

NOVACON 39



Guest of Honour:
Justina Robson

PROGRAMME BOOK

NOVACON 39

Guest of Honour **Justina Robson**

13-15 November 2009

The Park Inn, Nottingham

Welcome to Novacon

Alice Lawson

YSTINASKSNWYKNWYWANTT
(or, Bijoux)

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Welcome to Novacon

Alice Lawson Chair

November is here again, so it must be time for another Novacon. Where has the last year gone? It seems like only last week I told the Quality we would not be coming back (*and it's not often that I have been so right about something!*) Had we stayed there the last few months would have been a lot more interesting as we scrambled around frantically looking for a new hotel. So at the end of an era let me say there are things I will genuinely miss about the Quality. I loved the layout, they usually gave us a good Sunday banquet, the staff were lovely and usually helpful. It's just a shame that it went downhill the way it did.

I hope you all enjoy the new hotel – I think you will. Although we aren't actually in a town centre, for the first time in a long while we are near one. This is the first time this hotel has had our type of convention, so there will no doubt be teething troubles. We've done our best to anticipate as many of these as possible and sort things out in advance but sometimes this has not been possible. For instance: we do have real ale but, despite our best efforts, they will not budge on bar prices. This is disappointing, however I am confident that after they experience their first convention we will be able to negotiate a better deal for next year. So drink harder and faster is my advice.

The weekend will be full of the things you would normally expect at Novacon: There will be food and drink and, most importantly, lots of friends and people you want to spend time with. Don't get so distracted by old friends that you don't take time to attend the programme that has been lovingly put together.

I would like to take time to thank my very, very hard working committee. They always go above and beyond the call of duty, but there has been an even greater effort this year, what with refurbishing the art boards and breaking in a new hotel.

I would also like to thank our guest Justina Robson. She has been gratifyingly keen to take part, even suggesting a programme item she was enthusiastic about. Now, that's our kind of guest!

I hope that having trusted me to run Novacon 39, I do not let you down and that you have a really good time.

Alice

YSTINASKSNWYKNWYWANTT (or, Bijoux)

Justina Robson by Tanya Brown

One of the nicest things anyone has said to me about my writing is that my piece on Justina Robson's work, written for the Eastercon '06 programme book, made them head for the dealers' room and buy everything she'd written.

So: no pressure from my former self, then.

I could cut and paste that previous piece: it's only a little out of date, honest. I could, with clever use of fonts, turn the phrase *buy Justina's books now, you know you want to* into an edgy textual artwork. I could persuade the genetics lab of my choice to code that phrase into the genome of some unsuspecting cress plant. (Okay, there are no amino acids that correspond to the letters B J O U X Z, and a space makes no sense in a genome, so it'd actually read YSTINASKSNWYKNWYWANTT.)

Of those three options, saying it with DNA most nearly approximates the clever playfulness of Justina Robson's novels, from the dry humour and swipes at genre tropes in *Silver Screen* to the headlong joie-de-vivre of the Quantum Gravity books. Though the subject matter, and the tone, of Robson's work have evolved over the last decade, some elements are constant: virtuoso prose, fascination with character, sheer joy in invention.

Silver Screen was first published in the UK in 1999, to instant critical acclaim. It's set in a near-future Britain, the known and the strange—our present and Robson's envisioned future—clattering together and creating an unsettlingly familiar dissonance. In this future, artificial intelligences are becoming ... well, becoming *people*, and lobbying for rights, for autonomy, for freedoms. Anjuli O'Connell (young, female, brilliant, overweight and angst-ridden) finds herself embroiled in a mesh of bureaucracy, office politics and sudden death. Plus, she's effectively psychotherapist to an AI with a sly sense of humour, and her best friend is trying to answer the question 'where does life end and the machine begin?' through self-experimentation...

The novel plays with themes of transcendence, evolution, sublimation: the notion that a sufficiently advanced AI has as much potential for epiphany

as an old-fashioned human. It dances along the aforementioned borderline between 'life' and 'machine' with brio: these AIs play jokes on humans, love cinema, are individuals. Indeed, some are more human than some of the humans...

Next came *Mappa Mundi*, set in York (where Justina Robson studied) and in an America which is considerably more authoritarian than the USA we know. Natalie Armstrong is a scientist working with nanite technology and Selfware, which allows the reproduction and control of human thought processes. Natalie wants to think she's re-engineering sanity: she *doesn't* want to think of the darker implications of her research. There's an FBI operative tracking down criminal masterminds who play with genetics and may have attempted to murder his half-sister; there's his partner Mary, who's there to keep him on a short leash. Everyone's broken and imperfect, one way or another; nobody—well, none of the *characters*—is ever quite sure why they're doing what they're doing, what their motivation is, whether free will is an intrinsic part of being human or just a pretty confection.

Mappa Mundi is a fast-paced techno-thriller, with some profound philosophical questions—identity, sanity, free will and control—playing out beneath the conspiracies and chases. (Of all Robson's novels, I suspect it's the one which will age least gracefully.) It was followed by *Natural History*, awe-inspiring wide-screen space opera, which opens with one of those scenes that only a handful of writers (Banks, MacLeod, Reynolds...) can pull off:

FADE IN:

1. SPACE

A huge spaceship is hurtling through a meteor field, pocked and scarred by multiple impacts, heading for the light of a distant star through veils of dust and spinning tumbling space debris. A trail of white mist streams like blood from the site of a new impact. There is no sound in space, so the impact is silent: but a frightful cacophony is heard ... then, as the ship passes beyond the meteor field, the cacophony gradually slows down until we begin to recognise it as music played too fast: then slow, slower, until it's Don McLean's 'American Pie'.

VOYAGER LONESTAR ISOL (voiceover)

A long, long time ago, when I was little, I danced in a field of poppies listening to 'American Pie'...

Isol (as the reader knows from the first page, and the filmmaker will frantically try and fail to signal) is a Forged, an AI, a cyborg who's made as much as born: but she is undeniably a *person*, and the reader's right inside her head, her experience, her post-human consciousness from the word go. With Isol we cross half the galaxy, encounter honest-to-goodness alien intelligence, and explore strange new worlds. Watching Isol interact with Old Monkeys, we travel the other way—back to Earth, back to the question of what it means to be human, what it's like to be a person, why that person might not want to be like the Old Monkey (or, for that matter, the reader).

