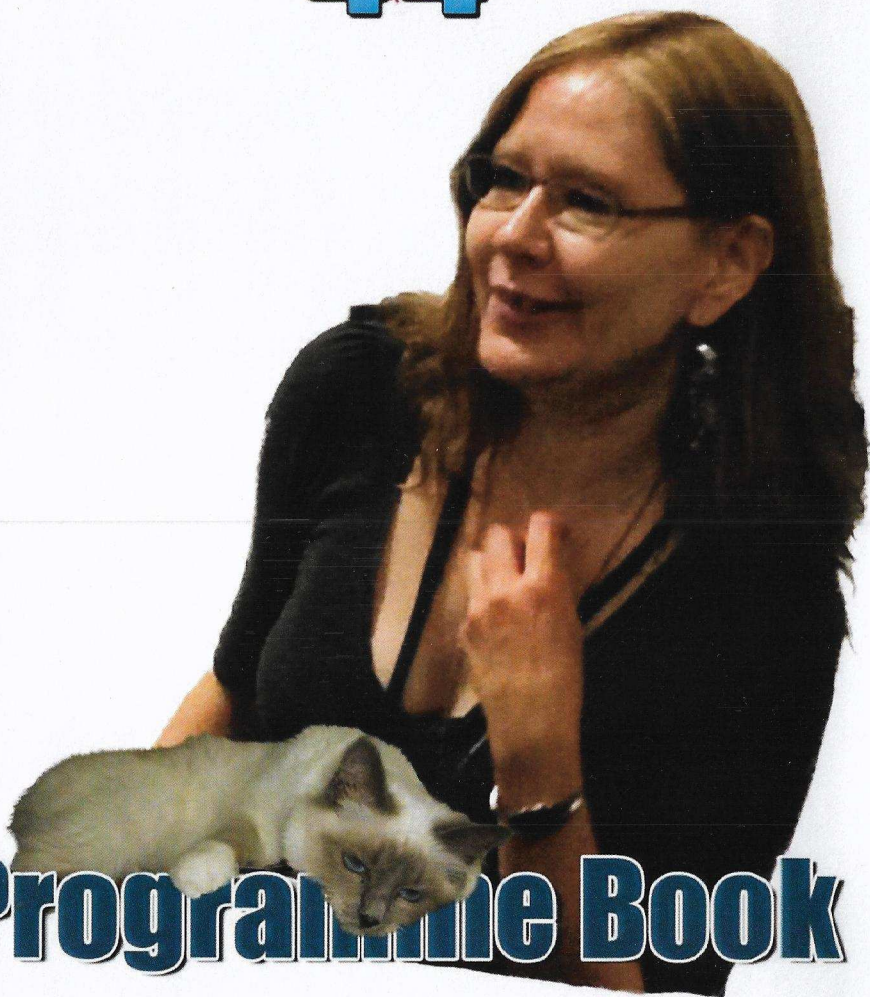


# NOVACON 44



**Programme Book**



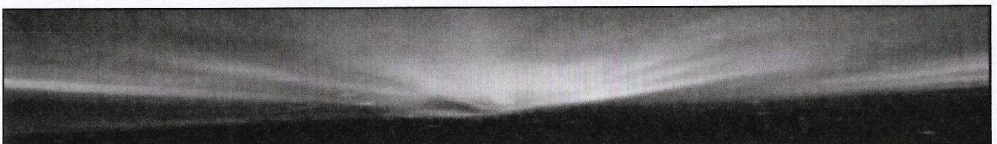
The **Birmingham Science Fiction Group** was founded in 1971 to enable local and not so local fans to get together to discuss science fiction and related topics.

We meet on the second Friday of every month, 7:45pm at the Briar Rose Hotel on Bennett's Hill in Birmingham, 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: **[BHAMSFGROUP@YAHOO.CO.UK](mailto:BHAMSFGROUP@YAHOO.CO.UK)**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:  
**[www.birminghamsfgroup.org.uk](http://www.birminghamsfgroup.org.uk)**





Park Inn Hotel

Nottingham

14-16 Nov 2014

## Guest of Honour: Kari Sperring Science Guest: John Gribbin

### Contents

Tied Up In Notts - Steve Green	4
Main Programme	5
Kari Sperring – Michael Abbott	9
Living with Ghosts , a review - Christina Lake	10
The Grass King’s Concubine, a review - Helena Bowles	11
Quantum Fluctuation – an excursion through the works of John Gribbin	13
Meet the Committee	15
2014 Nova Awards	17
History of Novacon	19
Membership list	21

### Acknowledgements

Christina and Doug would like to thank all our contributors to publications throughout this year. The Roll of Honour for the Programme Book includes Chrissie Harper for the Novacon 44 logo, Alison Scott for the awesome front cover, Michael Abbott, Helena Bowles and Steve Green for helping with the additional creative writing. The illo on page 8 is by Sue Mason and page 12 by the much missed Dave Mooring.

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## Tied Up in Notts

by Steve Green

Ah, you've finally arrived: (cue Monty Burns impersonation) *excellent*. More so than any other convention I've encountered, the joy of Novacon depends upon the gestalt ambience generated by its membership, so your presence this weekend will add immeasurably to the collective experience.

For those who've attended previous instalments in the Novacon spacetime continuum, we hope this forty-fourth chapter is as enjoyable as its predecessors. For those new to Europe's longest-running regional science fiction and fantasy event, please enter and join the party; latecomers are always welcome here.

