

# NOVACON

## Fifteen

1<sup>ST</sup> - 3<sup>RD</sup> November 1985

De Vere Hotel  
Coventry

GUESTS of HONOUR:

Dave Langford  
James White

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION.....	3
THE COMMITTEE.....	4
JAMES WHITE.....	7
.....by BOB SHAW.....	8
.....by WALT WILLIS.....	9
JAMES WHITE'S TWENTY ANSWERS.....	11
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	12
.....by ROG PEYTON.....	12
DAVID LANGFORD.....	14
.....photograph by ARNOLD AIKEN.....	14
.....by CHRIS EVANS.....	15
.....by KEV SMITH.....	16
DAVE LANGFORD'S TWENTY ANSWERS.....	18
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	21
WITHER NOVACON?.....	25
.....by STEVE GREEN.....	25
THE HISTORY OF NOVACON.....	27
THE NOVA AWARDS.....	29
THE COFF AWARDS.....	30
.....by EDDIE TRENCHCOAT.....	30
THE MEMBERSHIP LIST.....	31

### ADVERTISEMENTS

BSFG.....	2
BECCON.....	6
BSFG ANNIVERSARY PARTY.....	24
MEXICON.....	26
ALBACON.....	28
PANGOLIN.....	Back cover

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# NOVACON

is run annually by the  
**Birmingham Science Fiction Group**

**HONORARY PRESIDENTS:**  
**BRIAN W ALDISS and**  
**HARRY HARRISON.**

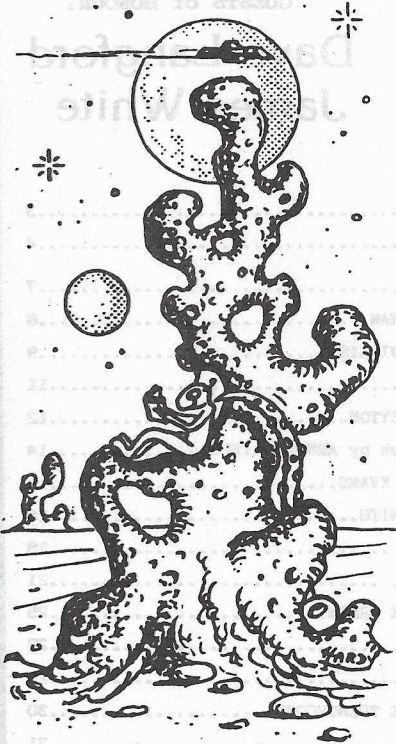
Regular monthly meetings  
since 1971.

Past speakers include;

Brian Aldiss,  
Isaac Asimov,  
Tom Disch,  
Harry Harrison,  
Rob Holdstock,  
Anne McCaffrey,  
Larry Niven,  
Fred Pohl,  
Chris Priest,  
Theodore Sturgeon,  
etc etc.

Monthly newsletters  
giving up to date  
news and reviews.

Meets 3rd Friday of  
each month - at The  
New Imperial Hotel,  
Temple Street,  
Birmingham.



For details contact

**DAVID HARDY**

**(021)-777-1802**

Non-members welcome !

# Chairman's <sup>very</sup> Last Hot Waffles

"This is it, better or worse, who knows? One weekend, one teeny-weeny weekend. Only one of us can leave and I have brought this on myself. Who knows?"

The door slammed shut and thick locks thudded into place, leaving only silence. The dark room was filled with all sorts of books, chairs and tables. Even a fully stocked kitchen and bathroom. And over against the far wall, a penny farthing.

"We meet again, Another chance for me to try and find out what goes on in that head of yours. I must have come close the first time to discovering your secret. But what brings me back you may ask. Misplaced loyalty, duty above and beyond, unrequited love or even express orders from they who control. Many people have tried to probe my mind with that question and failed. In fact, I am as much on trial here as you are. I thought I had proved myself the first time around and succeeded. Yet I was wrong. To escape I should have failed. Do something wrong and they'll have you back, but make it harder for you. Fail and you have passed. You can be classified and put in your place. My problem is that I don't want to be classified. I am here because you can be a stubborn, self-centred, unadaptable and over-rated convention. I am here because I love a challenge, a challenge to make you none of these. For a time I thought you had won, but here we are at last for better or worse.

So, what is it about you that keeps you going? The heritage, all those years to keep up? I'm sorry to tell you this, but that doesn't impress me. How about that inability to fit in, that snobbery at being different? Well, have I got news for you! People are not prepared to accept you unless you change.

I know what keeps you going, people like me, prepared to bash their heads in trying to help you. People who would put you first against friends, wives and personal loss. So wrapped up with you that they fail to see you as others do. So, this is it, for better or worse, my last attempt to unravel your secrets and make a better convention of you. For after this, I will leave you, five years is long enough for you to hurt me. So, for this last weekend, let us co-operate and really enjoy ourselves, happy in the knowledge that for you and I, the affair is over. And I thank you for that."

All that can be said now is thanks to James White and Dave Langford for being our guests of honour. Thanks to Carol, Graham, Martin, Tony, Dad and Zena for indulging me and everyone else who helped me along the way.

But most of all, thanks to Eunice, who, after all this, gets her husband back. (About time too! (EP) )

*Phill Probert*

# The Committed

PHILL PROBERT -- Chairman.

"There's something adult about the Capricorn baby. You hardly dare talk to him in baby talk because he seems to look at you with slight amazement. The Capricorn child doesn't go in for tantrums and shrieks of joy; as a realist he simply keeps quiet and decides the best course of action. There is something rather determined about his personality and behaviour. Behind this is the wish, from very early on, to achieve success. He seems to follow a precise plan and is capable of waiting for the best moment to get what he wants. He likes it when he can potter around quietly at his tasks or play. More than any other child, the little Capricorn takes as interest in the world of adults. He always likes to do a job properly and you can absolutely rely on him when there's a difficult task that needs patience, diplomacy and practical skill. His eagerness to learn usually makes him a good pupil (but sometimes a rather solitary 'model' pupil). Their tendency towards shyness and moral conflict means Capricorn children need lots of encouragement not to be so serious with themselves. Even if they react rather soberly to praise -- because they don't show their feelings easily -- they need lots of positive feedback." (From 'Mother And Baby', October 1985)

TONY BERRY -- Our man in Coventry, Fan programme/Fan room.

"I was born in Coventry in 1957 and first got into Fandom in 1978 through the Leeds University Science Fiction Society and the Leeds Group. My first con was Yorcon 1 in 1979, where I was so young and ~~stupid~~ innocent I volunteered to sit at the registration desk for hours at a time. Since then I have attended dozens of cons but have managed to avoid getting involved in running one. Until now that is, where I find myself responsible for the Alternative Programme (this boy's a fool).

On the writing side, I edited the LUSF Soc. magazine for two years and since then have produced three issues of a personalzine 'Eyeballs In The Sky' and was also a founder member of Frank's apa. At a con, when not losing

At a con, when not losing all my money to D. West at poker, I can usually be found losing all my money to D. West at dominoes. So I need people to buy drinks for me."

EUNICE PEARSON -- Publications.

I AM.....24; married to Phill; part-owner of two cats; companion of a teddy bear called William; a Christian; a fan of 'Miss Read' and Georgette Heyer; on a convention committee for the last time ever; editor of seven fanzines; a member of Get-Stuffed, The Women's Periodical, Minneapa, and ANZAPA; fond of chocolate, classical music and writing letters (I have 48 penfriends); sick and fed-up of British fandom, rotting cancer on the face of humanity that it is; hoping to be a mother soon; a J. G. Ballard fan.....

I AM.....me; and if you don't like it, you can lump it.

MARTIN TUDOR -- Advertising, hotel liason.

"I first heard of fandom through the BSFG just in time to miss NOVACON 9, attended NOVACON 10 and discovered the Birmingham Science Fiction Group. Then I hung around the bar in the Ivy Bush deftly avoiding any work for a couple of years ...until being drawn into con organising and fanzine production by the Donaldson/Oldroyd team and Pete Weston respectively. To this date I've published six issues of my genzine EMPTIES, produced a few apazines for FRANK'S APA, THE ORGANIZATION and EURAPA, worked on SEACON '84, NOVACON 14 and briefly on the BRITAIN IN '87 bid, as well as producing the BSFG Newsletter. I can be identified by the pint in my hand, the large flacid mass above my waist and the fungus on my chin. (Whaddya mean that describes 90% of male and 50% of female fans?!)"

CAROL PEARSON -- Art show.