It's in *Natural History* that Justina Robson introduces the notion of Stuff, which looks to the unevolved eye like grey quartz but is sentient and alien, and may be a universal consciousness, or a short-cut to transcendence, or—perhaps—the stuff that dreams are made of. The benefits are unimaginable in scope and substance: but the price may be too high. And this would all be a fascinating philosophical conundrum if we hadn't been caught up in the personalities of those—Forged and Human—who have to decide whether that next step up the ladder is worth letting everything else (self, memory, a field full of poppies, a sentimental song) fall away.

Living Next-Door to the God of Love, set thirty years or so after *Natural History*, is an epic novel Stuffed to overflowing with a convoluted plot, a thriving and evolving multiverse, hormones and dopamines, genre staples (vampires, cyborgs, dragons, comic-book heroes) harnessed as metaphor, teenaged lust, fairy-tale imagery, a love story or two, or three ... Maybe I've made it sound self-indulgent or overly eclectic: there's a whole universe, a *multiverse*, between the covers of the book, but nothing is wasted, nothing is superfluous. This is not just the dark side of the 'happy ending' (for some characters, for some readers) of *Natural History*: it's a further exploration and refinement of those hoary cyberpunk issues (intelligence and its interaction with the body; conflicting data models of the universe; what happens when the machines don't obey). It's about what people—humans, Forged, and others—choose to do, and what is forced upon them. It's also riotously enjoyable, blurring the boundary between science fiction and fantasy and providing sound empirical evidence for the theory that fiction about serious issues needn't be serious in itself.

But, oh-ho, then comes the Quantum Gravity series...

The first novel in the sequence, *Keeping it Real*, introduces the world of 2021, six years after the Quantum Bomb that—no one knows (or cares) how—ripped apart reality and retroactively wiped human memories of the time before. There are six realities, the human world (Otopia, née Earth) being only one of them. The others—each the setting of a novel in the series—include a realm populated by Elementals; Alfheim, where the Elves live, which has implemented an exclusionary policy for a year; Demonica (demons); Thanatopia (the dead); and Faery, which has been issuing tourist visas for three years. (Oh, and according to the Elves, there have *always* been six realms: it's not a recent thing. All those ballads? Accurate historical reportage.)

So with one bound we're in the Realms of Fantasy, though it's not the misty moisty balladland of many popular novels. Justina Robson is still playing with ideas about identity, the human/machine interface (her protagonist Lila is another cyborg-woman with self-image problems—though, even at 21, she's considerably more mature than some of Robson's earlier protagonists) and free will. And sex and drugs and rock'n'roll...

It's all great fun and tremendously, unashamedly self-indulgent (Justina's blogged about the series: "a set of books I started purely for my own fun, intending them to be SF / Fantasy / chicklit / action crossovers that satisfied all the bits of me that sorely needed entertaining after years and years of Serious Science Fiction"). More proof that entertainment and ideas aren't mutually exclusive.

...And now I really have to stop, and go and read *Selling Out*, *Going Under*, and *Chasing the Dragon* (all of which I've been saving for the Right Time). Okay, former self: I've made myself eager to binge on Justina Robson's novels.

At least, I *think* it was me...

Justina's novels have been shortlisted for the Arthur C. Clarke Award (*Silver Screen* and *Mappa Mundi*), the Philip K Dick Award (*Silver Screen*, *Natural History* and *Living Next-Door to the God of Love*), the British Science Fiction Association for Best Novel (*Silver Screen*, *Natural History* and *Living Next-Door to the God of Love*) and the Campbell Award (*Living Next-Door to the God of Love*). She also received the 2000 amazon.co.uk Writers' Bursary for *Mappa Mundi*.

Justina Robson

Bibliography

Novels

Silver Screen

1999

Nominated for British Science Fiction Award; Arthur C. Clarke Award;
Philip K. Dick Award.

Mappa Mundi

2001

Nominated for Arthur C. Clarke Award

Natural History

2003

Nominated for British Science Fiction Award; Campbell Award;
Philip K. Dick Award

Living next Door to the God of Love

2005

Nominated for British Science Fiction Award; Philip K. Dick Award;
Campbell Award

Quantum Gravity Series

Keeping It Real

Gollancz 2006

Selling Out

Gollancz 2007

Going Under

Gollancz 2008

Chasing the Dragon

Gollancz 2009

A New Hotel

Tony Berry

After a number of years at the Quality Hotel near Walsall, here we are in a new venue. There are several reasons for this, not least because people had itchy feet and wanted a change of scene. But mostly because it had become apparent that things were less than rosy at the Quality. There were always promises of refurbishment, and indeed they did refurbish the bar and main function rooms, but not much was done to the bedrooms. Things continued to deteriorate, the manager left, the conference manager left, the bar manager left. Then before last year's con they refused to give us a quote for this year until after Christmas. I got the impression that the hotel was being run down prior to closure, and so we decided to leave.

At the beginning of the year we had nowhere to go, so started feverishly checking hotels: some we'd been to before, and new ones. The problem for Novacon has always been that it is a mid-sized con, so needs a mid-sized hotel with the right mix of function rooms and bedroom space, preferably not out in the sticks. The Interweb was trawled, visits made and eventually I spent a day in Nottingham looking at 3 hotels. First impressions of the Park Inn were good, and it turned out to have everything we wanted, so here we are! We're a new experience for them, but as you know, conventions are unique and need to be experienced to understand, but I hope you'll like it and make it a success.

Earlier in the year the Quality hotel was sold and became a Compass hotel. I had reason to call in there in August and saw the conference manager I'd previously dealt with. Again she said that they were hoping for a complete refurb in the new year. Three days later the hotel was closed down and went into receivership, and everyone lost their job. I guess we made the right decision.

Programme

Helena Bowles & Richard Standage

Friday

19.00-19.30 **Opening Ceremony**

Meet the committee and our Guest of Honour, find out what treats are in store for you over the weekend, and how to volunteer your services.

19.30 – 20.30 **Room 101**

Guest of Honour Justina Robson reveals her arch dislikes to host Steve Green in our version of the popular TV show.

21.00 – 22.00 **Book Launch Party**

Join us in celebrating the launch of Justina's new book *Chasing the Dragon*. Come and be one of the first people to own a copy. Free wine and nibbles.