From its birth in 1971, Novacon has always aimed to celebrate both professionals in the genre and those who enjoy their work. Indeed, in its initial years, the invitation to be guest of honour alternated between the two 'branches'. I've been lucky enough in my three tours as Novacon chair to find guests whose backgrounds span both: in 1984, with the late, much-loved Rob Holdstock; in 2007, with the ever-inventive Charlie Stross; and now, in 2014, with the wonderful Kari Sperring, acclaimed author and longstanding Novacon fan. In addition, our special science guest, John Gribbin, maintains parallel careers as both an sf author and a veteran science journalist. We are truly delighted to have them present this weekend.

What more to tell you? That the bar is a great place to hang out and make new friends whilst renewing old acquaintances? You already know that. That we have a fantastic art show downstairs, hosted by the serene Ms Serena Culfeather, and that Mr Dave Lally will be dusting off his VHS collection in our shadowy screening room (with the full schedule announced outside)? Ditto. That you need to watch your inebriation level when Rog Peyton and Chris Morgan are hosting an auction? Well, that goes without saying. That we have a special appearance from the band Crimson Clocks on Saturday evening? Okay, but you should have read that in our third progress report.

I think I've said enough, other than to thank my committee for all their amazing work this past year, and to doff my cap to both Alice Lawson and Chrissie Harper for their invaluable contributions (the former doing so whilst co-chairing a worldcon, which is pretty damned extraordinary).

Have fun. Have a brilliantly memorable weekend. And do buy a membership for Novacon 45, when some other idiot has to write these opening comments.

# Main Programme

## Friday

### 19:30: Opening Ceremony

Your opportunity to get acquainted with our guest of honour, **Kari Sperring**, and our special science guest, **John Gribbin**, as well as the rabble who organised this event. There'll be a few twists this year, so why not drag yourself away from the bar (with a refilled glass, of course) and join us as we launch the good ship Novacon 44?

### 20:30: Room 101

Our guest of honour, **Kari Sperring**, names and shames those objects, individuals and social trends she desires hurled into the Cosmic Abyss. Provided he's back from rehab in time, **Steve Green** gets to act as Judge Judy and executioner. Let's hope Kari doesn't make a convincing case for Novacon's annihilation, else this will be a very brief weekend indeed.

### 22:00: Congoing On a Shoestring

It's been a busy year for British and Irish fans: a Worldcon in London, a Eurocon in Dublin, a clearly unmissable weekend in Nottingham. But in a time of austerity, how can we stretch our purses, wallets and credit cards accordingly? Theatrically swerving their backs upon payday loans, **Bellis**, **Theresa Derwin** (moderator), **Jaine Fenn** and **Mark Plummer** offer their experienced advice (but please do us a favour and don't act upon most of it until well after you get home).

## Saturday

### 10:30: Big, Really Big

Space opera has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity in recent years, as readers once again enjoy dramas only a cosmic stage can contain. **Janet Edwards**, **Jaine Fenn** (moderator) and **Andy Sawyer** explore the joys of galactic empire-building.

### 12:00: Computing With Quantum Cats in the Multiverse

Can our special science guest, journalist and author **John Gribbin**, create a cat's cradle using string theory? We have a feline he might.

### **13:30: Meanwhile, in a Room Overlooking Historical Accuracy...**

From *Pavane* to steampunk, science fiction has often looked backwards as well as forwards, offering its own spin on history *as it might have been*. But just how much notice of the facts does fantasy need to take? Our guest of honour, **Kari Sperring** (aka historian Dr Kari Maund), is joined in discussion by **Jacey Bedford**, **Linzi Cooke** and **Theresa Derwin** (moderator).

### **15:00: Guest of Honour Interview**

**Kari Sperring**, author and long-time Novacon enthusiast, discusses her work and inspirations with **Kate Keen**. (Followed by a Q&A.)

### **17:00: Eurofandom**

Novacon has always enjoyed a strong presence from fans outside the UK (this year's committee even includes residents of both France and Greece), but how does 'their' fandom differ from our own? **Bellis** (moderator), **Stamatis Stamatopolous** and **Wolf von Witting** discuss their experiences in Germany, Sweden, Greece and Italy.

### **18:30: Group Therapy**

The life of a writer is said to be a lonely one, which might in part explain the growing popularity of writers' groups, from Milford to Tindall Street. But do they drive participants to strive for artistic heights, or stifle them under a duvet of well-meaning support? Our guest of honour **Kari Sperring** swaps her own experiences with **Jacey Bedford**, **Linzi Cooke**, **Jaine Fenn** and **Caroline Mullan** (moderator).

### **20:00 Book Launches (downstairs bar)**

Whilst the main programme suite is set up for our musical guests, Crimson Clocks, why not wander downstairs and check out some of the newest science fiction and fantasy releases?

### **21:30: Novacon Presents... Crimson Clocks**

Steampunk rockers **Crimson Clocks** spring into action, led by vocalist Linzi (aka author LM Cooke), who's joined by Colin (bass), Jo (violin/oboe) and Steve (drums). Be warned: "Prepare for a Penny Dreadful, set to music."

### **22:45: Book Auction**

There are some books you'll never forget, hard as you try. We'll sell them to you.

## Sunday

### 11:00: Getting an Agent

**Jacey Bedford** offers an insider's guide to a few tricks of the trade.

### 12:30: Girly SciFi

*The Hunger Games, Divergent, The Host* -- all examples of the boom in 'young adult' sf featuring strong female characters struggling for survival in a hostile future? But is this sub-genre really as feminist as it might at first appear? And does *The Maze Runner* represent a traditionalist backlash? Our guest of honour, **Kari Sperring**, joins **Janet Edwards, Jaine Fenn** and **Caroline Mullan** (moderator).