"It's not easy being someone's little sister; especially a fan's little sister. Most people autotomically assume that I started reading sf because Eunice told me to. Well I didn't -- it was because of my friend Clenda-Newman. Eunice may have taught me to read, but I found I could manage pretty well on my own, thank you very much, once I reached the age of twelve! I was quite proud of my collection of Isaac Asimov paperbacks; despite Eunice sneering as she read a J.G. Ballard. (Mind you, my books seemed to wander onto her bookshelves all by themselves!) I was very intrigued by all the tales Eunice told me about this Novacon thing and I was eager to see it for myself; especially as that was were she met Phill!

Since then, I've helped out at Novacon 13, 14 and now I've been 'persuaded' to join this year's committee. I'm a member of The Women's Periodical and The Organization and I may just do a fanzine sometime, if no one stops me in the meantime! I'm rather fond of cats, playing the church organ and pestering Phill and Eunice."

GRAHAM POOLE -- Registrations, treasurer, hotel bookings.

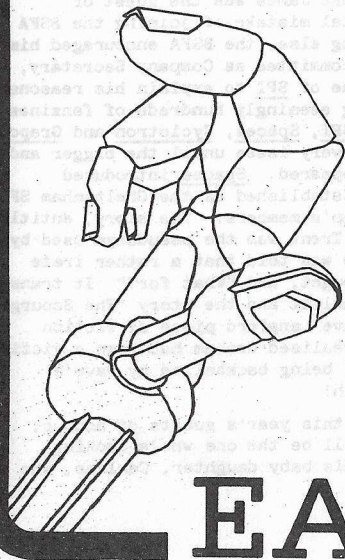
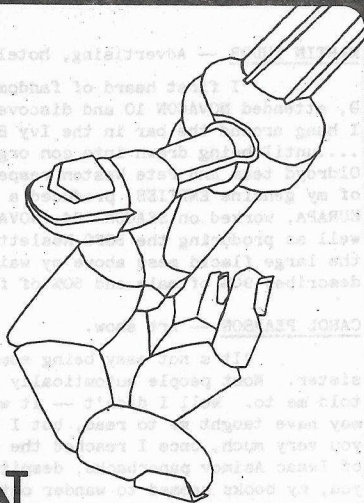
"Graham is a fan of the 70's who claims that the only thing he didn't do in that decade was serve on a convention committee. His first convention was the Easter-con at the Giffard Hotel, Worcester in 1970. One of the many people he met there was James White looking smart as he was indoctrinated into that sacred fannish order of Sf Fantasy. Graham classed him as one of fandom's nice guys and so was encouraged at attend the very first Novacon later that year because James was the guest of honour. Having encountered fandom Graham made the fatal mistake of joining the BSFA and then letting slip he was an accountant. If nothing else, the BSFA encouraged him to begin fanzine production. After two years on the committee as Company Secretary, he finally left in disgust and produced the first issue of SPI to explain his reasons. 1975 to 1977 saw Graham at his most active, publishing seemingly hundreds of fanzines (in reality, probably no more than thirty) including SPI, Spaces, Cyclotron and Grapo. SPI turned from photocopied to litho, improving with every issue until the bigger and better syndrome took its toll and issue seven never appeared. Spaces introduced Graham to our other guest of honour, Dave Langford. Established as the Cheltenham SF Group fanzine, it contained a story by one of the group's members. The story, entitled "The Scourge From Space" was by-lined Ian Trent. Ian Trent was the pseudonym used by Timothy C.S. Apps, or so Graham thought. At Mancon he was told that a rather irate Dave Langford was looking for him. "Dave who?" he thought, and "What for?" It transpired that Ian Trent was a pseudonym used by Keith Punlett and the story "The Scourge From Space" a badly retyped rip-off of a very early Dave Langford piece of fiction that originally appeared in Spinx. Fortunately Dave realised Graham had been a victim of a cruel hoax and Timothy C.S. Apps fared less well, being backballed by Dave's friends wielding a tin of black boot polish and a brush!

Graham survived those early encounters with this year's guests of honour, and can be easily recognised at the convention. he will be the one who's looking bleary-eyed at the start of the convention thanks to his baby daughter, Carlene, who was born on october 4.

# BECCON

# 87

## A Bid to hold the 1987 EASTER CONVENTION at the METROPOLE BIRMINGHAM NEC



If you wish to support this bid then;

Either give us your name and address at  
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# THE EASTERCON

# JAMES WHITE





# James White

I first got to know Jim White in 1949, which was a full year before he got to know me.

The reason for that odd state of affairs was that I had to cross centra. Belfast on my way to work, and in the mornings my attention was always caught by his lofty distinguished figure waiting outside the door of a tailoring establishment, where he obviously worked. At the time I firmly believed that I was the only science fiction fan in Ireland, but Jim had already met up with Walt Willis and was working on his fanzine, SLANT. Perhaps it was some wisp of telepathy which caused me to notice Jim -- or perhaps it was something to do with the fact that he's a couple of yards high. Anyway, I got quite a jolt when I finally contacted Irish Fandom and at my first meeting was introduced to Jim.

Little did I know that that was the start of a friendship which has lasted for eight summers. (Due to the vagaries of the Irish climate, a timespan of eight summers is equal to roughly 35 years.) During that period I have worked in the same office as Jim, seen him develop into a respected professional writer, tried (unsuccessfully) to borrow money from him, burned my fingers on his stupid model rocketship, learned to understand his jokes, helped introduce him to the evils of strong liquor, and finally convinced him that his early infatuation with Vera Ellen was misguided and that he would be better fantasising about somebody like Sheree North.

Above all, I've had a good time, because he is kindly, thoughtful, numerous, and has a truly original mind. Another quality which makes him an excellent choice as Guest of Honour is that he is a good talker. Even if he has no interest in your pet subject he is prepared to cultivate an interest in it there and then, all in the cause of lively conversation. What more can you ask of a friend or GoH?

Sometimes I find it a little surprising that Jim and I get on so well, because the usual criteria by which I choose my friends are very strict -- they have to eat too much, drink too much, smoke too much, be untidy, swear a lot, waste all their money, and have filthy minds. Jim qualifies on hardly any of these counts, so the only explanation I can think of is that he has been an uplifting influence on me.

Most attendees at Novacon 15 will know Jim White already and their regard for him will be as high as mine, but if by any chance you've never met him -- don't hang back! Go ahead and talk to him. About anything that comes into your head. For as long as you want. Make him work for his free b&b.

(First published in Novacon 15 progress report one.)

*Bob Shaw*

# APPRECIATION

People tend to look up to James, and it's not just because he is roughly a mile high. It's because having met him, they recognise that here is a man who, in the Ulster phrase, "doesn't have to stand up twice to cast a shadow". In other words he is a person of real substance: good without being dull, kind without being bland, wise without being smug and determined without being ruthless. Such people are rare, and the opportunity to meet one is not to be lightly discarded. So if you enjoy his work and would like to tell him so, go ahead and do it. You can be sure of a welcome, for he is not one of your standoffish pros. If unaccountably he doesn't seem to see you coming, I assure you it's only because he hasn't seen you yet: his eyesight isn't all that great these days.

It is keen enough, though, to recognise in the youngest and newest of fans, or the most timid convention attendee, himself as he was more years ago than his wife Peggy might like me to say. He was just an ordinary fan then, like you or me. In fact he still is. Just the other year he wrote a fanfiction piece which is a classic in its field, about the effect of our troubles on Irish Fandom: it is deeply moving to the few people who can remember how things used to be.

Looking back down through those years, it seems to me I can pin-point the actual moment at which James started to become a professional writer. It was about 10 pm on Sunday, 11th December, 1949, that there occurred what I sometimes think of as the Big Bang that started it all. We were in those days producing with immense labour a printed fanzine called Slant, for which I did the writing and James the illustrations, mostly woodcuts. I kept trying to persuade James to write something, but he kept saying he couldn't. And then something happened I will never forget. I described it in a 1962 fanzine called Xero, published by Dick Lupoff.

"James had the job of operating the press because he's bigger than I, being six foot four inches tall and the rest of him made to scale. He had the process down to a fine art, if you can describe as a fine art anything so brutal and awesome. Having closed the press he would take a deep breath, grasp the lever firmly with both hands and push himself into the air, where he would remain for a moment before returning to the floor. I estimate he had made this ascent twelve thousand times, and the first 25 pages of Slant 3 were stacked neatly in the corner, when disaster struck. We had set up and proofed the last page, the back cover, and were ready to run it off. The time was about ten pm. The page we were printing was even more crammed with type than usual, and James realised that an even greater effort than usual was required. Besides, this was the last page of an issue to which we had devoted our entire spare time for six months; he was going to finish the job properly. He eyed the press grimly, making sure it was firmly based. Then, retreating about three feet, he reached forward for the lever. Grasping it firmly in his two large hands, he bent at the knees and launched himself upwards in a parabolic arc, descending on the printing press from the vicinity of the ceiling like a heavyweight avenging angel. We covered in anticipation of the crunch of half a square foot of type and paper being rammed halfway through a cork dinner mat, but instead there was an earsplitting CRACK!