22.30 – 00.00 **Charades**

Come and help wind up our first evening with a bit of physical silliness. All welcome, no previous experience required.

Saturday

10.00 – 11.00 **Yours Sincerely, Charles Darwin: Public Scientist, Private Man.**

From his voyage round the world on HMS Beagle, to his last research on earthworms, Charles Darwin left a remarkable record of his life and work, his hopes, dreams, and fears - and even what made him laugh - in a collection of private letters and papers. Dr. Alison Pearn, Assistant Director of the Darwin Correspondence Project, gives us a unique and private insight into the man who was credited with changing the way we see the world (and reveals whether he really did bear any resemblance to Paul Bettany...)

11.30 – 13.00 **Book Auction**

Rog Peyton and Chris Morgan will help you expand your extensive book collection with some second hand but well loved bargains.

13.30 – 14.30 Guest of Honour Interview

Come and get to know Justina our Guest of Honour. Interviewed by Pauline Morgan.

15.00 – 16.00 Well Written, Popular...and Cancelled

Why do so many drama and especially SF shows get cancelled (Firefly, Sarah Connor, Primeval...) despite their apparent popularity, while others like Stargate just go on and on? And are there any implications of ITV's recently stated policy of having no serious drama before the watershed, in favour of the reality/talent shows that we all love to bits? Alice Lawson moderates, with Tony Berry, Steve Green, Tony Keen and Mark Slater

16.30 – 17.30 Fair Comment or Fair Cop

Helena Bowles leads a discussion looking at the recent libel actions that have been brought against Ben Goldacre and Simon Singh and considers their implications for stifling scientific debate. Joining her are Simon Bradshaw, Peter Harrow, Tim Stannard and Charlie Stross.

18.00 – 19.00 Is it All Over for the Novas?

Just how relevant are the Nova awards to fandom today? Departing administrator Steve Green leads the discussion with Claire Brialey, Greg Pickersgill and Rog Peyton

19.30 – 20.30 Genre Fiction Versus General Fiction

Which do we prefer, which is more successful, and why are some authors (such as our GoH) happy to switch between the two. Julian Headlong ponders the issues, along with Tanya Brown, Ian MacLeod, Liam Proven, Mike Shevdon and, naturally, our Guest of Honour.

21.00 – 22.00 Steve Green Reveals All

Steve Green tells us all about his TAFF trip and what he got up to at the Worldcon.

22.30 – 00.30 Science Fiction Film and TV Quiz

The return of the Novacon favourite, but with a new twist for this year. Put together a team and come and show off your knowledge of all that is obscure and bizarre in celluloid. Tony Berry is your question master.

Sunday

10.30 – 11.30 Five Ways to Find a Black Hole

Black holes are the most extreme environments in nature, where the force of gravity is so strong that even light cannot escape. Since we observe the rest of the universe through light, black holes must be directly

unobservable. In the last decade however, technological advances in observational Astronomy have made it possible for us to indirectly observe black holes and incontrovertibly prove their existence. Dr. Somak Raychaudhury from the University of Birmingham explains exactly how.

12.00 – 13.30 Art Auction

All that art work you have been salivating over all weekend in the art show, now it can be yours to decorate your lounge. Rog Peyton and Chris Morgan will be banging the gavel.

14.00 – 15.00 Good Book Hour

Bring along your favourite book, and one new (or newish) book from the last couple of years which you've really enjoyed, and talk about them for three minutes each. Hosted by our Guest of Honour, with generous slices of cake to all participants.

15.30 – 16.30 Whither the Book Room

With fewer booksellers coming to UK conventions, is the book room still vital to the overall convention experience. If the day comes when there are no more booksellers at conventions, what will we have lost? Caroline Mullan leads the debate, in an item that is allied a series of smaller syndicate room based discussions on Saturday (see below)

17.00 – 18.00 Awards Ceremony

Its time to say a big thank you to all those who made it possible, give out lots of fabulous gifts and prizes, and award the Novas.

19.30 – Late Beer and Food Tasting

It's not quite over yet. Come and sample some Italian food and interesting beer and soft drinks and kick back with all the people with no homes to go to (or at least had the foresight to book Monday off work). Entry ticket required, available at the Registration Desk throughout the weekend for a small fee or in exchange for three bottles of your favourite beer.

Extra Off Piste Items (aren't we good to you)...

Whither the Book Room

As a lead in to the main Sunday slot, Caroline Mullan leads two syndicate room based debates on Saturday to explore what the dealers' room means to us and conventions, and what we want from it in 21st century fandom.

Book Launch 2

Be in the downstairs bar on Saturday morning for the launch of Dave Hutchinson's new book, *The Push*. Come along, have a drink, buy a book, get it signed. Simple.

Kaffeeklatsch Sessions

Ian MacLeod, Ian Watson and our Guest of Honour have all very kindly agreed to lead kaffeeklatsch sessions over the weekend. Look out for the announcements on the day.

General Certificate of Science Fiction Education

Vernon Brown

On the next few pages you'll find a GCSE Question Paper. You should also find a loose A4 Answer Sheet – if not please contact Registration.

This is a multiple choice quiz. Each question has been given several answers, only one of which is correct. They are often abbreviated because giving them in full would make the correct answer too obvious. You must match your answer to one of the given ones. It's a bit like being given specifications for making a key, together with five different locks. If the key is made correctly it will fit one of the locks, if it's not, it won't.

INSTRUCTIONS

1/ There are three Sections to the Paper – Section B is easy, Section A is medium and Section C has harder questions. You have to submit two Sections which must include Section A. If you submit Sections A&B you will obtain an Ordinary Level GCSE Certificate if you pass, if you submit Sections A&C you will gain an Advanced Level GCSE Certificate if you pass. Pass mark is 40% and each Certificate is graded.

2/ Read each question, decide on your answer and match it to a given answer. When you have answered as many questions as possible decide whether you will submit Sections A&B or Sections A&C. If both Levels are submitted only the Ordinary Level paper will be marked. Please submit

your answers under your own name, precociousness is one thing, giving a certificate or draw prize to an infant is another.

3/ The Answer Paper has numbered and lettered squares that correspond to the questions and answers on the Question Paper. Carefully **BLOCK OUT** with black or blue ink, ballpoint or felt tip the squares corresponding to your chosen answers. Do **NOT** circle, cross or otherwise mark the squares, or use pencil, because the marking mechanism will not be able to cope with it and your paper will be rejected. If you make a mistake put a large X through the incorrect square.