### 12:30: Art Auction (downstairs bar)

You've had all weekend to peruse our art show, hosted by Serena Culfeather. Why not top it off by buying one (or two) of your favourite exhibits?

### 14:00: Invasion of the POD People

The explosion in self-publishing and print-on-demand small press releases has been variously described as the death of the traditional industry and the birth of a new platform in which creators have seized the methods of production? Perhaps the truth is a mix of both. Featuring **Alex Davis** (Elsewhen Books), **Theresa Derwin** (KnightWatch Press) and **Terry Jackman** (moderator).

### 15:30: The Road to the Stars

Renowned astronomical and science fiction artist **Dave Hardy** (y'know, the chap whose art graces the cover of your limited-edition souvenir chapbook) presents an audiovisual tribute to visionary Russian author and film director Pavel Klushantsev.

### 17:00: Awards Ceremony

As well as the presentation of this year's Nova Awards for excellence in UK and Irish fanzines (ensure you get your votes in before midnight on Saturday!) and the official announcement of Novacon 45, we'll also have some excellent prizes in the Novacon raffle (all proceeds to Talking Books for the Blind).

### 19.00 Beer Tasting and Banquet

And then it's farewell for another year, although we do hope some of you will stay with us a little longer, for Sunday evening's convention banquet and beer tasting.

If you want to attend the banquet, then you need to have a food ticket which you can buy at registration over the weekend.

To join in the beer tasting, bring 3 bottles of your favourite beers to the convention and deposit them at Ops. If you want some help with buying beer once you get to the convention, trained staff will be on hand to advise (go, Doug!) Or buy a beer badge for £5 to join in the fun. Soft drinks are included with the meal ticket.

## **Meanwhile, Downstairs...**

### **The Lally Programme**

If you've ever wondered what the Lally programme is all about, now is your chance to find out. Venture downstairs and check for clues as to what Dave will be showing this year.

### **The Off-Piste Programme**

This is our space for getting spontaneous, so keep your eye on the flipchart in the lobby. There are likely to be readings, book launches, auctions, kafeeklatsches and maybe even a TWP party/ clothes swap. Scheduled so far are book launches at 8 pm Saturday night and 11 am Sunday morning

### **The Art Show**

Go and bid on you're favourite items. This is what art may look like...





## Kari Sperring

by Michael Abbott

It's not easy to summarise Kari Sperring, but let's begin with Eightsquaredcon, the 2013 Eastercon, for which she was on the committee. Their newsletter featured this item:

### Good Advice

We asked Kari whether there was anything she thought the convention membership needed to know. "Don't Vote Tory", she replied.

What does this tell us? Firstly, that Kari is a long-time, hardworking fan, or she wouldn't have been on the committee of an Eastercon. She has also helped to run a number of other conventions, and she has worked on the BSFA committee, for whom she edited book reviews for Vector. She was a long time member of TWP, and she writes for fanzines. She goes to conventions, she takes part in programme items, she costumes, she befriends people, she helps those in trouble, she knows nearly everyone, and she is, in general, an absolute stalwart of fandom.

Secondly, it tells us that she has a ready wit, which is also proved by her conversation and her fanwriting. Though sound advice about not voting Tory doesn't convey the level of intelligence behind it. Her PhD has been followed by a career in academia, with associated non-fiction books, and then a writing career. (We don't talk about her short period working in Her Majesty's Tax service.) Personally, I have always been a little in awe of her ever since she declared that Dave Sim, writer of *Cerebus*, was becoming a misogynist several years before it became at all visible to me. (Spoiler: Dave Sim got more and more rabidly misogynistic over the next few years.)

Her blog posts at <http://www.karisperring.com/> and [http://users.livejournal.com/la\\_marquise\\_de](http://users.livejournal.com/la_marquise_de) give some idea of her range of interests, and are excellent and thought-provoking reading. A conversation with her can range across feminism in Blake's 7, books, Bollywood films, national identity, Breton folk music, skiing, books, Judith Tarr, cats, Musketeers, Hong Kong martial arts movies, Ms Marvel, books, Kate Bush, manga, American exceptionalism, world cinema generally, clothes, tennis, the West Coast Avengers, the Matter of Britain, health, world history, French culture, the history of the Labour party, books, and good old-fashioned gossip.

Thirdly, it tells us that she is a determined socialist, possibly even since before she was an SF Fan. Aged eleven, she refused to go to a grammar school in protest against the unfairness of the Eleven Plus (kids, ask your parents what

one of those is...). Now she's grown up, she remains an active political writer and campaigner about misogyny and other injustices, resolutely supportive of the underdog – whether that's women, the unemployed, or immigrants. And her critical eye, ironic awareness and empathy keep her well aware of, and well away from, the excesses of puritanism that some on the political left fall into. And she's not too proud to count cows to help the local nature reserve.

The biggest omission from this list is her writing. There's not just the excellent fiction that makes her such a fine choice as a Novacon GoH, there's also her academic and semi-academic books; mostly about the Celts, but also the *Three Musketeers*. Elegantly spanning the gap between fiction and non-fiction are her work as a Critic of SF and Fantasy, doing book reviews, writing for *Strange Horizons*, and running an SF Criticism Masterclass for the SF Foundation. I've been lucky enough to be in a Writers' Group with her, and her comments are incisive, constructive, and go to the heart of any problems.

