

The South Hants Science Fiction Group 40th Anniversary

Way back in 1980 semi big name fan Alan Dorey, who had been at Leeds University with Ric Cooper said to him, “you live near Jeff Suter down by Portsmouth why don’t you say hello to him?” Ric did, and he and Jeff decided to have the odd meeting down the pub when they felt the need and brought along assorted friends.

In 1981 they decided to make this more structured with regular meetings every two weeks and other fans such as Mike Cheater, John Bark and Phil Plumbly began to regularly attend and thus was born the SHSFG.

In the early days of 1981 and number of other fans joined, some stayed until today, others moved on in the fullness of time because, well sometimes real life gets in the way. We are here to celebrate the 40 years of the SHSFG and the friendships that came about because it existed.

Why South Hants Science Fiction Group? It was always Jeff and Ric’s ambition to appeal to not just the fans in Portsmouth but right across the South Hampshire hinterland and until the pandemic struck meetings were regularly held in Portsmouth and the town across the harbour, Gosport.

Here are some facts to jog memories and indicate to newer members what the group has achieved

SHSFG In Numbers:

Fanzines: 4

Semi Pro Fiction Zine: 1

Newsletters: 2

Conventions: 6

1 Day events in the pub: 3

Weddings: I.e. people who met because they were in the group – 2 (Paul and Theresa Winship & Andy and Sue Croft)

People: 76 people and 1 cat

Pubs: 12 (I think)

D&D Groups: 1

Book Clubs: 1

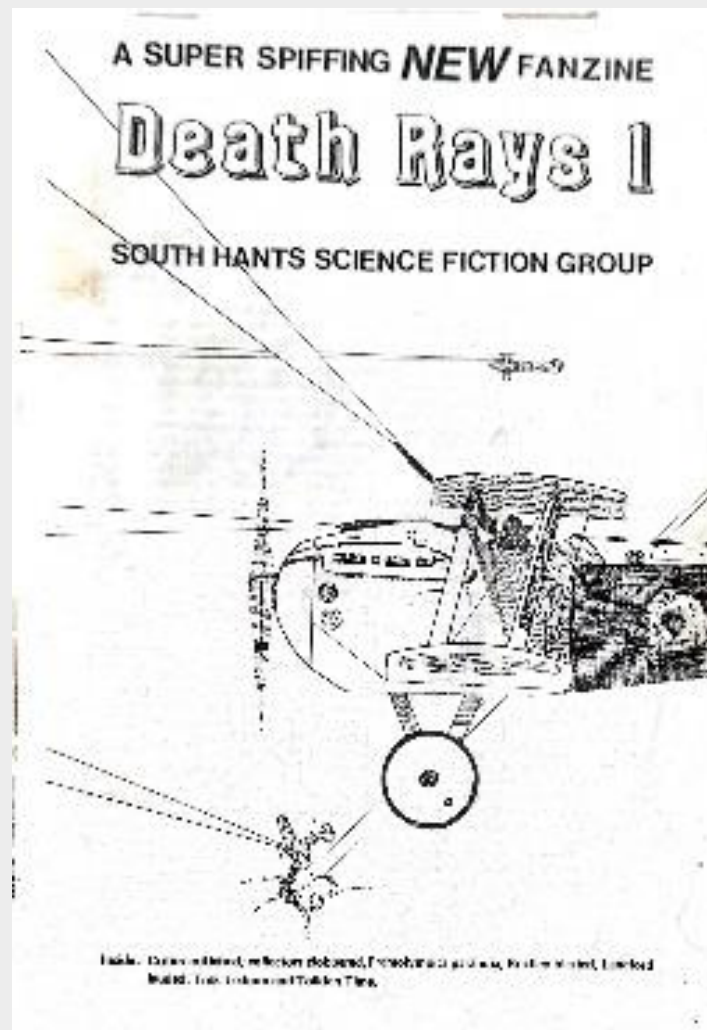
The following is not meant to be a comprehensive history but more to jog memories and hopefully engender some fun reminiscences at the party. I could have included more such as the episode where Ric’s car caught fire, or the Donald Tait party and the wine police, the many minibus trips and of course the beer festivals where it became customary to nominate the official SHSFG scapegoat until enough beers were provided to persuade the electorate to change their votes. I was the first scapegoat then after a few years Phil Talbot was voted “it”. But a couple of years ago we managed to nominate and vote in Dave Angus. So now if it goes wrong it is traditional to let forth a cry of “It’s Dave’s fault” and because of the pandemic there are no opportunities for a while to change that status.... So if something in here is wrong “It’s Dave’s Fault”! ☺

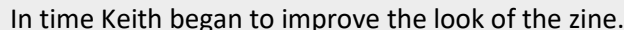
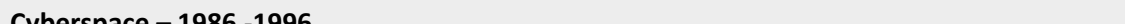
Fanzines

Back in the day the group have been quite active in the Fanzine front. Jeff Suter in the early 1980's would periodically produce a copy of his personal zine "Periphery". The group however from 1981 also published a group zine. The first attempt edited and helmed by John Bark was called Death Rays taking the title from a Biggles story, "The Death Rays of Ardilla" John produced 7 editions from 1981 to 1983 when he moved out of the area to take a job near London.

Death Rays 1981 - 1984

Death Rays was an A5 sized zine with contributions from both group members and fans in general.





Cyberspace

The Newsletter
Of The
SHSFG

Issue No. 15 Oct - Nov 1991

"Cyberspace" is published for the Society every January. It is a free publication, and is available to members of the Society. It is also available to non-members for a small fee. It is a free publication, and is available to members of the Society. It is also available to non-members for a small fee.

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SF Film Book - Peter Wright

The Aurum Film Encyclopedia, Volume 2
SCIENCE FICTION ed Phil Hardy

Aurum Press, ISBN 1 85410 159 5,
464pp, hb, £30.00

Just when you thought all your money was safe before the usual Christmas lightening of the wallet, comes glad tidings from Aurum Press, who have updated their definitive SF film encyclopedia. This first appeared in 1984 and it has proved to be invaluable ever since because it includes most SF films dating from 1895 up until 1984. There are one or two omissions, but I hope to see these included in the new edition along with a lot of new stuff. It will be published on 7 November and should be well worth forking out for. I can hardly wait to get my hands on a copy.