4/ Similarly block out the square corresponding to the **LEVEL** you are submitting ([O]* OR [A]*) and the **SECTION** you have chosen ([O]* OR [A]*). **PRINT** your name and address legibly in the space provided – your answer paper will be returned to you with this part showing through the window of a window envelope so the postal services must be able to read it.

5/ Post your Answer Paper in the GCSE box at Registration before 12.00 NOON on SUNDAY, but watch the GCSE posters for any alteration to this deadline. Please only fold it once on the arrowed line. All Answer Papers submitted will be entered into a free draw.

6/ This year papers will not be marked at NOVACON but afterwards, certificates will be posted to you. The draw prize will be given at the Closing Ceremony.

7/ Finally, Certificates will be sent directly to you, no one else will know how you have done unless you tell them. So please have a go, you may be better than you think.

Vernon Brown

SECTION A QUESTIONS (MEDIUM)

- 1/ Who wrote the "Paratime Police" stories?
a/ HBP b/ IA c/ JB d/ JC e/ JW
- 2/ Georges Melies (1861 – 1938) was a French SF ---?
a/ Artist b/ Author c/ Editor d/ Filmmaker e/ Publisher

- 3/ In the film "The day the Earth stood still" (1951) what was the name of the robot?
a/ Alela b/ Gort c/ Marvin d/ Robbie e/ Robinc
- 4/ From which short story was "2001 , A Space Odyssey" derived?
a/ Artifact b/ Evolution c/ Needle d/ The Other Species e/ The Sentinel
- 5/ In Asimov's "Nightfall" what causes people to go mad?
a/ The cold b/ The darkness c/ The moonlight d/ The stars e/The vampires
- 6/ What was "Analog" magazine's original title?
a/ Amazing b/ Astounding c/ Galaxy d/ If e/ New Worlds
- 7/ What/who is Susan Calvin?
a/ Artist b/ General c/ Roboticist d/ Scientist e/ Time traveller
- 8/ Who directed the film "Metropolis"(1926)?
a/ Alexander Korda b/ Fritz Lang c/ George Pal d/ Lumiere Brothers e/ Orson Welles
- 9/ In "Omnilingual" by H B Piper what functioned as a "Rosetta stone"?
a/ Astronomical chart b/ Calendar c/ Dictionary d/ Periodic table e/ Trading records
- 10/ The term "robot" was first used in a/an --- ?
a/ Film b/ Novel c/ Opera d/ Play e/ Poem
- 11/ In October 1938 an updated radio version of which story caused many listeners to panic?
a/ Frankenstein b/ Dorking Invasion c/ Empire of the Ants d/ War of the Worlds e/ World at Bay
- 12/ The film "Forbidden Planet" is based on a work by whom?
a/ Einstein b/ Heyer c/ Shakespeare d/ Socrates e/ Wells
- 13/ What feature distinguishes Slans from "normal" humans?
a/ Antennae b/ Eyes c/ Skin d/ Talons e/ Teeth
- 14 – 17 *Identify the sources of the quotations given.*
- 14/ "I know I've made some mistakes lately" (Film)
a/ I Robot b/ Matrix c/ Silent Running d/ The Time Machine e/ 2001: A Space Odyssey

- 15/ "All the Universe – or nothingness. Which shall it be Passworthy?"
(Film) a/ A b/ M c/ TT d/ TTC e/ TTM
- 16/ "Although I am writing this in the year 1877, I was not born until
1921." (Novel - opening words)
a/ BTJ b/ CO c/ FF d/ TIE e/ WMU
- 17/ "The year was 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't
only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which
way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else....." (Short story)
a/ Call me Joe b/ Gordon Pym c/ Harrison Bergeron
d/ Logan's Run e/ The Begum

SECTION B QUESTIONS (EASY)

- 18/ Who coined the phrase "Science Fiction" ?
a/ GRW b/ HG c/ HGW d/ HH e/ IA
- 19/ What catastrophe lies behind Shute's novel "On the Beach"?
a/ Alien invasion b/ Atomic warfare c/ Climate change d/ Disease
e/ Floods
- 20/ A triffid is a(n) –
a/ Alien b/ Amphibian c/ Disease d/ Insect e/ Plant
- 21/ What is the answer to Life, the Universe and Everything?
a/ Beer b/ ET c/ FT d/ Harissa e/ SOS
- 22/ Which author propounded the "Three Laws of Robotics"?
a/ ACC b/ BA c/ HGW d/ IA e/ JV
- 23/ In which film is an android played by Arnold Schwarzenegger sent
back from the future?
a/ AA b/ GG c/ MM d/ TT e/ ZZ
- 24/ Complete this film title: "Plan X X X X from Outer Space".
a/ Alpha b/ Conquest c/ Invade d/ Nine e/ Zero
- 25/ Who are the gentle race in HG Wells novel "The Time Machine"?
a/ Adora b/ Eloi c/ Morlocks d/ Os-Ostra e/ Yarri
- 26/ What did HG Wells "First Men in the Moon" use to get there?
a/ Balloon b/ Cannon c/ Cavorite d/ Rocket e/ Swans