Pieces of shrapnel ricocheted off the walls as James fell heavily onto the table and slid to the floor with a dazed expression, still clutching a stump of lever.

It was some moments before we recovered sufficiently to realise what had happened. It appeared that the part of the lever which made contact with the top of the press had completely disintegrated: at least we never found any of it except a few anonymous little particles like meteorites....."

It sometimes seems to me that in the following years that explosion echoed through the science fiction world we inhabited like the hundred-letter crack of dawn/doom that resounds through Finnegans Wake. For one outcome was that eventually James gave up making woodcuts and took to writing. His first effort was a report on the 1951 London, part of which was published by Vince Clarke in his SFNews. In an effort to encourage James, I remember Bob Shaw and I wrote letters of comment on that issue under various names, including a picture postcard of Buckingham Palace.....

"Dear Mr. Clarke,

We were amused by the Unconventional Fan by Mr. White. This is one of our favourite subjects.  
Yrs.

ER

PS. This is Our room."

Whether as a result of such august encouragement or not, James eventually sold a story to New Worlds, and then produced another which I persuaded him with some difficulty was good enough for Astounding, as Analog was then called. So James diffidently sent it off on its long and almost hopeless voyage across the Atlantic. Then as I recorded in a fanzine later.....

"One evening in March 1953 James White arrived at my house in great excitement clutching a letter from John W. Campbell Himself disclosing that he was willing to pay \$285 for James' story, the Scavengers. This was a fabulous sum to us in those days, but even to mention money in this context was misleading except in that it lent an air of reality to the incredible glory which had descended on our humble fan group, born and nurtured on Astounding. Our feelings were more like those of some country vicar who received out of the blue a tablet of stone announcing that his sermon last Sunday had found such favour on high that henceforth it is to be included in the Bible." (Quip 11, Arnie Katz)

For a while I continued to suffer and rejoice with James, but then he drew so far ahead of me that I felt inadequate to advise him. Besides I was so conscious of his worth as a person I doubted my own ability to judge his work dispassionately. I still do: the judgement must be yours, the reader. But I will tell you this: You will never pick up a book by James White that is not the best he can do: that does not make you think better of humanity; or doesn't leave you a better and happier person.

But lest you go away with the impression that James is some sort of saint (though mind you, he is) I thought I would record here some remarks he has made through the years and which I noted down at the time. For such a quiet person, he has a gift for saying things which you remember, because apart from their initial appeal they seem to contain some subtler comment on, well, like, the universe and everything.

For instance, I never go abroad, or attend a highbrow type party without

remembering WHAT'S THE GOOD OF SPEAKING FRENCH IF EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT YOU'RE SAYING? Then again, there seemed to be a deadly but gentle indictment of an entire literary field in his comment on a book he'd just read: IT'S NOT GOOD, BUT IT'S OBSCURE. Or, what about these on science fiction fandom itself: I WANT TO GO TO THE STARS IN MY SPARE TIME, and, OF COURSE I KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SPACESHIP AND A GIRL. I AM A FULLY PAID UP MEMBER OF THE BRITISH INTERPLANETARY SOCIETY.

*Walt Willis*

## 20 Answers

1. Have you got a nickname? "NO."
2. What is your greatest extravagance? "WORD PROCESSOR."
3. What do your slippers look like? "OLD, WORN, BUT THEY COME WHEN I CALL THEM!"
4. Do you believe in love at first sight? "NO."
5. Do you believe there is life after death? "NOT SURE."
6. Do you think there is life on other worlds? "YES."
7. If there is such a place as heaven, what do you think it is like? "HOPE IT HAS E-Ts."
8. Would you like to have been born female, instead of male? "NO."
9. What is your favourite piece of music, or song? "SCHEHERAZADÉ BY RINSKY KORSAKOV."
10. What is your favourite piece of art? "TOO MANY TO CHOOSE."
11. What is your favourite book or story? "LORD OF THE RINGS."
12. Do you prefer cats or dogs? "CATS."
13. If you could go back in time, which era would you choose? "WOULD PREFER TO GO FORWARDS."
14. If you could change one aspect of yourself, which would it be? "MORE FORCEFUL."
15. If you could change places with a famous person, who would it be? "ANY ASTRONAUT."
16. What is your favourite soap opera? "NONE."
17. What do you think of Christmas? "LIKE IT, DISLIKE HANGOVER."
18. Do you remember the first toy you ever had? "NO."
19. What is the first Sf book you read, and when? "THE TIME MACHINE -- 1942."
20. What is your favourite film? "MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH."

# Bibliography

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First published as half of Ace Double D-237 (1957)
- HOSPITAL STATION** -- Novel formed from short stories -- "O'Mara's Orphan"  
("Medic")/"Sector General"/"Trouble With Emily"/"Visitor At Large"/  
"Out-Patient". First in Sector General series.  
First published by Ballantine (1962)
- SECOND ENDING** -- Novel  
First published as half of Ace Double F-173 (1962)
- STAR SUGGEON** -- Novel formed from short story "Resident Physician" and short  
novel "Field Hospital". Second in Sector General series  
First published by Ballantine (1963)
- DEADLY LITTER** -- collection -- "Grapeliner"/"The Ideal Captain"/"The Lights  
Outside The Windows"/"Deadly Litter"  
First published by Ballantine (1964)
- THE ESCAPE ORBIT** -- Novel  
First published by Ace (19650  
Published in UK as OPEN PRISON
- THE WATCH BELOW** -- Novel  
First published by Ballantine (1966)
- ALL JUDGEMENT FLED** -- Novel  
First published by Rapp & Whiting (1968)
- THE ALIENS AMONG US** -- collection -- "Countercharm" (a Sector General story)  
/"To Kill Or Cure"/"Red Alert"/"Tableau"/"The Conspirators"/"The Scavengers"/  
"Occupation: Warrior"  
First published by Ballantine (1969).  
Hardcover edition published by Ian Henry omits the last story
- MAJOR OPERATION** -- Novel formed from short stories -- "Invader"/"Vertigo"/  
"Blood Brother"/"Meatball"/"Major Operation". Third in Sector General  
series  
First published by Ballantine (1971)
- TOMORROW IS TOO FAR** -- Novel  
First published by Ballantine (1971)
- DARK INFERNO** -- Novel  
First published by Michael Joseph (1972)  
Published in USA as LIFEBOAT
- THE DREAM MILLENNIUM** -- Novel  
First published by Ballantine (1974)
- MONSTERS AND MEDICS** -- collection -- novel SECOND ENDING (see above) plus  
short stories "Counter Security"/"Dogfight"/"Nuisance Value"/"In Loving  
Memory"/"The Apprentice"/"Answer Came There None"  
First published by Ballantine (1977)  
UK paperback published by Corgi omits the last two stories

AMBULANCE SHIP -- Novel formed from short stories -- "Contagion"/  
"Quarantine"/"Recovery" ("Ambulance Ship"). Fourth in Sector General  
series

First published by Ballantine (1979)

UK paperback published by Corgi adds extra story "Spacebird"

FUTURES PAST -- collection -- "Spacebird" (a Sector General story)/  
"Commutor"/"Assisted Passage"/"Curtain Call"/"Boarding Party"/  
"Patrol"/"Fast Trip"/"Question of Cruelty"/"False Alarm"/"Dynasty  
Of One"/"Outrider"

First published by Ballantine (1982)

SECTOR GENERAL -- collection -- "Accident"/"Survivor"/"Investigation"/  
"Combined Operation". Fifth in Sector General series

First published by Ballantine (1983)

STAR HEALER -- Novel -- Sixth in Sector General series

First published by Ballantine (1984)

## *Rog Peyton*



JAMES WHITE  
AND HIS WORD  
PROCESSOR

AMERICAN SHIP -- Novel formed from short stories -- "Contingent"  
"Farewell," "Recovery," ("Ambulance Ship"), "Fourth in Sector General"  
series  
First  
UK pub  
FUTURE EAST -- collection -- "Sector" (a short novel)  
"Comet," "Assisted Passage," "Curtain Call," "Boasting Party"  
"Fossil," "Fast Trip," "Question of Gravity," "Sales Area," "Dynamite"  
of "Sector"  
First published by Ballantine (1982)  
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"Combined Operation," Fifth in Sector General series  
First published by Ballantine (1983)  
STAR BEARER -- Novel -- Sixth in Sector General series  
First published by Ballantine (1984)

# DAVE LANGFORD



DAVE LANGFORD  
AND HIS WIFE  
PROFESSOR

# The man who was FANGLORD

Writing an appreciation of Dave Langford is a bit like describing Big Ben to a bunch of Londoners: it's a familiar landmark, and everyone knows what it's like. Physically, in fact, Dave is not unlike Big Ben in that he stands straight and tall (early on in the evening at least), chimes at regular intervals, and can often be seen with outstretched arms as though semaphoring the time. His head, however, is not noticeably pointed, and he only has one face, frequently with a grin of mischief or glee on it.