Let me know by the end of October if you are interested in a copy as I can order them for you and get a substantial discount at the same time.

1991 Hugo Awards

Listed below are selected award winners from this years Hugo as recently announced at this years Worldcon - ChiCon.

Novel	Louise McMaster Burd - The War Game.
Novella	Joe Haldeman - The Hammerway Road.
Novella	Mike Resnick - The Manasquan.
Short Story	Terry O'Quinn - Bear's Dream: Five.
Non-Fiction	Orson Scott Card - How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy.
Dramatic Presentation	Edward Scissorhands (20th Century Fox).
Professional Editor	Gardner Dozois - for LANSF and the Year's Best SF series.
Professional Artist	Michael Whelan.
Fan Artist	Teddy Harvey.
Fan Writer	David Langford.
Fanzine	Lan's Lantern - George 'Lan' Laskowski.
Semi-prozine	Locus - Charlie Brown.

Also decided at ChiCon was the site for the 1994 Worldcon. It will be held in Winnipeg who were the narrow winners by 55 votes from Louisville.

WINCON II - The Truth!! Phil Plumbly Reveals All

I have been told by one of the many Johns that I know, that it is quite unusual for a committee member to review his own convention, but what the hell! Bollocks to convention! Here is my review of WINCON II: a con to be really snug about.

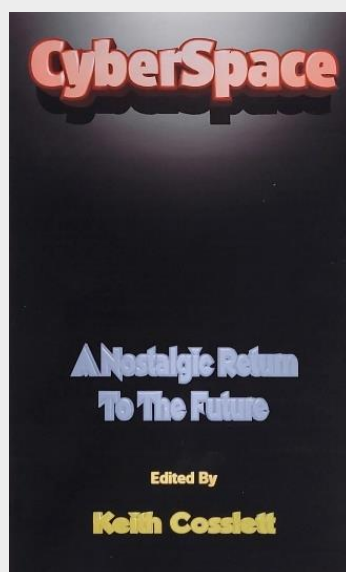
We arrived at King Alfred's College

Cyberspace 15 1

As time passed it continued to be well received with its mix of reviews, commentary, fan articles and SF news.



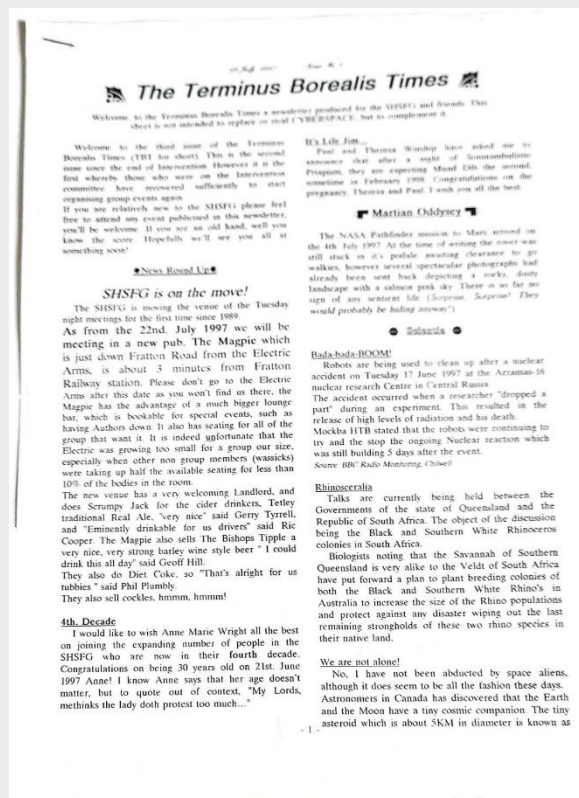
And even began producing best of editions:



However in 1996 Keith began to find the effort of regularly producing a zine to be a lot to combine with other things. So not wanting to see the group without a zine I took up the cudgel with my contribution. The Terminus Borealis Times. I lived in North End in Portsmouth at the time so the name seemed to suggest itself.

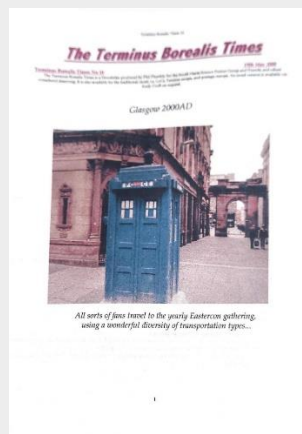
The Terminus Borealis Times – 1996 - 2001

The first TBT's were A4 in size and produced on an electronic typewriter and so looked quite "Fannish" for the time.



However in time I too acquired a PC and started to produce something a bit more polished. I also started to go for a more Fortean Times sort of feel to the publication.

Some had pictures like the genuine pub sign found in a country pub in West Sussex below, others were of things I found such as the "Tardis" in Glasgow that was a genuine police box.



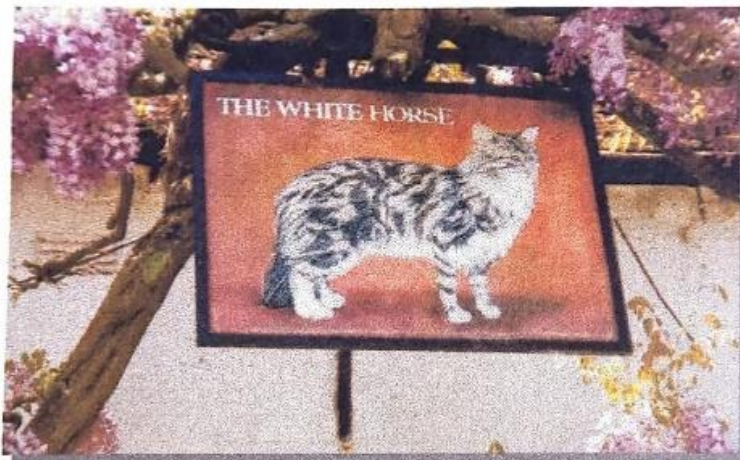
The Terminus Borealis Times

Terminus Borealis Times No 17

7th September 2009

The Terminus Borealis Times is a Newsletter produced by Phil Plumbly for the South Hants Science Fiction Group and Friends, and others considered deserving. It is also available for the traditional usual, i.e. LoCs, Farzine swaps, and postage stamps. An email version is available via Andy Croft or Phil Plumbly on request.