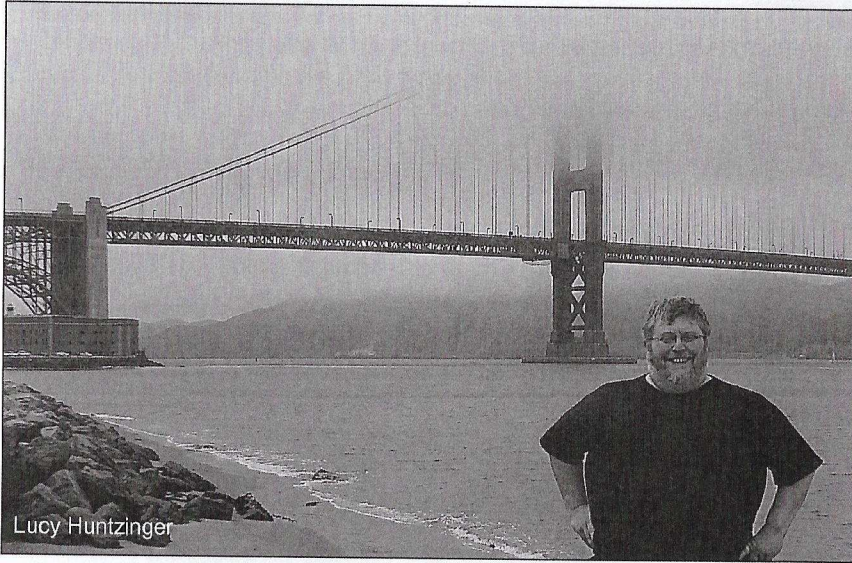
- 27/ On which planet in Edgar Rice Burroughs novels is Jetan played?
a/ Mercury b/ Venus c/ Earth d/ Mars e/ Jupiter
- 28/ What colour is Spock's blood?
a/ Black b/ Blue c/ Green d/ Red e/ Yellow
- 29/ What is the name of the planet in Anne McCaffrey's "Dragon" series?
a/ Barsoom b/ Pellandra c/ Pern d/ Terra e/ Tycho
- 30/ In Wyndham's novel "Trouble with Lichen" what property does the lichen possess?
a/ Aphrodisiac b/ Contraceptive c/ Hallucinogen d/ Poison e/ Prolongs lifespan
- 31/ In Vernes novel how many leagues did the submarine travel under the sea?
a/ 20 b/ 200 c/ 2000 d/ 20,000 e/ 200,000
- 32/ In "Quatermass and the Pit" what was found in the Pit?
a/ Ark of the Covenant b/ Dinosaur c/ Martians d/ Time machine e/ Uranium
- 33/ Who organised the first NOVACON?
a/ ASFG b/ BSFA c/ BSFG d/ BSFS e/ LC

SECTION C QUESTIONS (HARD)

- 18/ In which novel did a Brother spend 15 years making an illuminated copy of an electronic circuit?
a/ ACFL b/ AFOM c/ ICFS d/ MOTM e/ TTWT
- 19/ In which novel was the term "Soma" first used?
a/ AF b/ BNW c/ NEF d/ S e/ U
- 20/ Who wrote "Looking Backward 2000 – 1887"?
a/ BA b/ EB c/ JV d/ MS e/ RC
- 21/ What was the title of Gene Roddenberry's original pilot script for "Star Trek"?
a/ AB b/ GT c/ SV d/ TC e/ UK
- 22/ Which book appeared originally in magazine form as "Under the Moons of Mars"?
a/ APOM b/ FMOM c/ SMOM d/ TMOM e/ TWOM

- 23/ What was the first SF novel to win a Hugo?
a/ ACOC b/ BTJ c/ DS d/ LOL e/ TDM
- 24/ In "War of the Worlds" (film 1953) who executed the Martian and other astronomical artwork?
a/ CB b/ DH c/ GM d/ KF e/ RB
- 25/ What is the name of the virus that caused "The Death of Grass" (novel)?
a/ A/E b/ C-L c/ EVA d/ GV1 e/ NF/7
- 26/ Name the planet in "Mission of Gravity" by Hal Clements.
a/ DE b/ J c/ M d/ O e/ S
- 27/ In which novel is "grokking" practised?
a/ MITHC b/ SIASL c/ TDM d/ TMIAHM e/ WCTBFH
- 28/ The 1869 (US) and 1870 (UK) translations of "De la terre a la lune" both had much longer titles. In both cases what information was added to the original French title?
a/ Distance travelled b/ Duration of voyage c/ Method of propulsion d/ Number of passengers e/ Organising body
- 29/ "It happened here" (film 1966) is about invasion by --- ?
a/ Americans b/ French c/ Germans d/ Japanese e/ Russians
- 30/ "Sirius" (novel OS) is --- ?
a/ Canine b/ Corvine c/ Equine d/ Feline e/ Ursine
- 31 – 33. *In which novels are the following phrases found?*
- 31/ "Tension, Apprehension and Dissent have begun"
a/ DS b/ NOAS c/ SW d/ TDM e/ TMOV
- 32/ "It is lovely to watch the coloured shadows on the planets of eternal light"
a/ ACFL b/ FFFO c/ ROTS d/ TCATS e/ TYSBG
- 33/ "Bill never realised that sex was the cause of it all"
a/ BTGH b/ FCIB c/ FROOMB d/ POTA e/ TUM

What Steve did on his holidays



Among SF fandom's oldest institutions, the TransAtlantic Fan Fund was inspired by the 1952 campaign to send Irish überfan Walt Willis to Chicon II. Conceived as a one-off, it was such a hit that TAFF was formally set up the following year and, despite the very first winner being unable to make the trip, westbound and eastbound trips between Europe and North America were successfully organised in 1955 and 1956 respectively.

At TAFF's heart is the building of bridges between the many and diverse fannish communities, and this year's trip underlined that by being the first occasion a European fan went to a Canadian worldcon. 2009's delegate was Steve Green, who'll be discussing his journey across Canada and the United States (and hopefully illustrating his anecdotes with a few photographs) on Saturday.

2010's eastward race is already underway, and there's a ballot form in your membership pack. I'll be delighted to receive completed forms and any additional donations towards TAFF; you can catch me in the bar, or just after Friday evening's *Room 101* with our guest of honour, Justina Robson.

If you want to know more check out the fund's official website:
www.taff.org.uk.

Your Committee

As you're all aware, 2009 has been the year when we got to examine the private expenses and receipts of people in positions power. Why should fans escape this scrutiny? Naturally, to protect the committee's privacy, certain items have been redacted...