The newsletter Ansible, one of his finest creations, is required reading for most of us in the British sf fraternity, combining news, gossip, scandal and outrage, all served up with just the right mixture of irreverence and panache. If you haven't got a subscription you're definitely non-U. But Dave's roots go back much further than this and include fanzines humorous (Twil-Ddu) and serious (Drilkjis, co-edited with Kevin Smith) which both exemplify a high standard of intelligence, literacy and, that most essential ingredient of Dave's writing, humour.

Here he is at NOVACON 15, however, as one of our esteemed guests of honour, as freelance writer and author of numerous short stories, the novels The Space Eater and The Leaky Establishment, and non-fiction books such as War in 2080 and An Account of a Meeting with Denizens of Another World 1871. With Chris Morgan he's produced Facts and Fallacies, with George Hay and others The Necronomicon, with Peter Nicholls and Brian Stableford The Science in Science Fiction, and with Charles Platt Micromania. The last of these is a particular favourite of mine since it manages to difuse the mystique which surrounds computers in a very entertaining manner. War in 2080 is another favourite, a sane and funny book about a frightening subject. His most recent production, co-authored with Brian Stableford, is a book outlining the near future of the human race on Earth as speculative history. Next, no doubt, an account of everything that's happened in the universe since the Big Bang.

All of Dave's writing is characterized by a verve, invention and love of the English language. He also has a genuine wit which goes far beyond the crude punnery and burlesque which a lot of us descend to; it may be droll or outrageous, but it's almost always there. Only Dave would have the nerve to write a novel about a nuclear warhead which accidentally gets taken out of a top-security research establishment in a filing cabinet and has to be sneaked back in. He makes it seem both ludicrous and worryingly feasible.

Dave also has a good line in genuinely chilling horror, as readers of his short stories will know. He also inflicted Mac Malsen on an unguarded world, but then none of us is perfect. But above all he's a satirist at heart, sceptical of orthodoxies (except perhaps scientific orthodoxies), scathing about bureaucracy and perennially fascinated by the eccentricities of human behaviour. His basic good-heartedness and love of a joke sometimes allows the objects of his irony to get off more lightly than they deserve; but one of these days he may well be ruthless and single-minded enough to produce a satire of devastating proportions.

Most of you will know that at conventions Dave is usually to be found hovering around the bar. He's the one with the cupped ear, the machine-gun scatter of conversation and the explosive laugh which can stun a whole room into silence.



For someone who's supposed to be slightly deaf he doesn't miss a thing. Often he'll be sitting on the edge of a conversation, looking faintly quizzical or distracted, as if he's not hearing or connecting with what's being said. Then suddenly an eldritch smile creases his face and he pulls forth one of his famous notebooks to scribble down some bon mot or indiscretion which will later be enshrined in the densely packed pages of Ansible. You have been warned.

At Silicon 9 in August of this year the news came through from Australia that Dave had won the Hugo for the best fanwriter of the year. Dave was out at the time, but on his return to the hotel everyone cheered and applauded when he walked in through the door with Hazel. This was a reflection not only of his personal popularity but also an acknowledgement that the award was thoroughly deserved. More will follow, I'm sure; he's going to be a power in the land for years to come.

## Chris Evans

### THAT'S SF LIFE

"We've received a letter from Eunice Pearson of Birmingham saying:

"Dear Esther, We've selected Dave Langford as a Guest of Honour for Novacon 15, but we're not sure how people will take it. Can you help us?"

Well, we thought that you would be able to solve Eunice's problem, so we took our microphones out into the street....."

\*\*\*\*\*

Dave Langford as a Guest of Honour? Traffic! I've read his novels -- that great one where the lost Earth colony builds a giant radiator between the stars, The Space Eater. And the one about nefarious goings on at a Ministry of Defence Secret Research Toilet -- The Leaky Establishment. Cracking stuff! And then there's his non-fiction. I really liked Raw in 2080 -- the Future of Military Pornography. Great!

\*\*\*\*\*

Dave Langford for Guest of Honour? Had to happen, didn't it? Best fanwriter of his time, all those Hugo nominations. And his fanzines: the stunning, er, stunningly infrequent Drilkjis, the apazine (the any-apa zine) Cloud Chamber, the Nova award-winning Twll-Ddu.....

"I wish you hadn't spat in my face."

\*\*\*\*\*

"And you sir, what do you think of Dave Langford?"

Dave Langford? Can't understand the man. I mean, he threw up a perfectly good and useful job at the Ministry of Defence and Not Killing People, making nuclear warheads targetted on Soviet missile bases which we would on no account use first -- as I say, he threw up all that to publish a scruffy little newszine Ansible which is probably contrary to the Official Secrets Act.

"Thank you, Mr Hesltine."

\*\*\*\*\*

You want to know about Dave Langford? Boy, can I tell you about Dave Langford! When he was in the States on his TAFF trip, the things he got up to! He didn't tell the half of it in that trip report. Boston's still talking about it!

"Could you be more specific?"

And get sued for libel?

\*\*\*\*\*

Dave Langford, and not many people know this, is a frustrated builder. His first house, when he and Hazel bought it, was old and needed a lot of work doing to it. Then they moved to an even bigger, even older house which needed even more doing to it. Just lately, he's been eyeing a large pile of rubble near the M4.....

\*\*\*\*\*

Dave Langford? Langford? Oh yeah, great! Saw 'im on the box, on the wosname, Whistle Test. "Free Johns", innit? Funny name for a Free John -- Dave. 'e ought to change it to John or sunnik.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dave Langford? That Astral thing, isn't he? You know, you grab him in both hands and put both feet through, then bring one foot over and round and through between there and there, then up over you head and finally put the second foot back where you found it.

"No, you're thinking of the Astral Pole."

Oh yes, silly me. Famous Dave Westieluszko.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dave Langford? The computer boffin with the sci-fi pages on Prestel? The guy who programmed a PDP10 to write sci-fi stories by the yard?? The man with three computers in every room???

"That's the one."

Never heard of him.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dave Langford will be a great Guest of Honour. He buys his pint like a true fan and drinks his round like a true pro. Or is that the other way round.....? Guests of Honour should be associated with pints. Most Guests of Honour are very happy if you associate pints with them, in a tangible sort of way. Dave Langford is no exception. Buy him a pint and watch him associate it.

*Kev Smith*

# 20 Answers

## NOVACON FINAL EXAMINATION

Time: 3 hours

Answer any twenty of questions 1-20

Dave Langford

### 1. Have you got a nickname?

Lots, really. "David" is the genuine, authentic, birth-certificate name which I use in a serious professional capacity; "Dave" is the nickname of that low fan who prints smut in Anisible. (I'm surprised the Novacon 15 committee chose the latter as a GOH: perhaps the Letraset was running short.) Old school friends from Wales naturally make it "Dai", while Prestel likes to think of me as "733631000", and the VAT people -- with what I regard as rather offensive familiarity -- call me "292 6643 31".

### 2. What is your greatest extravagance?

Gadgets. Especially computing gadgets; the place is littered with obsolete technology like mechanical desk calculators, helical slide rules, and computers which two years ago were "state of the art". My fanzine credibility will vanish if the Secret Masters ever hear that I got rid of the duplicators and spashed out on a photocopier. "Just for a handful of toner he left us...."

### 3. What do your slippers look like?

This is either a trick question or a misprint for 'flippers'. Aged relatives give me slippers every Xmas: they all look like vile accreted mounds of dust under the bed, since when I trotter down for an early-morning cup of tea, the higher footwear-donning centres have not yet awakened and I go barefoot...making it easy for me to detect intruding woodlice on the kitchen's stone floor.

### 4. Do you believe in love at first sight?

Of course not. With my hearing, it usually takes two or three tries before receiving an intelligible "Hello" at first sight.

### 5. Do you believe there is life after death?

Not really -- especially as purveyed by organized religion. But I still have these egotistical hopes of Cabell's Jurgen: "Meanwhile, I tell you candidly.... there is something in Langford far too admirable for any intelligent arbiter ever to fling into the dust-heap. I am, if nothing else, a monstrous clever fellow; and I think I shall endure, somehow... I believe I can contrive some trick to cheat oblivion, when the need arises." This argument would be more comforting if I believed in the intelligent arbiter.