Surreal Pub signs no. 53



And some were genuinely weird like the photo I took at Dave Angus's place at a party. It's a picture of Darryl Thomas in his naturally inebricated state, but no one knows where the halo came from as it wasn't there when the photo was taken....



In 2001 I moved to work in North West London for a couple of years and TBT fell by the wayside.

State of the Rat - 1997

In 1997 John Richards also produced a one off zine *State of the Rat*. It recounted his time at the 1997 Eastercon.



Riding Out The Eastercon.

Tuesday 25th March

Before I left the office on Tuesday I went through the mail boxes of my e-mail account and deleted the lot. It was amazingly satisfying to point the mouse at the top of the list, jam the left hand button down hard and drag the whole incoherent mess into electronic limbo. After spending ten minutes or so blasting away I discovered the command on the mail box menu that allowed the user to destroy all the messages at once when the deleted box. I decided to ignore it and instead went back to deleting messages individually. This was now personal.

Over the previous three weeks the e-mail traffic on my account had been rising sharply. Since this was a work account I had been getting increasingly worried about the time it was taking even to check out the new messages. I got into the office at 08:30 and it was reaching the point that simply reading my e-mail was taking until 09:15. As I get very little e-mail professionally this was beginning to get noticed. If nothing else the disk space being taken up was alarming.

At 16:30 on Tuesday I reached the deadline. I would be leaving the office in half an hour and it was too late for anymore e-mail. At home I had already unplugged the Telephone Answering Machine as I was not planning to be back home until 23:00 and had no intention of being sober at that stage. The following day I would be up betimes (well at 05:00) and away to the fair land of Liverpool.

Wednesday 26th March

The train to London had just rattled through Woking when I heard the first report of the bombs at Wiltshire. Radio 4 switched directly into full panic mode and started 'phoning

up anyone who had even heard of the place. By the time I got to Euston the BBC were warning of the imminent collapse of the railway system all over the country. On the concourse nothing seemed out of the ordinary.

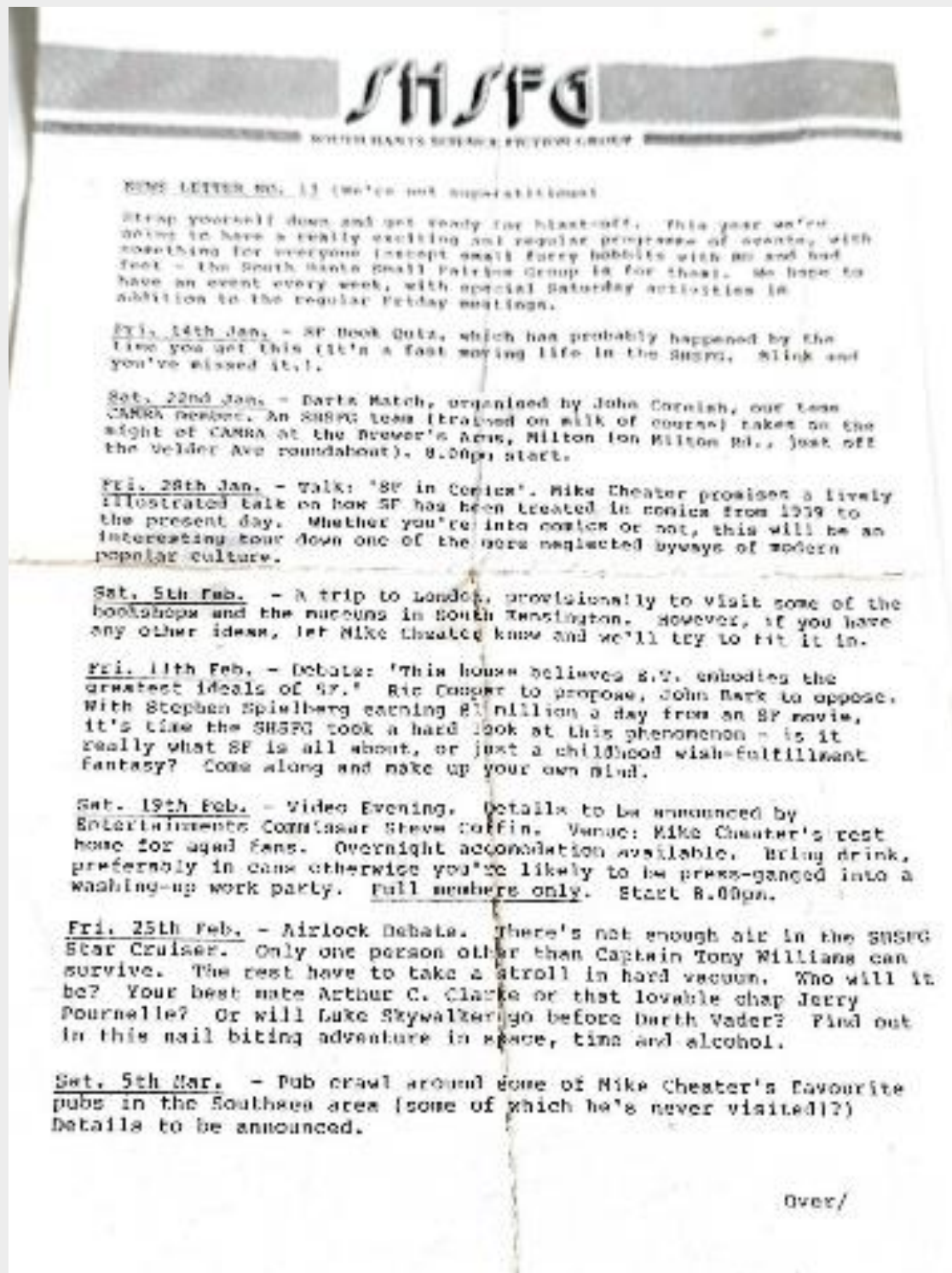
It had been decided more or less at the beginning that the committee would have to be in Liverpool from the Wednesday before the convention until the Wednesday after. (This had been the largest single cost taken into account when I had warned the others that it would cost about £2,000 to join the committee.) My decision to take the train had come after hearing the planned route for the Mini-bus. I had defended my choice by citing a desire to ensure that we did not get stuck with all of us standing by a wreck on the side of the M6 but my real reason was a passionate desire to avoid 10 hours of petty squabbling and desperate camaraderie. Running the risk of being blown to bits by the IRA seemed a small price to pay. However being stuck outside Crewe station for a couple of hours was a fate to be treated with rather less equanimity.