Lastly, we should note the sterling work Kari does in managing the Cambridge Skirt Mountain. It is so easy to lose track of this amongst everything else that she does so well.

## **Living with Ghosts**

**Reviewed by Christina Lake**

I read an early draft of *Living with Ghosts* back when I was in a writer's group with Kari Sperring many years ago, and I liked it so much that it went on my shortlist of books that I would publish if I ever won the lottery and set up my own publishing company. Luckily for Kari, she didn't have to wait for this unlikely eventuality and her novel found a home with Daw. *Living with Ghosts* is a sumptuous treat, full of vivid characters, barbed dialogue and sensuous settings. It's more fantasy than supernatural, and feels grounded in a hard-edged world where, as with George R R Martin or Robin Hobbs there are no guarantees over which characters will survive, or come to that, which will stay dead. The ambience is *Three Musketeers* meets Dickensian London, with duels, political intrigue and disorienting fogs, all played out under two moons. In a city historically protected from magic, it comes as a shock to Thierry, husband of the first minister to encounter the ghost of his dead friend. This is the first sign that all is not well in the state of Merafi, and leads Thierry to team up with the distractingly beautiful but flawed gigolo Gracielis, to uncover the forces behind this apparition. The plot then unfolds at a compelling pace, told from the perspective of a number of characters, both male and female, ranging from those at the top striving against political threats to those on the street dealing with the collapse of the city, magically-induced plague and spectral invaders massing in the mists.

One of the things I particularly like about the book is the way the magic works. It involves manipulating natural forces, and is based on initiation and heredity. Not many people can do it, just those with the right blood, who may or may not be quite human. They all have their own strengths, fire, stone, water or an affinity with a particular animal, or an almost lost ability to shapeshift. The alien atmosphere is enhanced by the extra moon, which is not just there for decoration, but plays a role in the physicality of the world, complicating tidal patterns and affecting magical abilities. I also liked the sense of history, events unfurling as a consequence of events in the past, leaving me with the impression that I'm reading an episode from a much larger story, in a much larger world, beyond the vividly realised streets of the city.

*Living with Ghosts* is not so much a story of a fight between good and evil, as a political battle for stability against the forces of chaos, sickness and destruction. But it always remains personal in essence, the choices of the characters are just as much about their relationships and how they want to live their lives as about the larger issues at stake. The strength of the story comes from this personal viewpoint and how the characters grow and change through the decisions they are forced to make, all within the action-led narrative of a highly readable fantasy adventure.

### **The Grass King's Concubine**

**Reviewed by Helena Bowles**

This is not your average fantasy. *The Grass King's Concubine* is an elegant, lyrical fairy-tale about power, human belief, magical bargains, and the power of words.

The story follows the life of a young woman of money, lands and birth. Aude grows up in the country where a formative experience at a young age leaves her obsessed with finding the "shining place" she saw in a vision. She is sheltered, bookish, obedient and naïve but hankers for excitement and travel. When she is grown, her uncle and guardian introduces her to society in the Silver City – home of the wealthy and privileged. Aude is an intelligent and inquisitive young woman for whom life within the social elite is stifling and she continues to dream of her shining place with its beautiful dancers, while attempting to find some clue as to where and what this place is.

Her life takes a sudden unforeseen turn the day she visits some of her property in the Brass City – the home of the working class, the factories, the poor, and the results of Aude's world's industrial revolution. Aude witnesses the maltreatment of a mill worker, attempting to step in with exquisite bourgeois naivete. This encounter leads her to explore the world of the Brass City for herself with the, initially reluctant, help of Jehan, a Brass City guard.

Through Jehan, Aude learns of the struggles of the workers, learns to parse the political pamphlets that Jehan gives her. She learns to question her role, to wonder why some have and some have not and to question the history of her own family.

Finally, the approach of an arranged marriage and a threat to Jehan leads her to act. She and Jehan leave to travel to the source of Aude's family's wealth and the legend of a magical bargain. They find a parched land reflecting the state of a mystical realm – World Below, the Grass King's domain. Aude's family history is tangled with the state of the realm and it is her responsibility to atone for the sins of her ancestors.

*Grass King's Concubine* is a meditation on the power of human belief to affect the world but also on the power of words fixed to a page – printed – to fix and bind that which was fluid. Words inspire people to reach beyond themselves, like the ferret-women Julana and Yelena, and literally open doors between the real and the numinous but they also reify ideas, which are contradictory and in turn affect the real world. The words of Marcellan are considered mystical and religious in Aude's world but in the Grass King's Realm he is the instigator of printing and the dissemination of knowledge – a flow directed to the real world that codified belief and has a terrible effect on World Below.

Aude must mend the Grass King's realm, thus completing the circle from her early ancestor who bargained with the exiled fitch women through Marcellan's words and the politics of the printing presses to the symbolic return of water to the land.



## Quantum Fluctuation – an excursion through the works of John Gribbin

by Christina Lake

John might or might not be surprised to learn that there are 10 copies of his book *Science: a history, 1543-2001* in the university library where I work. The library doesn't tend to buy multiple copies of books unless they're on a reading list, suggesting that as well as being an effective populariser of science, John is well-regarded by the academic community. The library also has copies of four other books by John. There's *The Science of Phillip Pullman's His Dark Materials* (co-written with his wife Mary), which was written for children aged 9 and over but was clearly so effective at explaining some seriously difficult physics that it was reprinted by Hodder's main imprint for an adult audience. We also have a book called *Deep Simplicity*, which is all about simplifying chaos theory (a tough job!), another one on Robert Fitzroy, who was Captain of the Beagle and founder of the Met Office, and lastly *Stardust*, another co-production with Mary, which is, literally, about life, the universe and everything.

