

Inclination PR 1

The Chequers Hotel, Newbury May 25th – 28th 1990

November 1989

Sex, Lies & Sellotape – The Chairman's Bit

This is it – the PR with the mostest, produced by the grooviest hippest team in the Western Hemisphere. Yup, Inclination is here with a bounce in its eye and a gleam in its step, casting scorn in the face of syntax and derision in the ears of good taste. Gosh, thrilling stuff is sure to follow.

After months of stalling, the Inclination committee have pulled their collective finger out and have toiled long and hard to produce this little PR gem. Lives will be brightened, despair shuffled off and money produced once this has been read. Honest guv. But seriously, things have been toddling along nicely and the reaction from fandom has been favourable. We're looking forward to a fun convention with oodles of audience participation, which is after all what it's all about. The plans we have for the programme to date involve both serious and funny items, and we hope to divide the programme into two equally balanced halves. More of this later.

But now for something entirely familiar. Some of you may be wondering just what Inclination is all about and are reading this to gain eternal enlightenment on that very subject. Well, not being one to prolong ignorance, I shall briefly expound the philosophy behind this convention. The basic tenet is that we want as many people as possible to participate in our programme items and, in doing so, introduce some new faces to the gentlemanly sport of programme participation. This, we feel, is very important if people are to gain the confidence required to take part in larger conventions. Nobody wants to be flung in at the deep end and a small convention of this sort, with no pressure on anybody, should be ideal to break people in gently. Evil cackles of laughter from off stage – we have ways of making you involved. We want old lags and newcomers to be in the same items, so that the newcomers can learn from the aged, but deeply talented fans. (The use of 'deeply' and 'talented' is entirely gratuitous.)

That's about all I want to say about the framework behind Inclination, as it's easy to overburden a convention with ideals and intent. Far better to let it unwind naturally and turn out the way it wants. A convention reflects the nature and attitudes of its members and, because of our members, we know Inclination will be a success.

Enough of this, and on with the dancing boys!

Aunty Elsie

Yes, well. The real Inclination committee is actually Linda-Clare Toal (chairman), Michael Abbott, Helen Goff, Mike Gould and Richmond Hunt. This is probably also a good point to mention that Keith Oborn has agreed to be our on-the-spot hotel liaison. In the rest of this PR is a slightly more serious explanation of what Inclination is going to be like, some information on the programme, what you need to know about the hotel, and more of that sort of stuff. There are also a couple of really important forms which can be posted off or given to any committee member.

What It's All About

Inclination is going to be slightly different from every other convention. In the past, there tend to have been two kinds of conventions. One kind is multi-streamed, heavily-programmed, with films, and guests, and everything under the sun, while the other is relaxed and lightly-programmed, with the focus on meeting people and chatting in the bar.

Inclination will be both of these kinds of convention. Or perhaps it'll be neither. Or something in between. No, let's say it'll be the best of both.

On the one hand, we're going to have a full programme running past midnight every night, taking up two rooms, with a range of serious and light-hearted panels and discussions, and some downright silly games and events. There's more about this below. On the other hand, there will be only one programme stream, no Guests of Honour, no films, no dealers' room, and no sit-and-watch programme items, but there will be plenty of time to chat to people in the bar. As far as Inclination is concerned, there won't be much difference between talking in the bar and talking in the programme.

The reason for this slightly weird combination approach to conventions is Inclination's theme, which is active participation: conventions as something to do rather than to watch. We're hoping to get all the participants actively involved, whether it's their first convention, their second, or their hundredth. Hence, no films, no speeches from famous authors, no time wasted on slick publications, but a weekend mixing talking in programme items (including a lot suggested by the membership) with talking in the bar. The exact mix is up to you, but all together it will (we hope) be both challenging and fun.

The Programme

Obviously, the programme is going to be important to the ideas of Inclination, so here's an outline of how it's going to be run. More details nearer the time.

First off, the times and places: the programme, which is single-stream, will run from 8pm to midnight of Friday, 11am to 1am on Saturday and Sunday, and (since it's a bank holiday weekend), 11am to 2pm on Monday. However, to reduce the dangers of complete overload, there'll be a break for dinner from 6:30 to 8:30pm on Saturday and Sunday evening, and there'll be one programme item every one-and-a-half hours, instead of

the usual one each hour. If a programme item wants to go on ninety minutes (in the opinion of the people present), that's fine: if it's shorter, that's fine too, and people can have a break for a drink before the next item.

