

NOVACON 29



Programme Book

**Novacon 29: 5th to 7th November 1999 at the Britannia Hotel,
Birmingham, with Guest of Honour: Ian Stewart.**

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Committee: Carol Morton (Chairman), Maureen Kincaid Speller (Programme), Steve Lawson (Registrations), Pat McMurray (Hotel Liaison), Tony Morton (Treasurer), Chris Murphy (Operations) and Martin Tudor (Publications).

Staff: Nic Farey (Tech Ops), Nigel Furlong (Book Room), John Harrold (Art Show), Al Johnston (Transport), Dave Lally (the Dave Lally Programme Room) and Tony Berry (Beer Tasting).

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“The Chairman Welcomes You...”

by Carol Morton

Another November, another Novacon. It truly does not seem like 12 months since the last one (okay, if you are going to be pedantic it's 51 weeks - as last year's was a week later).

I have to thank Ian Stewart for agreeing to be my Guest of Honour, I think he will be brilliant. I also need to thank my committee for all their work this year - especially my hubby Tony who has had to juggle two jobs and be Treasurer. He has unfortunately abandoned the idea of being a mega rock star, so its back to just two jobs.

At first I thought this was about all I wanted to say and it would have been a pretty short Chairman's bit but I find that I have to thank a lot more people for helping me out over the past eight years. The reason I am thanking them is that I am no longer going to be involved in the organisation of Novacons.

This came about when I asked next year's Chairman if he wanted me to work on Novacon 30's committee and as I have not yet had a reply from him I assumed he didn't want me on his committee. After the initial disappointment I stood back and had a think. Did I really want to carry on?

The answer was NO.

Although it has been fun, the work and pressure involved - especially over the last few weeks before, Novacon is immense (I don't know how Martin Tudor does it) and as my physical and mental health has not been at its best - severe depression does that to you, I have decided to quit. So maybe next year's Chairman *has* done me a favour.

There are too many people to thank individually for all their help, advice and support but a few deserve special mention. Thank you Steven Baxter, David Gemmel and Ian Stewart for agreeing to be Guests of Honour at the conventions I Chaired. Thank you Tony (Morton) for supporting me whilst I worked on the Novacon committees and your help when you worked alongside me on the committees. Thank you Martin Tudor for your help and seemingly bottomless knowledge of fandom. Thanks Sherrie Powell and Ina Shorrock for helping behind the registration desk - that is one part I *am* going to miss. Thank you to all those fans who pay to join the convention and then work their socks off all weekend, John Harold, Al Johnston, Nic Farey, Dave Lally and all the Gophers. But most of all thank you for coming along to the conventions and helping me to have a great, but often exhausting time.

Don't get me wrong, I will still be attending Novacons but I will be one of the crowd sitting in the bar able to having a nice relaxing weekend for a change.

Enjoy yourself this weekend – I know I will.

Me and Jack and Terry

by Ian Stewart

One person has had a major influence on my life as a writer and mathematician: Jack Cohen. And Terry Pratchett. *Two* -- two people have had a major influence on my life as a writer and mathematician: Jack Cohen and Terry Pratchett. And Marty Golubitsky. *Three* -- three people have had a major influence on my life as a writer and mathematician: Jack Cohen, Terry Pratchett, and Martin Golubitsky. Oh, and Tim Poston. Look, I didn't expect the Spanish Inquisition... Let's try it again.

Most of my work, both mathematics and writing, has been done in collaboration. A lot of my colleagues have tried writing books with other people, and found it a demoralising and wearying experience. You put the semicolons in, your coauthor edits them out again, you put the semicolons back, your coauthor edits them out again... The book goes round and round in circles and never converges; in the words of Tracy Kidder in *Soul of a New Machine*, you don't get the product 'out the door'. (Funny how Americans don't understand the word 'of'.) I've been fortunate --- no, let me take the credit: I've been cunning enough to choose my coauthors sensibly. My experience of writing collaborations has been one of unalloyed pleasure. I put the semicolons in, my coauthor edits a few of them out again, and *I agree it's better that way*.

This being an SF event, I won't mention Tim Poston or Marty Golubitsky again, except to say that they are both mathematicians, that my collaboration with Tim gave birth to the epic Pitman Lecture Notes *Taylor Expansions and Catastrophes* and the widely acclaimed monograph *Catastrophe Theory and Its Applications*, while my collaboration with Marty produced the classic *Singularities and Groups in Bifurcation Theory Volume II* (I'm sure you all own a copy -- and in case you wonder, I wasn't involved in writing Volume I) and *Fearful Symmetry*, which is pop science. In contrast, I *will* mention Jack and Terry again, because (a) I've just done so, and (b) the organisers of Novacon 29 asked me to write about my collaboration with them, and I might be struggling if I didn't refer to them by name occasionally.

As with so much in life (especially lateral suspension) a great deal that has happened to me would never have happened were it not for a fateful telephone call from Jack Cohen. It was so fateful that I now realise I can't actually place the year when it happened -- so, as a special service to Novacon 29, I shall stop writing and delve into the desk drawer with all the old diaries in a daring act of historical research, and report my findings in a moment...