Regrettably we don't have a copy of *In Search of Schrödinger's Cat*, an omission that I will have to remedy, since this is the book that John is best known for, and will certainly be relevant to his talk for Novacon on Saturday lunch-time. *In Search of Schrödinger's Cat* could be said to have opened up the market for popularizing quantum physics, leading the way to Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*. (And it will probably come as no surprise to find that John has also co-written a biography of Stephen Hawking.)

What this discussion of a somewhat random selection from John's work shows is that John (and let's not forget Mary) has a remarkable breadth of knowledge. In fact, it's hard to find an area of scientific interest John hasn't written about. His Wikipedia entry groups his books into the following topics (amongst others): quantum physics, evolution and human genetics, climate change, astronomy, origins of the universe and general science. And he's also written novels. On his own and with a number of collaborators, notably D G Compton, with whom he wrote *Ragnarok* (1991), an SF thriller about the countdown to a nuclear winter. More recently he's published the well-regarded *Timeswitch* (2009), a story about time travel, and the novella *The Alice Encounter* (2011) about first encounter with an alien species composed entirely of dark matter.

As Novacon's Science Guest, we'll get the benefit of both John's knowledge of science, and his interest in the speculative use of science in fiction. When H. G. Wells first wrote his scientific romances he largely made up the science, but his ideas were inspired by the science of his day, particularly evolution. The genre has become more sophisticated since then, but scientific ideas continue to provide the life-blood for its inventions and speculations. With works like John's to hand, there's no reason not to understand some of the more complicated areas of scientific thought, and more importantly, not to be inspired by what we know and can discover about life and the universe around us.



## ELSEWHEN PRESS

*an independent publisher specialising in Speculative Fiction*

### LAUNCHING AT NOVACON Book III of the Royal Sorceress series by Christopher Nuttall



The British Empire is teetering on the brink of war with France. A war that may, for the first time, see magicians in the ranks on both sides. The Royal Sorceress, Lady Gwendolyn Crichton, will be responsible for the Empire's magical resources when the time comes. Still struggling to overcome prejudice within the Royal College of Sorcerers, she has at least earned the gratitude of much of the aristocracy, if not their respect. Just when Gwen needs to be firmly focussed on training new sorcerers, her adopted daughter Olivia, the only known living necromancer, is kidnapped. Her abduction could signal a terrible new direction in the impending war. But Intelligence soon establishes that it is Russian agents who have taken Olivia, so an incognito Gwen joins a British diplomatic mission to Russia, an uncertain element in the coming conflict. Once she has arrived in St Petersburg, she discovers that the Tsar is deranged and with the help of a mad monk has a plan that threatens the entire world.

Immediately following on from *The Great Game*, *Necropolis* sees Gwen thrust into the wider international arena as political unrest spreads throughout Europe and beyond, threatening to hasten an almighty conflict. Once again Chris combines exciting fantasy with believable alternate history almost close enough for us to touch.

Join us in the downstairs bar at 11:00 on Sunday Morning, to launch *Necropolis*, meet bestselling author Christopher Nuttall and hear an extract over a mid-morning drink!

## Meet the Committee

The Novacon committee are notoriously shy and retiring, so we sent in renowned beer journalist Hopback Lightning to do some research. Although his notes were all written on the back of the Falmouth beer festival programme, we're confident that his profiles are accurate and not an amalgam of half-truths and mistaken identities taken from Wikipedia and e-fanzines.

### **Steve Green – Chair and Programme**

Steve Green is a Christian music singer, notable for his vocal range and flexible solo style. He's won four Grammys and one TAFF-trip for his work on Critical Wave. In between running conventions, Steve is British Minister of State for Trade and Investment.

*Tasting notes: Traditional stout; smooth on the palate, bitter on the finish*

### **Theresa Derwin – Programme**

Theresa used to be related to Charles Darwin until she married a zombie in 2012. Since then she has worked on numerous anthologies of horror stories, and is world-renowned for her feminist genre fanzine Andromeda's Offspring.

*Tasting notes: Smooth and deceptive with rich malt flavours, mellow bitterness and subtle sweet finish*

### **Steve Lawson – Membership**

Steve Lawson runs membership services for the whole of British fandom and has a database going back to the 1980s of every room booking ever made. His archive is in high demand from family history enthusiasts and paternity lawyers, as well as being the subject of a BBC documentary on Amazing Hobbies.

*Tasting notes: Full-bodied with long, bittersweet finish*

### **Eve Harvey – Treasurer**

Eve runs a guest house and vineyard for SF fans in the centre of France, and keeps Novacon in the black by astute currency dealings on the foreign exchange markets. On her brief visits to the UK Eve combines her career as a children's bookseller at Waterstones with working as front of house/ waitress at The Fat Giraffe in Padiham.

*Tasting notes: Flavoursome blond with fresh zesty hop character. Not for the faint hearted*

### **Tony Berry – Hotel**

Tony Berry is the founder the Blue Arrow Recruitment Agency and has been using its offices alongside his skills as a locksmith to recruit committee members and gophers for Novacon for the past two decades. Not many people know that Tony is also an accomplished entertainer, singer and compere, and used to be deputy Chairman of Tottenham Hostpur

*Tasting notes: Nothing fancy, just good old-fashioned bitter*

### **John Harvey – Website**

John Harvey writes crime-fiction set in Nottingham, featuring a crime-fighting American SF author called Mike Resnick. John may have learnt his web design skills at Aberystwyth University where he is Head of the School of Art.

