getting, a vote on unilateral disarmament: the con proved to be pacifist -- or those members in the con hall were, anyway. The fascists, apathetics and drunks were too busy watching potential trufans doing press-ups. Andrew Stephenson was very upset by all this, but when he protested the

validity of the vote he was suppressed by panel chairman Graham James. Thus does politics contaminate all..." (*Ansible* #18, June 1981.)

I suppose, in many ways, it is typical of fandom that Yorcon 2 is not remembered so much for Ian's controversial political actions but for the audacity of the con committee in using the unexpected profits from this National British SF Convention to fund a non-profit making SF magazine... How dare they! INTERZONE, of course, continues to this day (by the skin of its teeth) and if you are not a subscriber you should be! Interzone, 217 Preston Drive, Brighton BN1 6FL, UK (£20 for 6 issues, UK only or £38 for 12 issues, UK only), or go to: <http://www.sfsite.com/interzone/index.htm>

But I digress, Ian continued to court controversy in SF circles by standing for Parliament:

**Ian Watson:** "COSMIC NEWSFLASH! Did not W.B. Yeats remark: 'The intellect of man is forced to choose / Perfection of the life, or of the work; / And if it choose the latter, must refuse / A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark.' I've had enough of raging in the economic dark brought on by the mad Tory monetarists. So in the May election I'm standing as the official Labour Party candidate for Northamptonshire County Council, in the Helmdon division of this fair county -- an area which compares to the other electoral divisions rather as Texas to any other state. I am also now Press Officer of the Towncaster & District Labour Party.

"We shall overcome.

"It is, in fact, very unlikely that I will get in, as Helmdon is an impossible division, full of squires and fox-hunters. But I suspect that life will never be quite the same again.

"And let everyone be aware that the first public utterance by the hotch-potch of Social Democrats was in favour of retaining nuclear weapons." (*Ansible* #17 April 1981.)

His words were to prove prophetic as was reported in the next *Ansible*:

"Helmdon Council Election: 2801 votes cast, 14 spoilt; Tattersall (Con) 1860, Ian Watson (Lab) 927. 'Not bad for a safe Tory seat,' Ian told our reporter, adding: 'The mob chose Barabbas.'" (*Ansible* #18, June 1981.)

Since his brief foray into politics Ian has concentrated on becoming one of Britain's most prolific SF writers, producing an enormous body of work featuring nine collections of short stories and more than twice that number



of novels. NEW SCIENTIST magazine described him as "One of Britain's consistently finest science fiction writers." I must agree - and I'm astounded that he has never been invited to be a Novacon guest of honour before, but delighted that this appalling oversight has allowed me the opportunity to invite him to be our Guest of Honour at Novacon 34.

\* \* \* \* \*

I hope you all enjoyed Novacon 33, if you didn't for any reason please let us know and we'll try to ensure it is sorted out if it is in our power to do so. Of course, it is often easier to sort out problems at the time they occur so I will take this opportunity to encourage you to tell the Duty Committee Member at the con of any problems you have at the time they occur.

Mind you we are not expecting too many problems with our excellent venue, the Quality Hotel, which has proved so popular with fandom that already two other conventions have adopted it, FantasyCon and Precursor!

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who supplied material for our tribute to the late Dave Mooring in the Art Show; I'm sure everyone who visited the Art show rooms during the weekend appreciated it.

On the subject of the Art Shows, Ann Green will be delighted to hear from you if you have any artists you wish to see exhibit! Our innovative CD ROM art show means that distance is no object, so if there is someone whose work you'd like to see displayed let us know - please supply contact details if you have them!

Finally (and believe me I say *finally* with heartfelt sincerity) we have a Novacon web site again! After over a year of aggravation with our old site we have given up and launched a new web site at [www.novacon.org](http://www.novacon.org) under the auspices of John and Fran Dowd. Hopefully you will soon be able to pay for your memberships there via **Pay Pal**, and already you can acquire your Hotel Booking and Membership forms from there. Please remember to join Novacon and book your hotel room whether you use our wonderful new site or the forms enclosed with this Progress Report!

Remember the new web site address is:

<http://www.novacon.org>

## Novacon 34 The Committee

While the Novacon *Chair* always has to be a member of the Birmingham SF Group, the reason Novacon has not just endured but positively thrived while many annual conventions have fallen by the way side is that the Chair can then recruit a committee from anyone, anywhere, in fandom.

Thus we'd like to welcome Vicky Cook, to her first Novacon committee, Vicky's a regular of the BSFG and has been involved with Fantasycon, so I'm sure she's completely aware of what she's let herself in for, oh yes. We're sure Yvonne Rowse will make light work of organising a scintillating programme after doing a great job at Seacon last year

Ann Green has been doing such sterling work as art show supremo these past couple of years that we've made it a full committee post, with the bonus that there's someone to bring Steve to meetings when he's feeling 'tired and emotional'. We're now looking for someone to help when they're *both* feeling 'tired and emotional'.

Meanwhile that venerable old firm of Tudor, Hicks, Coast, Lawson & Lawson, with about thirty Novacons between them (all right, half of them Martin Tudor's) will ensure the balance of continuity and freshness that has kept Novacon going since the time when you could buy a pint of beer, a bacon roll and that year's Nebula-winning novel and still have change from a pound.

