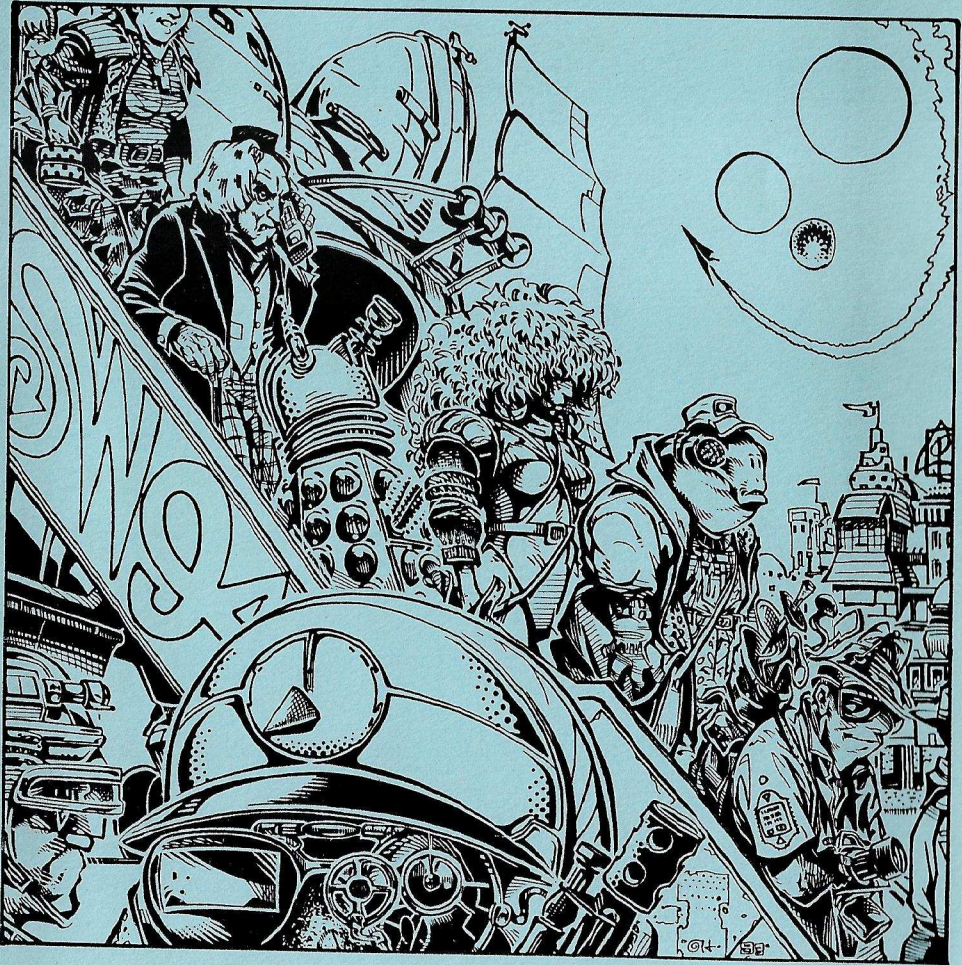


# Sou' Wester

**THE 45TH BRITISH EASTER CONVENTION**

*Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool 1st-4th April 1994*



# Sou'Wester

THE 45TH BRITISH EASTER CONVENTION

*Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool*

*1st-4th April 1994*

## Sou'Wester

is proud to announce our

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*Diane Duane*

*Neil Gaiman*

*Barbara Hambly*

*Peter Morwood*

**Thug the Mighty**

### *Guest Artist*

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*Graham Higgins*

and welcomes Richard Christian Matheson and the many other authors and artists at this convention and a special welcome to our visiting scientists.

Sou'Wester breaks with tradition by not having a personal greeting from the Chairman here. Instead, this simple message:

*"The committee and staff of Sou'Wester may have planned and run this convention, but the con belongs to its members. We hope you enjoy it."*

Our thanks to all — fans, pros, authors, artists, publishers, advertisers, rainhat makers, all those who are helping at Sou'Wester in ways however large or small, and to the management and staff of the Adelphi Hotel.

Tremendous thanks to all our contributors.

David V Barrett - *Editor*

Chris Bell - *Production Editor*

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# Contents

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<i>Interview with Starhawk of Wrynde</i>	Barbara Hambly	4
<i>Barbara Hambly</i>	Caroline Mullan	6
<i>Seven Films That Changed My Life</i>	Diane Duane	10
<b>Thog the Mighty</b>	Himself	11
<i>Diane Duane</i>	Sue Mason	12
<i>Rifling Historical Ideas</i>	Peter Morwood	14
<i>Graham Higgins</i>		15
<i>Peter Morwood</i>	Sue Mason	16
<i>Forward the Foundation!</i>	Andy Sawyer	18
<i>Richard Christian Matheson</i>		19
<i>Headlong into the Past</i>	Julian Headlong	24
<i>Alternative History</i>	Jim Burns	24
<i>An Honest Answer</i>	Neil Gaiman	27
<i>Neil Gaiman</i>	Chris Bell	31
<i>Anime: A Bluffer's Guide</i>	Harry Payne	34
<i>Xenophobia</i>	Chris Bell	39
<i>Who to Blame</i>		43
<i>British Easter Conventions</i>		47
<i>Mornington Crescent Tournament Rules</i>		48
<i>Preparing the Programme</i>	Rhodri James	49
<i>The Members</i>		51

# Artwork

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Graham Higgins	<b>Cover and all PR covers</b>		
Tom Abba	<b>All fliers, 7</b>		
<i>and</i>			
Fox	9	SMS	13
Ron Tiner	3, 17	David Hardy	21
Jim Burns	25	Bryan Talbot	27-30
Sue Mason	<b>Throughout</b>		
Chris Bell	<b>Sou'Wester compass rose</b>		
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# Starhawk of Wrynde speaks to J Rafferty Jones

Barbara Hamby

"Barbara Hamby?" said Starhawk, former mercenary and current heroine of Hamby's *Sun Wolf* and *Starhawk* series. "Sure I know Barbara Hamby. And if you talk to her, let her know that I was not real pleased about getting a brain concussion in chapter two and going through nearly the entire latest book of the series with a headache."

"I'm sure there were plot reasons for that," I said diplomatically (the former mercenary lieutenant was armed). "Would you mind talking a little bit about how it is to work for her?"

"Not in the least," said Starhawk. We retreated to the coffee and candy machines in the corner of the Characters' Locker Room, and sat rather uncomfortably on the plastic chairs nearby. The coffee was terrible. "I suppose I brought it on myself," she added, rubbing the back of her head. "I could have gone into Romances. They're less rough than action-adventure, but Holy Mother, have you ever tried to have a conversation with some of the men you meet there? And if I'd gone into straight historicals I suppose I'd have gotten killed. Say what you will about dealing with magic, at least it'll take care of injuries in record time and with no requirement for physical therapy afterwards."

I was fascinated, and forgot all about the author whose name had acted as the password to get into the Locker Room in the first place. "You mean you have a choice?"

"Well, more or less," said the Hawk. "At least coming out on the first book you do. I went into fantasy action-adventure because there was a good chance for it to turn into a series — another reason to avoid Romances, by the way, if you need any other reason besides those awful Obligatory Rape scenes. If your series is popular they don't dare kill you off. Their publishers won't let them. Not," she added bitterly, "that the pay's any better. Do you realise how small a percentage of the royalties on a book goes to the characters themselves?"

I shook my head. This was all new territory to me.

"It's pitiful. Even people like Sherlock Holmes and Conan don't get that much, though Holmes started investing in real estate right off the bat and after a hundred years the interest does build up. They're the lucky ones, because they're popular enough that when one author dies or quits, their series stays alive and sometimes they can renegotiate. And with a really strong series, secondaries like John Watson and Hikaru Sulu can sometimes get gigs on their own."

She sipped her coffee. "Of course, that's a tricky propo-

sition in itself, because the succeeding authors usually aren't as good as the original. I mean, you should see some of the crap Batman's had to put up with over the years. It's a little frustrating working for Hamby because she's got about five series going, which means my partner and I go a couple years between books, but I suspect that's better than an author who turns 'em out year after year and gets bored. A lot of the P.I.s have told me if they have to lose one more girlfriend to a serial killer, they'll send the author a letter-bomb."

"Can they do that?" I asked. Characters don't like to be reminded about virtual vs. actual reality, so I didn't quite know what her reaction would be.

"Sure they can." Starhawk grinned. "See that gal over there?" I looked. She was tall, graceful, Italian-looking with dark, curly hair and a strong face, in desultory conversation with a couple of Navajo tribal police. "After she got two boyfriends, a father, surrogate mother-figure, and a sister all killed off, she paid off the computer-gremlins to crash her author's hard disc. It didn't keep her author from doing terrible things to her, but at least it gave her a couple of weeks' break."

"Oh," I said. "Oh dear." I reconsidered my own adventure series about a stalwart Vietnam vet who opens a detective agency in Miami Beach when all his friends start getting killed.

"P.I.s have it rougher than we do anyway," she went on. "They *have* to get beat up once per novel — it's in the standard contract. Sometimes two or three times. And in a long-running series the author keeps trying to top himself and it can get pretty scary — just ask Alex Delaware or Dave Robichaux. At least in fantasy you have magic to bail you out. Though they get to drive cars and ride airplanes, which makes up for a lot. Believe me, covering four or five hundred miles of territory on horseback while the author goes on about the scenery and the history of the world for the past two thousand years is something you only want to do once. I don't see how Jean Auel's characters stand it."

"I see," I said. There certainly were a lot of big, tough-looking guys over in the Detective Section with band-aids and casts. Holmes wasn't in the locker-room — I'd been hoping to get a good look at him but, as Starhawk said, he works pretty regularly — but he had a big locker with his name on it, and I noticed the coffee machine also served several varieties of tea.

"Do you pick which author you work for?" I asked.

"Not exactly," said Starhawk, after a few moments'

thought. "I work for Hambly because we've got things in common, though not as many as some people think. For one thing, I happen to know she faints at the sight of blood, and talks baby-talk to her dogs. But she's had martial arts training, so she can, thank God, write a fight-scene without sounding ridiculous. And she's got a good grasp of background, so at least I get beat up in interesting places. That's a big complaint with the sword and sorcery crowd — all those damn roadside taverns are the same. And she does remember to write in lunch-breaks, which not all authors do. And she has a sense of humour."

"Is that important?"

"You try slogging through a trilogy of hundred-and-twenty-thousand-word novels in which no one cracks a joke or exhibits the smallest trace of irony."

"I have," I said. I used to do reviews for *LOCUS*.

"It's worse from the inside."

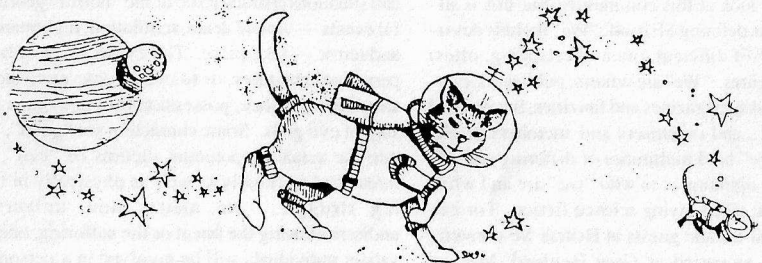
I believed her. "So on the whole, Hambly's a pretty good author to work for?"

"Pretty much. She's only destroyed a couple of civilisations that I know about — and one was in a *Star Trek*, so that doesn't really count — and she keeps both the sex and the violence within do-able bounds. I mean, no intercourse on galloping horses or anything. Of course, being the main hero's girlfriend is always a risk. You're just setting yourself up to get killed, kidnapped, or turned into a giant white slug like that English fellow did... But weirdly enough, I trust her. Most of her characters do, which is unusual in this business. Things may get a little rough at times, but she does try to have happy endings. Believe me, a happy ending is all any character really wants."

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒

Discs have a tendency to escape from envelopes. Full marks and very many thanks to the Bristol postman who found the disc containing the majority of this work lying loose at the bottom of his sack, and worked out to whom it should be delivered.

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# Science Fiction and Barbara Hambly

Caroline Mullan

Barbara Hambly was born in 1951; her first book was published in 1982. Since then she has published three trilogies and two parts of a fourth, all marketed as fantasy, plus two fantasy novels and one historical adventure. There are also two Star Trek tie-ins, and two novelisations from the Beauty and the Beast TV series. Is she a fantasy writer, or an SF writer?

The Clute/Nicholls *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (1993) spends three pages discussing definitions of SF before concluding that none is workable. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1992) is bolder: "Fanciful fiction based on postulated scientific discoveries or environmental changes, frequently dealing with space travel, life on other planets, etc." — not false, but not complete either. Damon Knight says: "Science fiction is what we point to when we say it." But who are "we"? "We" are the community that has an interest in and knowledge of SF. Each is defined in terms of the other. To avoid this recursion we must look at this community, but this is almost as difficult as defining SF itself. "We" include devotees of a number of different, often overlapping, often ill-defined sub-genres. "We" are writers, publishers, critics, editors of books, magazines and fanzines, buyers and readers of these... and organisers and members of SF conventions. "We" hold multitudes of differing and often incompatible opinions as to who "we" are and what we would point at when saying science fiction. For example: in the past decade guests at British SF conventions have been as varied as Greg Benford, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Alasdair Grey, Thomas Disch, Argela Carter, Robert Holdstock, Terry Pratchett and Doris Lessing. And now Barbara Hambly.

One of the most marked characteristics of the SF field in the Eighties and Nineties has been the extent to which, as sub-genres have proliferated, rules previously formulated for distinguishing between works of SF and related genres have broken down. Writers nowadays pick and mix among the familiar building blocks of all the sub-genres to suit their own purposes; confusion is compounded by publishers' (often apparently arbitrary) categorisation of the resulting books for commercial reasons.

One of the reasons why Hambly's work is of interest is that it can be used to examine distinctions between some of these sub-genres.

Hambly's work is primarily, and quite fairly, marketed as fantasy. She is also, however, a prime mixer of sub-genres, consistently leavening her "fantasy" with aspects commonly characteristic of both "horror" and "science fiction".

Hambly sets her plots against two kinds of landscape. She mainly uses pseudo-medieval settings, with castles and walled cities, peasant farms and trackless wastes, haunted ruins and labyrinths where evil dwells. These are furnished with suitable animals and artifacts: dragons, horses, swords, jewels and the like; and suitably populated by nobles, warriors, wizards, merchants, artisans and peasants. Knowledge and tools are magical rather than scientific or technological, as is appropriate for the territory. Alternatively, she describes worlds closer to ours — contemporary California, Nazi Germany and Victorian London — which are then rendered fantastic, normally by being used as the background against which to place characters who are either from another more fantastic place, or themselves of a fantastic nature.

This use of fantastic landscapes for her settings is one reason to identify Hambly as a fantasy writer. But within these fantasy settings, she often uses language, images and situations characteristic of the "horror" genre. Dreadful events — violent death, mutilation, nightmares of fear and terror — take place. The events are ascribed to supernatural creatures, or to evil people motivated to destruction by malice, possession by a demon, or the worship of evil gods. Some characters are "good", or at any rate the actual or potential victims of "evil", and are threatened spiritually as well as physically in the ensuing struggle. No matter how universal and indiscriminating the threat or the suffering, one or more valiant individuals will be involved in a personal struggle with the source of the evil.

Having set up the plot, Hambly will develop it subject to rules frequently associated with science fiction. The threat is objective and impels the characters to action. Action, including magical action, is subject to physical laws, more or less strictly observed, which are explained in pseudo-scientific terms. People and creatures of all kinds — good and evil alike — are normally subject to economic and ecological constraints and imperatives, which are sometimes explained. Finally, the plot is resolved by explanation as well as by action.

Changing just one word of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary's* definition, it provides a reasonable introduction to the four fantasy sequences that make up the bulk of Hambly's work to date, and also to its relationship to SF: "Fanciful fiction based on postulated magical discoveries or environmental changes, frequently dealing with space travel, life on other planets, etc." The substitution of "magical" for "scientific" is very nearly (and of course not coincidentally) exact: magic in these books is normally described as if it were a science. Magic is the subject of research and experiment by wizards living



WEEPING FROM THE SHADOWS WITH AN ANGEL AND AN ENGLISHMAN...