*Tasting notes: A fruity, hoppy nose with hits of peaches and lemon grass, and a malty mouth feel*

### **Doug Bell – Publications**

Doug Bell got involved with fandom after losing his spleen during a night of heavy drinking in Aberdeen. He is best known for his role as lead designer on the Dungeon Master series of computer games, and his work as a sportscaster on WJOX-AM. In his spare time Doug produces country and western fanzines under the pseudonym of Ranger Doug.

*Tasting notes: Drinks dangerously less than its strength*

### **Christina Lake – Publications**

Christina Lake used to be one half of the indie-girl band The TAFF Twins, but has since become an unincorporated recreational area in British Columbia with her own weather station and marina. When not writing publications for Novacon, Christina Lake can be booked online or via Trip Advisor.

*Tasting notes: Grapefruit flavoured with a long lingering aftertaste*

### **Bellis – Metal Mayhem**

Bellis is leader singer in a Swedish-Greek heavy metal band. His ambition is to become sheriff of Nottingham and marry Virginia Woolf.

*Tasting notes: Fermented by wild yeasts*

### **Serena Culfeather – Artshow**

Serena has taken a break from dominating world tennis to work on her relationship with North Carolina timber magnate, Bradley Cooper. Serena relishes opportunities for manual labour, and plans to start logging in Nottingham forest once she has finished setting up the art show.

*Tasting notes: Well balanced, dominated by fruits and hops, with a dry finish*



## 2014 Nova Awards

A long time ago, in a Novacon far away, the first Nova awards were awarded for the best fanzine of the preceding twelve months. In those far-off days, the winning fanzine was a single issue selected by a jury of distinguished fans, but since then things have moved on – electronic fanzines are now eligible, the winners are now selected in three categories, and the jury has now been replaced by a popular vote – which is where you lot come in.

All sufficiently widely-read fans resident in the UK or Eire are eligible to vote in the Nova awards, so if you've read six or more of the eligible titles from the last year then you are now invited to express a preference. Online voting closed a week ago, but paper ballots are accepted until midnight on the Saturday of Novacon.

Awards are now presented in three categories, "Best Fanzine", "Best Fan Writer" and "Best Fan Artist".

You'll find a ballot form in your membership pack; a "longlist" of known eligible titles appears on the reverse. Just be sure to get your choices into the ballot box at registration before midnight on Saturday.

The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony.

## The Nova Awards: Past Winners

### Best Fanzine

**1973:** *Speculation* #32, ed. Peter Weston

**1974:** *Zimri* #6, ed. Lisa Conesa; *Big Scab* #2, ed. John Brosnan [tied]

**1975:** *Maya* #8, ed. Rob Jackson

[1975 was the final year a Nova was awarded for a specific issue of a fanzine]

**1976:** *Maya*, ed. Rob Jackson

**1977:** *Twil-Ddu*, ed. Dave Langford

**1978:** *Gross Encounters*, ed. Alan Dorey

**1979:** *Seamonsters*, ed. Simone Walsh

**1980:** *One-Off*, ed. Dave Bridges

### Best Fanzine; Best Fanzine Writer; Best Fan Artist

**1981:** *Tappen*, ed. Malcolm Edwards; Chris Atkinson; Pete Lyon

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

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

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

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

**1986:** *Pink Fluffy Bedsocks*, ed. Owen Whiteoak; Owen Whiteoak; Arthur "ATom" Thomson

- 1987:** *Lip*, ed. Hazel Ashworth; D West; D West
- 1988:** *Lip*, ed. Hazel Ashworth; Michael Ashley; D West
- 1989:** *VSOP*, ed. Jan Orys; Simon Polley; Dave Mooring
- 1990:** *FTT*, ed. Joseph Nicholas, Judith Hanna; Dave Langford; Dave Mooring
- 1991:** *Saliromania*, ed. Michael Ashley; Michael Ashley; D West
- 1992:** *Bob?*, ed. Ian Sorensen; Michael Ashley, Dave Mooring
- 1993:** *Lagoon*, ed. Simon Ounsley; Simon Ounsley; Dave Mooring
- 1994:** *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk*, ed. Greg Pickersgill; Greg Pickersgill; D West
- 1995:** *Attitude*, ed. Michael Abbott, John Dallman and Pam Wells; Simon Ounsley; D West
- 1996:** *Banana Wings*, ed. Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Alison Freebairn; D West
- 1997:** *Banana Wings*, ed. Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Mark Plummer; Sue Mason
- 1998:** *Banana Wings*, ed. Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Maureen Kincaid Speller; D West
- 1999:** *Barmaid*, ed. Yvonne Rowse; Yvonne Rowse; Sue Mason
- 2000:** *Plokta*, ed. Alison Scott, Steve Davies and Mike Scott; Yvonne Rowse; Sue Mason
- 2001:** *Head!*, ed. Doug Bell and Christina Lake; Alison Freebairn; Dave Hicks
- 2002:** *Plokta*, ed. Alison Scott, Steve Davies and Mike Scott; Claire Brialey; Dave Hicks
- 2003:** *Zoo Nation*, ed. Pete Young; Claire Brialey; Sue Mason
- 2004:** *Zoo Nation*, ed. Pete Young; Claire Brialey; Sue Mason
- 2005:** *Banana Wings*, ed. Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Claire Brialey; Alison Scott
- 2006:** *Banana Wings*, ed. Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Claire Brialey; Sue Mason
- 2007:** *Prolapse*, ed. Peter Weston; Mark Plummer; Alison Scott
- 2008:** *Prolapse*, ed. Peter Weston; Claire Brialey; Alison Scott
- 2009:** *Banana Wings*, ed. Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Claire Brialey; Sue Mason
- 2010:** *Journey Planet*, ed. James Bacon, Claire Brialey, James Bacon and Chris Garcia (with guest editor Pete Young); Mark Plummer; Arthur "ATom" Thomson
- 2011:** *Head!*, edited by Doug Bell & Christina Lake; Claire Brialey; Dave Hicks
- 2012:** *Banana Wings*, ed. Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Mark Plummer; Sue Mason and D West [tied]
- 2013:** *Banana Wings*, ed. Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Mike Meara; D West