As well as all this, there are two rooms booked for our one programme stream, and we'll be using them alternately. So if one item uses up its hour-and-a-half and some people want to keep it going, there's no problem with that either --though we might just start winding it up if it carries on three hours.

All of which should help give programme items some of the more leisurely feel and relaxed atmosphere of conversations in the bar. And at all the panels and discussions, the same rule applies: contributions from anyone present will always be welcome. They will all be participation events.

The idea of active participation in the programme is one that isn't going to wait till the convention. One of the two inserts in this PR is the Programme and General Information Form. As well as the usual space for you to say what programme items you'd like to take part in, and volunteer to help in other ways, there's a large section for any suggestions you have for programme items, of whatever kind. This includes any suggestions that you wouldn't want to take an active part in yourself on the day, as long as you think it'd make a good programme item. Also, don't feel you have to use the form: we're equally interested in ideas however they get to us, by post or face-to-face.

And most importantly, of course: what is the programme actually going to contain? Well, we won't know it all ourselves until the Programme Forms have come back, but we've bent our principles enough to come up with some ideas ourselves. So far our 'silly' items planned include Pass the Buck (a combination of Pass the Parcel and being on a Worldcon committee), a different version of Mornington Crescent, and, performed live, a History of Fandom, Part 1: 4004 BC - 1900 AD. Also at least one item starring Linda-Clare Toal: we don't know exactly what's going to happen in it yet, and we probably still won't after it's over.

Our serious items will cover SF topics, matters fannish, and anything else of interest to enough people. They include panels on the stages SF has been through, what the future might hold in different fields, a discussion of fringe religious cults, a look at fannish competitiveness, fan feuds, arts cinema, and an ice cream tasting. What do you mean, that isn't serious? It's a genuine culinary study, and we've already arranged freezer space with the hotel. There may be a covering charge for this, though we'll accept ice cream supplies in payment.

There'll be more information about the programme in PR 2, including how to get ice cream to the convention, (though we'll supply some ourselves as well), and more detailed information about some of the other items above and those decided from your feedback. There'll also be a list of items for which we will want volunteer participants.

Newbury and the Chequers

Inclination will be held in the Chequers Hotel in Newbury. A lot of you will know the Chequers, host (so far) of four Rubicons and a Contabile, and it's done good work at them.

Newbury is a pleasant market town a short train ride west of London. The Chequers is in the centre of town, fifteen minutes walk from the railway station, and we'll be taking it over entirely, using two rooms for the programme, and spreading socially over all the rest of its vast and comfortable lounge space, including two bars. There is also a restaurant that serves the best hotel breakfasts known to fandom, and good meals in the evening --though if you prefer, the bars will serve up hot meals at lunch, and sandwiches as late as three in the morning. The staff enjoy having SF conventions, and are both friendly and (usually) reliable. Room rates will be £27 per night single, and £22.50 per person per night in a double or twin.

There are 17 single rooms, 8 twin and 26 double, as well as three family rooms (which include a cot for children). We don't have details of the family rooms yet, so if you are interested, say so on the form and we'll get back to you.

Enclosed with the PR is a form for hotel bookings: you can join at the same time if you haven't already. It's all very straightforward, and you can just send us the information in a letter if you'd prefer. Please note that we will need a £10 deposit, payable to Inclination, before we can confirm the booking with the hotel. Obviously, the sooner you can send us the booking form, the easier it is for us, and the more likely you are to get the kind of room you want (and one of the better rooms of that kind as well). We **must** have the deposit and booking form by Easter. Hotel booking forms should be sent to:

Linda-Clare Toal,
11 Oakfield Avenue, Kelvinbridge, GLASGOW, G12 8JF

Once again, thanks to Keith Oborn for agreeing to be our on-the-spot hotel liaison during the run-up to the convention. He's done this job at all four Rubicons, and knows the Chequers very well. We appreciate his help.

Dull Bits

A few details that you need to know, but probably know already:

Attending membership of Inclination is £8, supporting (which gets you all our publications) is £5. Supporting membership can be converted to attending for the difference in costs. We're not selling advertising space or dealer's tables. There'll be a list of members in PR 2, and there would have been one in this one if it didn't require two more sides of PR. The end.