### Committee:

- Chairman Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, WV13 1HX (empties@breathemail.net);
- Secretary Vicky Cook, 5 Greenbank, Barnt Green, Birmingham, B45 8DH (aunico@hotmail.com);
- Treasurer Alice Lawson, postal address as Steve Lawson's below (fab@zoom.co.uk);
- Programme Yvonne Rowse, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpley, Worcs, DY12 1NP (yvonne@hallsfarm.demon.co.uk);
- Publications Dave Hicks, 1 St. Woolos Place, Newport, NP20 4GQ, (david.hicks70@ntlworld.com );
- Registrations Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ (xl5@zoom.co.uk);
- Operations Cat Coast, postal address as Dave Hicks' above (david.hicks70@ntlworld.com )
- Art Show Ann Green, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 7LQ (neergnna@yahoo.co.uk)
- Promotions Steve Green, address as Ann Green above (ghostwords@yahoo.co.uk)



# Novacon 34 News

## NEBULA AWARD NOMINEES

The final ballot for the Nebulas, as awarded by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, is as follows. The winners will be announced at the Nebula Awards Banquet on 17 April in Seattle.

### BEST NOVEL

Lois McMaster Bujold, *DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY* (Baen); Carol Emshwiller, *THE MOUNT* (Small Beer Press); Kathleen Ann Goonan, *LIGHT MUSIC* (Eos); Nalo Hopkinson, *THE SALT ROADS* (Warner); Jack McDevitt, *CHINDI* (Ace); Elizabeth Moon, *THE SPEED OF DARK* (Ballantine)

### BEST NOVELLA

Eleanor Arnason, "The Potter of Bones" (ASIMOV'S Sept 2002); Kage Baker, "The Empress of Mars" (ASIMOV'S July 2003); Neil Gaiman, *CORALINE* (HarperCollins); John Kessel, "Stories for Men" (ASIMOV'S Oct/Nov 2002); Ian R. MacLeod, "Breathmoss" (ASIMOV'S May 2002)

### BEST NOVELETTE

Richard Bowes, "The Mask of the Rex" (F & SF May 2002); Adam-Troy Castro, "Of a Sweet Slow Dance in the Wake of Temporary Dogs" (IMAGININGS); Cory Doctorow, "Ownz0red" (SALON August 2002); Jeffrey Ford, "The Empire of Ice Cream" (SCIFICTION Feb 2003); Ray Vukceвич, "The Wages of Syntax" (SCIFICTION Oct 2002)

### BEST SHORT STORY

Eleanor Arnason, "Knapsack Poems" (ASIMOV'S May 2002); Kevin Brockheimer, "The Brief History of the Dead" (NEW YORKER 8 Sept 2003); Harlan Ellison, "Goodbye to All That" (MCSWEENEY'S MAMMOTH TREASURY OF THRILLING TALES); Carol Emshwiller, "Grandma" (F & SF March 2002); Karen Joy Fowler, "What I Didn't See" (SCIFICTION July 2002); Molly Gloss, "Lambing Season" (ASIMOV'S July 2002); James Van Pelt, "The Last of the O-Forms" (ASIMOV'S Sept 2002)

### BEST SCRIPT

Scott Frank & Jon Cohen, *MINORITY REPORT*; David A. Goodman, *FUTURAMA*: "Where No Fan Has Gone Before"; Hayao Miyazaki, Cindy Davis Hewitt & Donald H. Hewitt, *SPIRITED AWAY*; Andrew Stanton, Bob Peterson & David Reynolds, *FINDING NEMO*; Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens, Stephen Sinclair & Peter Jackson, *THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS*

# *Novacon 34* Dancing Queen

## The Programme by Yvonne Rowse

Programme. The essential centrepiece of the convention sparking intense intellectual discussion deep into the night or somewhere to go if there's no-one in the bar you want to talk to. Whatever your motivation for stepping into the programme rooms we expect to be able to entertain you. We've already spoken to Ian Watson about what he is interested and passionate about at the moment. This will form the central core of the programme together with the usual Novacon melange of silly and serious, science, SF and fannish.

At the last committee meeting we discussed the late night entertainment options for Saturday. For the last two years we have provided two options. Alongside the traditional disco, two years ago we organised a fashion-parade of fannish night attire (otherwise known as the 2am fire alarm for those not participating). Last year we arranged, at quite frightful expense, a lunar eclipse. After furious argument it was decided that the lunar eclipse had been, whilst much less spectacular obviously, somewhat more tasteful, and the majority of the committee favoured a re-run.

Alice Lawson did a quick calculation and informed us, in no uncertain terms, that we really couldn't afford to stage another lunar eclipse. Steve Lawson's suggestion that we could probably have a whip-round for a solar eclipse was quickly dismissed on the grounds that we wouldn't gain the full benefit of such a spectacular event at midnight. We all grumbled a little but eventually decided that this year we would concentrate on making the disco the sort of event that everyone would enjoy.

Last year the DJs had a huge selection of music, quite a lot of which I actually recognised and would like to dance to. They tried a number of tactics to get people onto the dance floor; played a wide selection of music, blew bubbles across the room, asked for requests. Sadly we were all either too shy or too forgetful to be able to say what we wanted to dance to.

'This year,' I suggested forthrightly, 'We'll get a play list organised before the event.'



'We tried that before,' said Martin glumly. 'No-one answered.'  
'Yes,' I replied, 'But I don't think the idea was sufficiently incentivised.  
This year we'll have a fall-back position.'

Proudly I presented them with the default play list with the suggestion that we should pipe the music into the bar area so that everyone could enjoy it.