Despite the frantic wailings of radio journalists the trip up was uneventful. I got excited at the sight of all the familiar places in the same way as usual and arrived at The Adelphi buoyed up and ready to do business. The revelation by the Desk Clerk that the people from the BBC were busy for the moment, that Barbara Pemberton was off until tomorrow and that given that my room was not yet ready they would be obliged if I could go away again for a couple of hours dented my mood slightly but I was still fairly bubbling when, expelled from the local equivalent of paradise by a chamber maid with an eternally burning duster, I sloped off down to the city centre for lunch. It is to this excitement that I attribute the fact that when I returned I was clutching a 12 CD set of Aerosmith's earlier works which my collector's instinct had ordered me to buy a Virgin on the simple grounds that it was 27% cheaper than at HMV. I hoped that I would like early Aerosmith.

By 15:00 I had got my room, discovered that cider was £1.20 a pint in the hotel's public bar (Friday's) and found both the people from the BBC and John Barik. The ABC people could have been hired from Stereotypes 'R' Us. Jonny the Assistant Producer who I never saw with an actual clipboard but seemed to have a permanent idealised one clutched to her chest, Neil the Director bespectacled slightly fey and a man I would have sworn wore a grey Levi's tank top although I doubt I ever saw him in one. Having failed to score lunch from these people I settled for a pot of coffee and John and I set out to explain why our initial reaction to a 'phone call from them had been sufficient to send the Producer's Assistant (not the same as the Assistant Producer) off back to cry on Chris Bell's shoulder - and led to a question from my work mates as to why I had yelled "Fuck, Fuck, Fuck" at my 'phone and then vanished for half an hour to the smoking lounge. Since these people were definitely going to be in the hotel for the duration, and for the following six months, it was essential that we reach an accommodation. This was aided by the fact that we knew precisely what they were up to and they had to guess what we were about. In the end we reached a modus vivendi by which they would follow members of staff around for the weekend but would not go near the Masquerade without further discussion. We would give them a chance to explain

Newsletters

The SHSFG has also had a couple of Newsletters the first produced in the early 1980's was produced by the rather menacing sounding SHSFG Council. In reality probably Mike Cheater, John Bark, Jeff Suter and/or a couple of others.



The other produced towards the end of the 1990's was to help with another SF group forming in the area. The USS Merlin was formed by a sub group of fans into Star Trek and was to be a mini monthly

day event held at a community centre. Well supported by the SHSFG which produced the Merlin Freep as the Merlin newsletter.

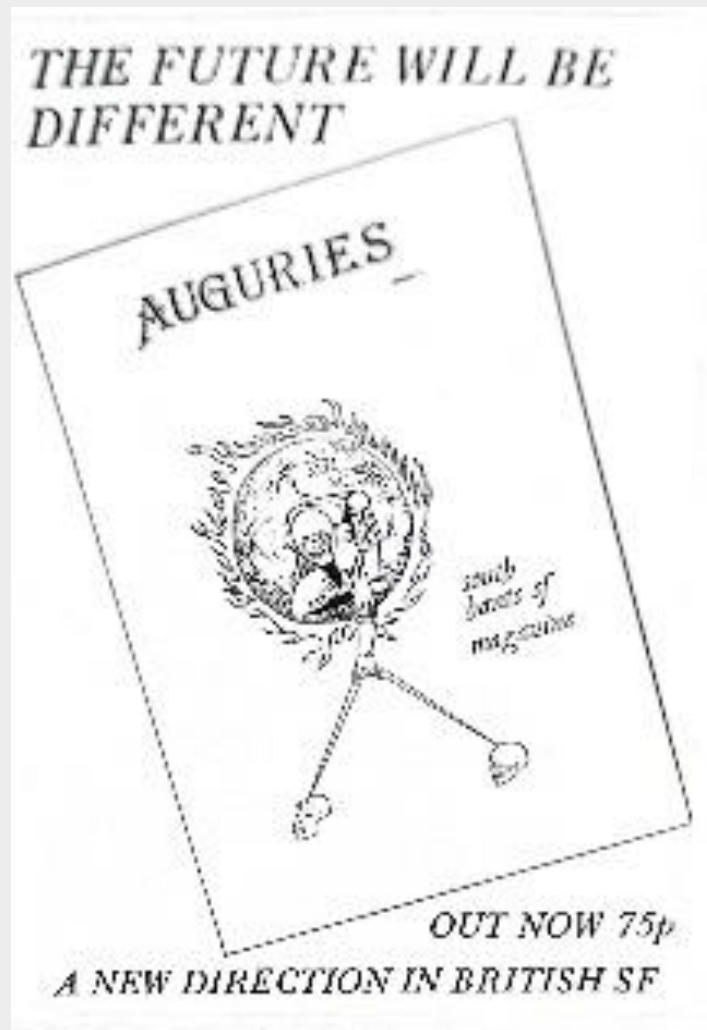


This too ended when I moved to Watford so I could work in North West London.