A NIGHT-IMAGINATION.  
BY TOM ABBA (W/ ANTHONY TO FROG ARTS)

Tom (14)

NESTRO

on worlds other than ours, and disruption of the magical environment the cause or consequence of change and adventure. There is often magical communication between the wizards involved and people from other worlds ("life on other planets, etc."). Sometimes the wizards travel, magically, through "the void" ("space travel") between universes, usually to our Earth, to escape or pursue their problems; sometimes the traffic is the other way.

This practice of magic achieves effects — travel, communication at a distance, deception of the enemy, death — which could equally well be explained using pseudo-scientific or technological rather than magical terms. Interestingly, Hambly's wizards often practice other sciences too, and use magic and technology to similar ends. Wielders of magic work beside wielders of technology, each with their own strengths and subject to their own limitations. Wizards can conjure balls of fire, until they exhaust themselves. Flame-throwers can be used by unskilled men, until they run out of fuel. Computers can be used to develop strategies and formulate spells, until their batteries run out.

Fantastic and science fictional elements converge even more when both magic and science are explicitly related to the same underlying reality. When spells cast by wizards register on a scientist's instruments, and fields generated by electricity disrupt the practice of magic, where does fantasy stop and magic science fiction begin?

When Hambly's recipes are examined in this way we see how these standard ingredients contribute to the whole. Fantasy is the staple: the needs and desires of the fantastic characters in their fantasy landscapes drive the plot and motivate the characters, while magic is primary in detecting the nature of the threat and providing the ultimate solution. SF bulks out the mix when required, but its elements are passive, used when to hand, subordinated to the needs and ends of the fantasy. And horror provides spice, used in small quantities to flavour the whole.

Hambly's landscapes are well drawn and vivid; the writing lively; the plots well-woven, often with an original (not to mention entertainingly feminist) twist or three. Her characters may be stereotyped as to occupation, but are nevertheless individual and fallible human beings who change and grow as the plots develop, and their adventures and relationships are depicted with sympathy and humour. Not all the villains are necessarily "evil", nor their opponents "good", and Hambly often deals with a degree of human complexity and moral ambiguity which is unusual, and welcome, in any genre. These ingredients vary in combination with variations of the basic recipe to give each book or sequence its different flavour, all to the taste of the SF fan.

Finally, the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction's* entry on the definition of science fiction refers the reader to the entry on sense of wonder. Reader, Barbara Hambly has one. Which seems as good a place to continue from as any.

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# Seven Films that Changed My Life

Diane Duane

Well, more or less. All the following have had a more or less profound effect on my written output, whether as prose or scripts for this and that. Some are older, some newer: the list is by no means meant to be exhaustive. What this particular selection says about the internal structure of my brains, my morality, or my karma, I leave as an exercise for the student. Mostly I'm not going to give you any hints. And for God's sake, if you figure out something profound, don't tell me what it is.

I list the films alphabetically, since there's no way I could rate them in terms of preference: but I would consider myself poorer for not having seen any of them.

## *The Apple War*

Has anyone here ever seen this film? It used to turn up at Lunacons in the mid-70's, and at Boskones too, I think. It was an import, from either Sweden or Denmark, I believe: subtitled in English. It involves a very strange family who live in a rural area of the country in question, and who are determined to stop a plan by a German developer to erect, in their neighborhood, a theme park called Deutschneyland. The process of stopping this is begun by the protagonist, an interesting young woman, throwing her shoe out a window of her house — and event follows event inexorably, and hilariously. I hope this film exists on video somewhere: I want to see it again. Some of the young woman's relatives are very strange... But this is one of the most matter-of-fact fantasy films I've ever seen: even the term "magic realism" seems too high-flown for it.

## *A Christmas Story*

This is so perfect an evocation of an American Christmas of the late 40's that I can't understand why it didn't do well in the US at first: though it seems to have made its name now on video, and has shown over here a couple of times now (most recently over the Christmas movie binge on ITV: Christmas morning, in fact). This film is for everyone who ever desperately wanted a specific Christmas present, and didn't get it — or did. The author of the story on which it's based (also the narrator of the film) remembers his childhood with excruciating clarity, and (thank God) finds it funny. Particularly recommended: the scenes involving the "Chinese turkey", "soap poisoning", and the flat tire sequence, in which the young protagonist emits "the Queen Mother of all swear words"; and for its absolute gross-out quality, the scene featuring the younger brother in which the protagonist's mother coos, "Show me how the little piggies eat?..."

## *First Spaceship to Venus*

The ultimate proof to me that a good viewer, or reader, can save the most wretchedly executed story and turn it

into something magical. I was taken to see this movie at the drive-in when I was eight or nine. It was a charming and cheap multinational production — Indian-Soviet-Italian-God-knew-who-all-else — about a Hugo-looking spaceship which, guess what, goes to Venus. I fell asleep a couple of times during the movie — whether because of the glacial progress of the plot, or the lateness of the hour, it's hard to say any more: but I woke up toward the end to find one of the intrepid astronauts having an earnest conversation with the aliens who had sent the message which caused the ship to come — a multitude of tiny spiderlike beings, boinging around him. I was entranced. This was GREAT stuff. I went home in a daze of delight.

Years later, the very early 80's it would have been, when VCR's were still something unusual, I was working for David Gerrold, and he had one. Late, late one night, this movie made a reappearance. I asked David to tape it for me: he did. All excited I stopped by the next morning to look at the tape.

And the movie was *terrible*. Slow, badly acted, terribly directed... and the spiders, the wonderful spiders, had turned into pingpong balls with pipe-cleaners stuck in them. You could see the wires that made the spiders bob up and down. The eight-year-old in me insisted that someone had gotten at that film somehow. The adult sighed and thought, "You can't go back..." But the memory of the first viewing remains, and tells me that in the enthusiasm of our readers is our best hope: even when we fail, they will sometimes make us succeed... in memory, at least.

## *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*

I love Zero Mostel. I love Buster Keaton. I have a fondness for early Sondheim. I like Phil Silvers a lot. Costume drama of any kind appeals to me: costume comedy is even better. And five-door farces are better still. So this movie wins on all counts, besides being a Richard Lester film: I like the "busyness" of his style, the odd and lived-in faces he insists on casting, the fact that in any scene there is always something fascinating going on in the background — people eating, drinking, gambling, rolling their eyes in boredom, living their lives. Rather the way it happens now.

## *Ghidrah the Three-Headed Monster*

Is that how you spell it? Japanese orthographies are as bad as Irish ones.

I had the bejeezus scared out of me at an early age by Godzilla — the first movie, the "original" version with the interpolated scenes featuring Raymond Burr. Even-

ually I got over it and went straight in the other direction, to a mad love of all slightly crazed monster movies: doubtless this was fostered by the habit of the RKO affiliate in New York, WOR, of showing the same movie three or four times in a day, one after another — they called this “Million Dollar Movie”: I now suspect it was the affiliate’s way of getting the maximum number of showings for a one-day rental. At the time, though, it simply looked to me like a good way of seeing Mighty Joe Young have the piano played at him several times on an otherwise useless rainy Sunday, or to watch the Crawling Eye tentacle around through the Alps again and again and crash through the blockhouse wall to try repeatedly to eat the helpless baby.

WOR seemed to have a particular fondness for the seedy monsters, and they showed the Japanese material with delightful regularity. One of these, though, was so bizarre that I remember sitting through it in stark twelve-year-old disbelief, utterly astounded by the wildly disconnected stuff which seemed to have been thrown into this film by the shovelful. Distressed and amnesic alien princesses lurching around the landscape and uttering glassy-eyed monotone prophecies of imminent doom, wet-behind-the-ears Japanese reporters and their girlfriends running in all directions trying to advance the plot, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, ineffective dingbat military types, and then the giant meteoric monster “egg” which emits the monster of the title — a sort of three-headed dragon which spits lightning bolts and other forms of cosmic halitosis at all and sundry — I sat there and laughed until I cried. What made it all even better was the loopy idea of getting the Earth’s then resident monsters — Godzilla, Rodan and Mothra (in her aspect of twin baby giant-moth caterpillars) — to beat up on Ghidrah. Not to mention the presence of the two “little fairies” — I suspect the original meant something more like “nature spirits”, but whatever: the foot-high women who travel in a wooden box with a handle and serve as translators for the monsters in general and Mothra in particular — and their attempt, urged by the Japanese reporters and so forth, to convince the native monsters that they should team up and save the Earth. Godzilla’s retort is short and sweet — something along the lines that, since Earth people had been trying to electrocute and bomb and nuke the monsters for all this while, now that they were in trouble, they were welcome to stuff it; and the fairies, in shocked chorus, exclaim, “Godzilla! What language!” — No, no, it’s too good. Someone show me the movie again!!

You could, if you liked, possibly make a case that my fondness for treating the alien’s viewpoint kindly in my work can be traced directly back to this film. There might be something in the idea.

### *Kelly’s Heroes*

I am no fan of war movies, to Peter’s mild disappointment: don’t care about tanks, guns, flashy uniforms, and all the allied male-hormonal stuff that goes with the delight of blowing up things, and incidentally, people. But greed, *that* I understand, and the conceit that greed is so powerful it can even stop people fighting is one I find delightful — and likely. The idiotic anachronism of Donald Sutherland’s performance as the “hippie” tank commander, the chronic bellyaching of Don Rickles, the equally chronic annoyance of Telly Savalas, and the GI-With-No-Name cool of Eastwood, inevitably leave me grinning all through: and the final High-Noon stalk on the German tank, with the abruptly applied Morricone soundtrack... I really like that.

### *The Lion in Winter*

Odd how sometimes nothing but one specific scene will stay with you after many years. The film as I remember it is static, simply the stage play with the cameras locked down, no movement, or little — but the darkness and claustrophobia and cold of some of those scenes in the castle remain with me, at least in memory. And one fragment of one scene in particular: a young man’s hand held out, another young man taking it. There were Herewiss and Freclorn, though for many years I didn’t recognize it. One shot lies fallow in the mind for ten years or so... then out come three or four novels.

It just goes to show you: movies are dangerous.

### *Vive la vie dangereuse!*



### *Thog the Mighty*

Like our other guests, Thog was born middle-aged; unique among them, he is copyright. Well known for his strong views on modern literature, especially Experiential Postmodernism (“**Thog never need second match**”), he has seen fragments of his biography appear in *The Book of the Magnakai*, *The World* and others. 1993 saw distillations of his wisdom rescuing *Heliograph* and *Cactus Times*; Sou’ Wester, knowing a True Avatar of the Fan Ethos (and free GoH) when it sees one, is proud to have enlisted its services for *Adelphi Coracle*. When not pounding the newsroom keyboards he will be found genially ripping up the bar, not so much watching other con-members getting smashed as actively doing the...

**Thog The Mighty** is most grateful for the use of a Copyprinter provided courtesy of Gestetner Ltd, Lincoln House, 100 Broadway, Salford, Manchester M5 2UW. Contact Peter Maddocks on 061-872 8511.

# Diane Duane - In the Spaghetti

Sue Mason

Okay, I admit it, I don't even have the vaguest idea why I bought a copy of *Door into Fire* by Diane Duane from Grass Roots Underground Bookshop on a rainy Manchester day in 1982. I was most probably sheltering from the rain and needed something to read on the bus home. Grass Roots was literally, as well as politically, underground, and it does occasionally rain in Manchester. It took me ages to figure out why I always came home from there with an SF or fantasy book by a female author. Of course, the male and female SF sections were kept strictly apart hmm... I wonder where they put James Tiptree Jr? Why did I buy that particular book? It most certainly wasn't because of its cover, a truly dire picture of a muscle-bound hero holding aloft a steaming sword, while a nubile young lady draped herself about him, all painted in lurid shades of green and yellow. My apologies to the uncredited artist if he is reading this. I can think of a couple of books that it would have been suitable for. *The Door into Fire* just wasn't one of them. After all, the hero's lover, in the book, is another man. Sorry, no bimbos. So it wasn't the cover, it wasn't the author — this was Diane's first published work. Hmm... Maybe Diane chose the cover herself and had painted in it the subliminal message "Buy This Book". Or perhaps she arranged it to cast a gas on all who saw it? (Look, I wouldn't put it past Diane, if she could swing it.)

I bought her book, and read and enjoyed it. I also read its introduction by David Gerrold. It was far more an introduction to Diane than to her book, and it mentioned all sorts of interesting things about her. Little things, such as her being an unlicensed helicopter pilot and an ex-psychiatric nurse — and it also said that if one were ever to meet Diane one should ask her about the falcon in the spaghetti.

So... Eastercon the following year was Albacon in Glasgow (I think it was the one where the guest of considerable prestige and somewhat lacking in stature, and manners, failed to show). In the midst of the traditional and spectacular Albacon Custard Pie Fight I found myself standing next to a lady wearing a badge naming her as Diane Duane. Aha, thinks I, the Falcon in the Spaghetti incident. So obviously I asked her the pressing question. Just at this point, fate chose to intervene. A fluorescent pink custard pie came zooming in on a trajectory guaranteed to make a right mess of Diane's cream linen suit. I threw myself womanfully in its path and, this being the way of things, we retired to the relative safety of the bar to talk.

Conversations with Diane are fun. She doesn't have that arrogant attitude which one or two authors cultivate, the opinion that no fan is worth bothering with, they are not

a member of the honoured profession to which the pro belongs, they merely buy the books. Some of them give the impression that if Christian Barnard or Mother Theresa were to ask them anything, they would dismiss them as "just another fan", never mind what achievements they had outside the hallowed halls of the convention hotel. But Diane is not like that. She can talk about anything: computers, quantum mechanics, gardening, space flight, where to purchase the finest sausage in Ireland... Great fun. She also has a rather dry, sharp wit. I would sooner fight ten rounds against Frank Bruno than get on the sharp side of that tongue. She has written a bewildering variety of material: comics, original novels, *Star Trek* novels, TV scripts, children's novels and even (don't tell her I told you), *My Little Pony*. She makes a great guest for a convention. You can put Diane on almost any panel and be assured that she will come up with a worthwhile contribution.

Diane's books range from heroic fantasy to hard SF, sometimes written with her husband and fellow guest at this convention, Peter Morwood. Her *Door into...* series present action which is, for the characters and their world, clearly legends in the making, while keeping a compassionate and tight focus on the protagonists and their very human hopes, fears and loves. Her children's books are vibrant and alive and *fun*. In Britain they suffer the age-old distribution problems of contemporary children's SF. I found ten copies of *Deep Magic* in the staff room of an SF bookshop. They were due to be returned to the publisher without ever having been out on the shelves. They had been "ordered by mistake" as the bookshop "did not sell children's books." >sigh< I bought all ten copies and it took a total of two fannish phonecalls to sell them all.

I must confess that I have not read any of Diane's *Star Trek* novels. I'm afraid I don't much care for *Star Trek* (a hangable offence in some circles. I can never remember the difference between Vulcans and Romulans, and I thought that Q was the name of the weapons officer in Fleming's Bond novels.) But Diane can talk *Trek* to fans or pros with the best of them, and I know that at least one of her *Star Trek* novels entered the *New York Times* bestsellers list, so she must be doing something right.

Her work is well crafted and distinctive. Diane herself is witty and intelligent and fun, and I'm sure you will see her around Sou'Wester, socialising as well as keeping the committee happy by working. But a final word of warning: If you should see her eating pasta in the restaurant, I wouldn't disturb her. I don't think that Liverpool has any falcons (just Liverbirds, I believe), but where Diane is concerned I wouldn't put money on it...



# Rifling Historical Ideas

Peter Morwood

One of the commonest questions any writer probably hears is: "Where do you get your ideas?"

It's not a question with a simple answer, especially with SF and Fantasy. The ideas come from so many sources: talking to other writers, agents, editors. Conversations with fans and friends in the con bar. Reports in newspapers and television, skewed sideways by wild imaginings — even though there's sometimes disbelief that modern events can have any effect on the writing of "period" fantasy. Believe me, they can.

And books, always books, most of them non-fiction or at least way outside the field of my own writing. People always seem surprised to learn how little SF&F I actually read, especially those who've seen the bookshelves at home. But closer inspection reveals that hardly any of my books (except for the works of a certain T Pratchett) have a more recent publication date than 1987, and most of the others came from the USA with Diane.