'Yes,' he mused. 'That should provide sufficient incentive for everyone to make at least a couple of suggestions.'

So folks, this is the default play list. It's quite short but we could put it on a loop.

- D.I.S.C.O. by Disco Tex and the Sexolettes
- Macho Man by Sinitta
- Birdy Song by The Tweets
- Agadoo by Black Lace
- Anything by Celine Dion
- or remix Techno versions of Ian Sorensen fannish musicals.....

If you have any better suggestions, drop me a line. I expect my inbox to be full Real Soon Now. Especially from those lucky fans who have featured in one of Mr Sorensen's fabulous songs.

**Disclaimer** (dedicated to our very own Steve Green)

There is no guarantee that any of the events recorded above actually happened. Steve, of course, wouldn't know. They might have happened. They should have happened. And, for fannish purposes, it's close enough to be accurate. They *did* happen. In some reality or other.

If YOU have any ideas you'd like to see turned into programme items at Novacon 34, or are interested in taking part in the programme, Yvonne can be reached at:

Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpeley, Worcs, DY12 1NP  
(yvonne@hallsfarm.demon.co.uk)

# Novacon 34 Invention And Impatience

## Guest of Honour: Ian Watson

Born in England in 1943, Ian Watson graduated from Balliol College, Oxford, in 1963 with a first class Honours degree in English Literature, followed in 1965 by a research degree in English and French 19th Century literature. After lecturing in literature at universities in Tanzania and Tokyo, and in Futures Studies (including Science Fiction) in Birmingham, England, he became a full-time writer in 1976 following the success of his first novel, *The Embedding* (1973) which won the John W. Campbell Memorial Award and in France the Prix Apollo, and *The Jonah Kit* (1975) which won the British Science Fiction Association Award and the Orbit Award.

Numerous novels of SF, Fantasy, and Horror followed, and 9 story collections. His stories have been finalists for the Hugo and Nebula Awards, and widely anthologised. From 1990 to 1991 he worked full-time with Stanley Kubrick on story development for the movie A.I. Artificial Intelligence, directed after Kubrick's death by Steven Spielberg, for which Ian has screen credit for Screen Story. He lives with a black cat called Poppy in a small rural village 60 miles north of London.

Previously Ian wrote a number of poems -- such as whenever one of his characters was a poet and needed to demonstrate this! -- but in the past few years he has become much more prolific, poems sprouting like mushrooms although lasting a bit longer, one hopes. DNA Publications ([www.dnapublications.com](http://www.dnapublications.com)) released his first book of poetry, *The Lexicographer's Love Song*, in 2001. This includes his poem *True Love* which won the 2002 Rhysling Award of the Science Fiction Poetry Association.

His recent story collection, *The Great Escape* (Golden Gryphon Press, 2002; [www.goldengryphon.com](http://www.goldengryphon.com)) was chosen by The Washington Post as one of the 8 best sf & fantasy books of the year. Golden Gryphon Press released his latest novel, *Mockymen*, in Autumn 2003.

In 2001 Ian was a guest of the Semana Negra at Gijón in Spain, of the Aachen Poetenfest in Germany, of Science+Fiction, Festival Internazionale della Fantascienza in Trieste, and was Guest of Honour at the Polish National SF Convention in Katowice.



In 2003 Ian was a guest of the Science Fiction Foundation and the British SF Association at The Goldfish Factor in London. He appeared as himself and also as the "Ghost of Honour" of H.G.Wells during the Second International Week of Science & Science Fiction in Timisoara, Romania; was a guest at Hungarocon in Salgótarján, Hungary; visited the Madrid Book Fair to launch the Spanish edition of his novel *The Fire Worm*; was a guest at the Terni Film Festival in Italy; and he revisited Hungary as guest at ÁtjáróCon in Budapest.

### Quotes from Reviewers & Critics

"He writes a heady, zest-filled prose that whips up a froth of speculation about anthropology and linguistics, topology, structuralism and astrophysics - in fact, after reading Watson's novels one has the first dazed impression that there is virtually nothing that they aren't about." J.G. Ballard in *New Statesman*.

"For sheer inventiveness and intellectual brilliance, Ian Watson has already established a place in the front rank of contemporary writers." *Sunday Times*.

"A phenomenon, a national resource to be conserved. Ian Watson resembles H.G. Wells in both invention and impatience." *Times Literary Supplement*.

"Ian Watson is perhaps the most impressive synthesiser of ideas in modern SF." *Encyclopædia of Science Fiction*.

"Watson's imagination runs riot, but his prose has the poise to keep one in the picture throughout. Don't anybody lock this man up, just yet." *The List*.

"Mr Watson wreaks havoc with what is accepted - and acceptable." *The Times*.

"Ian Watson is among the very few writers of any sort of fiction who can genuinely handle the front line of contemporary intellectual work." *The Observer*.

"One of Britain's consistently finest science fiction writers." *New Scientist*.

# *Novacon 34* My Adventures in Hungary

## Ian Watson travels hopefully through Budapest

I'm just back from Budapest, where I was a guest at Atjarocon on October 25th 2003.

Atjaro is the new Hungarian SF magazine, and "atjaro" means a portal or passageway, though only if I put the accents on the right letters, which I daren't do because of eccentric misbehaviour on the part of Windows XP.