### 6. Do you think there is life on other worlds?

Bound to be.....James White, Larry Niven, Arthur C. Clarke, H. G. wells, Hal Clement and A. E. van Vogt can't all have been lying to me.

### 7. If there is such a place as Heaven, what do you think it is like?

Well, I imagine a sort of combined Gothic folly, library, pub, convention hotel, stately pleasure-dome and Victorian town house, with my private sun-drenched

bathing beach and golf course attached, surrounded by bits of picturesque landscape like trackless forests, crags, chasms, waterfalls, geysers, permafrost, chunks of industrial archaeology, and labyrinthine caves which reveal much about the subcon-  
-scious quirks of D. Langford. And at the centre of this idyllic scene I imagine myself looking suspiciously around and muttering, "Where's the snag?"

8. Would you like to have been born female instead of male?

As a serious SF critic, I'd find it interesting to test Heinlein's assertion (in one of those disappointing later books) that "it's even better for a woman". Probably he was quoting Tiresias, who did try it both ways -- an experience which would make an interesting fanzine article. Trouble is, comparisons and purient curiosity are ruled out; the question boils down to "How would you like to be someone completely different, without the special memories which make up your unique personality?" Exit, pursued by the philisophical problem of identity.....

9. What is your favourite piece of music, or song?

Pardon?

10. What is your favourite piece of art?

Any single picture seems to fade when put under a harsh spotlight as My Favourite. It would probably be something by Dali, Magritte, Escher, Bosch or Max Ernst (especially Europe after the Rain).

11. What is your favourite book or story?

Another one that gets different responses at different times. Some quick, knee-jerk, Langford-in-October -1985 reactions..... In fantasy, probably the Earth-sea trilogy, or The Worm Ouroboros, or Little, Big, or any of half a dozen by Cabell. SF: Rogue Moon, "The Book of the New Sun", The City and the Stars, Martian Time-Slip, The Muller-Fokker Effect, Tiger! Tiger! (there must be others but I can't think of any today). Short stories: Earnest Bramah's Kai Lung, Max Beerbohm's Seven Men. Classics: Tristram Shandy. Overall top novel: Chesterton's The Man Who Was Thursday. Best buy for tying round one's neck prior to leaping off a bridge: Battlefield Earth. All subject to change without notice.

12. Do you prefer cats or dogs?

I like dogs to be a long way away. I prefer cats to be further away.

13. If you could go back in time, which era would you choose?

One with good beer, adequate sanitary facilities and National Health Service dentists. I know that limits it a bit, but I used to get appalling tooth-aches, with all my worst nightmares being about teeth disintegrating or snapping (as indeed happened at the Brum Group 10th Anniversary party, to the limitless disgust of those whom I told about it in minute detail while not eating breakfast). The best horror story I ever wrote was all crumbling teeth and bursting eyeballs: even Ramsey Campbell lifted one eyebrow half a millimetre as he bought it, so it must have been truly disgusting.....Meanwhile, the era which most calls me is usually only about four weeks back. A week, in other words, before the current deadline.

14. If you could change one aspect of yourself, which would it be?

I'd like to be able to turn my laziness on and off. Not get rid of it altogether -- I enjoy being slothful and taking an hour to open the post while the rest of Reading gets carbon monoxide poisoning and high blood pressure en route to work -- but to focus the beam of attention like one of Colin Wilson's supermen and sternly ignore all the little distracting voices that say "stop and have a cup of tea... review that thrilling Philip E. High novel... the pubs have just opened, you know... isn't it important that you squeeze this imperative spot... take a break and write something for the Novacon programme book..."

15. If you could change places with a famous person, who would it be?

Another tricky one, thanks to all the implications so dear to us skiffy fans. For example, suppose I wanted to humanize our bloody awful government and said "I'll change places with Margaret Thatcher," and after a well-spent day redirecting Trident expenditure in ways which might save a few lives (our local hospital has been hacked to the point where it has to beg patients to bring their own blankets) I'd nobly return home, and Hazel would open the door and say "Ugh! you're not coming in here, you're Margaret Thatcher!" Similarly in the role of Ronald Reagan: before I could have any fun I'd probably get a fatal heart attack from incautiously lifting a heavy piece of paper..... The most fascinating prospect would be a few hours as some major mathematician, perhaps Godel or Cantor, looking across those glittering abstract vistas which, from where I stand now, are just teasing glimpses through cloud.

16. What is your favourite soap opera?

The best of them all -- an interactive drama of pity and terror, of wit and kitsch, of all-absorbing triviality -- science fiction fandom.

17. What do you think of Christmas?

Even when it's happening, I do my best not to think of it. Is it true that it was once some kind of religious festival?

18. Do you remember the first toy you ever had?

My grandparents lived in a chilly Victorian semi with quarry-tiled floors, and matching the floor there was a set of building blocks which could keep the infant Langford quiet for hours on end. They were made of smooth stone, dull red and cream, chipped and eroded like my teeth at a later Brum Group party, and they had a comforting weight. When you grew bored with building the Taj Mahal, you could stage its spectacular destruction by earthquake in clattering Sensurround. Ha, the deprived youth of today -- those feeble plastic Lego bricks just don't make the same soul-satisfying crash when hurled through a window or a glass lampshade. I forget how long it took me to pay for the glass lampshade. Or was that when I discovered the yo-yo? These days I have to sublimate all that kind of thing on Stephen Donaldson books.

19. What was the first SF book you read, and when?

That's something which does stick. I was ten or so, hooked on Science, spending furtive nights scanning the Children's Encyclopaedia for risqué passages about the Bessemer Process....and one day my favourite aunt handed me The Day Of The Triffids and a bowl of home-made mulligatawny. Though it was a while before I read Tiger! Tiger! and met the word "synaesthesia", something fused in my memory: the orange-brown of the Penguin jacket and the soup, the twin glows of curry and realization that This Was The Staff. I wonder which SF book I read second? An offhand guess was Harness's triffic The Paradox Men, but I just looked up my aged copy and discovered that, according to the methodical little defiler of books I used to be, it was the eighty-fifth.

20. What is your favourite film? (This was substituted for the rude question.)

Sometimes -- not invariably -- to an extent of several inches -- and probably more often than you suspect. (My favourite film is Monty Python's Life Of Brian, but it was more fun to answer the rude question.)

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First published by David & Charles (1979)

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First published by Arrow (1982)

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First published by Muller (1984)

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Commissioned and in progress: WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS -- an SF novel for Arrow, and EARTHDOOM (with John Grant) -- a spoof disaster novel. Edited by David Langford: a forthcoming Allen & Unwin omnibus of G.K. Chesterton's lesser-known detective stories.

## SHORT STORIES:

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CONTRIBUTIONS:

To books: UNIVERSITY DESK ENCYCLOPEADIA, 1977; MACMILLAM ENCYCLOPAEDIA, 1981; THE DIRECTORY OF POSSIBILITIES ed. John Grant and Colin Wilson, 1981; THE COMPLETE BOOK OF SF AND FANTASY LISTS ed. Malcolm Edwards and Maxim Jakubowski, 1983; THE COMPLETE COMMODORE 64 ed. Allan Scott, 1984; THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF FANTASY (in preparation); the Zomba Books 'Black Box' omnibus of Anthony Boucher novels (introduction); 1984; weapon-physics consultant for SEX SECRETS OF ANCIENT ATLANTIS by John Grant, 1985.

Many magazines, including: Ad Astra, Amazing SF, Computer & Video Games, Destinies, Extro, Foundation, Imagine, Interzone, Knave, Locus, New Chartbusters, New Scientist, Penthouse, Popular Computing Weekly, Practical Computing, Science & Public Policy, SF Chronicle, SF Review, Starburst, What Micro?, Which Micro?, White Dwarf and Your Computer.

Many anthologies, including: Afterwar ed Janet Morris, Andromeda ed Peter Weston, Aries ed John Grant, Armada Ghost Books ed Mary Danby, The Best of Knave ed Ian Pemble, Beyond Lands Of Never ed Maxim Jakubowski, Fontana Books Of Great Horror Stories ed Mary Danby, The Gruesome Book ed Ramsey Campbell, New Writings In Sf ed Ken Bulmer, Peter Davison's Book Of Alien Monsters, Pictures At An Exhibition ed Ian Watson, Pulsar ed George Hay, A Spadeful Of Spacetime and The Future At War ed Fred Saberhagen.

Dave 'David' Langford won the Hugo Award for 'Best Fan Writer' at the 43rd World SF Convention, Melbourne, 1985. He likes real beer, antique hearing aids and the destruction of human civilization as we know it today....and if you don't know him now, you never will!