Of course, there are the hardy perennials: the original RE Howard Conan stories; Ursula Le Guin's Earthsea books; Clark Ashton Smith and JRR Tolkien. Alan Garner's early work, especially *Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, with its chapter of just about the worst claustrophobia I've ever read. (It's far too good for children...!) But the rest come and go; I need the shelf space for research books.

And in those research books, you can find material that's just crying out to be included in a novel:

A step-by-step description of how to go about roasting a whole ox, from making the fire to carving the meat. (From a book on Hungarian cooking.)

That the medieval Russians equated hospitality with getting drunk so much that they broke the bases off their stemmed wine and vodka cups, and later made them without bases at all. When your cup was full you couldn't put it down, when it was empty it was automatically refilled, and since they drank everything except tea *na zalpom*, all down at a single gulp... Well. Yes. (From a Russian cookbook which also features a seven-century-old recipe for the wickedest dessert in the world.)

The great vice of the Mongol Khans saved Western Europe from invasion. (They drank too much strong liquor — to prove they could afford it — and the KhaKhan Ogotai died of it just in time for the army poised outside Vienna to be recalled to elect his successor. They never came back.)

What could and couldn't be done by a man wearing full armour? (He could vault — in full harness of mail-and-

plate — into his horse's saddle without touching the stirrups.) King Edward III could do it. In fact, it gets mentioned so often that I suspect he was rather proud of the achievement. No cranes. No derricks. But all those little interlocked metal rings could sag and collapse together unexpectedly if you leaned too far off the vertical. That would shift your centre of gravity with unsettling ease, often so suddenly that falling down was inevitable. I don't think I've ever seen that happen to a fantasy hero... Yet.

So much for non-fiction. But there was once a novel called *The Pyrates* by George Macdonald Fraser (of Flashman fame). If only his editor had made him remove such anachronistic references as Errol Flynn, Warner Brothers pirate movies and Airfix glue, never mind Gucci boots and Cartier rapier-hilts and (of all things) Helena Rubenstein face-cream...! (I kid you not!)

Yet the book had its good points, including the loveliest evocation of scene and period ever to open a novel. And then there are the historical characters, well-known people like Samuel Pepys and Charles II, and others less familiar. One in particular sent me looking for the truth behind the fiction, and I found a ready-made hero just waiting to be re-employed.

His name was Blood, Thomas Blood. (Try saying it in a Sean Connery accent for best effect.) He was variously known as — depending on whom he was trying to impress or run away from — Colonel (or Captain, or Doctor of Medicine, or even the Right Reverend Doctor of Divinity) Blood. He was the man who stole the Crown Jewels — and was then let off with a free pardon, the restoration of his lands and a pension of £500 a year. Now what, pray, was going on there...?

I have my own theory, and it's going to be called *Blood's Ruby*.

Imagine England during the time of the Merry Monarch, Old Rowley, otherwise His Majesty King Charles II, the swarthy man two yards high. A time when the King's horse at Newmarket was ridden by the owner. When Captain Henry Morgan, ex-pirate, could also be Sir Henry Morgan, Admiral of Privateers and Deputy Governor of Jamaica. When Lancelot Blackburne started out as a buccaneer and ended up as His Grace the Archbishop of York. When the notorious French highwayman Claude du Vall danced a coranto on Hampstead Heath with the lady in the coach he had just held up and then let her go unharmed because she was too pretty to rob...

It was an historical period with such inspirational music as the popular hits; "Nonesuch"; "A la Mode de France";



"Drops of Brandy"; "Rufty-Tufty," "Hunt the Squirrel"; "The Clean Contrary Way"; "Cuckolds all in a Row" and "Fox on You for a Fop" (as filkers should know, all names of tunes are quite true).

There were people such as Sir Isaac Newton and indeed the entire Royal Society, dabbling in science and sorcery with equal enthusiasm; Eccentric Religious Personages; Filibusters, Pirates, Buccaneers (not the same thing) who went sailing against all flags On The Account; Smugglers, Highwaymen, Tobymen and Gallant Gentlemen of the Road; Dutchmen and their wizards, Frenchmen likewise, Spaniards also; Cannoneers, Pistolcers, Rufflers, Swordsmen, Duellists & other such Naughty and Romantick folk, etc., etc.

It was a strange time, balanced halfway between superstition and science. For example, it was a time when Newton proposed his Physical Laws of Motion, which hold true today.

But it was also a time when King Charles (patron of the Royal Society) purchased from its inventor, Dr. Goddard, Professor of Physics at Gresham College, a formula for a guaranteed cure-all based on the usnea moss which grew only on skull-bones. Charles promptly changed its name from "Goddard's Drops" to "King Charles's Drops" and almost certainly jacked up the price, since he paid £1500 for it. (Equivalent 1994 value, £400,000 or \$750,000!)

There was also the contrast between the increased use of rifled firearms and the nervous wondering about just why something so simple as spiral grooves in a gun-barrel produced such unnatural accuracy. Maybe the Devil had something to do with it... To find out, an experiment was carried out by the *Hexenbischof* of Mainz. (The "Witch-Bishop" is a nice title for a man who wasn't actually a witch, or even much of a bishop. He functioned more as a sort of pest-control officer...)

His conflicting theories were as follows:

(a) The Heavenly spheres rotated, therefore a rotating rifle-bullet would fly straight(er) because no imp of Satan could cling to it and spoil the aim (at least according to Hermann Moritz, the Bavarian necromancer). However, and conversely...

(b) Since use of such weapons made breaking the 6th Commandment much easier (Thou shalt do no murder, for those who skived off Sunday School), then obviously things on earth that rotated in blasphemous imitation of Heavenly ones, such as rifle bullets, were positively infested with imps all trying to increase the numbers of souls sent down to Hell.

So the *Hexenbischof* had two members of the Sharpshooters' Guild take two rifled muskets and supplied one with

ordinary lead bullets. The other had silver slugs, cast under exorcism and deeply engraved with an elaborate crucifix, loaded to the accompaniment of benedictions and a sprinkling of Holy Water. After twenty shots in which the lead was right on target and the silver (when the sodden powder even went off) was all over the place, rifled weapons were declared anathema by the *Hexenbischof*, burnt by dozens, and anyone making them thereafter was promised the same fate.

(The reality is duller: the lead bullets were soft and bit into the rifling grooves as they were supposed to. The harder silver did not, thus (a) letting the force of the exploding powder leak past and (b) not acquiring a proper spin. They also suffered from the turbulence and imbalance of having a large cross cut into one side of a sphere. And being doused in water, Holy or not, is not good for any black-powder weapon.)

I mention only in passing the equally real and historical Duke Albrecht the Magnanimous of Bavaria, a man so fond of shooting that all the privies in his palace were at one end of long corridors, with targets at the other end, alongside each loo, several racks of loaded wheel-lock pistols. Think about it. As effective as air freshener, more entertaining than old *Reader's Digests*, and a guarantee of privacy. Nobody in their right mind would dare come banging on that door...

So where do I get my ideas? *Where do I not...?*



## Graham Higgins

Graham Higgins is a veteran *Punch* illustrator (the use of the word "veteran" giving an exaggerated idea of his age); he has also worked for *Q* magazine and for *Knockabout*. His "good pulp credentials" include *Animal Man* and *Doom Patrol* for DC Comics, as well as *Zippy Couriers* in *2000 AD*. He produced the graphic novel *Mort* — *The Big Comic*, and seems to be designing the T-Shirt too; and he is now working on other Big projects, factoid books for the DC imprint, *Piranha: The Big Book of Weirdos*, *The Big Book of Urban Myth*, *The Big Book of Conspiracies* and *Masking the Face of Mars*, "about the NASA cover-up of the Martian face".

As if art weren't enough, he moved from an illustration in *Tales from the Forbidden Planet* to short stories in *Temps*, *Villains* and *The Weerde 2*, the anthologies from *Midnight Rose*. Multi-talented wretch...

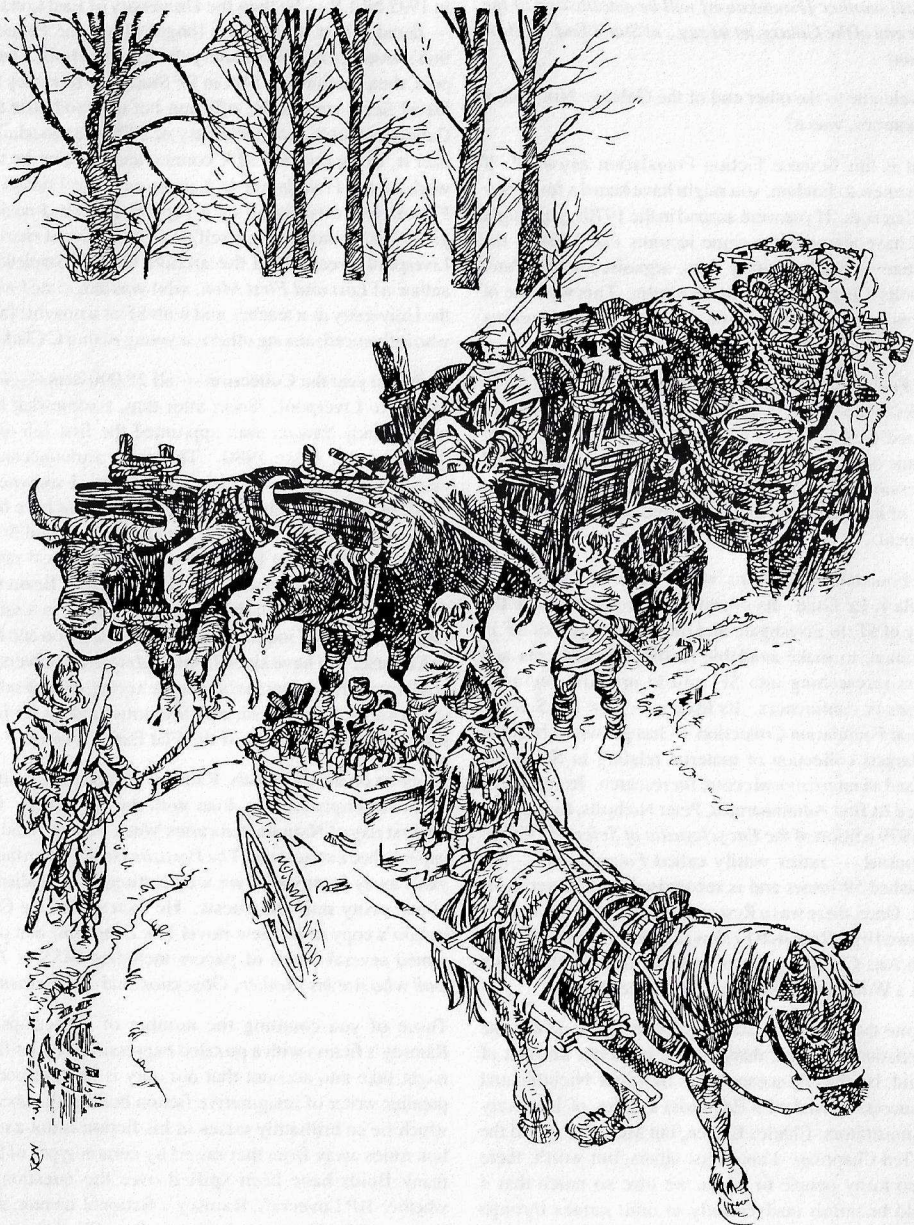
He says of himself: "I am an inveterate anorak concerning drawing," which we interpret to mean: Buy him a drink and he'll talk for hours about drawing. Conversely, buy him a drawing (or buy one of his) and he'll talk about drink.

# 10 Things You Need to Know about Peter Morwood

Sue Mason

1. He makes strange noises. No, I really mean it. Really peculiar noises. He is a one-man sound studio. You want the sound of a jet aircraft at Mach 3, just tell Peter the type of aircraft. A machine gun, no problem. A telephone? Peter is your man. And he does *Star Trek* sound effects frighteningly well (sign of a mis-spent youth). Once, while he and Diane were guests at a large American Trek con, Peter needed to get Diane's attention. He was on the 10th floor, Diane was on the ground. He leant over the balcony, out over the hotel atrium, and made the sound of the *Enterprise* hailing signal. Diane said that several fans had a near-religious experience and expected to be beamed up at any second.
  2. He speaks Klingon. Strange but true. I once telephoned to ask how to write "Oh I do love to be beside the seaside" in Klingon. Peter phoned back in under fifteen minutes. Who is the weirder? Me for needing to know or Peter for knowing?
  3. Peter Morwood once fought an imaginary duel with fellow author Chris Claremont, involving imaginary swords, pistols, cutlass, rayguns and light sabres, in the lounge of the Adelphi at Eastcon. The fight was eventually halted by a member of convention security who came running up at full tilt to remind them of the convention's weapons policy — only to then realise that neither of them was armed with anything more lethal than a good imagination. By the way, Chris won; Peter died gracefully... but loudly.
  4. He considers chilli peppers to be a staple of the human diet. You need to stand over him while he cooks to remind him that he has already put in the dish two whole chillis and that, no, he can't add some tabasco sauce. Or chilli powder. Or his favorite Caribbean hot sauce... even if it is specially imported.
  5. Peter's first convention was very nearly his last. He came with Anne McCaffrey to Mythcon in Hull. He was sitting on a third-floor window sill at a late night party, with a bottle of Bushmills clasped between his knees, laughing and talking most enthusiastically. The only problem was that the window behind him was wide open. I sat on his feet while Gytha North kept him talking and someone reached behind to shut the window. A close shave.
  6. He loves guns, swords, tanks, bombs, katana, guns, more guns. In fact, any weapon of mass destruction or personal mayhem. Considering that he is such an amiable person, it's quite frightening. His editor was worried as he had read up to page 124 of *Prince Ivan* and there had not been a single fatality. On the next
- page 30,000 foot soldiers bit the dust. So that was all right then.
7. Peter likes the occasional drink.
  8. After watching the late night, unexpurgated version of *Urōtsokidoji* (Legend of the Overfiend), a particularly violent and weird piece of Japanese anime set partially on a school campus, Peter turned around and stated, "I went to a school like that." I hope not.
  9. Peter Morwood is married to Diane Duane. This happy state of affairs has led them to writing together, though when they find the time to write together is a bit of a mystery. Peter's body clock generally kicks in at about 11 am and he is usually *compos mentis* by about 2 pm. Diane tends to get up bright and early and starts working at about 9 am. She falls over at about midnight, while Peter is just getting into full swing by 2 am. I believe that Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman had the same sort of problem while writing *Good Omens* together. But then they were not married. (At least, not to each other.)
  - 10 He writes books. He writes books with great verve and enthusiasm. He researches them most thoroughly. That's why he learnt Klingon. And Russian. And how to use a machine gun. And a sword. He has a sound enough grounding in military theory to make the hardest SF story ring true. Or to start a small war. He knows enough about Japanese laquered armour to invent, and accurately draw, armour for his Alban fantasies which really would keep his characters all in one piece. He has the patience to plough through countless obscure books on Russian myths, looking for the odd piece of information which will make the Russia of Prince Ivan come to rich and bloody life. Most of all, there is that boundless enthusiasm crammed into every line of everything Peter Morwood writes.
- Oh yes, and a wicked sense of humour. But I think you had already guessed that.





200

# Forward the Foundation! – The Story So Far ...

Andy Sawyer

"...And another [Foundation] will be established at the other end of the Galaxy, let us say... at Star's End." (Hari Seldon)

So welcome to the other end of the Galaxy. Not such a bad journey, was it?

What is this Science Fiction Foundation anyway? If you're new to fandom, you might have heard a few cryptic references. If you were around in the 1970s, you might even have attended the same lectures that I did at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, organised when Peter Nicholls was at the Foundation's helm. This was one of my own routes into fandom. Fortune's wheel turning full circle? Maybe so.

The Foundation itself came fully into being in 1971 thanks to the persuasive efforts of George Hay, who interested the North East London Polytechnic in an embryonic organisation of writers, academics and other SF professionals established to promote SF and provide a flow of information to the media and educational establishment.