Alice Lawson (Chair)

Lager: £12.00 Cider: £2.00

Keg Bitter: £0.43 Real Ale: £1.00

Curry: £6.00

Travel (Taxi fares): £7.42

Travel (personal sedan chair carried by four tanned, firm, muscular young men stripped to the waist and oiled):

£ [REDACTED]

Name: Tony Berry (Hotel Liaison)

Lager: £0.00 Cider: £0.00

Keg Bitter: £0.43 Real Ale: £ [REDACTED]

Curry: £ [REDACTED]

Medical costs and damages for emotional distress payable to people he's hit for offering him lager or cider:

£ [REDACTED]

Medical costs and damages for emotional distress payable to [REDACTED] after incident at [REDACTED] [REDACTED]'s party involving [REDACTED], chocolate body paint and a life-size cardboard cut out of Nic Farey:

£ [REDACTED]

Name: Richard Standage (Programme)

Lager: £0.00 Cider: £0.00

Keg Bitter: £0.43 Tequila: £ [REDACTED]

"Ring Of Fire" brand jalapenos: £ [REDACTED]

Bribes from: 1) S[REDACTED]ve Gr[REDACTED]n to put him on the programme:

£ [REDACTED] ; 2) others not to put them on with S[REDACTED]ve Gr[REDACTED]n:

£ [REDACTED]

Name: Helena Bowles (Programme)

Lager: £0.00 Cider: £0.00

"Classy Ladee" brand tequila, creosote and kumquat flavour alcopop: £ [REDACTED]

Curry: £ [REDACTED]

Travel (Taxi fares): £9.13

Travel (personal sedan chair carried by the rest of the committee): £0.09

Name: David Hicks (Publications)

Lager: £4.00 Keg Bitter: £2.50

Real Ale: £3.00 Curry: £4.50

Chateau Petrus 1983: £ [REDACTED]

Lobster with truffle pate, sautéed asparagus and champagne foam (with extra curry sauce): £ [REDACTED]

Charles Atlas Corporation course in how to achieve muscular arms, rippling torso and tireless legs: £7.50

Legal fees from suing Charles Atlas Corporation for medical costs and emotional distress owing to overzealous (yet futile) attempt at same: £ [REDACTED]

Name: Cat Coast (Secretary)

Lager: £4.00 Keg Bitter: £6.50

Real Ale: £23.00 Curry: £4.50

Premium rate phone charges from *Strictly Come Dancing* vote line: £ [REDACTED]

Minute taking stationery with every third line pre-printed with "The Chair demanded that Mr. Lawson stop doing that and pay attention.": £ [REDACTED]

Name(s): Tony Berry, David Hicks, Martin Tudor, Richard Standage.

Compensation received for hernia treatment and emotional distress arising from carrying the bloody sedan chair:

£ [REDACTED]

Name: Steve Lawson (Registration)

Real Ale: £92.00

Combined nose hair clippers/flamethrower with built-in wi-fi: £ [REDACTED]

Leatherperson multitool with built-in real ale bar and

GPS: £ [REDACTED]

Lifetime subscription to the Alyson Hannigan fan club:

£ [REDACTED]

Received from various television companies desperate for home videos of cretins maiming and humiliating themselves; for video of "Sedan chair catastrophe":

£ [REDACTED]

Nova Awards

Steve Green

In 1973, Novacon instituted the annual Nova Awards to celebrate achievement in British science fiction fanzines. Originally handed down by a panel of judges, these accolades are now decided by Novacon members who can demonstrate a basic knowledge of current fanzines.

Following Novacon 32, the three categories - best fanzine, best fanzine writer, best fanzine artist - were extended to cover fanzines produced in Eire. In addition, electronic fanzines are now eligible, provided a hardcopy is lodged with the administrator.

Note: Novacon 39 has scheduled a debate on the future of the Nova Awards for Saturday evening. Check the Read Me for full details.

The following fanzines were received by or brought to the notice of the Nova Awards administrator between 1 October 2008 and 30 September 2009 inclusive, and are considered eligible for the 2009 awards, presented at Novacon 39: *Ansible* #255 - #266, Dave Langford; *Are You Still Here*, Steve Green; *Banana Wings* #36 - #39, Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer; *The Banksonian* #14, David Haddock; *Brain Scrapings*, Selina Lock; *Bye Bye Johnny* #3, Graham Charnock; *Critical Wave* #2.01, Steve Green & Martin Tudor; *Cyddydd* #1, Steve Green (primarily a contribution to the Fantasy Amateur Press Association); *Data Dump* #130, #132 - #134, #136 - #140, Steve Sneyd; *The Descent of Fan*, Douglas Spencer; *Fourth Age Lembas*, Sandra Bond (primarily a contribution to the Fantasy Amateur Press Association); *Head* #8, Doug Bell & Christina Lake; *Inca* #4, Rob Jackson; *Journey Planet* #3 & #4, James Bacon, Claire Brialey & Chris Garcia (Pete Young was guest editor on #3); *Lost in Space* #1 & #2, Jim Mowatt; *Motorway Dreamer* #6, John Nielsen Hall; *No Sin But Ignorance* #49, Claire Brialey (received 1 October, but published in September); *Plokta* #39.5 & #40, Steve Davies, Alison Scott & Mike Scott; *Quasiquote* #7 & #8, Sandra Bond; *Relapse* (formerly *Prolapse*) #13 & #14; *Virtual Tucker Hotel* #22 - #24, Peter Sullivan (although primarily an electronic fanzine, paper copies are available upon request).

The following were also received during the same period, but are ineligible under the current rules: *Chunga* #15, Andy Hooper, Randy Byers & Carl Juarez; *Festival of Fantastic Films Progress Report Vol.19* #2, *Vol.20* #1 & #2, Tony Edwards for the Society of Fantastic Films; "Smooooooth...", Curt Phillips; *This Here...* #10, #12, Nic Farey; *Vanamonde* #773-792, John Hertz.

The History of Novacon

1971 Novacon, Guest of Honour: James White

Imperial Centre Birmingham (Attendance: 144)

Chair: Vernon Brown

Committee: Ray Bradbury, Alan Denham, Alan Donnelly, Pauline Dungate.

1972 Novacon 2, Doreen Rogers

Imperial Centre (144)

Chair: Pauline Dungate

Stan Eling, Jeffrey Hacker, Richard Newnham, Meg Palmer, Hazel Reynolds.

1973 Novacon 3, Ken Bulmer

Imperial Centre (146)

Chair: Hazel Reynolds

Stan Eling, Gillon Field, Meg Palmer, Geoff Winterman.

1974 Novacon 4, Ken Slater

Imperial Centre Birmingham (211)

Chair: Dr Jack Cohen

Pauline Dungate, Stan Eling, Gillon Field, Robert Hoffman, Arline Peyton, Rog Peyton, Hazel Reynolds.

1975 Novacon 5, Dan Morgan

Royal Angus (272)

Chair: Rog Peyton

Ray Bradbury, Pauline Dungate, Robert Hoffman, Laurence Miller, Arline Peyton.

1976 Novacon 6, David Kyle

Royal Angus (317)

Chair: Stan Eling

Helen Eling, Laurence Miller, Arline Peyton, Rog Peyton.