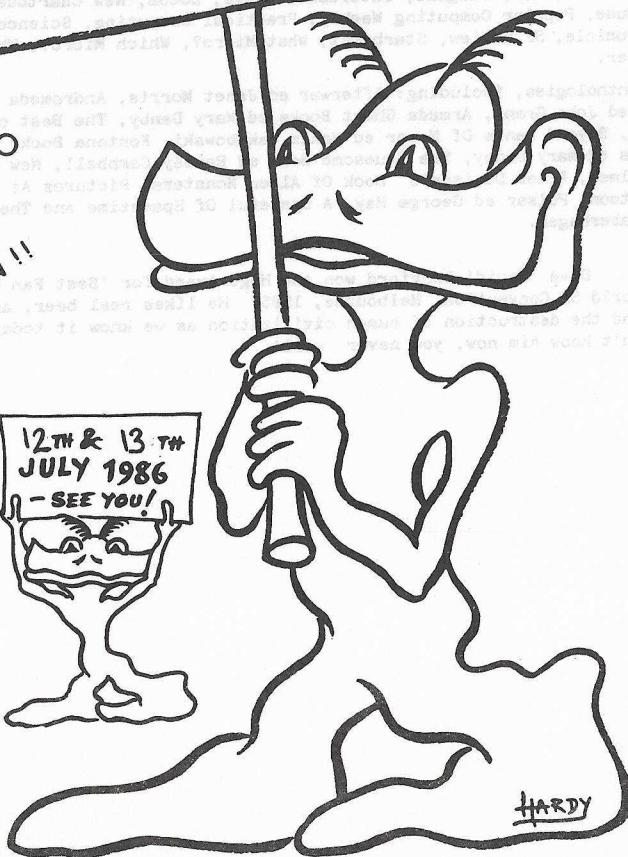


# Birmingham Science Fiction Group

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# Wither

## NOVACON

(A PROLOGUE TO THE NOVACON 15 DEBATE)

If chairing the 1984 Novacon taught me nothing else, it was that unless this veteran of British conventions is urgently released from its frantic annual schedule, it may not survive this decade and certainly not in the form we enjoy today. I'm not alone in this view -- I know from recent conversations that these opinions are echoed by the acting chairman of Novacon 16, Martin Tudor, which should cast aside any fears that I'm being unnecessarily alarmist.

One of the central themes of this year's Silicon debate, perhaps the last one ever, was a growing acceptance by the organisers that their task was increasingly one of duty rather than of commitment; in other words, they were carrying on because of loyalty to their friends instead of the fun they once had setting up the events. Even I'd fallen into the same trap and that self-realisation in the wake of Silicon persuaded me to decline the offer of a post on Martin's committee, much as I'd declined one on Phill's this year. It is a lesson the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, as the final authority behind Novacon, would be well-advised to note.

In his competent outline of the cases for and against two-year Eastercon bidding, published in the first Albacon III progress report, Roger Torraway lists the 'pro' arguments as a wider choice of venues, a wider choice of guests and "it hasn't been done before". Whether change in itself is progress is debatable, but there is no denying either the logic of the first two points or their increasing relevance to Novacon. The curious system by which the BSFG manages Novacon (its committee being in actuality a sub-committee of the BSFG committee, the chairman of the former a mere member of the latter) means no convention committee is officially appointed until the BSFG's agm each January, when he or she 'emerges' in a manner reminiscent of the Tory Party's choice of leader (apt really -- the BSFG's constitution was originally 'borrowed' from a branch of the Young Conservatives). Of course, the prospective incumbent is known long before then, never later than the previous year's closing ceremonies, and groundwork for each con is usually underway several months before then (causing some amount of difficulty if the chairman of the prospective Novacon is already knee-deep in work on the current event, as has been the case now since Novacon 12). But this still leaves barely enough time to choose a committee exhibiting that rare combination of experience and freshness (true, certain people -- mainly BSFG members whose sole contribution to the group's major project is their attendance money -- have argued that Novacon is now so standardised that it virtually writes its own programme, but it's the committee's challenge to prevent such an atrophication of creativity ever taking place), find a suitable guest of honour and -- perhaps more crucial timewise -- an ideal venue. This final hurdle is becoming more and more complicated as long-term bookings take a grip on the industry; two likely venues for Novacon 16 (one being the Grand Hotel, site of last year's con) had to be eliminated immediately, not because of any short-fall in their suitability (both seemed excellent choices) but simply because these hotels are booked solid up to eighteen months ahead. At this rate Novacon will be eternally limited to either the hotel used the previous year (memories of the Royal Angus suddenly flood my inner eye) or hotels with such a paucity of facility space they are forced to approach us (ah, I can see the Royal Angus again).

Conventions are now jig business in this country and for Novacon to continue its career of success onwards into the 1990s, we must adopt a businesslike approach. There are only so many variations on the Novacon theme and the current annual schedule

actively encourages monotony and crushes exploration of new approaches. Novacon is, and will remain, a project of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, but the present format is burning out its limited pool of skilled and/or enthusiastic convention staff.

If these statements seem disconnected, then I've derailed my own train of thought in the preceding discussion and would ask you to journey through it once again; if, on the other hand, you now see the logic of rescheduling Novacon into a two-yearly event as of 1986, then it's been worthwhile. Of course, even if the Novacon Debate this year does come out in favour of this move, it still has to get through the BSFG, but I'd be intrigued to see how even they could ignore such a crucial demonstration of opinion.

\*\*\*\*\*

The debate in question, "Are cons a con?", will take place on Sunday at 5.30pm. Be there, and tell the BSFG exactly what you want.

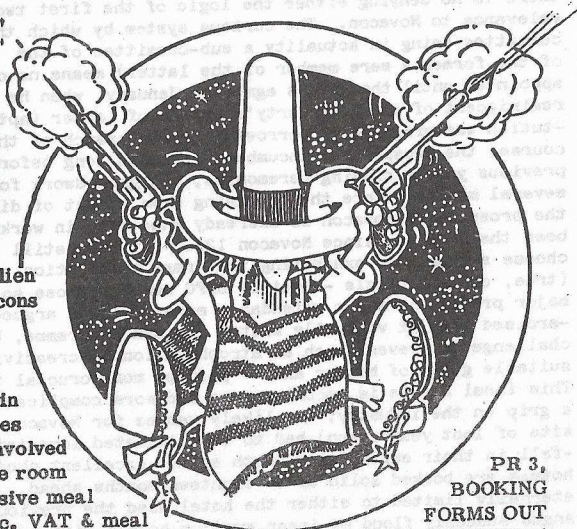
*Steve Green*

# MEXICON 2

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# The History of Novacon

<u>NOVACON</u>	<u>HOTEL</u>	<u>GUEST OF HONOUR</u>	<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE*</u>
	Imperial Centre	JAMES WHITE	Vernon Brown	144
	(Committee: Ray Bradbury, Alan Denham, Alan Donnelly, Pauline Dungate)			
2	Imperial Centre	DOREEN ROGERS	Pauline Dungate	144
	(Committee: Stan Eling, Jeffrey Hacker, Richard Newham, Meg Palmer, Hazel Reynolds)			
3	Imperial Centre	KEN BULMER	Hazel Reynolds	146
	(Committee: Stan Eling, Gillon Field, Meg Palmer, Geoff Winterman)			
4	Imperial Centre	KEN SLATER	Dr Jack Cohen	211
	(Committee: Pauline Dungate, Stan Eling, Gillon Field, Robert Hoffman, Arline Peyton, Rog Peyton)			
5	Royal Angus	DAN MORGAN	Rog Peyton	272
	(Committee: Ray Bradbury, Pauline Dungate, Robert Hoffman, Laurence Miller, Arline Peyton)			
6	Royal Angus	DAVE KYLE	Stan Eling	317
	(Committee: Helen Eling, Laurence Miller, Arline Peyton, Rog Peyton)			
7	Royal Angus	JOHN BRUNNER	Stan Eling	278
	(Committee: Liese Hoare, Martin Hoare, Ian Maule, Janice Maule, Dave Langford)			
8	Holiday Inn	ANNE McCAFFREY	Laurence Miller	309
	(Committee: Dave Holmes, Kathy Holmes, Chris Watson, Jackie Wright)			
9	Royal Angus	CHRIS PRIEST	Rog Peyton	290
	(Committee: Helen Eling, Stan Eling, Chris Morgan, Pauline Morgan, Paul Oldroyd)			
10	Royal Angus	BRIAN ALDISS	Rog Peyton	495
	(Committee: Joseph Nicholas, Keith Oborn, Krystyna Oborn, Paul Oldroyd, Chris Walton)			
11	Royal Angus	BOB SHAW	Paul Oldroyd	362
	(Committee: Helen Eling, Stan Eling, Joseph Nicholas, Phill Probert)			

12	Royal Angus	HARRY HARRISON	Rog Peyton	373
(Committee: Chris Baker, Dave Hardy, Eunice Pearson, Phill Probert)				
13	Royal Angus	LISA TUTTLE	Phill Probert	339
(Committee: Chris Donaldson, Steve Green, Dave Haden, Jan Huxley, Paul Oldroyd, Eunice Pearson, Paul Vincent, John Wilkes)				
14	Grand Hotel	ROB HOLDSTOCK	Steve Green	333
(Committee: Kevin Clarke, Ann Green, Dave Haden, Eunice Pearson, Phill Probert, Martin Tudor, Paul Vincent)				
15	De Vere	JAMES WHITE DAVE LANGFORD	Phill Probert	340
(Committee: Tony Berry, Carol Pearson, Eunice Pearson, Graham Poole, Martin Tudor)				

(\* Numbers taken from each programme book. This is not necessarily the complete total.)