My Hungarian hosts were wonderfully inventive in arranging exciting adventures. The last time I was in Budapest my friends Ata (composer of thrilling computer games music) and Kriszta showed me more regular sights such as the Citadel, the Castle (with its ancient dark Labyrinth beneath, home to artefacts of an imaginary ancient civilisation), and heroic statues of Magyar chiefs arriving from Siberia on horses with antlers. This time the accent was on transport - cars, trams, subway trains, light aircraft. On the first night after dinner we had a car crash. Peter hadn't drunk a drop but he was quite excited, so he forgot that the dark cavernous street we were zooming along didn't have priority over the dark cavern that intersected it. BANG, directly into the door I was sitting beside. For some reason uniquely that night I'd decided not to fasten the seat belt, so I was able to lurch into the cushion of Laszlo rather than sharing space with the intruding car - owned ironically by an insurance company manager.

The demise of the car meant that Adam took me and Roberto (Quaglia) to a bar to explain in sign language, Klingon, and a few words of English, how I would get to the con the next day. (Roberto and I had realised at Hungarocon a few months earlier that the Hungarian language, being connected with nothing else on Earth, is probably Klingon.) Tracing the route of the red Metro line across the map was okay, but then I must "Go villamos!" Pronounced villamosh. What or where was villamos? Inspiration struck me. Might it perhaps be a tram? The vocab in my Berlitz Hungarian for Travellers confirmed this, although I soon decided to alter the title of the book by pen to Klingon for Surrealists. "Yellow villamos!" cried Adam triumphantly. Clearly I should not catch a red or blue or green villamos.



Fortunately Peter turned up an hour later and commented, "All villamos in Hungary are yellow. The number of the villamos might be more useful." So the next morning I sallied to the subway to cross from Pest into Buda, and actually arrived on a number 61 villamos at Mom Park, where the con was happening. Unfortunately I alighted from the tram beside a park, which confused me. Was the con in a tent in the park? Shivering in the arctic breeze, I gazed skywards for inspiration and discovered the words MOM PARK adorning a huge shopping centre. I was to discover that MOM stood for something like Magyar Optical Manufacturers, which had occupied the site previously.

An excellent venue, full of shops and warm air, with a cinema complex up top where Atjarocon was happening. Various radio and TV interviews occurred, one with a show hosted by actress Zita who played the Queen of the Vampires (until killed within a few minutes) in the recent Hollywood movie Underworld which was filmed in Budapest and its subways. Before my question and answer session in the main hall I'd decided to do a 5-minute burlesque skit of Warhammer 40K, and had requested a commode or potty to represent the paralysed superpsychic 40K Emperor's prosthetic throne, but only a black plastic bucket was forthcoming. However, by putting this single stage prop over my head, this also enabled me to give the audience greetings from Darth Vader. By coincidence the Klingon name for a bucket is vödör, pronounced Vedder. Darth Vader had previously endeared himself to the whole of Hungarian fandom after Hungarocon by pouring half a dozen of the best Hungarian red wines down his sink back home because they weren't supersweet like the white Tokaji he had enjoyed. He should have added a bag of sugar to each bottle.

I'm best known in Hungary so far because of my 40K books, which all re-appeared while I was in Budapest as a vast omnibus hardback volume weighing a ton, and also because of Al. Zsolt, who already published the 40K books separately, mentioned that he was recently driving through the red light district when he saw a prostitute standing on the pavement reading my Space Marine. This is true popularity.

Next day Zita was having a sightseeing flight in a tiny Cessna from a grass airfield, so she invited me and Roberto along. It was the first time any of us had been in such a small plane, but I had recently been on a terror ride at St Giles Fair in Oxford, so I was well prepared. Misty day; blue Danube in the distance. After we got back Zita's dog suddenly took off right across the airfield and was nearly killed by a glider taking off, but it jumped the cable just in time, and returned very worried, trembling, ears flat back.

Another super adventure was riding the whole of the Budapest subway up front in the driver's cab, because she, Sylvia, was one of the convention organisers. We saw the parts passengers don't see, such as the secret tunnel to Parliament and the blast doors installed by the Communist government.

A pub called St Lancelot's specialising in medieval English banquets was wonderful too. Fire-eaters, belly-dancers, suits of armour, sword-fighting, the works. Since I've never been to an English medieval banquet in England, it was quite surrealistic to experience one for the first time in Budapest. Since our hands were greasy from tearing whole chickens and porks apart, and since the ashtrays were a foot across in the shape of round battlemented castles it seemed a good idea to construct an army of monsters from the surplus bones and meat and vegetables and skewers and lay siege. The staff seemed to admire our food art.

By now Roberto and I were well aware that journeys in Budapest with native guides start out by going in totally the wrong direction, then correcting to a different wrong direction, only gradually converging after an hour or so on one's goal, but he still fell into the trap of being guided in his big silver Mercedes to a place of interest out of town, which involved taking two and a half hours to leave Buda, where he was staying, via three crossings of the river over the very same bridge into Pest and back again. Getting out of town should have taken about fifteen minutes. So when we finally arrived at our destination darkness fell and we had to leave promptly, to become trapped in a two hour rush-hour queue returning to the city. Consequently, when we went to the Franz Liszt Museum the next day on foot, I used my own map, which prevented straying, although our hosts complained at how fast Roberto and I seemed to walk. "You have only been here a few days! We have been here for years!" Can it be that the gravity of Budapest upon its inhabitants increases as time goes by? Oh what surrealistic fun it all was. What lovely meals and wines and beers and hosts and buildings and much, much more. And yes, the Hungarians probably are Klingons, or some sort of delightful alien. When I was teaching Adam some more English in the airport before departing I asked, "How many fingers on your hand?" and he answered, "One Two Three Four Five." "That is a thumb," I corrected him. "No, " he insisted, "it is a finger! I have five fingers!"