Semi-Pro Zine

In the early 1980's one of the group members at the time, Nic Morton, wanted to produce a semi prozine to publish SF fiction. He wanted to call it Auguries, but needed some money to do so. The group having some funds provided the seed funding to get issue one off and going.

I don't have a copy of that issue but have an advert which shows the cover:



It was still going strong a few years later in the 1980's but I've lost track of it now.

Conventions

The SHSFG has in its time put on a number of Conventions.

Wincon: Unicon 9 - 1988

The first in 1988 was also the first of the Wincon series of conventions held at King Alfred's Teacher Training College in Winchester. This happened in 1988 and was also part of the then series of conventions based in college or university sites and were known as Unicons. These were bid on by different committees every year and if a profit was made some of the money was passed to the next Unicon to help them along. They tended to be smallish at about 200 attending members.

Wincon: Unicon 9 Happened in the August of 1988.

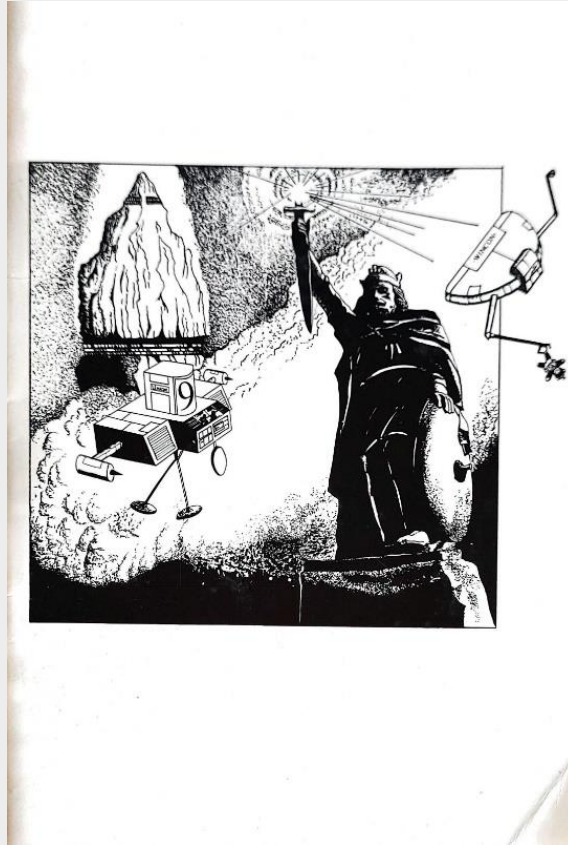
The guests were: Patrick Tilley, Michael De Larrabeiti and Geoff Ryman.

The Committee were:

John Bark, Mike Cheater, Joy Hibbert, Phil Plumbly, John Richards, Dave Rowley, and a three foot high black and white Teddy Bear called Guinness Thanks who we made the con chair on the grounds we couldn't trust each other to do that job. Guinness made the job canvassing for memberships at

conventions from Glasgow to Leeds quite interesting as we carted him all over the country by train. Guinness actually belonged to John's housemate Steve White. Steve wasn't daft enough to join the committee so was spared the embarrassment of having to take him by train everywhere.

The Wincon Programme Book cover



Wincon was also distinguished by GOH Patrick Tilley launching what was to become a Wincon tradition. He got very bad stage fright on the first night of the con, and decided to leg it back to Wales. In doing so he left a pair of shoelaces stuck to the board in his room with a note that read,

“Dear Committee, I have found that these shoelaces have opened a door into another dimension and I have climbed down them to explore it. I’m sorry to have gone but good luck with the convention.”

It wasn't a great beginning but fans being fans took the story to heart, and the committee were able to dine out on it for a number of years after.

Wincon II - 1991

Having done it once, some members of the committee decided to have another go. This time the convention was in the same location but not a unicon, and welcomed some new faces to the committee as others had moved on. This time it was in the summer of 1991.

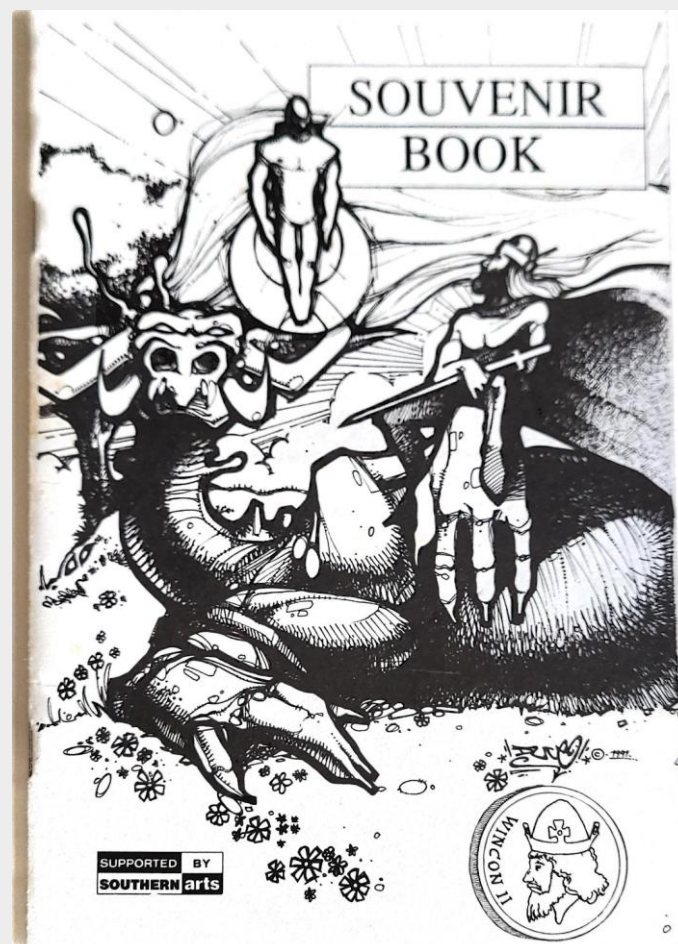
The GOH's were: Josef Nesvadba, Bruce Sterling, and Brian Stableford

The Committee were:

John Bark, Mike Cheater, Keith Cosslett, Andy Croft, Terry Hunt, Phil Plumbly, John Richards, Jeff Suter.