1977 Novacon 7, John Brunner

Royal Angus (278)

Chair: Stan Eling

Liese Hoare, Martin Hoare, Ian Maule, Janice Maule, Dave Langford.

1978 Novacon 8, Anne McCaffrey

Holiday Inn Birmingham (309)

Chairman: Laurence Miller

Committee: Dave Holmes, Kathy Holmes, Chris Walton, Jackie Wright.

1979 Novacon 9, Christopher Priest

Royal Angus (290)

Chair: Rog Peyton

Helen Eling, Stan Eling, Chris Morgan, Pauline Morgan, Paul Oldroyd.

1980 Novacon 10, Brian W Aldiss

Royal Angus (495)

Chair: Rog Peyton

Joseph Nicholas, Keith Oborn, Krystyna Oborn, Paul Oldroyd, Chris Walton.

1981 Novacon 11, Bob Shaw (362)

Royal Angus

Chair : Paul Oldroyd

Helen Eling, Stan Eling, Joseph Nicholas, Phill Probert.

1982 Novacon 12, Harry Harrison

Royal Angus (373)

Chair: Rog Peyton

Committee: Chris Baker, Dave Hardy, Eunice Pearson, Phill Probert.

1983 Novacon 13, Lisa Tuttle

Royal Angus (339)

Chair: Phill Probert

Chris Donaldson, Eunice Pearson, Steve Green, Dave Haden, Jan Huxley, Paul Oldroyd, Paul Vincent, John Wilkes.

1984 Novacon 14, Robert Holdstock

Grand Birmingham (333)

Chair: Steve Green

Kevin Clarke, Ann Green, Dave Haden, Eunice Pearson, Phill Probert, Martin Tudor, Paul Vincent.

1985 Novacon 15, James White & Dave Langford

De Vere Coventry (340)

Chair: Phill Probert

Tony Berry, Carol Pearson, Eunice Pearson, Graham Poole, Martin Tudor.

1986 Novacon 16, E C Tubb & Chris Evans

De Vere Coventry (257)

Chair: Tony Berry

Nick Mills, Darroll Pardoe, Rosemary Pardoe, Graham Poole, Maureen Porter.

1987 Novacon 17, Iain M Banks

Royal Angus (315)

Chair: Bernie Evans

Mick Evans, Dave Hardy, Graham Poole, Stephen Rogers, Geoff Williams.

1988 Novacon 18, Garry Kilworth

Royal Angus (336)

Chair: Tony Berry

Bernie Evans, Rog Peyton, Greg Pickersgill, Linda Pickersgill, Martin Tudor.

1989 Novacon 19, Geoff Ryman

Excelsior Solihull (426)

Chair: Martin Tudor

Tony Berry, Helena Bowles, Bernie Evans, Nick Mills, Pam Wells.

1990 Novacon 20, Dr Jack Cohen

Excelsior (330)

Chair: Bernie Evans

Al Johnston, Alice Lawson, Steve Lawson, Nick Mills, Richard Standage.

1991 Novacon 21, Colin Greenland

Forte Post House Solihull (200)

Chair: Nick Mills

David T Cooper, Bernie Evans, Al Johnston, Alice Lawson, Steve Lawson, Chris Murphy.

1992 Novacon 22, Storm Constantine

Royal Angus (300)

Chair: Helena Bowles

Tony Berry, Bernie Evans, Jenny Glover, Steve Glover, Carol Morton, Richard Standage.

1993 Novacon 23, Stephen Baxter

Royal Angus (350)

Chair: Carol Morton

Helena Bowles, Bernie Evans, Tony Morton, Richard Standage.

1994 Novacon 24, Graham Joyce

Royal Angus (214)

Chair: Richard Standage

Helena Bowles, Sarah Freakley, Carol Morton, Tony Morton, Chris Murphy, Martin Tudor

1995 Novacon 25, Brian W Aldiss; Harry Harrison; Bob Shaw;

Special guest Iain M Banks

Chamberlain Birmingham (338)

Chair: Tony Morton

Tony Berry, Carol Morton, Chris Murphy, Richard Standage, Martin Tudor.

1996 Novacon 26, David Gemmell

Ibis Birmingham (281)

Chair: Carol Morton

Sarah Freakley, Tony Morton, Chris Murphy, Richard Standage, Martin Tudor.

1997 Novacon 27, Peter F Hamilton

Abbey Great Malvern (277)

Chair: Martin Tudor

Carol & Tony Morton, Chris Murphy, Mike Siddall.

1998 Novacon 28, Paul J McAuley

Britannia Birmingham (265)

Chair: Martin Tudor

Steve Lawson, Pat McMurray, Carol & Tony Morton, Chris Murphy.

1999 Novacon 29, Ian Stewart

Britannia (239)

Chair: Carol Morton

Maureen Kincaid Speller, Steve Lawson, Pat McMurray, Tony Morton, Chris Murphy, Martin Tudor.

2000 Novacon 30, Christopher Priest; Special Guest Rog Peyton;

Guest Artist David A Hardy

Britannia (224)

Chair: Tony Berry

Maureen Kincaid Speller, Steve Lawson, Pat McMurray, David Cooper, Chris Murphy, Martin Tudor.

2001 Novacon 31, Gwyneth Jones

Quality Walsall (219)

Chair: Tony Berry

Cat Coast, David Cooper, Dave Hicks, Alice & Steve Lawson, Martin Tudor.

2002 Novacon 32, Ian McDonald

Quality (252)

Chair: Martin Tudor

Cat Coast, David Cooper, Steve Green, Dave Hicks, Alice & Steve Lawson.

2003 Novacon 33, Jon Courtenay Grimwood

Quality (203)

Chair: Martin Tudor

Cat Coast, Steve Green, Dave Hicks, Alice & Steve Lawson.

2004 Novacon 34, Ian Watson

Quality (227)

Chair: Martin Tudor

Cat Coast, Vicky Cook, Steve & Ann Green, Dave Hicks, Alice & Steve Lawson, Yvonne Rowse.

2005 Novacon 35, Alastair Reynolds

Quality (216)

Chair: Tony Berry

Vicky Cook, Alice Lawson, Steve Lawson, Yvonne Rowse, Helena Bowles, Cat Coast.