CENTRAL HOTEL GLASGOW

28th-31st MARCH 1986

# ALBACON III

THE 37th BRITISH ANNUAL SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION



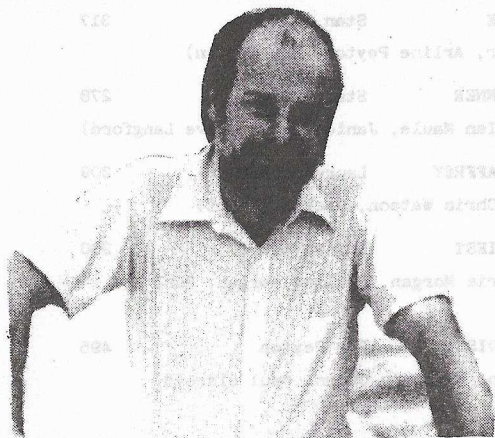
## GUEST OF HONOUR

## Plus

## JOHN JARROLD

## and

## PETE LYON



## JOE HALDEMAN

Albacon III  
c/o Vince Docherty  
20 Hillington Gdns  
Glasgow G52 1PR

# NOVA AWARDS

The Nova Award was started in 1973 by the late Gillon Field. Presented annually by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, the Award was, until 1981, given to the editor of the fanzine voted 'Best of the Year'. Until 1977 the winning fanzine was decided by a select committee of famous fans, but the NOVACON committee persuaded the ultra select NOVA committee that a slightly more democratic system would be more appropriate. And so voting was opened to all 'informed fans'. The only other major change came in 1981 when it was decided to extend the Awards to three Awards -- Best Fanzine Editor, Best Fan Writer and Best Fan Artist.

The fundamental idea of the Nova as it's been run since 1977 is that it should be awarded by informed vote. The informed votes come from informed voters, defined as NOVACON members who have been active in fanzines sometime in the year or two preceding the relevant NOVACON. "Active in fanzines" is a bit harder to define, but for the sake of clarity the Nova Award Rules state that this means having produced one or more fanzines, or having contributed articles/artwork to two or more, or having had letters of comment printed in three or more.

As for the Award itself, every year has seen a different design. The first year it was created by Gillon Field. Since then it has been designed by Birmingham's very own Ray Bradbury.

Past winners have been:--

- 1973 PETER WESTON for Speculation
- 1974 LISA CONESA for Zimri  
JOHN BROSINAN for Big Scab
- 1975 ROB JACKSON for Maya
- 1976<sup>6</sup> ROB JACKSON for Maya
- 1977 DAVE LANGFORD for Twll-Ddu
- 1978 ALAN DOREY for Gross Encounter
- 1979 SIMONE WALSH for Seamonsters
- 1980 DAVE BRIDGES for One-Off
- 1981 Best Fanzine = Tappen by MALCOLM EDWARDS  
Best Writer = CHRIS ATKINSON  
Best Artist = PETE LYON
- 1982 Best Fanzine = Epsilon by ROB HANSEN  
Best Writer = CHRIS ATKINSON  
Best Artist = ROB HANSEN
- 1983 Best Fanzine = A Cool Head by DAVE BRIDGES  
Best Writer = DAVE BRIDGES  
Best Artist = MARGARET WELBANK
- 1984 Best Fanzine = Xyster by DAVE WOOD  
Best Writer = ANNE HAMIL WARREN  
Best Artist = D. WEST
- 1985 Best Fanzin = ?  
Best writer = ?  
Best Artist = ?

# COFF AWARD

In a dark and dingy pub on the outskirts of Solihull, Steve Green suddenly slammed his pint down onto the table and very nearly jolted Kev Clarke into sobriety.

"I've got it!" he exclaimed, typically overdramatic, and before Kev could even ask if it was contagious, continued: "We finally have a chance to put the record straight over the Concrete Overcoat Fan Fund."

Kev opened his eyes and feigned coherence: "Nhuuh?"

"C'mon," Steve groaned. "You remember how Phill Probert used the Novacon 14 programme book to launch that ridiculous rumour about you founding COFF just so I could be judged the fan most deserving of a concrete three-piece and a one-way swimming lesson in the Birmingham canal system?"

"Sounds fair to me," quipped Kev, ducking just a second too late to avoid the ashtray.

"Well, this year we can make certain I have no chance at all of winning," Steve added, grinning from ear to ear. Or from there to there, I forget which.

"Let me guess," Kev replied. "You increase the votes from 10 pence each, so Martin Tudor can't afford to stuff the ballot box like last year?"

"Wrong."

"You divert the money raise from fannish good causes like TAFF and GUFF to investment in South Africa, so everyone avoids voting altogether?"

"Wrong again," Steve snapped. "You simply appoint me co-administrator and enforce the rule that no one in control of COFF can ever win the award. You know, the one you created to guarantee you'd never win it."

Kev nodded reluctantly, increasingly conscious of the shotgun barrel now resting between his knees, and so ensured his new-found partner would be barred from following in the footsteps of previous COFF winners Bob 'Fake' Shaw (1982), Simon Polley (1983) and Richard Bergeron (1984).

Of course, he carefully neglected to remind Steve that he could still come second, but that's another story.

EDDIE TRENCHCOAT

# MEMBERS

1	JAMES WHITE	54	Maureen Porter	109	Richard Brandshaft
1	DAVE LANGFORD	55	Martin Hoare	110	Paul Kincaid
2	Peggy White	56	Katie Hoare	111	Barbera Conway
2	Hazel Langford	57	Urban Gunnarsson	112	Charlotte Bulmer
3	Phill Probert	58	Ken Slater	113	Martin -Smith
4	Eunice Pearson	59	Joyce Slater	114	Pete Weston
5	Martin Tudor	60	Gerbish	115	Bruce Saville
6	Graham Poole	61	Oscar Dalglish	116	Justin Rogers
7	Carol Pearson	62	Rory O McLean	117	Linda Bagley
8	Tony Berry	63	Dave Ellis	118	George Ternet
9	William & Raffles	64	John Dallman	119	Jane Welsh
10	Harry Harrison	65	Caroline Mullan	120	Richard Harris
11	Brian Aldiss	66	Peter Smith	121	Chris Cheyne
12	Paul Vincent	67	Anton Nigel O'There	122	Susie Cheyne
13	Tim Illingworth	68	Chris Southern	123	Vicky Cheyne
14	Allen Boyd-Newton	69	Jenny Southern	124	John Maudsley
15	Eric Bentcliffe	70	Eta De Cico	125	Geoffrey Winterman
16	Christina Lake	71	Mal Ashworth	126	Adrian Snowdon
17	Edward John Ward	72	Hazel Ashwaorth	127	Linda Pickersgill
18	Christine Ward	73	Stuart Hall	128	Greg Pickersgill
19	Jonathan Cowie	74	Chris Chivers	129	Alun Harries
20	Jim Greer	75	Stephen Tudor	130	Colin Langeveld
21	Mike Damesick	76	Pam Wells	131	Ann Green
22	Moira Shearman	77	Dave Hardy	132	Peter Mabey
23	Michael Bernadi	78	Peter Wareham	133	Marcus Rowland
24	Steve Davies	79	Gwen Funnell	134	John Brunner
25	Charles R Mawdsley	80	Mike Gould	135	Peter Memmott
26	Harry Bell	81	John Jarrold	136	Sue Thomason
27	Roger Robinson	82	Steve Mowbray	137	Tim Broadribb
28	1/2 Cruttenden	83	Owen Whiteoak	138	Kate Wright
29	Wendy Cruttenden	84	Larry Van Der Putte	139	Mark Greener
30	Kathy Westhead	85	Ving Clarke	140	Rose Tracey
31	Mike Westhead	86	Paul Oldroyd	141	Michael Ancell
32	Roger Perkins	87	Chris Donaldson	142	Patrick Curzon
33	Andrew Stephenson	88	Terry Hill	143	Nigel Robson
34	Bernie Evans	89	Dai Price	144	Ben Taylor
35	Brian Anerigen	90	Rog Peyton	145	Mike Christie
36	Darroll Pardoe	91	Michael Skelding	146	Zoltan
37	Rosemary Pardoe	92	Dave French	147	John Pickering
38	David Breen	93	Shirley French	148	Fran Pickering
39	Ashley Watkins	94	Heather Ward	149	Lee Montgomerie
40	Peter Tyers	95	Alan Gilbert	150	Doreen Rogers
41	Kay Allen	96	Colin Fine	151	Mike Gray
42	Nick Mills	97	Julian Headlong	152	Matthew Irving
43	Stan Eling	98	Rob Jackson	153	Mike Moir
44	Helen Eling	99	Jeremy Johnson	154	Debbly Moir
45	Howard Rosenblum	100	Mark Hansen	155	Tim Bellerby
46	June Rosenblum	101	John Stewart	156	Frank Carver
47	John Steward	102	Teresa Hehir	157	Dave Cowie
48	Susan Francis	103	Bob (Fake) Shaw	158	Chris Green
49	John Perry	104	Chris Jordan	159	Tim Illson
50	Chris Jennings	105	Kamal Hashmi	160	Innes Leage
51	John F Dowd	106	Paul Dormer	161	Paul Mason
52	Martin Easterbrook	107	Vince Docherty	162	Nickianne Moody
53	Margaret Austin	108	Jim Darroch	163	Dave Murray