For some reason Wincon II was mostly blank for me, in part because I decided to keep the Bar Manager sweet on the opening night with a very late night drinking session which resulted in my being very unwell, violently so in fact. In cleaning up the mess, I had the embarrassment of running into Bruce Sterling whilst trying to do so. He was up late and taking a walk as he hadn't quite adjusted his body clock to UK time at that point. He was very mellow and cool about for which I was especially grateful at the time.

The Wincon II souvenir book



Wincon III - 1994

Wincon and Wincon II having been critically acclaimed by the fans attending persuaded us to try and deliver a third convention, again at King Alfred's College in Winchester in the summer of 1994. This time we lost GOH Algis Budrys because of Visa Issues meaning that he could get out of the USA but had no way to guarantee he would be let back in.

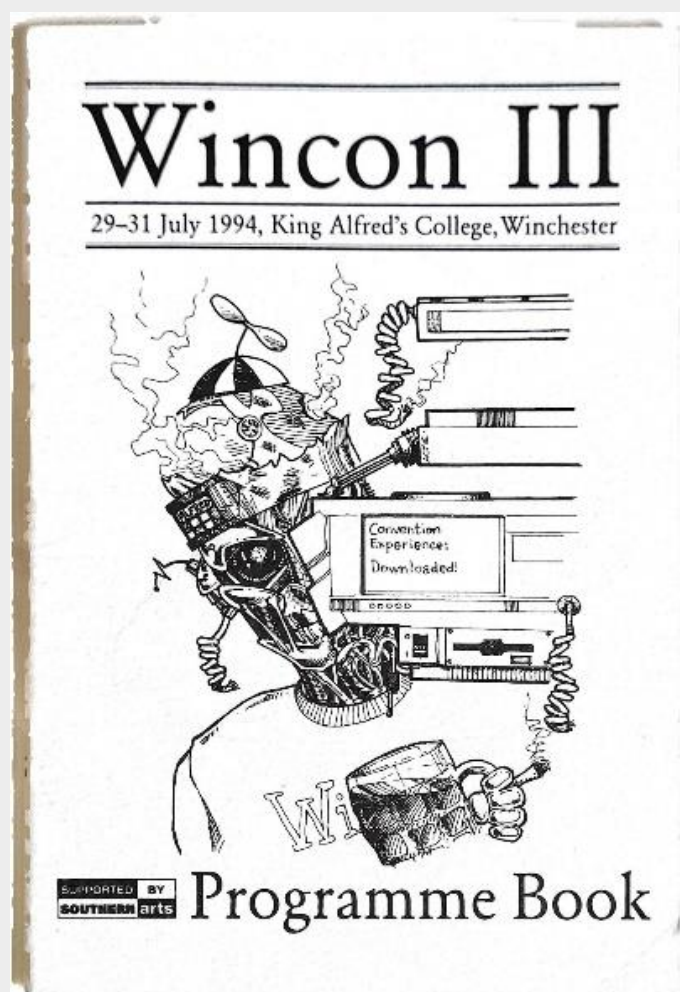
GOH's were: James P Hogan, Norman Spinrad, and Colin Greenland. Norman stepped in at short notice to cover the gap left by Algis Budrys so we're especially grateful to him.

The Committee were:

John Bark, Keith Cosslett, Andy Croft, Terry Hunt, Phil Plumbly, John Richards, Jeff Suter, Anne-Marie Wright, Pete Wright

One abiding memory I have is of Colin Greenland seemingly able to put away endless amounts of beer with no readily apparent affects, and being an all-round great guest at mixing with the fans. Jim Hogan also having a propensity to drink a tad too much and bursting into people's rooms at random only to realise it wasn't his room and having to leave at a rate of knots.

The Wincon III Souvenir book



Intervention – UK National Eastercon 1997

Intervention was and was not another of the Wincon series of conventions. John Richards was at a convention where fans were bemoaning their concerns that there was no Eastercon bid for 1987. So he volunteered to put on a bid. So it became thus that the by now permanently floating Wincon Committee found itself putting on the UK National convention in Liverpool at the Adelphi Hotel in Easter 1997.

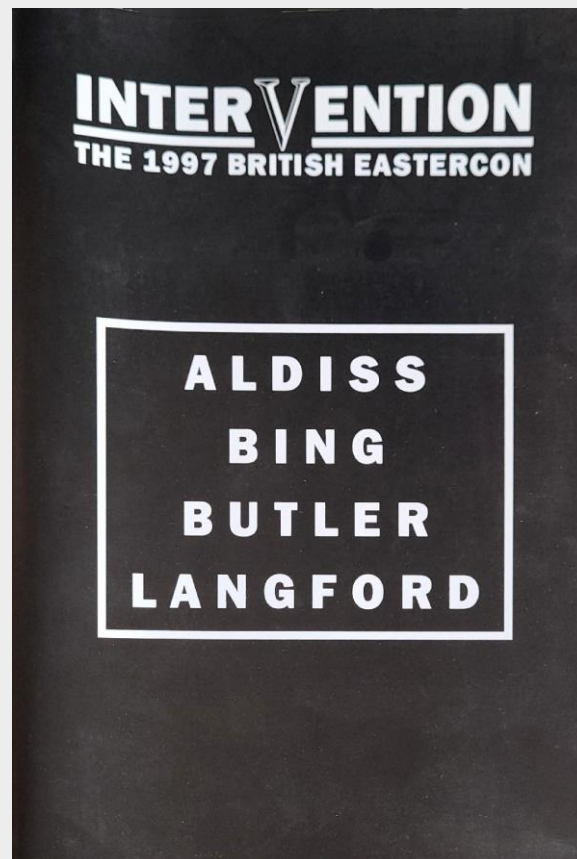
GOH's: Brian Aldiss, Jon Bing, Octavia Butler, Dave Langford