Stick out your fifth finger in Budapest for a ride on a yellow villamos.



This article is taken from Ian's excellent and comprehensive web site at:  
[www.ianwatson.info](http://www.ianwatson.info)

## *Novacon 34* The Nova Awards

by Steve Green, Administrator

Since 1973, the Nova Awards have celebrated excellence in British fanzines, extending their scope to Eire and certain electronic publications in 2002. Voting is open to any Novacon member able to exhibit a rudimentary familiarity with the current fanzine scene (for the full rules check out our web site at [www.novacon.org](http://www.novacon.org)).

Congratulations to Pete Young, Claire Brialey and Sue Mason, who received their Nova Award statuettes at Novacon 33 from guest of honour Jon Courtenay Grimwood. The complete results appear below.

Occasionally, the Novacon committee also presents its own Nova, for "Best Fan". In 2003, such veteran figures as Ken Slater and the late Bob Shaw were joined by Ina Shorrock, commemorating a half-century in fandom, most of it in the company of her much-missed husband Norman; the award was presented on the committee's behalf by Birmingham SF Group vice-president Harry Harrison.

**Best Fanzine 2003:** 1, *Zoo Nation* (ed. Pete Young), 59 points; 2, *Plokta*, 39; 3, *Banana Wings*, 33; 4, *Tortoise*, 16; 5, *Head*, 14; 6, *Quasiquote*, 11; 7, *Floss!*, 10; 8, *Ansible*, 5; 9, *Conver[s]ations*, 4; 10=, *Convertible Bus*, *Halo of Flies*, *Joie de Vivre*, 3 points each; 13=, *Album*, *Bogus*, *No Sin But Ignorance*, *Outlaw Mutation Boogie*, *Parakeet*, *Swiss Tony Speaks to the Nation*, *Vibrator*, 2 each; 20=, *Brum Group Newsletter*, *Once More With Fanfunds*, 1 each.

**Best Fan Writer 2003:** 1, Claire Brialey, 29 points; 2, Tony Keen, 22; 3, Pete Young, 17; 4, Max, 16; 5, Tanya Brown, 14; 6=, Alison Scott, Dave Langford, Mark Plummer, 13 points each; 9, Lilian Edwards, 10; 10=, Doug Spencer, Sue Jones, 8 each; 12=, Doug Bell, James Bacon, 6 each; 14=, Graham Charnock, Sandra Bond, Yvonne Rowse, 5 each; 17=, Dave Hicks, Ian Watson, Jim de Liscard, Maureen Kincaid Speller, 3 each; 21=, Christina Lake, Ian Sorensen, Ron Bennett, 2 each; 24=, Alison Freebairn, Ang Rosin, Guilia de Cesare, 1 each.

**Best Fan Artist 2003:** 1, Sue Mason, 69 points;  
2, Dave Hicks, 44; 3, Alison Scott, 18; 4, Pete Young, 15; 5, D West, 14; 6,  
Steve Jeffrey, 10; 7, Sue Jones, 3; 8, Mark Plummer, 2.

A total of 37 valid ballots were cast. Special thanks to Jon Courtenay Grimwood, Harry Harrison; to Cat Coast, for her assistance in counting ballots; and, of course, to Ray Bradbury for designing the awards.

A checklist of known eligible fanzines published since 1 October will appear in the next progress report. Material should be forwarded to:  
33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, B92 7LQ.

## Gophers: A Special Request

By Cat Coast

If you're one of Novacon's Very Special People - that is, a Gopher - I would just like to say: I love you. If you are not, there currently exists a window of opportunity.

We're looking for people to volunteer for one or more hour-long shifts, overseeing the CD-Rom Art Show .

Now, I've done this, so I know from experience that it's not the most, er, exciting job in the world, but we really need people to volunteer some of their time to run the event successfully. Plus, I personally guarantee that you won't be left lumbered with it for more than an hour at a time, unless you insist.

One change: this year we'll be giving out *Gopher Reward Tickets* (or *Groats* as they're sometimes called) for every two-hour shift, that can be redeemed for food and drink throughout the convention, to those good fans who are kind enough to help with the running of the convention. So you'll be able to enjoy the reward for your good deeds there and then!

And if you wish to volunteer for any other gophering activity, great! Contact me at the address below, or introduce yourself when you arrive at Novacon if you prefer:

1 St. Woolos Place, Newport, NP20 4GQ,  
(david.hicks70@ntlworld.com )



# *Novacon 34* Hotel Information

## The Quality Hotel, by Martin Tudor

The Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall is situated beside Junction 10 of the M6 - so access by road couldn't be easier. The nearest Railway Station is Walsall and the nearest Inter City Railway Station is Wolverhampton - full details about travel will appear in our third and final Progress Report.

The Quality has about 150 twin/double rooms - no singles. Twin/doubles are £35 per person, per night (inclusive of full English breakfast). The Hotel Manager has agreed that we can use 30 of these as singles at the special rate of £47 per person, per night (inclusive of full English breakfast). So if you want a single room complete the enclosed Hotel Booking form NOW - singles will be allocated on a strictly first come basis!

The Quality Hotel are holding *all* of their available bedrooms for us until 15<sup>th</sup> October 2004 - after which time they will start taking non-Novacon bookings. So you *must* get your bookings to Steve Lawson by that date.