The Foundation's patrons were Arthur C Clarke and Ursula K Le Guin. Its objectives were to promote the study of SF, to investigate and promote the use of SF in education, to make available facilities to students and others researching into SF, and to organise lectures, courses or conferences. Its library — now the Science Fiction Foundation Collection — has grown to become the largest collection of material relating to SF in the EC, and an international centre for research. Its resources helped its first Administrator, Peter Nicholls, to produce the 1979 edition of the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. Its journal — rather wittily called *Foundation* — has published 59 issues and is recognised as a leader in its field. Once, there was a Research Assistant (Colin Lester) followed by a Research Fellow (David Pringle). Thanks to an Arts Council grant (remember those?) there was even a Writer in Residence (Colin Greenland).

Despite the decline in staffing levels in the 1980s the Foundation survived, thanks to an immense amount of unpaid, behind-the-scenes work by (after Nicholls and his successor, Malcolm Edwards) a series of Honorary Administrators: Charles Barren, Ian McPherson and the late Ted Chapman. I could list others, but won't; there are so many people to whom we owe so much that it would be unfair inadvertently to omit names through error. Let me cite only one more: Joyce Day, who as part-time Secretary during some of the Foundation's most difficult years kept the whole show on the road. The British SF world owes Joyce more than it knows.

In 1992 NELP — by then the University of East London — decided that it could no longer afford the Foundation's overheads. Fortunately the University of Liverpool, then planning an MA in SF Studies to be run by Dr David Seed, stepped in, offering not only to house the Collection but to fund the salary of a librarian to administer it, to support the MA course, and to carry on the work of the Foundation in liaison with the Friends of Foundation, established as a support and fund-raising group but reconstituting itself as an educational charity. Liverpool already held the archive of Olaf Stapledon, author of *Last and First Men*, who was associated with the University as a teacher and with SF as a novelist (and who influenced, among others, a young Arthur C Clarke).

Early last year the Collection — all 25,000 items — was moved to Liverpool. Soon after that, a somewhat bemused Andy Sawyer was appointed the first full-time Administrator since 1980. The press announcement caused a mini-burst of media excitement. I suppose if I'd slept with a member of parliament I *could* have had more attention, but it was enough to make David Seed and me old hands at being interviewed by local radio presenters who all wanted to make the same "Beam me up, Scotty" jokes. But the publicity resulted in a satisfactory number of inquiries about the Collection and the MA course. We have since been contacted by university academics, TV researchers, people trying to remember this book they once read, and folk intrigued by the fact that we hold the archive of the Flat Earth Society.

To set us on the right path, Ramsey Campbell deposited his manuscripts on long loan with the Collection. On the first day of National Libraries Week Ramsey read an unpublished extract from *The Parasite* (set less than thirty yards away from where we were sitting) to an audience of university staff and guests. He then signed the Collection's copy of his new novel *The Long Lost* and presented several boxes of papers including MSS of *The Doll who Ate his Mother*, *Obsession* and *The Parasite*.

Those of you counting the number of spaceships in Ramsey's fiction with a puzzled expression on your face might take into account that not only is he Liverpool's premier writer of imaginative fiction but that the unease which he so brilliantly raises in his fiction is not a million miles away from that raised by certain types of SF; many fluids have been spilled over the question of whether HP Lovecraft, Ramsey's fictional mentor, was horror or SF. Moreover, he *has* written SF: the novella "Medusa" received specific mention when *Interzone* recently reviewed the collection *Strange Things and Stranger Places*. And in any case, Ramsey is a well-

known figure in SF as well as horror fandom. This man is no literary purist; he'll accept a drink from you no matter what you read. Thank you, Ramsey.

Since then we have received further valuable donations of archive material. From the literary executor of the late John Wyndham we are extremely grateful to receive on loan legal and family papers concerning Wyndham's estate as it relates to his books, as well as a collection of (largely non-SF) MSS from Wyndham's brother Vivian Beynon Harris, which for their intrinsic interest alone are a valuable addition to the material in the care of the Collection. We are also now holding, on behalf of Liverpool University, a unique counterpoint to the Olaf Stapledon Archive: the personal book and magazine collection (including much correspondence) of the late Eric Frank Russell (1905-78), one of the great figures of Liverpool, British and World SF. Pride of place is the Hugo Award for the short story "Allamagoosa" (1955). We are extremely grateful to Erica Metcalfe, EFR's daughter, for this material.

The Liverpool University Press is currently looking at (believe it or not) *sixteen* proposals for books to be published over the next couple of years in its new SF Texts and Studies series. The first two volumes will be a collection of critical essays on 19th century SF and Robert Crossley's biography of Olaf Stapledon; these will be published in the September this year, marking the launch of the MA course.

This MA course is the UK's first graduate-level specialist course in SF, involving lectures, seminars and an individual dissertation. It is organised on a modular basis, looking at various aspects of SF such as "utopias" and "time", and has already attracted interest from around the world. If anyone would like to find out more, please contact me at the convention or pick up some of our literature.

Given the interest and support we have received, we are confident that the Foundation's work will continue and that this unique collection will grow. And how much more so, if you help!

How? First, become a Friend of Foundation. Contact the Friends' table for details. By joining Friends you not only show your support; you can, if you wish, take an active part in the Foundation's work. If you have a particular involvement or area of expertise, let us know; part of the Collection's resources is the knowledge of its contacts.

Second, donate material. We rely on the generosity of the SF world to survive. Whether you are a publisher of books, magazines or critical journals, a fanzine editor, or a fan with surplus books, we need what you have to offer. Think of the Science Fiction Foundation Collec-

tion as the UK deposit of SF: the acquisition of another item we haven't got makes the Collection that much stronger.

Third, support the FoF fundraising events at Sou'Wester and other cons. Every raffle ticket, every second-hand book you buy from the FoF table helps provide resources for the Foundation.

If you want to know more — and I hope you do — join me on Saturday morning when I will explain more about the work of the Science Fiction Foundation Collection — and share some of the more interesting and obscure items I've found lurking between dusty covers. And join me *again* on Saturday afternoon when we can toast the Foundation's new future. See you then!

## CONTACTS

Enquiries about consulting the Collection and donations of material:

Andy Sawyer, Science Fiction Foundation Collection, Liverpool University Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool L69 3DA, UK.  
051-794 2733/2696. (email: [asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk))

The MA in SF Studies, due to start in October 1994:  
Dr David Seed, English Department, Liverpool University, Liverpool L69 3BX, UK.

*Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction* edited by Dr Edward James: c/o New Worlds, 71-72 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0AA, UK.

Information about/offers of help and money to Friends of Foundation: Rob Meades, 75 Hecham Close, Walthamstow, London E17 5QT, UK.



## Richard Christian Matheson

We are grateful to Pan Macmillan for bringing Richard Christian Matheson to Sou'Wester. The son of SF and horror novelist and scriptwriter Richard Matheson (*I Am Legend*, *The Twilight Zone* TV series, etc.), Richard Christian Matheson has followed in his father's footsteps, scripting over 300 TV programmes and several Hollywood films.

His first novel *Created By* will be published this month. It's about a young TV writer-producer who creates a horror series which rivets America with its state-of-the-art death and designer sex... until reality starts first copying, and then anticipating the scripts. We've not read it yet, but Clive Barker, Peter Straub and others rate it highly.

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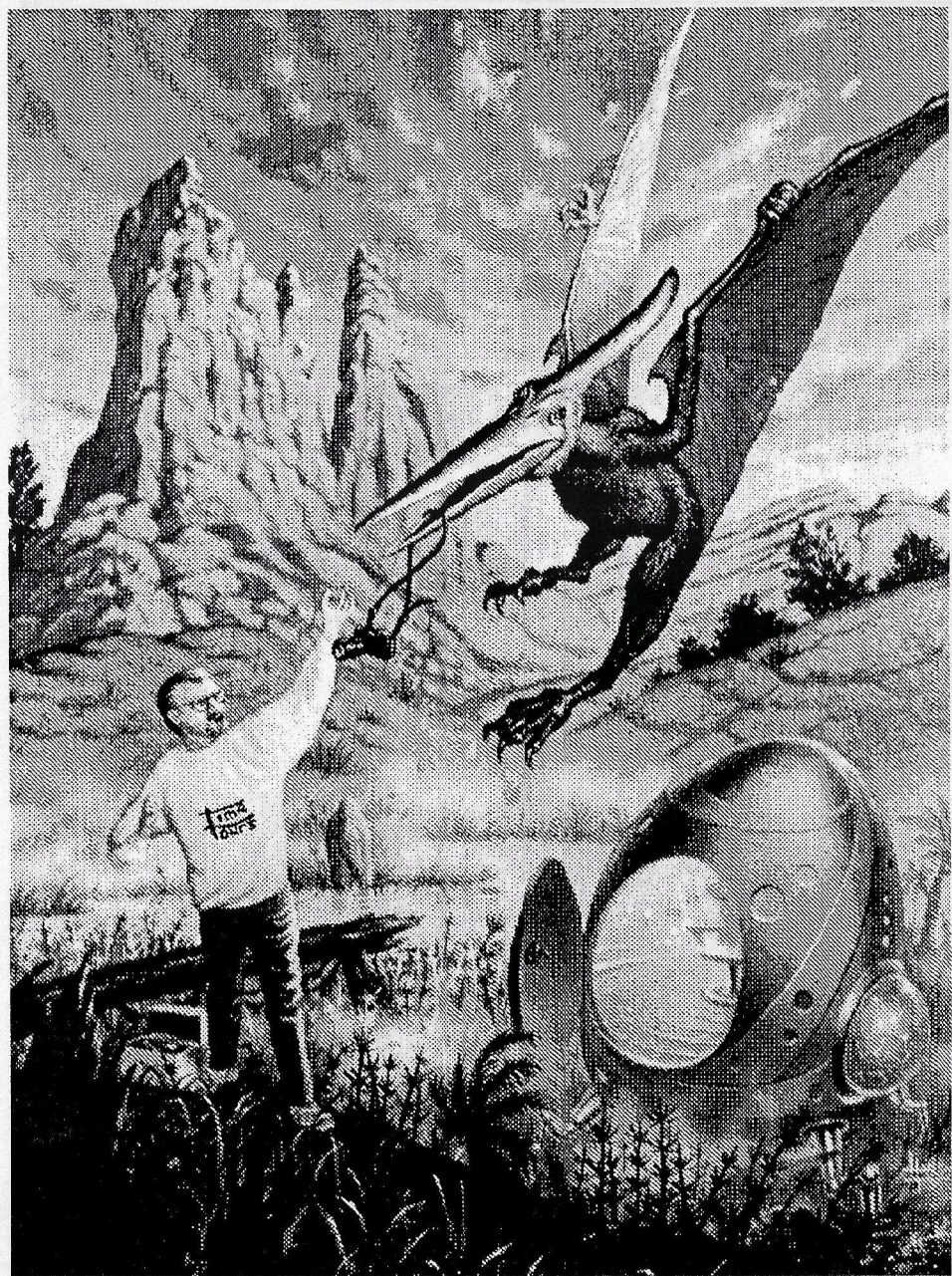
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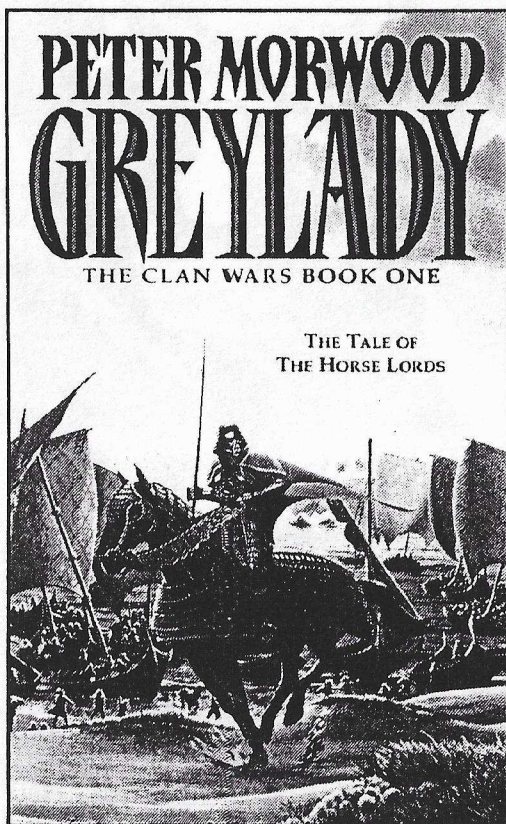
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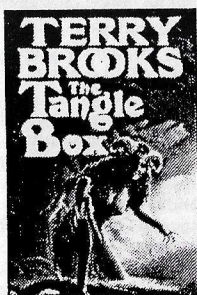


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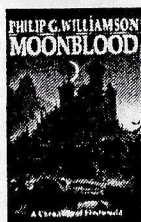
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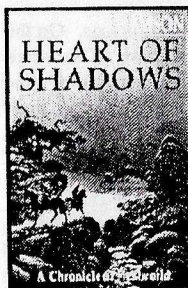


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# THE BIGGEST NAMES AND THE BEST NEW WRITERS

Julian Headlong

The imbibing of certain liquid refreshments has always been a tradition at fannish gatherings. Their use at British conventions has been well-documented (by *Then, Empties* and the *CAMRA Real Ale Guide*) and has brought fame and fortune to such luminaries as John Jarrold, D West and Martin Hoare.

But when did it all start?

According to Prof A Panshin in his historic publication *Star Well* (Ace 1978), civilisation was created so that populations of considerable size could be supported so that they could build, invent, keep records, and stock all the necessary supplies for making war.

He went on to explain that civilisation in this sense is obviously not possible for peripatetic populations (which was easy for him to say), that is, migrant peoples whose staples are nuts, roots and berries, and the odd slow-moving aardvark — the continuing search for which keeps these people mobile and healthy, it being a well-known fact that a little aardvark never hurt anyone.

This, as we all know, is a total crock.

No! Civilisation is not the product of war. It is the child of agriculture. But why did mankind take to the fields? Not to allow him to build, invent, keep records and stock up on pointy sticks and heavy rocks. After all, it actually takes *more* effort to live poorly in an agricultural society than it takes to live rather well as a hunter-gatherer.

No! The invention of agriculture was for one purpose and one purpose only: to save men the trouble involved in collecting the many diverse and fiddly ingredients necessary for the making of BEER!

The timing of Sou'Wester is truly auspicious. On this date we celebrate the 7,993rd anniversary of the single greatest invention in the History of Mankind. On this day in 5,999 BC the first Convention Bar opened, in the Metropole Hotel, Uruk. And was promptly closed again, because they had neglected to get a licence. Because, of course, they hadn't been invented yet.

So naturally Mankind's very next invention was the room party. Quickly followed by salted nuts, little bags of extra-crispy unleavened bread, and the quite disgusting pork scratchings.

Plus, of course, the HANGOVER.

But that's another story.

Jim Burns

A proud Mr McAuley demonstrates his recently acquired vaporetto to an admiring Mr Joyce. Mr Joyce is, of course, well known for his encyclopaedic knowledge of arcane propulsion systems (quote: "Steam-power certainly gets the thumbs up from me!")

Mr J. Yes as I was saying, Mr McAuley, steam-power certainly gets the thumbs up from me!

Mr M. I shall be sure to pass your comments on to thee Great Engineer, Mr Joyce. In the meantime, I should deem it a kindness, sir, if you were to refrain from planting your muddy feet on the dash!

Mr J. My apologies, sir! I forget my manners, so overwhelmed am I by the thrilling forward rush of the device. Of what order of speed is the device capable if I may so enquire?

You may, sir. Though it remains the case that I have yet to allow the beast full-rein, I confess to a slight nervousness with regard to the confident manipulation of the velocity-crank and have yet to ratchet it forward much beyond the three-quarters detent. Even so, I can claim to have bettered 20kph, albeit on a slight downhill gradient.

Mr J. ...Remarkable!

Mr M. Yes, though I should perhaps point out that this is a modified example of the device, specially prepared for me by the people at Mamod. The stripped-down, swivelling boiler — to my own design, incidentally — reduces the weight considerably, thereby adding perhaps 5kph to the top speed. You may too have noticed the satin-wood and brass trim added to the smoke-stack — to my special order, as were the seat and the front brake — none of these features to be found on the standard version of the device.