Committee:

Janet Barron, Keith Cosslett, Andy Croft, Steve Green, Geoff Hill, Heidi Lyshol, Pat McMurray, Val Phillips, Phil Plumbly, John Richards, Anne Marie Wright, Pete Wright

This convention being the UK National was big, it was in the Adelphi and suffered from the fact that the Adelphi was notorious for security issues. At one point it felt like certain elements of the local population were trying to play Assault on Precinct 13 with the con. We had people trying to get in with no membership, people breaking into guest bedrooms to nick stuff, people breaking into the dealer's room to try and nick stuff only to discover people had been put up in there overnight to watch for such an occurrence. One of our security teams even found someone had climbed up the outside of the hotel, crossed the roof and were on their way down to get into the con from the doors inside the atrium. The GOH's were great, most of the fans were great, but the attitude of the hotel to its security issues was not. For me it was both the high point of my con running career and the beginning of burn out from being on the same con committee since 1986.

The Intervention Programme Book



Wincon V - 1999

Many fans had assumed Intervention was Wincon the Eastercon even though the committee had not said that. To add fuel to the fire in 1999 Wincon V returned to its roots at King Alfred Teacher Training College in Winchester and was again a Unicon.

The GOH's were: Warren Ellis, Dianna Wynne Jones, Michael Sheard, and John Whibourn.

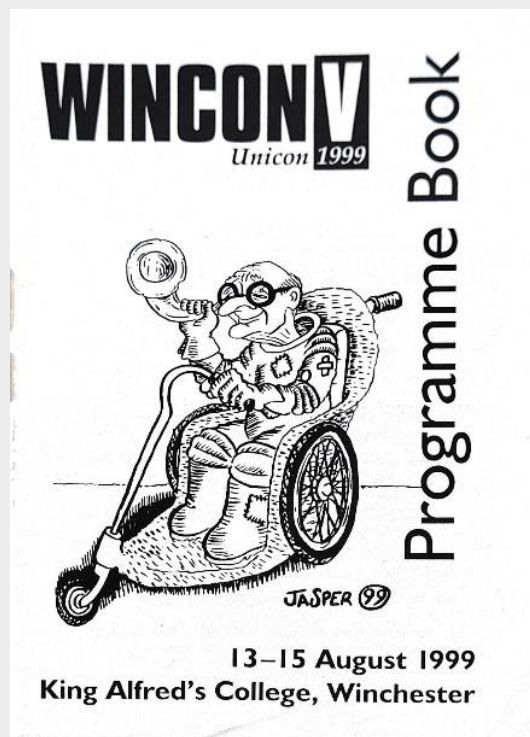
This time the con managed to loose John Barnes and Kara Dalkey as GOH's ahead of the con, for reasons that escape me now but seemed reasonable at the time.

The Committee:

John Bark, Keith Cosslett, Andy Croft, Steve Green, Pat McMurray, Val Phillips, Phil Plumbly, John Richards, Anne Marie Wright, Pete Wright

Wincon V for me seemed to go alright, the guests were great, and Michael Sheard in particular turned out to be a great raconteur at the committee meal and in his items. However for some of the committee it felt that this might be their last hurrah as many had been on the committee for over a decade now. Since then there have been no more cons. Some burned out completely and only now attend cons, some still volunteer to help out at cons but won't join committees and some Pat McMurray in particular have gone on to Chair Eastercons and some to work at high level on Worldcons. However, Wincon V was the last of the Wincons although another organisation in Winchester are running wincons there at I believe the same site even. It's not us anymore.

The Wincon V Programme Book

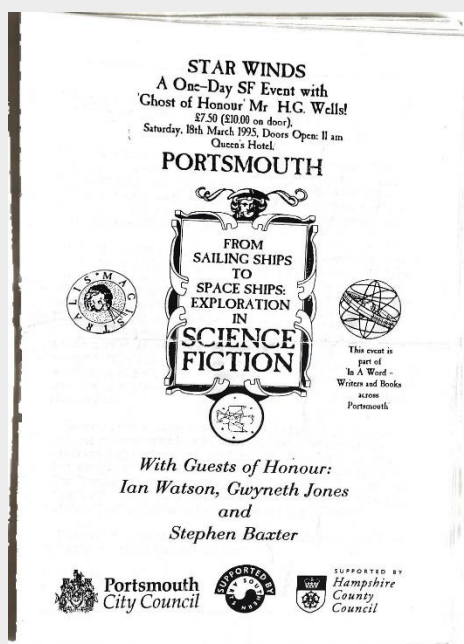


Starwinds

Not actually part of the Wincon Series, Starwinds was an SHSFG production and was a one day convention produced in conjunction with Portsmouth Councils Arts festival. This took place in Portsmouth in 1995 at the Queens Hotel in Southsea.

In true Wincon spirit however, Starwinds lost a GOH before the con, this time Harry Harrison had to fall out owing to personal reasons.

GOH's were: Ian Watson (as Mr H G Wells), Gwyneth Jones, and Stephen Baxter



The committee consisted of Mike Cheater, Keith Cosslett, Geoff Hill, Andy Croft, and Pete Wright.

I remember it as quite a fun day and Ian Watson did a great job of being ghost of honour, HG Wells, wandering the hotel in Edwardian costume.

What Happens These Days Now We've More Or Less Retired From Con Running?

These days the group is a little more reserved in activities. There is a D&D group which by its nature is limited in numbers. Pre Pandemic there was also a regular book club (also known as an excuse to overeat and drink too much beer....) limited to about 14 people in number purely because most people cannot accommodate more than that number in one room of their homes.