Children under 5 will be accommodated free of charge, and children aged 5-12 will be charged £10 per night to include breakfast.

All residents will be able to enjoy full use of the Quality's Leisure Club, which comprises indoor heated swimming pool, spa-bath, sauna, solarium, and gymnasium.

It is worth noting that if you agree to share a room we can guarantee that you can have a key each as we have again made arrangements with the Hotel to ensure a supply of duplicate keys are available if requested in advance. (See below for details.)

For those who insist on a single but don't book in time there is an overflow nearby. This is a Travel Inn, 10 minutes walk from the Quality Hotel (15 minutes back - as it is *up* hill on the way back!). Rooms there are currently £44.95 (which does not include breakfast and the price is due to rise in March 2004). However, if you are on a very tight budget it is worth bearing in mind that Travel Inn charge per room, rather than per person, and many of their rooms will accommodate up to two adults and two

children under 16. The address for the Travel Inn is Bentley Green, Bentley Road North, Walsall, West Midlands, WS2 0WB. It is next door to the Bentley Green Brewsters from Brewers Fayre (where Travel Inn's breakfasts are served - full English for £6.50, Continental breakfast £4.50). Further information from:

<http://www.travelinn.co.uk/TI/index.jsp?page=inn&id=210>  
or telephone bookings on **08701 977 258**. It should be noted that in recent years the Travel Inn has filled up very quickly so it will pay you to book early if you really want a single!

For further information contact: Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ (e-mail [xl5@zoom.co.uk](mailto:xl5@zoom.co.uk) or telephone 0114-281-1572).

## Duplicate Room Keys

We have made arrangements with the Hotel so that if you are sharing a room and require a key each you should be able to get one this year. (Unfortunately if you are in one of the 30 suites you cannot have a key each as they have different locks to the other rooms in the hotel.)

However, if you require a key each you must notify the Hotel of this on arrival. You will not be able to change your mind later because the Hotel will be programming 100 rooms to accept duplicate key sets before we arrive. This is a time-consuming process and there are a limited number of these duplicate key sets available - the Hotel does not normally use them and is buying them in especially for Novacon.

If you do have a key each please don't lose them! If you lose your key two new keys will need to be issued immediately as your sharer's key won't work after you've used your new key! As there are limited quantities of these duplicate keys available you may find that if you've lost your key the Hotel will be forced to reprogramme the lock on your room to take their standard single key system again.

If you do not have a key each you can still easily gain access to your room by either tracking down your sharer or by asking Hotel Reception to let you in with a master, but please don't get them doing this all the time. The hotel will require you to produce your keycard as proof that it is your room, so please ensure you carry it.



# The Parents' Co-operative

By Helena Bowles and Richard Standage

This year child care facilities will again be run by us. For those who don't know us, Richard is a registered children's nurse and I am a registered nurse. We both have the requisite police checks as well as experience of our own children (eight and six) plus experience with children in play groups, nursery and hospital settings. We have run an informal children's room at Novacon for the last couple of years. We plan this year to adopt a more formal approach in order to comply as fully as possible with national guidelines and with local authority regulations.

The plan is for two sessions per day, the first probably starting 15 minutes before the main programme stream. This will probably run for 2 to 3 hours, followed by an afternoon session of two to three hours or so.

In order to comply with regulations regarding the number of adults per child for each session used one parent **MUST** volunteer for one shift at a time booked in advance, hopefully at a time convenient to him/her. He or she will not *definitely* have to work this session but must be available to do so if we need extra hands to deal with the number of children. Richard will technically be manager and I will be deputy manager. One of us at least will be present with volunteers at every session.

To ensure children's safety we will have a sign-in/sign-out policy, with digital photography of each adult. This means only the person who drops the child off can collect them. On the first session attended by each child there will be a short form to fill in regarding likes/dislikes, fears, illnesses, allergies etc. We must also have either a mobile phone number or a good idea of where you will be so the DCM can locate you if necessary. There will also be a booklet for parents with our room phone number/mobile number, details of our emergency procedures for illness/fire alarms etc.

So nobody gets overburdened with work we still require volunteers! We would also like to know in advance roughly the number and ages of those children likely to be attending so we can have a plan of structured activities appropriate to each likely age group planned in advance.

If anyone has any ideas/comments/criticisms/queries etc. we can be reached directly at:

38 Harold Road, Smethwick, West Midlands, B67 6LJ or

Richard@standage-bowles.freeserve.co.uk

Please reference any E-mail with Re:Creche.

## Novacon Art Show

This year's Art Show is again being run by Ann Green. If you're planning to show any work please contact her to let her know your display needs. Should you wish to help out in any way, please get in touch, either by contacting Ann beforehand or early at the con. Contact Ann at:  
Ann Green, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 7LQ  
(neergna@yahoo.co.uk)

## CD-Rom Art Show

Can't make it to the con but would still like to exhibit your work? Or perhaps you can't bring as much as you'd like to display? No Problem. Once again, we'll be running the innovative and exciting CD ROM Art Show. If you have work for display, please contact us (the suggested format for images is a JPG at resolution 72 pixels).

CD-Roms should be sent to:  
Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ (e-mail xl5@zoom.co.uk or telephone 0114-281-1572).