## History of Novacon

The first Novacon was run in 1971 by Aston University Science Fiction Group, with the second and all subsequent Novacons taking place under the authority of the BSFG. Years, attendance, guests and chairs are as they appear in the following table.

Year	Attendance		Guest(s)	Chair
1971	Novacon	144	James White	Vernon Brown
1972	Novacon 2	144	Doreen Rogers	Pauline Dungate
1973	Novacon 3	146	Ken Bulmer	Hazel Reynolds
1974	Novacon 4	211	Ken Slater	Dr Jack Cohen
1975	Novacon 5	272	Dan Morgan	Rog Peyton
1976	Novacon 6	317	David Kyle	Stan Eling
1977	Novacon 7	278	John Brunner	Stan Eling
1978	Novacon 8	309	Anne McCaffrey	Laurence Miller
1979	Novacon 9	290	Christopher Priest	Rog Peyton
1980	Novacon 10	495	Brian W Aldiss	Rog Peyton
1981	Novacon 11	362	Bob Shaw	Paul Oldroyd
1982	Novacon 12	373	Harry Harrison	Rog Peyton
1983	Novacon 13	339	Lisa Tuttle	Phil Probert
1984	Novacon 14	333	Robert Holdstock	Steve Green
1985	Novacon 15	340	James White, Dave Langford	Phil Probert
1986	Novacon 16	257	EC Tubb Chris Evans	Tony Berry
1987	Novacon 17	315	Iain M Banks	Bernie Evans
1988	Novacon 18	336	Garry Kilworth	Tony Berry
1989	Novacon 19	426	Geoff Ryman	Martin Tudor
1990	Novacon 20	330	Dr Jack Cohen	Bernie Evans
1991	Novacon 21	200	Colin Greenland	Nick Mills
1992	Novacon 22	300	Storm Constantine	Helena Bowles

Year	Attendance		Guest(s)	Chair
1993	Novacon 23	350	Stephen Baxter	Carol Morton
1994	Novacon 24	214	Graham Joyce	Richard Standage
1995	Novacon 25	338	Brian W Aldiss, Harry Harrison, Bob Shaw Special guest: Iain M Banks	Tony Morton
1996	Novacon 26	281	David Gemmell	Carol Morton
1997	Novacon 27	277	Peter F Hamilton	Martin Tudor
1998	Novacon 28	265	Paul J McAuley	Martin Tudor
1999	Novacon 29	239	Ian Stewart	Carol Morton
2000	Novacon 30	224	Christopher Priest Special Guest: Rog Peyton Guest artist: David A Hardy	Tony Berry
2001	Novacon 31	219	Gwyneth Jones	Tony Berry
2002	Novacon 32	252	Ian McDonald	Martin Tudor
2003	Novacon 33	203	Jon Courtenay Grimwood	Martin Tudor
2004	Novacon 34	227	Ian Watson	Martin Tudor
2005	Novacon 35	216	Alastair Reynolds	Tony Berry
2006	Novacon 36	245	Ken MacLeod	Tony Berry
2007	Novacon 37	227	Charles Stross	Steve Green
2008	Novacon 38	206	Ian R MacLeod	Helena Bowles
2009	Novacon 39	210	Justina Robson	Alice Lawson
2010	Novacon 40	300	Iain M Banks Special Guest: Brian W Aldiss	Vernon Brown
2011	Novacon 41	236	John Meaney	Steve Lawson
2012	Novacon 42	232	Jaine Fenn	Tony Berry
2013	Novacon 43	207	Jo Walton	Yvonne Rowse