Mr J. A device to be proud of, sir! Reflecting, if I may say so, its owner's discrimination and good taste in these matters. But if I may perhaps at this juncture inject a small note of interested concern to the discussion. Have you considered the environmental impact of the device?

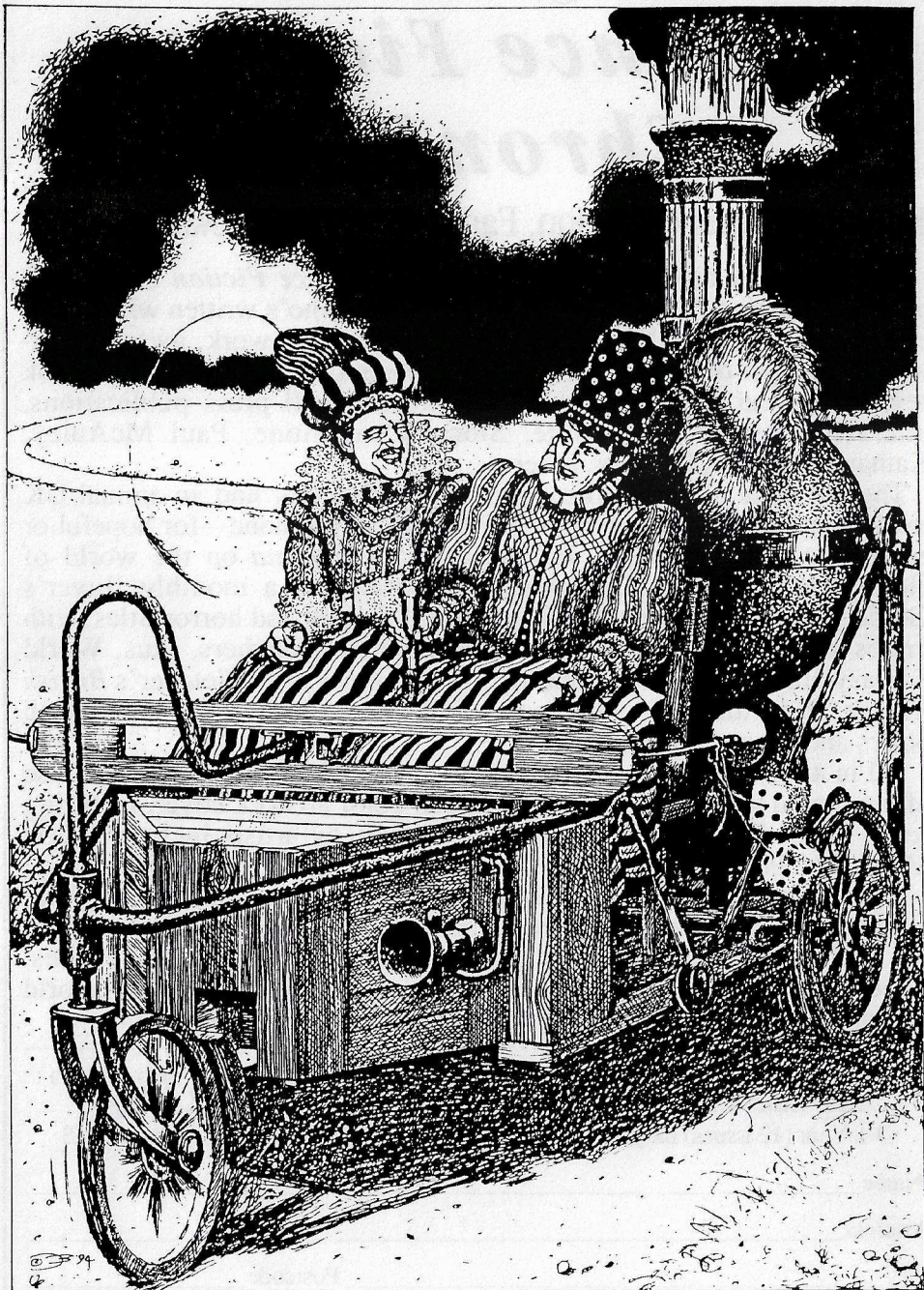
Mr M. Environmental? What pray is "environmental", sir? I am unfamiliar with the word.

Mr J. Ah! A relief and a blessing to me, Mr McAuley, that the concept is one of which you remain charmingly, indeed enviably ingenuous. For it is a word born of naught but the mindless ranting of the pitiful Mob — who would have the good men of science and engineering flayed alive and would plunge us all headlong back into the Dark Ages!

Mr M. A pox on them all, say I! Let us be thankful that we live in such an enlightened time and may enjoy the benefits bestowed upon us by those men of imagination who bring to us such wondrous artifacts as this ingenious vaporetto.

Mr J. Indeed! You take the words from my mouth Mr McAuley.

Mr M. And now, Mr Joyce — would you be so kind as to feed the firebox with some of the wood you'll find beneath the seat? I fear we are losing forward momentum...



© 1994  
J

1993 Hugo Award Winner!

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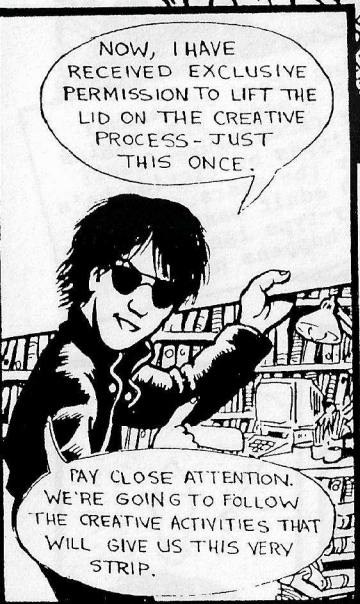
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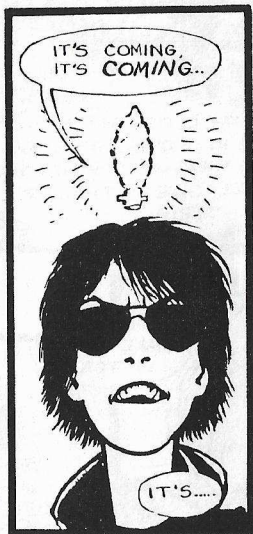
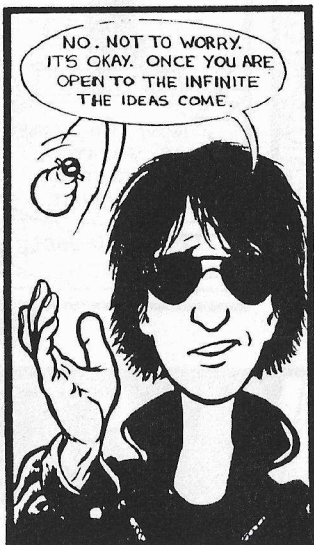
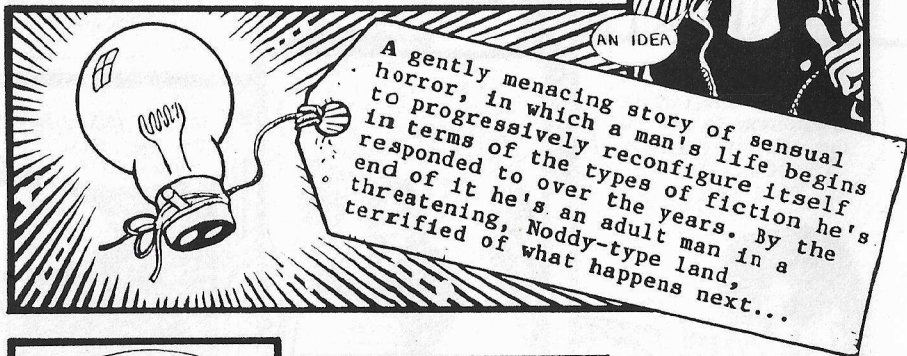
# An Honest Answer

from  
**NEIL GAIMAN.**  
illustrated by  
**BRYAN TALBOT.**  
inscribed by  
**TOM ABBA.**

"Where do you  
get your ideas?"

IT'S A QUESTION  
WRITERS ARE ASKED ALL  
THE TIME. AND WE DON'T  
TELL ANY OF YOU **HOW** WE  
GET OUR IDEAS BECAUSE IT'S  
A SECRET - DEEPLY,  
INEXTRICABLY LINKED WITH  
THE ENTIRE CREATIVE  
PROCESS.







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A FUNNY CAT BOOK?

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After that, the infinite offered up, in short order...



a haiku

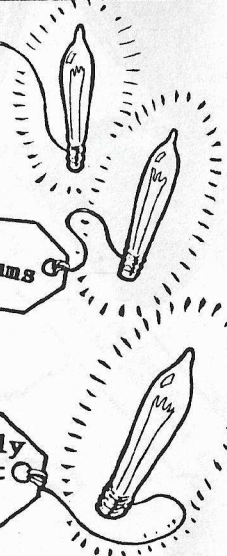
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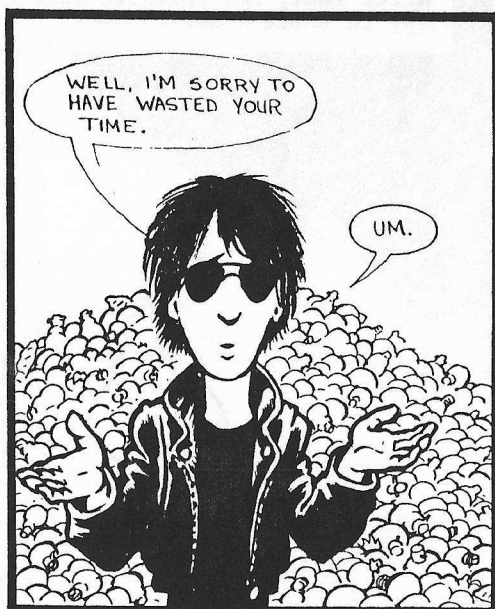
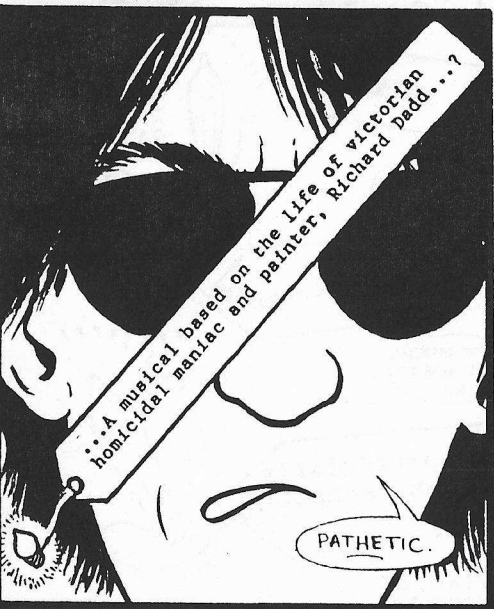
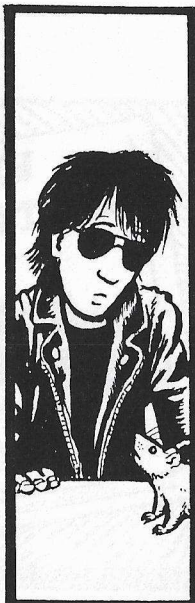
two pantoums

TOO MUCH LIKE HARD WORK.

a particularly filthy sonnet

TOO DIFFICULT FOR BRYAN TO DRAW CONVINCINGLY.





The following Thursday the author received a note from the Infinite, apologising for the interruption in service, and asking if it could have its funny cat-book idea back, because there were people who needed it.

But it was too late. It had already been used as the introduction to an anthology of minor Late-Seventeenth Century Metaphysical Poets.



# Neil Gaiman - Alien with a Mission

Chris Bell

Let's face it, it may have been rash of us to invite Neil Gaiman to be one of our Guests of Honour. Things happen when he's around, and sometimes they're as strange as if he had written them. Maybe he has. If he's the Author, that might explain quite a lot; but since his ambition seems to be recognition as an Agent of Serendipity, if he is the Author I shall stop worrying so much about Life. On the whole Neil seems to be benign.

It has been said of Neil that he doesn't want to rule the world (probably true, because it would take up so much time), with the rider "No, he just wants to choose who gets the job." That could be a fascinating experience for the world, because he doesn't always seem to be quite as others are, and his choice might be... um... original.

There are rumours that he was born, but I'm not sure when or where, and I'm not sure that I believe it in any case. He probably just hypnotised his family into thinking that he was an ordinary baby. Alternative suggestions have included the notion that he is one of the Flying Dutch, who after however many centuries of roaming about the globe bemoaning his fate has finally come to terms with it and become so laid back about the whole business as to be horizontal, particularly on the telephone. Some of this theory is certainly valid. Another persistent idea is that since he is not quite as others are, he is perhaps an alien with a mission to observe us at close quarters. I can go along with that quite easily as well.

How advanced his original civilisation might be remains open to doubt. They might be a whizz at interstellar travel and all that, but Neil's idea of the fastest way from Chelsea to East Sussex was via the M4 and M25, on one notable occasion. He may not have meant to be here at all, if that's the way he navigates. He may have been aiming for Andromeda and missed by a degree or two. In fact, whilst I don't feel the faintest alarm at the idea of his running the world, I do get the abdots at the thought that he might try to steer it anywhere physically, as opposed to spiritually or in the realms of imagination.

It is well on the cards that we could attribute Sou'Wester's peregrinations entirely to the fact that we made this particular selection of person for a Guest of Honour, given some of the journeys in which he's been involved.

For instance, how many people do you know who have been forced to drive their car off the road and into a dense hazel thicket by an angry *pigeon*? Truth and honour, it happened to Neil. What about the aeroplane across the States, a scheduled flight, which ran out of fuel in mid-State, as it were, and had to land in a hurry at Phoenix, Arizona? That was one plane in which he tried to make that journey; another shed a door before it ever got to

New York, and had to stop home for repairs. Or again, there was a trip from London to Bristol via East Sussex, when I ended up taking Neil home because we were playing Mornington Crescent with real stations as we searched for Victoria and he said "East Grinstead" so we went there, and Neil first of all incapacitated me by telling me about the torch song "I'm just a fool who / thought that Cthulhu / could fall in love" while we were doing some highly illegal speed in the fast lane, and then pointed out that the turning we wanted might well be *this* one, Chris. (If you were the driver in the Cortina when I made that left turn I'd like to take this opportunity to apologise.)

That we weren't all killed on that occasion proves that Neil is benign. Haphazard, but benign.

At some point in this piece I am probably supposed to be giving you all sorts of details about what Neil Gaiman has written and done and achieved and so on, but to be honest, I think that you can find that out for yourselves, and a list of "he has written"s makes dull reading. Excellent though his work might be (and it is; he's a very fine writer), that isn't the reason we wanted him as a guest. We wanted to get him to Sou'Wester because he's such good company, such good value as a person to have around. Ideas flow out of the man like the flashes and bangs at an Armageddon Enterprises firework display. I'd rather try to tell you that, and encourage you to appreciate the man as well as the work, than go in for a bibliography, because I personally would want to listen to what he has to say about this, that and t'other thing even if he'd never written a word of it down.

In fact this entire enterprise may have been an exercise in futility. Unless you're as good a writer as Neil Gaiman, there is no way to convey the essential Neil Gaiman in writing. (If you are Neil Gaiman, what are you doing skulking in a corner reading this? Get out there and mingle *immediately* and stop making a liar out of me!) However, the editor said "Do it", and I'm a great one for only obeying orders [*Hmmp!* — Ed.], so I've tried. What I suggest, though, is that I stop here, you stop here, and we both go and find Neil and buy him a drink.

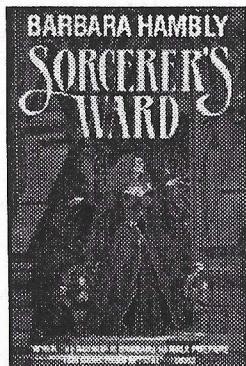
Whatever the things that may happen at you after that because he's around at Sou'Wester, I confidently predict that when we've all finished weebing and re-sorted our world-view, we'll find that they were a good idea. Unexpected and slightly skew to reality perhaps, but on the whole in our favour.

I'll come right out and say it: Neil Gaiman is an Agent of Serendipity.