## Novacon's RNIB Raffle

As usual we will be selling raffle tickets to raise money for the Royal National Institute for the Blind's "Talking Books for the Blind Project". So, if you have anything you would like to donate as a prize for the raffle please contact:  
Martin Tudor at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, WV13 1HX  
empties@breathmail.net

We will list the Raffle Prizes beside Novacon Registration in the convention foyer throughout the weekend, and the winning numbers will be posted there after the Awards Ceremony on Sunday.

Last year we raised £250.00

Don't forget to buy a ticket or ten!!! Keep an eye out for Anne Woodford who will be roaming the convention doing what she does so well.



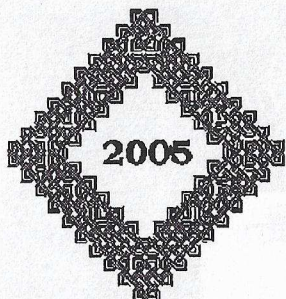
# *British Fantasy Society*



The British Fantasy Society exists to promote and enjoy the genres of fantasy, science fiction and horror in all its forms. We are well supported by the publishing industry and have many well known authors among our members, not least our president, Ramsey Campbell, who says: "This is an invitation to you to join the community of the fantastic. Many years ago, when I was a struggling writer and a vociferous fan, I tried to convince people that we admirers of fantasy needed a society to bring us together for fun and for sharing our ideas, and I don't know of a better such organisation than the British Fantasy Society..."

We hold regular Open Nights which are open to all, not just our members, and these are listed on our website, <http://www.britishfantasy.com>, as well as in our quarterly news magazine, Prism. We also publish a bi-annual fiction magazine, Dark Horizons. Once a year, we hold our main convention, FantasyCon, an event that is always well attended by known and unknown alike.

Subscriptions: £25 (UK), £30 (Europe), £45 (Rest of World)p.a. Membership entitles you to four free issues of Prism, two of Dark Horizons, and free copies of all BFS Special Publications, also discounted attendance at BFS events. Cheques should be made payable to: British Fantasy Society, The British Fantasy Society, 201 Reddish Road, South Reddish, STOCKPORT, SK5 7HR England. Or you can join online at the BFS Cyberstore: <http://www.britishfantasy.com/shop/info.htm>.



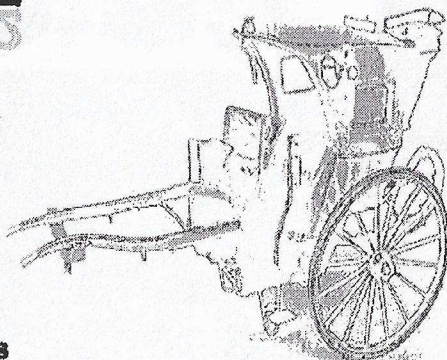
## PARAGON2 BYBYGON3

### **Eastercon: The British National Science Fiction Convention**

25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> March 2005  
Hanover International  
Hinckley

#### **Guests of Honour:**

John & Eve Harvey  
Ben Jeapes  
Ken MacLeod  
Richard Morgan  
Robert Rankin



#### **Membership Rates**

	<b>from 1 December 2003 to 16 April 2004</b>	<b>April 17 2004 to November 2004</b>
Attending	£35	£40
Supporting	£15	£15
Junior	£17:50	£20
Child	£5	
Infant	free	

#### **Contact Address**

John Dowd      4 Burnside Avenue, SHEFFIELD S8 9FR, UK  
telephone:      +44 (0) 114 281 0674  
email:            [members@paragon2.org.uk](mailto:members@paragon2.org.uk)

<http://www.paragon2.org.uk>

join online through the website using PayPal at no extra charge



# To advertise in our splendid publications...

If you wish to

Rates: The rates are as follows (fan rates in brackets):

Progress Reports -

- Full page £35.00 (fan £15.00)
- Half page £17.50 (fan £9.00)
- Quarter page £9.50 (fan £6.00)

Programme Book -

- Full page £80.00 (fan £35.00)
- Half page £50.00 (fan £17.50)
- Quarter page £27.50 (fan £10.50)

Anyone interested in advertising should contact Dave Hicks (Publications):

1 St. Woolos Place, Newport, NP20 4GQ  
([little.jim@dial.pipex.com](mailto:little.jim@dial.pipex.com)).

Deadlines for camera-ready advertising copy are detailed below:

- PR #2: 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004, to be mailed end August 2002.
- PR #3: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2004, to be mailed mid-October 2002.

Programme Book: 10th September 2004, distributed at Novacon 34.

## Bar prices a bit steep?

The more people who book early, then the more leverage the committee has with the hotel management to ensure you have a good, *affordable* convention.

You know you're coming, so book now!

## Dealers' Room

If you wish to book tables in the Dealers' Room please contact Steve Lawson at the address below. Tables cost £20 each for the weekend, the Dealers' Room will be open from late Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon (set up can begin on Friday morning).

For further information contact: Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ (e-mail xl5@zoom.co.uk or telephone 0114-281-1572).