164	Kevin Murray	224	Stephen Prosser	284	Suzanne Orian
165	James Petry	225	Helen McNabb	285	Lilian Edwards
166	Chris Preist	226	Mike McNabb	286	Pauline Morgan
167	Paul S Richards	227	Katy McNabb	287	Chris Morgan
168	Simon Smith	228	Adam McNabb	288	Helen Starkey
169	Matt Williams	229	Nicola McNabb	289	Duncan Webster
170	Phil Collins	230	Julie Beale	290	Jonathan Salmon
171	Ron Bennett	231	Stephen Redbourn	291	Robert Mackiroy
172	Liz Burak	232	Nigel Pearson	292	John Mottershead
173	Ken Lake	233	Sue Harrison	293	Steve Hanson
174	Jan Lake	234	Jenny Watson	294	Richard Van Der Voort
175	Robert Stubb	235	Lawrence O'Donnell	295	Marion Van Der Voort
176	Steve Hubbard	236	Friend	296	Juliet Eyeions
177	Trevor Mendham	237	Mike Meara	297	Phil Spencer
178	Peter Day	238	Pat Meara	298	Judith Hanna
179	Jon Wilkes	239	Joy Hibbert	299	Joseph Nicholas
180	Aidan Collard	240	Dave Rowley	300	Leslie Flood
181	Steve Devaney	241	Bryan Betts	301	Pamela Buckmaster
182	David Parkins	242	Tina Hewett	302	Eve Harvey
183	Alex Zbyslaw	243	Dave Holmes	303	John Harvey
184	Robert Day	244	Ian Anderson	304	Jonathan Coleclough
185	Lisanne Andrews	245	Derek Howarth	305	Neil Robinson
186	Stu Andrews	246	Paul McCarthy	306	Jackie Gresham
187	Keith Oborn	247	Keith Mitchell	307	Mike Dickinson
188	Krystyna Oborn	248	Clive Warren	308	John Brosnan
189	Steve Jones	249	Jeanette Warren	309	Elda Wheeler
190	Eddy Kewin	250	Ingrid Walton	310	Malcolm Edwards
191	Niall Gordon	251	Marsha Elkin Jones	311	Sherry Francis
192	Mandy Dakin	252	Laura Wheatley	312	Chris Evans
193	David Redd	253	Rob Hansen	313	Faith Brooker
194	Alex Clarke	254	Avedon Carol	314	S J Bennett
195	Edmund Jackson	255	Dave Thomas	315	D A Caton
196	Susan Chamberlin	256	Neil Oglivie	316	Nigel Perry
197	Carol Bennett	257	Heather Oglivie	317	Dave Holmes
198	Geoffrey Williams	258	Keith Timson	318	Helen Holmes
199	Terry Broome	259	Julia Fitzgerald	319	Joshua Holmes
200	Brian Hamilton	260	Dermot Dobson	320	Patrick A Lawford
201	Chris Baker	261	Perdy Dobson	321	Ruth Colecliffe
202	Mike Llwellyn	262	Chris Mayers	322	Chris Warwick
203	Alan Eeles	263	Sherry Newton	323	Jon Inganfield
204	Val Wood	264	Henry Newton	324	Terry Pratchett
205	Mike Stone	265	Penny Newton	325	Jim Barker
206	Ian Warner	266	Sharon Hall	326	Kevin Tyler
207	Mark Caldwell	267	Bryan Hall	327	J G Patton
208	Simon Shacklady	268	William Bains	328	Roger Octon
209	Rafe Culpin	269	Jane Bains	329	Alastair Durie
210	Alan Sullivan	270	Tony Morton	330	Marcus Durie
211	John Wilkes	271	Carol Morton	331	Christopher Ogden
212	Simon O'Hsley	272	Rif-Raf	332	Dewi Williams
213	Mark Thomas	273	Magenta	333	Robert Holdstock
214	Robin Levy	274	Helen Porter	334	Jenny Robertson
215	Rowena Levy	275	Peter Morwood	335	Anne Hamil Warren
216	Chris Bursey	276	Charles Redpath	336	Phil Palmer
217	Alexander Cheyne	277	Hazel Marchington	337	S N Cope
218	Susan Booth	278	Tony Rogers	338	Ros Calverley
219	Jean Sheward	279	Dave Raggett	339	Karen Kelsall
220	Malcolm Davies	280	Jenny Raggett	340	Tony Aldridge
221	Laurence Miller	281	Martin Harlow	341	Mark Applin
222	Jackie Miller	282	Arthur Thompson	342	Neil Parry
223	Mark Fletcher	283	Elizabeth Sourbut	343	J M Sherwood

# Who, in their right mind, would buy a computer from a scaly anteater...?

For a start, one of the UK's major aerospace companies.

And a couple of banks, a few garages, a building contractor, a tyre manufacturer (or possibly a publisher of calendars ...), a commodity broker, a major manufacturer of communications equipment ...

And a national research and development corporation ...

And ...

And two novelists (one sf, one mundane), a playwright, an author of textbooks, a film producer, a TV scriptwriter, at least one Hugo-winner ...

And a Worldcon ...

And ...

And not only hardware (Apricot/Sirius/Victor/IBM), all sorts of comms goodies (modems, Telecom Gold, One-to-One, etc) and end-user software (word-processing,

accounting packages, database, etc), but a full consultancy service into the bargain (there's no mere box-shifting about *this* scaly anteater!) – all backed up with excellent support and fast delivery.

And, above all ...

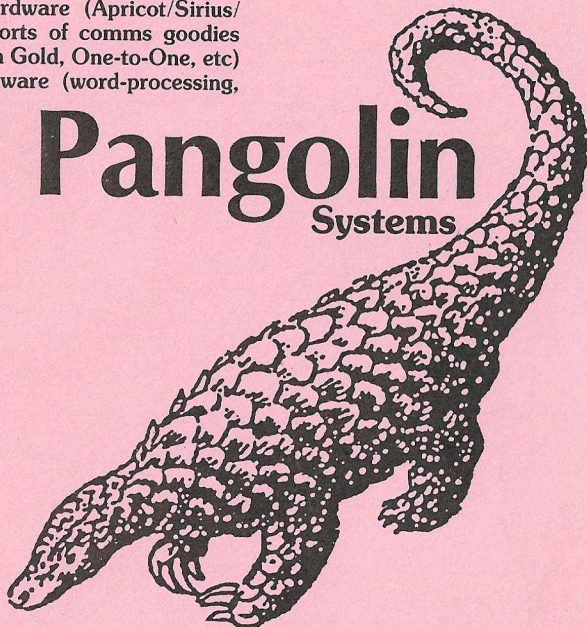
And, above all, the ability to make compatible the most incompatible bits of hardware you could imagine ...

And, by the way ...

And they've even sold a word-processor to a copywriter who starts every sentence with 'And'.

But they're trying to debug that one ...

## Pangolin Systems



Write, phone or E-Mail for further details:

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(or check page 796 of the Concise Oxford Dictionary ...)