## **Novacon 44 Members at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014 (total 186)**

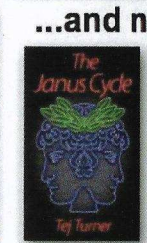
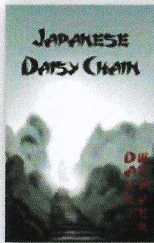
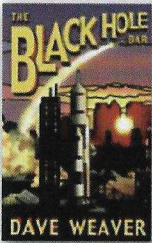
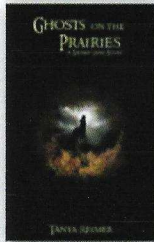
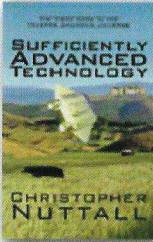
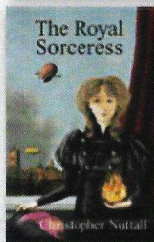
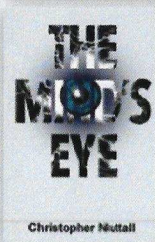
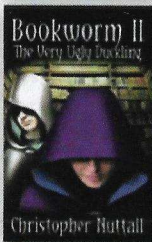
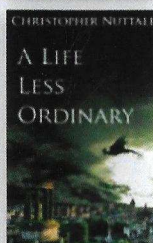
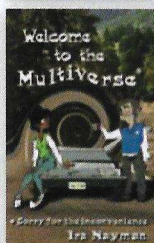
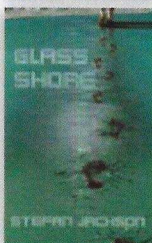
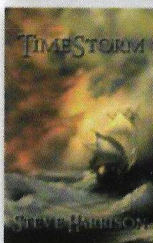
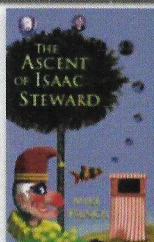
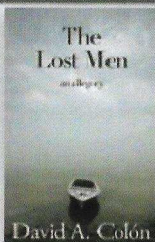
1	Kari Sperring	31	Barbara-Jane
2	Phil Nanson	32	Markus Thierstein
3	John Gribbin	33	Caroline Mullan
4	Jo Walton	34	Brian Ameringen
5	Jaine Fenn	35	Emjay Ameringen
6	Dave Weddell	36	Dave Hicks
7	Steve Green	37	Penny Hicks
8	Doug Bell	38	Cat Coast
9	Tony Berry	39	Martin Smart
10	Theresa Derwin	40	Melica Smith
11	Christina Lake	41	Pauline Morgan
12	Steve Lawson	42	Chris Morgan
13	Alice Lawson	43	James Odell
14	John Edwards	44	Roger Robinson
15	Julia Daly	45	Mike Scott
16	Douglas Spencer	46	Flick
17	Tony Rogers	47	David Cochrane
18	Harpal Singh	48	Anne Woodford
19	Tim Kirk	49	Alan Woodford
20	Peter Wareham	50	Michael Abbott
21	Gwen Funnell	51	Anne Wilson
22	Sue Edwards	52	Andrew Patton
23	Julian Headlong	53	Austin Benson
24	Steve Dunn	54	Caro Wilson
25	Dave Tompkins	55	Robert Smith
26	Ron Gemmell	56	Neil Summerfield
27	Chris Bell	57	George Ternent
28	½r	58	Linda Ternent
29	Claire Brialey	59	Calvin Ternent
30	Mark Plummer	60	Steve Davies

61	Guilia De Cesare	92	Christine Davidson
62	Jim Walker	93	Peter Mabey
63	Tim Stannard	94	Roger Earnshaw
64	Pat Brown	95	Dave Hardy
65	Vernon Brown	96	Chris Stocks
66	Sue Jones	97	Steve Rogerson
67	Alan Bellingham	98	Dave Langford
68	Colette Reap	99	David Carlile
69	Simon Dearn	100	Pete Randall
70	Paul Dormer	101	Marcus Rowland
71	Margaret Austin	102	Martin Hoare
72	Martin Easterbrook	103	Heloise Tudor
73	William Armitage	104	Anders Bellis
74	Gary S Wilkinson	105	Luke Smith
75	Mali Perera	106	Tony Keen
76	Alan Webb	107	Kate Keen
77	Gerry Webb	108	Greg Pickersgill
78	Harry Payne	109	Catherine Pickersgill
79	Hal Payne	110	John Mottershead
80	Jodie Payne	111	Morag O'Neill
81	Omega	112	Tim Broadribb
82	Adrian Snowdon	113	MEG
83	John Harvey	114	Peter Wilkinson
84	Eve Harvey	115	Stephen Cooper
85	Niall Gordon	116	Bridget Wilkinson
86	David Thomas	117	Dave Lally
87	Margaret Croad	118	Charles Partington
88	Neil Tomkinson	119	Charlotte Bulmer
89	Alison Tomkinson	120	Jacey Bedford
90	Jamie Scott	121	Peter Coleborn
91	Michael Davidson	122	Jan Edwards

123	Alex Storer	155	Susan Watson
124	David Breslin	156	Joseph Andrew Jenkins
125	Kate Solomon	157	Janet Jenkins
126	Malcolm Davies	158	Stuart Jenkins
127	Ian Warner	159	Tommy Wareing
128	Chris Nuttall	160	Nick Larter
129	Aisha Nuttall	161	John Dowd
130	Peter Ellis	162	Fran Dowd
131	Janet Edwards	163	Gary Andrews
132	Yvonne Rowse	164	Ian Maughan
133	Sally Rowse	165	Vron McIntyre
134	Ian Sorensen	166	Mike Meara
135	Terry Jackman	167	Pat Meara
136	Stan Nicholls	168	Robert Day
137	Anne Nicholls	169	Cathy Easthope
138	Peter Buck	170	Vanessa May
139	Alison Buck	171	Steph Tomkinson
140	Deirdre Montanaro	172	Debbi Tomkinson
141	Sue Mason	173	Sanem Ozdural
142	Judi Hodgkin	174	Zandy Hemsley
143	Steve Mowbray	175	Genevieve Hodgkin Hemsley
144	Bridget Bradshaw	176	Mark Slater
145	Rob Jackson	177	Chris Brooks
146	Rhodri James	178	Dave Holmes
147	Tobes Valois	179	Will Macmillan Jones
148	Mary Gribbin	180	Nigel Page
149	Rog Peyton	181	Stamatis Stamatopoulos
150	Laura Wheatly	182	Kirsti van Wessel
151	Anders Headenlund	183	Serena Culfeather
152	Alice Headenlund	184	John Wilson
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