## *Novacon 34* List of Members

Complete to 29<sup>th</sup> March 2004

- |    |                        |    |                         |
|----|------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 1  | Ian Watson             | 25 | Tony Berry              |
| 2  | Jon Courtenay Grimwood | 26 | Jae Leslie Adams        |
| 3  | Ian McDonald           | 27 | Neil Summerfield        |
| 4  | Enid Crowe             | 28 | Arthur Cruttenden       |
| 5  | Gwyneth Jones          | 29 | Tim Stannard            |
| 6  | Harry Harrison         | 30 | Erhard Leder            |
| 7  | Brian Aldiss           | 31 | Paul Oldroyd            |
| 8  | Martin Tudor           | 32 | Chris Donaldson         |
| 9  | Cat Coast              | 33 | Adrian Snowdon          |
| 10 | Vicky Cook             | 34 | Roger Robinson          |
| 11 | Ann Green              | 35 | Sue Edwards             |
| 12 | Steve Green            | 36 | Noel Collyer            |
| 13 | Wendy Graham           | 37 | Dave Langford           |
| 14 | Dave Hicks             | 38 | Douglas Spencer         |
| 15 | Alice Lawson           | 39 | Dave Hardy              |
| 16 | Steve Lawson           | 40 | Tony Rogers             |
| 17 | Yvonne Rowse           | 41 | Laura Wheatly           |
| 18 | Nic Farey              | 42 | Vernon Brown            |
| 19 | Bobbie Farey           | 43 | Pat Brown               |
| 20 | Dave Holmes            | 44 | Paul Dormer             |
| 21 | Al Johnston            | 45 | Paul Kincaid            |
| 22 | Steve Jones            | 46 | Maureen Kincaid Speller |
| 23 | Chris O'Shea           | 47 | George Ternent          |
| 24 | Dave Lally             | 48 | Linda Ternent           |

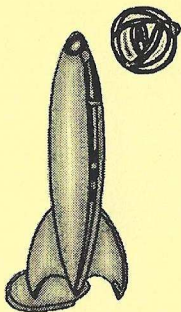


49	Calvin Ternent	90	Matthew Cooper
50	Stephen Dunn	91	Libby Cooper
51	Anne Woodford	92	James Odell
52	Alan Woodford	93	Mark Plummer
53	Brian Ameringen	94	Claire Brialey
54	Meriol Ameringen	95	Dave Tompkins
55	Caroline Mullan	96	Niall Gordon
56	Paul Treadaway	97	Krystyna Oborn
57	Gavin Long	98	Ina Shorrock
58	Caroline Loveridge	99	Gavin Shorrock
59	David Thomas	100	Ian Sorensen
60	Sally Sinclair	101	Tara Dowling-Hussey
61	Mark Sinclair	102	Simon Bradshaw
62	Carol Morton	103	Bridget Bradshaw
63	Tony Morton	104	Steve Davies
64	Pauline Morgan	105	Giulia De Cesare
65	Chris Morgan	106	Sue Jones
66	Eve Harvey	107	Marcus Rowland
67	John Harvey	108	Martin Easterbrook
68	Colin Harris	109	Margaret Austin
69	Peter Wareham	110	Pat McMurray
70	Alison Scott	111	Jim Walker
71	Steven Cain	112	Mike Scott
72	Marianne Cain	113	Tim Stock
73	Jonathan Cain	114	Helena Bowles
74	Rog Peyton	115	Richard Standage
75	Gwen Funnell	116	Andrew Hobson
76	Julian Headlong	117	Sue Hobson
77	Tony Keen	118	Gerry Webb
78	Kate Bodley	119	Mali Perera
79	Michael Abbott	120	Alan Webb
80	Anne Wilson	121	William Keith
81	Pete Young	122	Kostya Milayev
82	Kate Solomon	123	Vincent Docherty
83	Malcolm Davies	124	John Dowd
84	Marcus Streets	125	Fran Dowd
85	Rae Streets		
86	Mathilda Streets		
87	David T. Cooper		
88	Jane Cooper		
89	William Cooper		



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University, Howard Street, Sheffield, S1 1WB.





# INTERACTION

## The 63<sup>rd</sup> World Science Fiction Convention

4 - 8 August 2005

The SECC Glasgow, Scotland

### GUESTS OF HONOUR

Greg Pickersgill, Christopher Priest  
Robert Sheckley, Lars-Olov Strandberg  
and Jane Yolen

### Scotland Home of the Ceilidh and the Highland Fling



#### Membership Rates

(Valid to 1st December 2004)

Supporting	£30
Attending	£95
Child <sup>(7 to 15 on 4 Aug 05)</sup>	£32
Infant <sup>(0 to 6 on 4 Aug 05)</sup>	Free

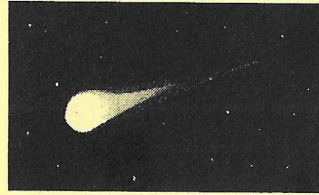
#### INTERACTION

379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield  
South Yorkshire, UK, S2 3HQ

General Enquiries [info@interaction.worldcon.org.uk](mailto:info@interaction.worldcon.org.uk)  
Membership Enquiries [memberships@interaction.worldcon.org.uk](mailto:memberships@interaction.worldcon.org.uk)  
Online Membership <http://www.interaction.worldcon.org.uk>

"World Science Fiction Convention" and "Workicon" are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society, an unincorporated literary society

# Birmingham Science Fiction Group



THE BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP was founded in 1971 to enable local and not so local fans to get together to discuss science fiction and related topics.

We meet on the second Friday of every month, 7:45pm at the Britannia Hotel. Just 5 Minutes from New Street Station and handy for all bus routes. We usually start the evening with a guest speaker, often a professional in the field such as Brian Aldiss, Terry Pratchett or Peter F. Hamilton.

If you live anywhere in or around the West Midlands, the BSFG is the Group for you. For further information, and a copy of our monthly newsletter, please:

email

[bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk)

Also, do visit our website at:

[www.bsfg.freesevers.com](http://www.bsfg.freesevers.com)