During the pandemic there is also a weekly virtual pub the Two Phil's Arms, so named by Ric Cooper as Phil Talbot and I got the meetings going on zoom in the early days of the first lockdown.

There would be in normal times, regular meetings in the Brewhouse and Kitchen and The Winchester In Portsmouth and the Queens Hotel in Gosport. At some point assuming the pubs survive the lockdown economic pressures we'll meet there again. It's also my ambition to try and keep the Two Phil's Arms running in some form or another as so many of the attendees at that are SHSFG members who have moved away and cannot attend the weekly in person meetings and it has been a joy reconnecting with so many of them again.

SHSFG Drinks

The drinks were invented over a short hazy period and originally appeared in *The Terminus Borealis Times*, issue No1, Dec 1996

Romulan Ale

Version 1: Take any pint of strong lager Lowenbrau, Stella Artois, and add a measure of Blue Curacao. Your beer will turn the purest green and you'll have a pint of head banger special. Guaranteed to frighten any Germans present as discovered by myself and some Polish fans at one of the Jersey Eastercons when we invented this version of the drink at a German room party. The Poles crashed it to get their own back for 1939....

Version 2: Take any pint of lightish real ale, a good golden ale or pale ale will do. Again add a shot of Blue Curacao. Three of four pints of these should get anyone doing "The Pompey Walk".

Jovian Sunspot (Inspired by a drink seen on Babylon 5)

Ingredients:

1 shot of Tequila, four shots of Orange Juice, 2 teaspoons of Grenadine

Method: Pour tequila and OJ into a glass and leave to settle for a couple of minutes. Once settled slowly, carefully and gently pour in the Grenadine so it settles in the bottom to provide the red spot. Drink with care and have fun.

The B Movie Brain

This recipe was invented by myself and Paddy McCaw back in 1988.

Ingredients: 1 small bottle of sparkling apple juice, A double measure of Jim Beam or Jack Daniels, 1 measure of Bailey's Irish Cream. Some Ice cubes

Method: Pour the apple juice into a tall glass, and add the double measure of bourbon and the ice. Let it settle then slowly and gently pour the Bailey's into the centre of the drink where it will form a white globule suspended in the middle of the drink. There you have a drink that looks like one of those naff disembodied brains in a tank beloved of so many black and white B movies. I tried this once many years ago in the bar of the Blue Anchor pub where I used to work one Sunday lunchtime. My boss told me never to do it again as it cleared the bar very quickly that day.

Disclaimer – try these drinks at your own risk as I'll accept no responsibility for any drunken behaviour arising from anyone drinking these drinks. Drinking these multiple times or with other alcohol will get **most** people drunk **very** quickly.

Venues

This naturally brings me onto the subject of Pubs where the SHSFG have met and they were:

The George and Dragon (nicknamed the Frog and Helicopter by John Richards)

The Portsbridge – where we could see Ric pulling into the carpark with enough time to all down our pints in time for his round.

Scotts Bar – Where we spent an evening with Neil Gaiman

The Hornpipe (Community centre Bar) - where we helped the landlord act as bouncers

The Dorchester – Where we got on well with Henty's and again acted as regulars and bouncers if needed

The Electric Arms – where we were able to fill the lounge bar on meeting nights and give Terry Pratchett beer and fish and chips

The Magpie – Another venue where we had the lounge bar to ourselves and had at least three one day events there if memory serves me correctly

The Ship & Castle – which did at a pinch

The George – which also did at a pinch

The Winchester – which is still used but only for 1 meeting a month

The Queens Hotel – which serves as our overseas branch being across the harbour in Gosport

The Brewhouse and Kitchen Portsmouth – where we meet two weeks of the month in Portsmouth

The Two Phil's Arms – where we meet weekly via cyberspace (how Sfnal!)

The People

On checking records (which are by no means complete by the way, I was surprised to see a huge number of people have come our way over the years. Some were passing lights which headed off into the darkness, some have left Portsmouth but are still very much part of what goes on and some came and stayed and are in fact still here. I've produced a list below but if you spot a name missing please let me know.

Joined in the 1980's

Alan Dorey	Mike Moir
Ric Cooper	Debbie Moir
Jeff Suter	Tony Williams
John Bark	Paul Winship
Mike Cheater	Theresa Winship
Phil Plumbly	Mandy Marriott
John Cornish	Peter Turk
Steve Coffin	Sally Tedder
Steve Robbins	Roger Fressanges
Andy Croft	Clive White
Richard Brown	Terry Hunt
Peter Cohen	Mark Ireland
John Richards	
David Collins	
Jackie Crooks	
Neville Crooks	
Bill Longley	
Steve White	
Dave Strong	

Joined in the 1990's

Malcolm Baldwin	Alan Slaughter
Paddy McCaw	Jasper Smithers
Jason Austin	Andrew Summersgill
Chuck Berry	Phil Talbot
Jocelyn Britcher	Daryl Thomas
Mike Allum	Nicky Turner
Andrea Clarke	Gerry Tyrell
Gary Scarlett	Nicki White
Valerie Eastwood	Cedric Whiting
Bill Furlong	Sandra Whitmore-Jones
Martin Lock	Nicky Wicks
Bruce McDonald	Anne Marie Wright
Liz McDonald	Pete Wright
Sue Croft	Orlanda Williams
Square Bear	Rob Meades
Dan Pead	Alice Kohle
Chris Scott	Danny Caitlin
Dave Angus	Pat McMurray
Donald Tait	

Joined in the 2000's

Geoff Thorpe	Whiskers The Cat
Diana Challice	
John Bray	
Ellen Andresen	
Ian Withall	
Espana Sheriff	
John Coxon	
Boudicca Wolf	
Fiona Anderson	

I'm sure I've missed some people out, so if you know who they are please let me know.

I'm sure there will be many more years of friendship and fun in the SHSFG and I'm looking forward to see what the future brings to the group.

Happy Celebrations to all.

Phil Plumbly

16 May 2021