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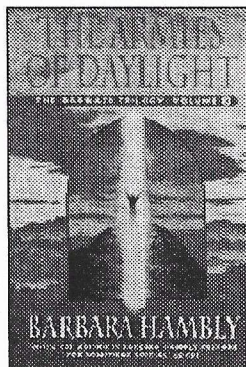
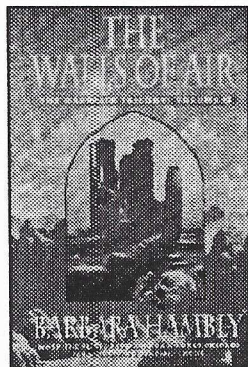
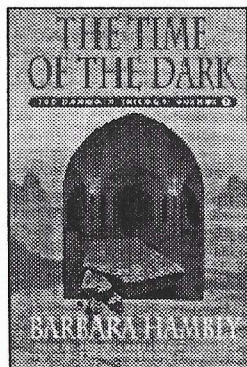
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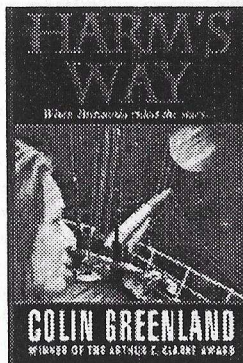
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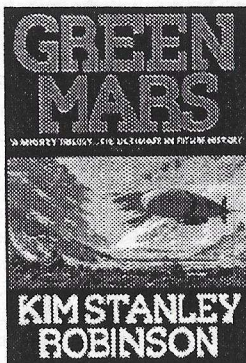
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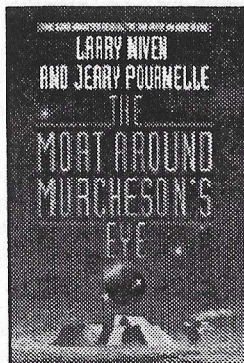
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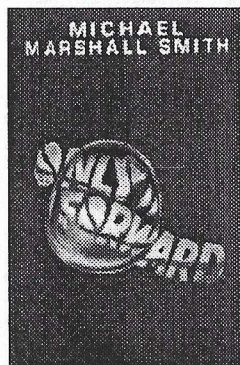
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# FROM THE BEST!

Harry Payne

Anime? Japanese animation to you, squire. Oh, you mean manga, right? No, manga are comic books, anything up to the size of your Yellow Pages, and try sticking one of those in your VCR. On second thoughts, don't. It would be expensive.

Anime has been around on video since the early 1980s. Admittedly, most of it was mutilated out of all recognition and marketed for four-year-old Americans, but a surprising amount of it was, and still is, watchable. Remnants of this "First Wave" can still be found in discount stores and out of the way video shops. Happy hunting, and if you find a good copy of *Space Firebird*, I'll pay money for it!

The "Second Wave" started in 1990, when the Eastcon dedicated a fair amount of its film/video programme to the genre. Until then, most people didn't know that there was a wealth of animation made on the other side of the world which wasn't exclusively for children. Despite grumbles about poor quality videos, and "robots robots \*\*\*\*\* robots", anime now has a place in fandom, with two major UK cons a year, as well as showings at multi-media cons and one-day expos in London. Big business also caught on fast, and the end of 1991 saw the release of *Akira*, certainly the best-known and probably one of the best examples of modern, adult-oriented animation.

What was released early on was aimed at 11-19 year-old males and mostly of a muchness, containing extreme violence, explicit sex and bad language. This was due to market research "proving" that this was the only sort of anime that would sell. Not surprisingly, there was a backlash from some of society's more conservative elements, who made comments as to whether or not the genre should be banned, or at the very least made "safe for children" again. Fortunately, responsible adults (including James Ferman of the British Board of Film Classification) dismissed this attempt at censorship out of hand. However, the reputation remains: Miyazaki Hayao's *Porco Rosso* was rejected by a major UK film distributor last year on the grounds that it couldn't be a "manga film" (*sic*) as there was no sex or violence in it!

It's now four years on from Eastcon. There are over 50 anime tapes available over the counter, and more are on the way. Small UK companies are releasing different types of anime, from the Japanese equivalent of the Saturday morning cartoon to "shojo" films, which deal Oh So Beautifully with bittersweet, unconsummated romances, not necessarily between two people of differing genders. ("Is that a daisy in your buttonhole, or are you just pleased to see me..."). True, there's a quota of robot suits and girls with guns to be seen as well, but at least it's more of a balanced diet now. There are also wel-

coming signs that the larger distributors are coming round to this way of thinking.

If you're after more than what's for sale in the UK, and have a multi-standard VCR which can play US or Japanese tapes, you've the ticket to a much greater variety of anime than the UK could ever hope to provide. It's very big business in the States at the moment, having broken into the mainstream market last year, and there are mail-order companies prepared to post tapes — or even laserdiscs — to the UK. Many US releases are subtitled rather than dubbed, and tapes are more expensive than over here, but there are far more of them, and it's not that difficult reading subtitles. You can even buy anime from other EC countries, so if you want to brush up your Italian or Spanish you can enjoy yourself at the same time, and don't even need a multi-standard VCR as most European countries (except France) use the PAL standard. Magazines like *Manga Mania* and *Anime UK* will give you an idea of what's available overseas. Just one word of warning — Customs. These guardians of law and order who so nobly protect us from ourselves take a very dim view of what they consider to be "obscene" and may quite legally seize and destroy anything they dislike. Even from other EC countries, despite so-called "free trade". So if you want to get anime from abroad, perhaps you should refrain from ordering the uncut *Urōtsukidoji*, or anything too explicit which might offend their delicate sensibilities.

If that's frightened you off importing your tapes, here's a short list of UK releases worth looking at. Prices vary; check around record and comic shops as well as the usual big stores, as well as the dealer tables at this con. You may find quite a difference! And, after you've browsed through this slim volume, why not pop into the Film/Video room and see what's showing?

## Ten Anime Releases Worth Looking At

### *Akira*

If you don't know anything about anime, this is a good place to start. Incredible visuals and imagery, filmed just as if it were live-action, and a totally inscrutable plot made this an instant cult film. If you can afford it, go for the double-tape box, with the "widescreen" subtitled version and extra "making of" tape.

### *Bubblegum Crisis*

In the 21st century, four women in powered suits take on a megacorporation and their cyborg products. This makes the odds about even. Great storyline — *Blade Runner* fans will love it. Eight episodes, one per tape; the sequel may be released in 1994.

### *Cat Girl Nuku Nuku*

When you're a penniless inventor trying to look after your only son, and your ex-wife happens to own an arms factory and wants him back, he needs a protector. A cyborg protector... with a cat's brain!!? She's cute, she's fluffy, she's Nuku-chan! Several episodes; the second has perhaps the silliest rubber octopus outside of a Harryhausen movie.

### *Dominion*

Despite (in my opinion) poor dubbing and an atrociously re-worked music score, this everyday story of a police-woman and her pet tank versus a criminal mastermind and the cat-sisters from Hell is wonderfully tongue in cheek. Two tapes: work has started on the sequel in Japan.

### *The Heroic Legend of Arislan*

Sword-and-sorcery epic with a kingdom at stake. Several hunks for female anime fans to sigh over, as well as the usual beautiful women. The plot is standard, but well-handled, and English voices make a refreshing change from American. Two tapes: more to follow.

### *Lensman*

Bearing more resemblance to the *Star Wars* trilogy than EE "Doc" Smith's classic pulps (only fair, as Lucas borrowed ideas from them!), this is a surprisingly good Space Opera. NB: the sell-through release is longer (and bet-

ter) than the version shown on satellite TV.

### *Project A-ko*

Would you believe St. Trinian's versus the Alien Hordes? A fast-paced action/comedy which parodies everything in sight, from giant robots to American comic characters. The script loses something in the dubbing, but it's still great fun.

### *The Sensualist*

A very striking piece about erotic shenanigans in old Japan. Not so much animated, as moving classic prints, but very effective, and genuinely erotic as opposed to sexually explicit. A refreshing change from most anime offerings.

### *Warriors of the Wind*

The only anime by Miyazaki Hayao, possibly the greatest living animator, currently available in the UK. In spite of half an hour having been cut and the original storyline having been re-written, this still shines through as a classic.

### *Wicked City*

A horror film with an interesting and convoluted (but very silly) plot about demons from another dimension interacting with ours in divers ways. Sex, blood and large spiders feature prominently, and the hero has the worst chat-up lines ever.

RED FOX would like to congratulate

## Thog the Mighty

on his SMASHING achievement in becoming Sou'Wester's only Virtual GoH.

Chapters of the Official Biography are **Legends of Lone Wolf: The Book of the Magnakai** (complete with stunning colour portrait by Peter Jones) and **The Birthplace**, both £3.99.

Thog's amanuensis, John Grant, is in the newsroom and will add a nervous signature if requested.

Thog say: "Athletic ex-berserker of middling years would like to meet...oops, wrong ad."

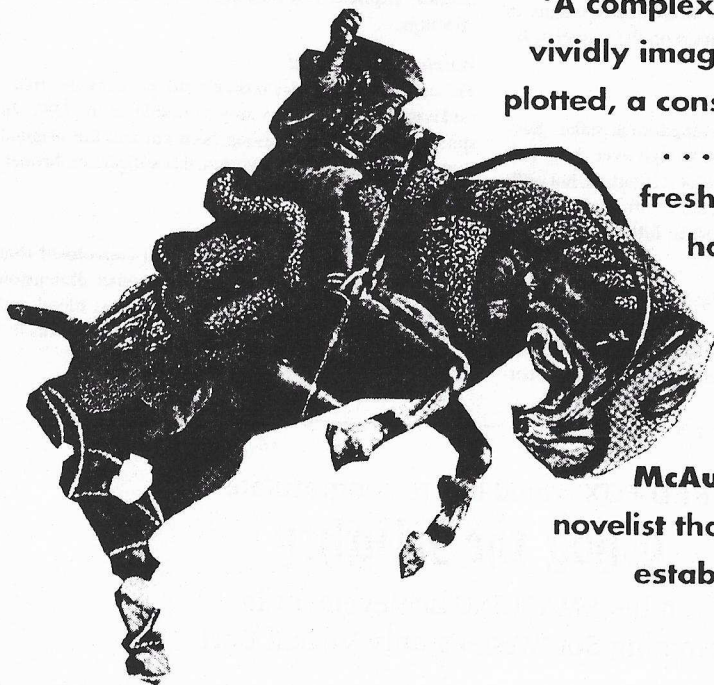
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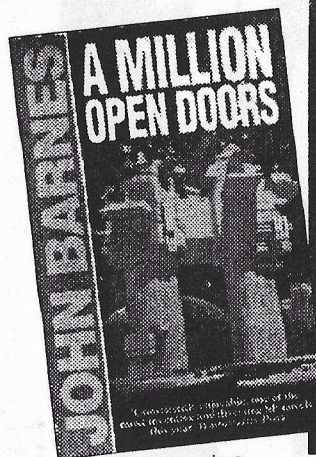
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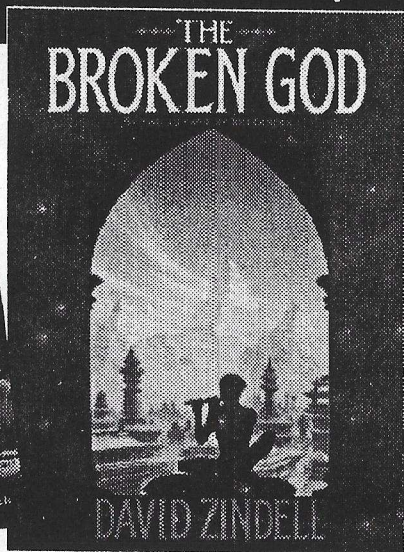
*Arthur C Clarke*

AWARD

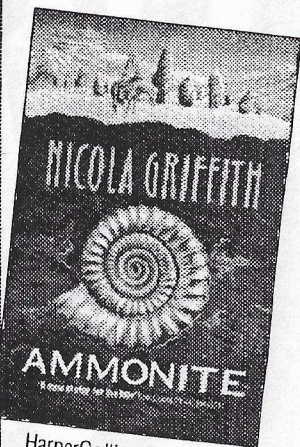
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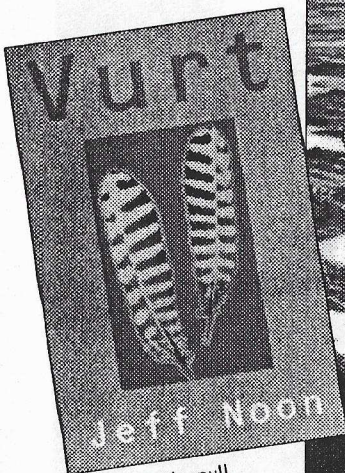
Millennium



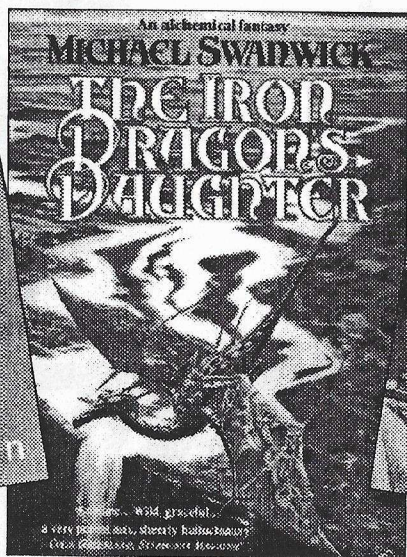
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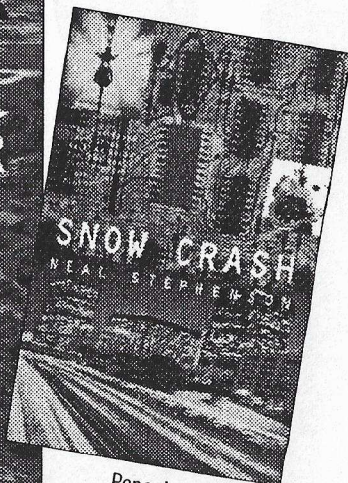
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The winner will be announced on April 20th



# Xenophobia

Chris Bell

Xenophobia: "Fear or hatred of the strange or foreign".

The word's origins are Greek. It comes from much the same part of the world as Macedonian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian. In that region it has recently been horribly shown that it is possible, for no reason immediately obvious to an outsider, to start being violently xenophobic towards people with whom you have shared a town, a village or a street all your life, with whom you went to school, whose children played happily with yours a few weeks ago. This terrifies me. If Yugoslavia can fragment into murderous, xenophobic factions this year, can we be sure that the "United" Kingdom might not do the same next? We can already look at Ulster (or Northern Ireland; I've probably given offence to some people by using the wrong name) and feel the chill wind down our spines. It could be anywhere, any cause: all it needs is the wrong nudge and it's out of control before we really knew it had started. It's so easy to teach a child to hate and fear — the Gypsy, the Scot, the Jew, the Negro, the Queer, they've all been used as bogeymen. Any old Them will do.

Xenophobia: I fear it and I hate it, but is it really all that strange or foreign?

A fanzine had an all-male authorship issue, followed by an all-female one. The clichéd Martian observing Earth and wondering what the hell goes on might be excused for thinking we have two entirely separate species, Man and Woman. Or Men and Wimmin. I look at George Elliot and at Acton, Ellis and Currer Bell, or I read some work in the first person singular with a female protagonist but written by a man, and I honestly can't see that it matters worth a damn what the sex of the author is if the work is worth reading. But one species or sex feels for some reason threatened by the other because it is different, and regards it as strange or foreign to such an extent that fear or hatred is the only possible response. Phrases such as "just like a woman" or "what do you expect of a man" start to be used, pejoratively. Wild generalisations hit the fan. Sensitive men are driven to drink because "all men are potential rapists" and they find the idea of rape horrific; strong women try to learn to simper and blush because "men are threatened by competence in a woman". It's absurd, isn't it? The amount of despising of each other (and of ourselves) we are tricked into saddens me.

Xenophobia, you see. Well, isn't it?