2006 Novacon 36, Ken MacLeod

Quality (245)

Chair: Tony Berry

Committee: Dave Hicks, Steve Lawson, Alice Lawson, Helena Bowles, Vicky Cook.

2007 Novacon 37, Charles Stross

Quality (227)

Chair: Steve Green

Vicky Cook, Steve Lawson, Ann Green, Alice Lawson, Kevin Clarke.

2008 Novacon 38, Ian R MacLeod

Quality (209)

Chair: Helena Bowles

Steve Lawson, Alice Lawson, Richard Standage, Tony Berry

Members

1	Justina	Robson	39	Roger	Robinson
2	Ian R	MacLeod	40	David	Thomas
3	Charlie	Stross	41	Margaret	Croad
4	Feorag	NicBhrìde	42	Caroline	Loveridge
5	Ken	MacLeod	43	Gavin	Long
6	Brian	Aldiss	44	Dave	Cox
7	Harry	Harrison	45	Tony	Togers
8	Alice	Lawson	46	Dave	Tompkins
9	Tony	Berry	47	Paul	Dormer
10	Helena	Bowles	48	Niall	Gordon
11	Cat	Coast	49	Michael	Abbott
12	Dave	Hicks	50	Anne	Wilson
13	Steve	Lawson	51	Ian	Maughan
14	Richard	Standage	52	Stephen	Dunn
15	Martin	Tudor	53	Ian	Sorensen
16	Vernon	Brown	54	Yvonne	Rowse
17	Pat	Brown	55	Adrian	Snowdon
18	Ina	Shorrocks	56	Gwen	Funnell
19	Gavin	Shorrocks	57	Peter	Wareham
20	Neil	Summerfield	58	Peter	Mabey
21	Chris	Stocks	59	Brian	Ameringen
22	Tim	Stannard	60	Meriol	Ameringen
23	Chris	O'Shea	61	Caroline	Mullan
24	Gerry	Webb	62	Sue	Jones
25	Mali	Perera	63	Dave	Hardy
26	Kostya	Milayev	64	Julia	Daly
27	Chris	Bell	65	Douglas	Spencer
28	½r		66	Jim	Walker
29	George	Ternent	67	John	Dowd
30	Linda	Ternent	68	Fran	Dowd
31	Calvin	Ternent	69	Rog	Peyton
32	Anne	Woodford	70	Claire	Brialey
33	Alan	Woodford	71	Mark	Plummer
34	Pauline	Morgan	72	Julian	Headlong
35	Chris	Morgan	73	Penny	Hicks
36	Barbara-Jane		74	Steve	Davies
37	Marcus	Thierstein	75	Giulia	De Cesare
38	James	Odell	76	Liam	Proven
			77	John	Harvey
			78	Eve	Harvey
			79	Steve	Green
			80	Dave	Lally

81	Al	Johnston	123	John	Wilson
82	Heloise	Tudor	124	Serena	Culfeather
83	Jennifer	Swift	125	Wendy	Graham
84	Mike	Scott	126	Michael	Meara
85	Flick		127	Pat	Meara
86	Marcus	Rowland	128	Greg	Pickersgill
87	Simon	Dearn	129	Catherine	Pickersgill
88	Thomas	Recktenwald	130	Simon	Bradshaw
89	Steve	Cooper	131	Hailey	
90	Susan	Peak	132	Noel	Collyer
91	Farah	Mendleson	133	Angela	Rosin
92	Steve	Rogerson	134	Ian	Warner
93	David	Cochrane	135	Dave	Langford
94	Andy	Sawyer	136	Del	Cotter
95	Martin	Easterbrook	137	Neil	Tomkinson
96	Margaret	Austin	138	Alison	Tomkinson
97	Tony	Keen	139	Christy	Avraam
98	Kate	Bodley	140	Phillip	Collins
99	Nik	Whitehead	141	Ian	Brown
100	Wilf	James	142	Helen	Cross
101	Susie	Haynes	143	Chris	Murphy
102	Martin	Holmes	144	Teresa	
103	JFW	Richards	145	Andrew	Patton
104	Nicholas	Jackson	146	Carol	Morton
105	Bridget	Wilkinson	147	Tony	Morton
106	Peter	Wilkinson	148	Christopher	Brooks
107	Harpal	Singh	149	Mark	Slater
108	David T.	Cooper	150	Eddie	Stachelski
109	Jane	Cooper	151	Sue	Hobson
110	Duncan	MacGregor	152	Andrew	Hobson
111	Christina	Lake	153	Robert	Smith
112	Lennart	Uhlin	154	Tobes	Valois
113	Doug	Bell	155	Martin	Hoare
114	Roderick	O'Hanlon	156	Christine	Davidson
115	Laura	Wheatly	157	Michael	Davidson
116	Sue	Edwards	158	Ian	Whates
117	Tanya	Brown	159	Edwin	Rydberg
118	Dave	Holmes	160	Ian	Watson
119	Richard	Crawshaw	161	Lazio	Kenzler
120	David	Cluett	162	Peter	Harrow
121	Joyce	Cluett	163	Anthony	Hilbert
122	Beth	Giddins	164	Tony	Naggs

165	Omega		183	Malcolm	Davies
166	Harry	Payne	184	Kate	Solomon
167	Jodie	Payne	185	Peter	Sullivan
168	Hal	Payne	186	Mike	Shevdon
169	Jamie	Scott	187	Angela	Goodfellow
170	Nick	Mills	188	Steve	Jones
171	June	Strachan	189	D.M.	Sherwood
172	Ann	Looker	190	Patrick	McMurray
173	Mark	Young	191	Julie	McMurray
174	Peter	Crump	192	Peter	Tyres
175	John	Bray	193	Tim	Maguire
176	John	Medany	194	Clarrie	O'Callaghan
177	Rita	Medany	195	Daniel	Robson
178	Lisa	Konrad	196	Ben	Robson
179	Campbell	McLeay	197	Ruth	Robson
180	Martin	Smart	198	Marianna	Leikomaa
181	Melica	Smith	199	Matthew	Cooper
182	Clare	Boothby	200	Libby	Cooper



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 Old Joint Stock, Temple Row (please note new location), just 5 minutes walk 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 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: BHAMSGROUP@YAHOO.CO.UK

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: www.birminghamsgroup.org.uk

NOVACON 39



Guest of Honour:
Justina Robson

PROGRAMME BOOK