Then there was the conversation at a BSFA meeting where an apposite quotation came to me, and it happened to be part of a song, so I sang it. Nothing wrong with that, you'd think, except perhaps my voice? But the re-

action I got was, "Filking! I like it! Just don't let that lot over by the bar hear you..." And he was quite right. The mass of lit'ry fans by the bar might not have lynched me, but they would have thought the less of me for it if they'd noticed what I was doing: my credibility as a serious member of fandom would have been badly dented. Late one night at the 1993 Mexican a bunch of people were heard to Sing, and they were still being ribbed about it the following evening; it was talked about in "I thought better of X" terms for the rest of the con.

Xenophobia: a mild form of it, perhaps, but still xenophobia.

You're a fanzine fan; I'm a filker. You're into gaming; I'm keen on tech. You make the costumes; I watch the films. You run conventions; I read books. How much understanding and sympathy do we have for each other and for each other's interests? Be honest: were you one of the people sneering at a con committee's lack of organisation — from the safety of the bar? Or who aimed a mini-barrage at the tech crew — who work their socks off for all our benefit at every con and usually don't even get thanked by name at the closing ceremony? Was it *you* who said "We don't dress up like that at this convention" to a costumed lady at a lit'ry con, just to make sure she felt *really* good about how she looked? Perhaps you were the comix-fan neo who walked into a fan room and was asked "And who are *you*?" in a tone which sent you scurrying out again to escape from the hostility you were facing?

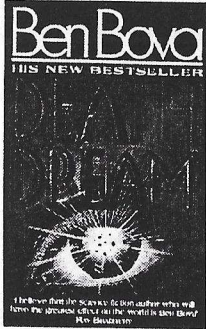
Xenophobia. "Ey, it's a stranger — 'eave 'alf a brick at 'im!"

You'd think that fandom would be more tolerant of the strange than any group of people in the world. We ought to be accustomed to it, after all — intellectually if nothing else. We spend at least some of our time reading books about alien cultures, watching films about first contact, speculating... We've all daydreamed about what we would do if They landed in our back garden: we would be undisturbed by their weird form, we would offer peace and friendship, we would be wonderful and welcoming Representatives of our Species. Tolerance would be our watchword. We know that it would be idiotic to assume that an alien would only be interested in raping, enslaving or eating us; away with *Starship Troopers* — we have grown out of such hawkish rubbish; remember instead *Speaker for the Dead* and *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*.

I'd love to believe that one of fandom would be an ideal First Contact for an alien who'd run out of propulsion fluid in the area. My bet, alas, is that any one of us would be just as prone to unthinking, terrified aggression as

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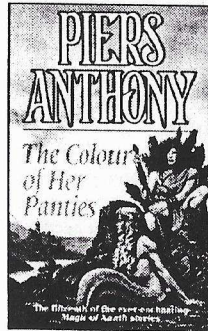
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- Ray Bradbury



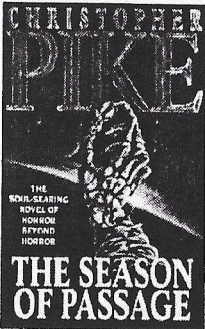
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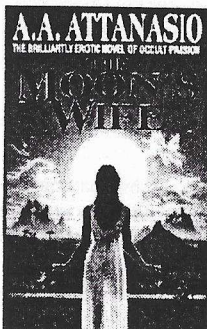
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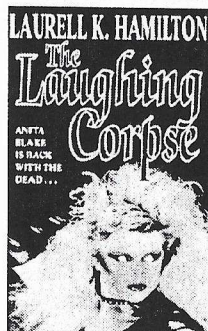
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any Joe Public Mundane, and that the alien would wish fervently that it had checked the fuel-gauge before it got anywhere near good ol' Sol.

If we can't even get it together to tolerate each other's little foibles, what possible hope can we have that we'd cope at all with something *really* out of this world?

What would happen if that alien were so tasteless as to like *Star Trek*, or if it were wearing a Slave-Boy-of-Gor costume, or arrived brandishing a pair of dodecahedral dice? Suppose that it were (shudder) Male? or Female?

Xenophobia. That's what would happen. Galloping fear and loathing.

We can congratulate each other and ourselves all we like about our decent, tolerant outlook; it doesn't cut any ice when the actuality doesn't bear out the boasts. I have a badge which says "Be kind to Mundanes — they can't help it". I just wish sometimes that we could be a little less bitchy to each other as well. "Be kind to Fans — they can't help it", perhaps?

There are large sections of fandom with which I seem to have very little in common, and which for a long time I ignored or avoided. I don't have much to do with fanzines; I've not had any prose published professionally; I don't have a TV, and I don't go to the cinema; I can't sew, so costuming's out. I've never played a D&D game in my life; I'm not technically-minded; I don't read comix; I can't draw, so forget the Art Show; I don't have a decent singing voice and can't play an instrument.

Yet in spite of these handicaps there are people I like very much indeed who are fanzine fans, lit'ry fans, authors, media fans, Trekkers, Masquerade fanatics, gamers, members of the tech crew, comix readers and writers, artists, filkers — even conrunners. What though they're rattling their too-many-sided dice, or wearing two small bits of chamois leather and a big grin and nothing else, or scribbling down chance remarks for inclusion in their next book, or convincing me that I really *want* to do Hotel Liaison for an Eastercon? These people are good company, and I want to go on liking them even if half the time I don't know what they're wittering on about. Think what I'd be missing if I had dismissed them sight unseen just because they weren't exactly like me and with all the same interests.

Xenophobia: it's a dirty word.

I'd be really happy if one day we could manage to be as sympathetic and tolerant of other people in fandom whatever their gender or interests, as we like to think we would be of a ten-foot-tall FTL-travelling arachnid at the bottom of our garden. Let's all try it just for one year. After we've got into practice on fans we might extend it to mundanes, and after that, maybe to the really unspeak-

able. If we work at it very hard indeed we might even contrive to be civil to Welsh rugby supporters.

No, no, I'm not being prejudiced, really. You see, I live in Bristol, and these guys come over the bridge from Cardiff and they don't even need a passport and they sing about kitchen utensils in a funny language when the band are trying to play jazz in the pub and they drink too much and...

Hang on a minute. There was a Welshman at the last-but-one con I was at. He watched a Rugby International all Saturday afternoon, but he was really quite human. You never can tell what might be hiding behind the label you've pinned on somebody's front like a target to fire your hostility at.

Xenophobia is silly luggage to carry, as well as being dangerous.

*[An earlier version of this article appeared in Thingumbob; thanks to Chuck Connor for permission to rework it.]*

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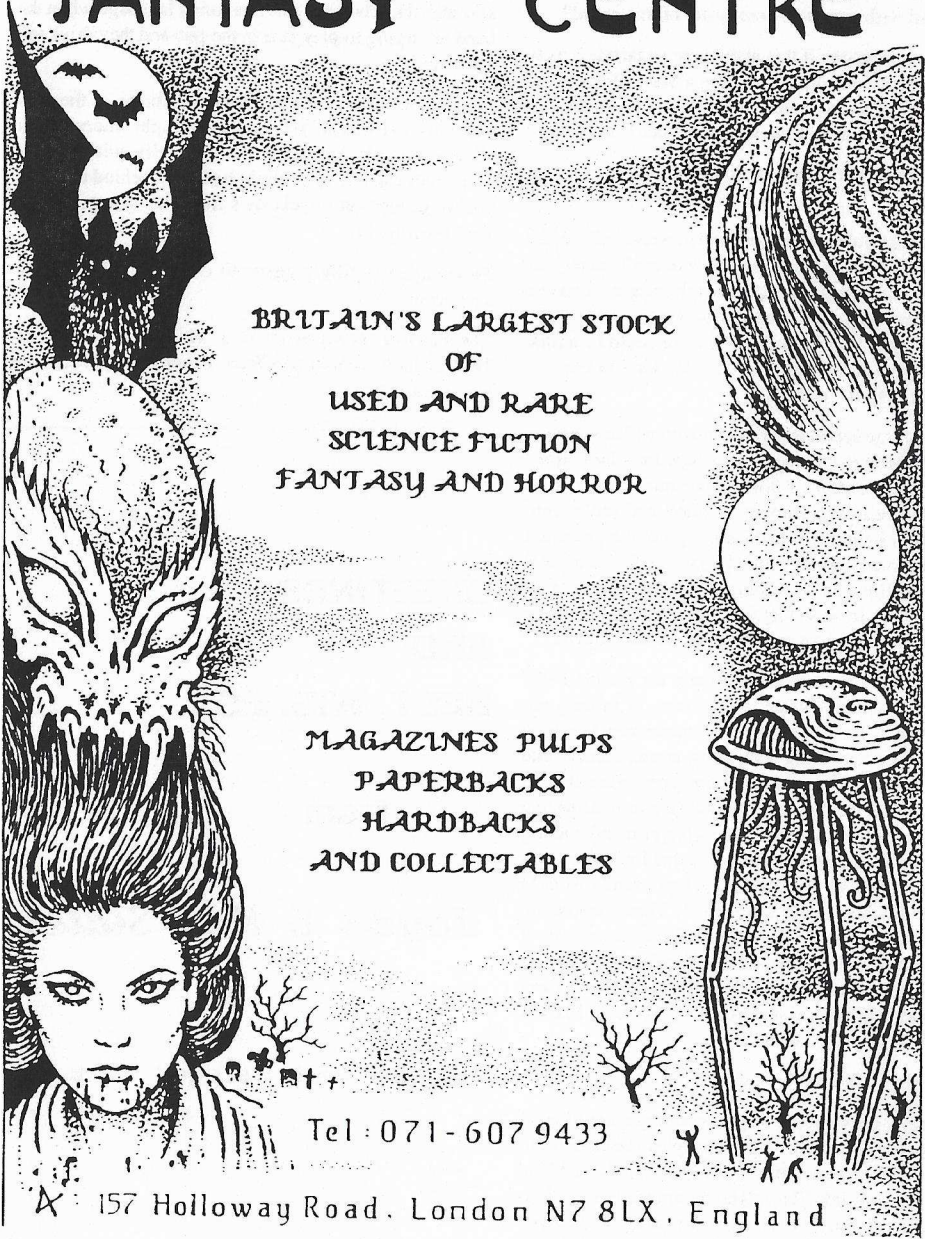
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# Who to Blame – The Committee and Others

## **Commodore: Marcus Streets**

Chairman. Will be recognisable by his fine head of red hair and by his worried expression. Marcus's job is not to know anything himself but to know whom to blame for it. He will point out the committee member you need, whatever your problem. Little does he know that as one man, woman and BEM the committee will instantly blame him. Heh-heh-heh...

Marcus was notably on the committee for Reconnaissance; he spent the entire year before the con in another country. This time his immense sense of responsibility has kept him pinned in England — or maybe it was getting married just after the committee got together that did it.

Marcus has been carefully kept unaware that it is possible for the chairman of the committee to resign.

## **Bo'sun: Rhodri James**

Programming. Will be recognisable by his benign, bearded and bespectacled appearance, calculated to soothe the anxious fan by its familiarity (at the last census 87% of fandom had beards and glasses) and by his vaguely concerned expression. Rhodri's most important function is to spread calm and reassurance, to the committee in particular and to anyone else who wanders into his ambient orbit in general. If all else fails, he could probably sign us into submission.

Rhodri went to his first convention in 1985 and became involved in conrunning in 1987. He joined a committee for the first time in 1988, and chaired his first committee at Illumination in 1991. He has also perpetrated fanzines on a regular(ish) basis.

Rhodri joined the committee too late to get into the queue for resignation. Not to be left out, however, he claims to have resigned fleetingly at Novacon, as a result of being too close to the Intersection desk.

## **Purser: Ben Brown**

Treasurer. Will be recognisable by his name badge, which will say "Ben Brown"; by the fact that he will not be carrying a petty cash box nor even a chest full of doubloons; and by his expression, which has gone past worry to bemusement. Ben is in charge of telling us what we can't afford and why, and generally of restraining the other members of the committee's wilder and more expensive flights of fancy.

Ben juggles vast sums of other people's money for a trade, and predicts what they will do; he has previously done the same thing for conventions too. Last we heard, he was muttering that it might be easier just to charge Sou'Wester to his credit card and sort out the details afterwards. Confidence-inspiring, that.

Ben resigned from the committee for a year, but he didn't tell anybody; and since we obviously couldn't do without him he eventually came back.

## **Quartermaster: Chris Bell**

Membership and Hotel Liaison. Will be recognisable by the symbiotic black corduroy cap and by being a worried expression moving rapidly in at least three directions at once. Her business at the convention is to sort out any queries and crises about whether or not you have joined the con, and

whether or not you have a bed to sleep in, and if you do, where it is.

Chris fell into fandom by accident at Santacon in 1986, via running a small publishing house, and has been to every Eastercon since. As a dress-rehearsal for being on the Sou'Wester committee she co-chaired Pentatonic, the fifth annual filk con; other than that she has no fannish credentials whatsoever, and has never even stood an ops shift in her life, but reckons that several hundred fans and a few hotels cannot be more awkward to organise than two artists and a printer were.

Chris is planning to resign from the committee as soon as she has enough time spare from sorting out all the beds and bods to be able to spend five minutes thinking up a good excuse.

## **Chief Petty Officer: Gary Stratmann**

Ops. May be recognisable by his combat gear — Take This Seriously! Do Not Annoy This Man! — and by his being a worried expression happening Suddenly. Gary would like to point out that once he has been bought a drink he accepts the buyer as "friend", may wag his tail, and will not bite, fold, spindle or mutilate said buyer for the time being. (Drink also helps deal with the worried expression.) Gary's function is to move in a mysterious way performing wonders. In more general terms he seems to be in charge of everything that nobody *else* did.

It seems somehow fitting that Gary's introduction to fandom in 1979 should have been that he was blown across a quadrangle at his university by an early effort of Hugh Mascetti's in the Total Destruction of the Universe stakes. It is typical of Gary that this experience in no way put him off, and he seems to have been helping to run conventions ever since.

Gary didn't resign from the committee, but he got married instead, which was nearly as effective since it meant that we didn't see him at nine successive meetings...

## **Naval Attaché: Sue Edwards**

Guest Liaison. Will be recognisable by the fact that she is the Quiet member of the committee, and by her expression of gentle worry. Sue's job is to soothe the ruffled guest. Since nobody could possibly want to upset her, and since she will be very upset if anything goes wrong, nothing is going to go wrong. That's the basis on which the rest of the committee are working, anyhow.

Sue has been attending conventions for years, but so unobtrusively that none of the rest of the committee can pin down when and where they first met her; they just know that it was a good thing when they did.

She watched the resigning with resignation. (And resignation.) (And resignation.) (And resignation.) (And resignation.)

## **Flag Lieutenant: David V Barrett**

Publicity and Publications. Will be recognisable by the printer's ink under everyone else's fingernails, and by his worried expression. This man has been in charge of persuading people to write things for the Programme Book, persuading

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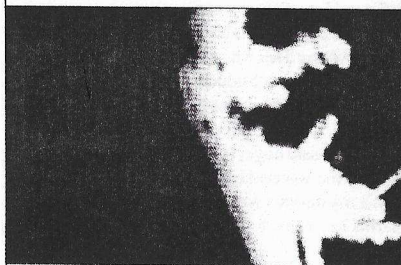
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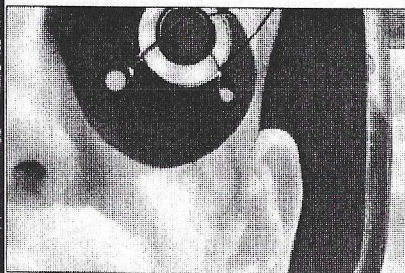
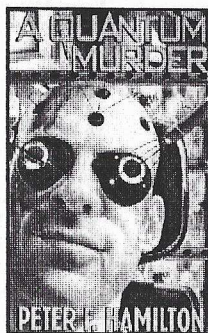
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people to take out advertisements in the Programme Book, persuading people to give us free advertising, persuading people to send authors to join us, and so forth. He will probably be found in the bar "liaising" with the people he has already conned into doing things for the convention.

David once edited *Vector*, and has been involved in other such nefarious activity, but this is his first venture into the heady world of conning.

David resigned from the committee with great formality, in writing, copies to everybody he could think of, on the grounds that he was too busy to do a decent job for us. We ignored him and held the next committee meeting at his house: whereupon he revealed that he had just sent out 70-something letters and wanted more letterhead pronto, and started to discuss the Programme Book.

#### **Sparks: Richard Rampant**

Tech Crew Boss. Will be recognisable by the fact that his hair is *meant* to be standing on end and thereby giving him a worried expression. Any other resemblance to Sonic the Hedgehog is likely to be deliberate; Richard is the wrong shape to do a convincing job, however, standing as he does about six foot six tall and six inches wide.

Richard is now something of an expert on running tech at the Adelphi: he gets lumbered every time. Buy him a drink; buy all the tech crew a drink: each. Lots of drinks: each. They won't drink them, of course, not when they are playing with umpty-fidget-£££s-worth of tech gear, but they like to feel appreciated and cherished.

Not being actually on the committee, Richard is not eligible for resignation, has not resigned, and is not resigned.

#### **Land Officer: Caroline Mullan**

Registration. Will be recognisable by her sheer efficiency, and by her total inability to maintain a properly worried expression.

Caroline's business is to take the chaotic trilocationary information provided by Chris and use it to ensure that every member of the convention gets given the right membership pack immediately upon arrival, without undue fuss or bother. Her secondary function is to dispel and dissipate alarm and dependency. Since she has been doing these things for conventions for a number of years, she can be trusted to get them right.

So far Caroline has shown no inclination to resign. So far. We're just hoping it'll stay that way until Monday evening.

#### **Coxswain: Kari**

Green Room Manager. Will be recognisable by her splendid dress sense and by her having carefully cultivated a worried expression in order to fit in with everyone else. She is in charge of getting people to where they are meant to be, or at any rate of causing this to happen, with effortless ease.

Kari has been being quietly efficient at conventions for what seems to have been a long time, but can't have been really unless she started running the things in her cradle.

Having signed up once, Kari is not going to re-do it; she doesn't believe in repeating her effects.

#### **Sergeant of Marines: John Harold**

Head of Security. Will not be recognisable.

John's function is to appear behind you, silently, sort out the trouble and then vanish before you notice that he's arrived.

Not eligible for resignation.

#### **Supercargo: Mark Plummer**

Dealers' Room Supremo. Will be recognisable by a resemblance to Lavengro, including the casually knotted bandana and flashing eyes and teeth, and by the ferociously concerned expression.

Mark is in charge of making sure that anyone who has some thing that they wish to sell at the convention is brought into contact with persons who potentially wish to buy the artifacts to be vendied; and he isn't even on to a percentage. Definitely a candidate for being bought a drink.

Mark is not eligible for resignation, but he feels it anyway.

#### **Artificer: Tom Abba**

Art Show Supremo. Will be recognisable by the fact that he is likely to be wearing a sillier hat than that of Chris, and by an expression not so much worried as incisively bemused.

Not only will Tom put pictures on display, and organise getting them auctioned if such is the desire of the artists, he has also produced the fliers for Sou'Wester over the past 18 months. At Helicon he was responsible for the Bear in a Box and irresponsible for as much else as he could manage in the time available.

Tom would not dare to try to resign: the Other Bear might Get him.

#### **Officer of the First Watch: Tim Broadribb**

Film Show Supremo. Will be recognisable by his watchful expression. Tim watches *everything*: more so if it has sprocket holes down the sides, more so if it's female, presumably most so if it's female and with sprocket holes down the sides.

His business is to show the films. Show them what, he hasn't told us. We trust him, anyway; he's done this before, just a few times...

Tim is not eligible for resignation, and if he tried we would despair.

#### **Officers of the Second Watch: Harry Payne & David Row**

Video programming. Will be recognisable by the antisocial hours they feel obliged to keep, and by the benign and therefore worrying expressions. Their function is to show more and more, and more and more diverse, videos, and to keep the members of the convention busy and happy and off the streets at times when all elsewhere is chaos or closed, depending.

Neither of them would dream of trying to resign: the mad impulsive fools were (shh) *volunteers!!*

#### **Pirate Parrot Princess: Pat Silver**

Not On the Committee. Pat was on the Follycon committee, and has provided advice, computer programs, scrap paper, more advice, suggestions, dire warnings and other essentials including tea (or rather coffee) and sympathy.

Pat resigned from the committee early and often, and made a home run.

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# British Easter Conventions

## Early conventions

1937	Leeds	
1938	London	
1939	London	
1943	Leicester	Midvention
1944	London	Eastercon

## Eastercons

1	1948	London	Whitcon	Bertam Chandler
2	1949	London	Loncon	
*	1951	London	Festivention	Forrest Ackerman, Lyell Crane
3	1952	London	Loncon	
4	1953	London	Coroncon	
5	1954	Manchester	Supermancon	John Russell Fearn
6	1955	Kettering	Cytricon	
7	1956	Kettering	Cytricon II	
8	1957	Kettering	Cytricon III	
9	1958	Kettering	Cytricon IV	
10	1959	Birmingham	Brumcon	
11	1960	London		Ted Carnell, Don Ford
12	1961	Gloucester	LXIcon	Kingsley Amis
13	1962	Harrogate	Ronvention	Tom Boardman
14	1963	Peterborough	Bullcon	Edmund Crispin
15	1964	Peterborough	Repetercon	EC Tubb
16	1965	Birmingham	Brumcon II	Harry Harrison
17	1966	Yarmouth	Yarcon	Ron Whiting
18	1967	Bristol	Briscon	John Brunner
19	1968	Buxton	Thirdmancon	Ken Bulmer
20	1969	Oxford	Galactic Fair	Judith Merril
21	1970	London	Seacon'70	James Blish
22	1971	Worcester	Eastercon 22	Anne McCaffrey, Ethel Lindsay
23	1972	Chester	Chessmancon	Larry Niven
24	1973	Bristol	OMPAcon	Samuel R Delany
25	1974	Newcastle	Tynecon	Bob Shaw, Peter Weston
26	1975	Coventry	Seacon	Harry Harrison
27	1976	Manchester	Mancon 5	Robert Silverberg, Peter Roberts
28	1977	Coventry	Eastercon 77	John Bush
29	1978	Heathrow	Skycon	Robert Sheckley, Roy Kettle
30	1979	Leeds	Yorcon	Richard Cowper, Graham & Pat Charnock
31	1980	Glasgow	Albacon	Colin Kapp, Jim Barker
32	1981	Leeds	Yorcon II	Ian Watson, Tom Disch, Dave Langford
33	1982	Brighton	Channelcon	Angela Carter, John Sladek
34	1983	Glasgow	Albacon II	James White, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Avedon Carol
35	1984	Brighton	Seacon'84	Roger Zelazny, Chris Priest, Pierre Barbet, Josef Nesvadba, Waldemar Kumming
36	1985	Leeds	Yorcon III	Greg Benford, Linda Pickersgill
37	1986	Glasgow	Albacon III	Joe Haldeman, John Jarrold
38	1987	Birmingham	BECCON'87	Keith Roberts, Chris Atkinson
39	1988	Liverpool	Follycon	Gordon Dickson, Gwyneth Jones, Len Wein, Greg Pickersgill
40	1989	Jersey	Contrivance	M John Harrison, Anne McCaffrey, Don Lawrence, Avedon Carol, Rob Hanson
41	1990	Liverpool	Eastcon	Iain Banks, SMS, Anne Page
42	1991	Glasgow	Speculation	Rob Holdstock
43	1992	Blackpool	Illumination	Geoff Ryman, Paul McAuley, Pam Wells
44	1993	Jersey	Helicon	George RR Martin, John Brunner, Karel Thole, Larry van der Putte
45	1994	Liverpool	Sou'Wester	Diane Duane, Neil Gaiman, Barbara Hambly, Peter Morwood, <del>Who</del> the <i>Flight</i>

NB Eastercons were held over Whitsun until 1955 when they moved to Easter. Festivention was tied in with the Festival of Britain and is not numbered as an Eastercon.

# Mornington Crescent Tournament Rules

It has come to our attention that an attempt may be made to repeat the *Worthington Manœuvre*, in the run up to the turn of the century. Teams are warned that this will lead to instant disqualification, and blacklisting of the individuals concerned.

In order to render this folly less practicable, we have decided to take up the suggestion made last year by the Jade team and to open play by *Local Rules*. After a certain amount of heated discussion the local has been selected: The Bull at Goring. Since the only available clean copy of these rules is in the hands of the Landlord, photostats will be made available to teams on application and on payment of a small fee.

*Rule 17* remains inviolate, as always. In addition, the optional straddle has been included, unless it is transpentine. *Paschal Rules* come into force as usual at midnight on April 2nd/3rd.

After consultation with our typesetters we have elected to adopt *Biffin's Foible* to prevent the unauthorised anti-aliasing during play. However responding to the recent EC Directive, and in order that play should continue to abide by the terms of the amendment to the Geneva Convention, *Biffin's Foible* may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, or in the event of a tie — provided that the tie contains no man-made fibres or amusing representations of popular cartoon characters.

We want a nice, clean game, with no gouging or biting, please, teams. There will be penalties.

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# Preparing the Programme

Rhodri James

The first thing I did on taking over programming duties a year and a half ago was to decide what sort of programme I wanted. The committee gave me a fairly free hand in the matter, and approved of my choice of an unambitious, balanced, traditional Eastercon programme. There would be items on SF and Fantasy literature, on TV and films, on fandom and fanzines, on science, on gaming, and all the rest of the normal lucky dip. To achieve this, I then picked a subcommittee which, I hoped, was also balanced, unambitious and traditional. Well, one out of three wasn't too bad.

The programming subcommittee I finally settled on consisted of myself, Michael Abbott, John Dallman, Sue Edwards, Claire Goodall, Robert Maughan, Kari Maund and Linda Stratmann, all of whom deserve thanks for keeping me on the tracks and being generally wonderful workers. Between us we adequately covered books, comics, films, TV, writing, gaming, filking, fanzines, conventions, science, history and literature, as well as providing links to Green Room, Ops and Guest Liaison. This meant that we were able to brainstorm over the whole area of SF and fandom, and produce a programme that worked as a whole rather than as a collection of bits.

The committee initially set the twin themes of Travel and Change to drive our deliberations. Whilst these did generate a few ideas, they didn't capture the imagination of the subcommittee. More interesting, we felt, was the idea of asking future cons to run an item for us. We were emphatic, however, that these should be real items of genuine interest to Eastercon goers, not just adverts for conventions. The committees that we approached were quite enthusiastic about the whole idea, and soon started throwing programme items back at us. Even the mighty machinery of Intersection set to work on new ideas as well as the items that we had already talked them into. Someday I may reveal the details of Martin Easterbrook's obsession with porridge...

Many ideas died still-born, of course. A few ideas for playing with generation ships never reached the first generation, nor did the modelling workshop. An item on whether Economics could work didn't. We missed our chance to get the BBC to come and be grilled. And I never did work out what to do with the fascinating title "The Inverted World And Other Mobile Homes." Equally, various people did suggest items to us which, wonder of wonders, fitted neatly with existing holes in the programme.

There is surprisingly little flexibility in the programme of an average Eastercon, particularly in a hotel like the Adelphi in which you cannot run any programme

streams. Your evenings come mapped out for you: Friday has the Filk Concert, Saturday has the Masquerade and Disco, Sunday has the Awards Ceremony and Banquet or Cabaret, Monday has the Dead Dog Party. You can change any of these, but not lightly; fandom has become fond of its spectaculars, and does not take kindly to their absence. The remaining time in the afternoon is quickly eaten into by the obligatory Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Gripe Session, Art Auction, major Guest of Honour items which should not be programmed against, and so on. Taken all in all, there are not many programme-hours left in the day, and when you start trying to balance the programme so that similar items do not clash, you quickly find yourself running out of manoeuvring room.

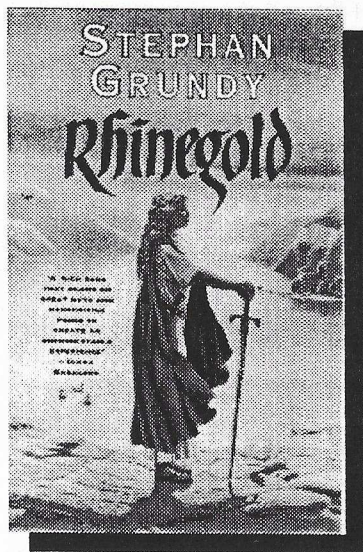
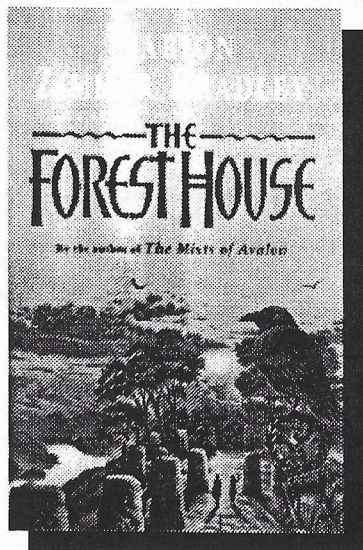
Eventually everything settled down, and by early December we had a good approximation of the final programme. It turned out to be rather heavier on literary SF than I had intended, and light on comics and media items. There was clearly a little tinkering left to do, a few items to be swapped about for better effect or to avoid scheduling the same person on consecutive hours, and so on. The usual boring mechanics.

Enter Dave Clements, cackling. You must have heard of the grant that Dave, Amanda Baker and John Bray prised out of the Office of Science and Technology for the purpose of getting eminent scientists to conventions. As Dave Langford was heard to murmur at the time, the smallest Cabinet Office grant attracted the largest amount of publicity, as Dave Clements was interviewed on the radio four or five times in three days. This grant had to be spent by the end of the financial year, so logically Sou'Wester became the major beneficiary.

You can imagine the effect of this on our nearly finished programme. Mild devastation followed at the next few subcommittee meetings as parts of the programme were bumped into smaller and smaller rooms to make enough space for scientific items, which had to be picked carefully to avoid unbalancing the whole programme. The further revelation that a number of members of World SF would be at the Eastercon caused relatively little chaos by comparison.

Since this article is being written in late January, I still don't know whether the final programme will confirm to my original ideas, nebulous as they were. I think it will come quite close. I hope that it will encourage different areas of fandom to meet and mix with each other, breaking down some of the comfortable but oh-so-destructive ghetto walls. How do you think it went?

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416S	John Alderman	492A	Steve Browster	365A	Mandy Dakin
255A	Iain Alexander	672A	Ian Broadhead	37A	John Dallman
329S	Mike Alexander	656A	Faith Brooker	296A	Maggie Dalton
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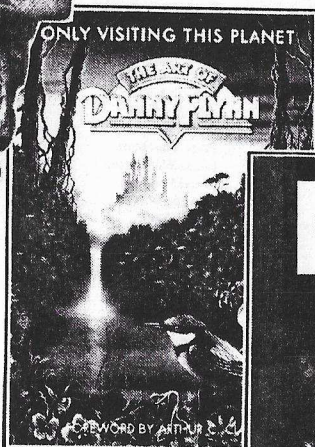
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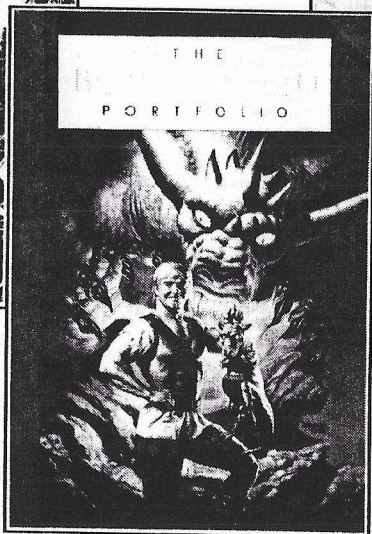


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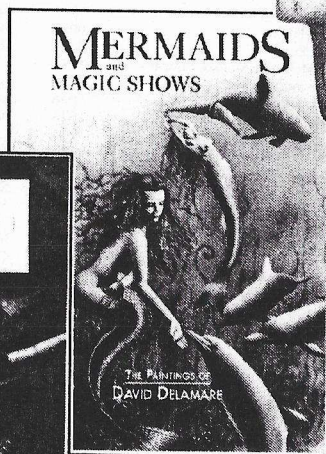
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