...OK, well -- the exercise proved quite valuable. For example, I found a whole stack of blank labels for floppy discs which I mislaid about six years ago. I also found 11 pocket diaries; including the 1991 one that went into the washing-machine by mistake. (Let me explain: for many years I kept my diary in the back pocket of my trousers, and sometimes I forgot to check before putting them in the *ali baba* to be washed. My wife always used to buy me *two* diaries for Christmas: one to start the year, and the other to replace the first when it got washed by mistake.) There was a lot of useful historical information -- the gas man called on 17 March 1987, for instance, and somebody (or some *thing?*) called ARCHILLA warranted three entries on 11, 12 and 13 December 1989. I think he was a physicist -- but with a name like that she could be a villainess in *Blake's Seven*, or a world-girdling entity from the *Lensman* series.

As well as these two still-amazingly-well-preserved items of Stewart family history, and countless others equally intriguing which I shall reserve for another occasion, I found the first diary entry relating to Jack, on 3 April 1990. It reads, in its entirety:

Jack Cohen

10.00 or so.

That 'or so' shows that Jack's punctuality and awareness of time then were no better than they have ever been, before or since, and adds credibility to my belief that this was the occasion of First Contact -- the alternative being that I failed to record that event in the diary, which I find inconceivable. The 'Cohen' adds conviction: forever after, the entry reads just 'Jack'. But my main point here is that no subsequent 'Jack' entry ever includes 'or so'. Obviously I learned fast.

Beside the above entry is the cryptic remark 'Exit 1', in what is *probably* different ink, and almost certainly bears no relation to Jack's visit. I haven't the foggiest idea what it refers to. Exit 1 of *what?*

I have always told the story of our first meeting as Jack turning up at my office door unannounced, saying: "I'm Jack Cohen, you're Ian Stewart, it's time we met." He has always sworn that he rang me up a few days before to arrange to drop by. Having on many occasions witnessed his formidable ability to wield the telephone at the drop of a hat, I am convinced that his recollection is the correct one. At any rate, we both agree we went

to a pub -- the Coventry Cross in Kenilworth -- and discovered that despite him being a biologist and me being a mathematician, we discovered we had a lot in common -- among them chaos, SF, and an interest in philosophical issues in science.

Out of that first meeting eventually (1994) came *The Collapse of Chaos*. My diaries record numerous meetings -- in 1990 they are 18 May, 30 May, 21 June, 28 June; then on 29 June I gave a talk at Birmingham University on Chaos and Biology which I *know* Jack must have arranged; 13 July, 3 August, 3 October (most of the gap was when I went to Kyoto); something weird on one or more of the 29, 30, 31 October ("OK = JACK 1" it says and each of those dates has an entry "OK"); and then -- hope I'm not boring you, but now we get to the point of all this -- and then, "NOVACON a.m. Jack" on 9, 10, 11 November. Right. Jack persuaded me to come to Novacon: clearly it was Novacon 20, and my collection of Novacon badges bears this out. In short: the evidence of the diary agrees with what I now remember of our initial interaction. I have many times told people that it took us four years to write *The Collapse of Chaos* (having long ago forgotten whether that was true) and this seems to be correct -- as long as you include the period between submitting the manuscript and getting the beast into print.

Well, that was fun, boys and girls, and I have now pinned down the year of our first meeting, which I've been wanting to do for ages, so thanks to Novacon for triggering an uncharacteristic burst of action.

At Novacon 20, Jack introduced me to Terry Pratchett, and the three of us had lunch in the Birmingham airport hotel where the con was being held. Little did I know that... but I get ahead of myself.

Implicit in those pub lunch discussions was the idea that Jack and I might end up writing a book together, and within a few months we'd pretty much decided to do so. There didn't seem to be any rush, and we developed a method of collaboration that we both found congenial. One week, I would go over to Jack's house for most of the day, and we would discuss various issues in science (and out of it). We would repair to a pub for lunch, and continue the discussion. The next week, Jack would come over to Coventry, and we'd do much the same thing. This alternation of venues went on for about two years, and might still be going on to this day, with *The Collapse of Chaos* still existing only in embryonic pre-verbal form, but then the fifth person out of the four I mentioned at the start made a major impact on my life. This was the redoubtable John Brockman, a literary agent and New York Jew who had decided to corner the market in popular science authors. (He succeeded, and scares publishers silly to this day.) John was visiting London and he invited me down to discuss the possibility of signing up. This panicked my then publisher (no names, but

an Antarctic bird springs to mind) who phoned me out of the blue to offer an advance on whatever my next book might be, the sum being 25 times as big as any previous advance I'd ever had. (Bear in mind that before that my typical advance was £0, but the last couple had been in the four-figure bracket, and I don't mean £10.00.) The offer was roughly 2.5 to 3 times my annual salary at that time. (Bear in mind that I was working in a university, not the City, too.)

The publisher's pre-emptive strike was seriously off-target, though, because once people started talking serious money I knew I was out of my depth and immediately concluded that I needed an agent. By this point Jack and I already had quite a bit of *Collapse* down on paper, and it became clear that Jack would need an agent too, and the same one as me. Needing good advice, we (no, Jack -- of course) phoned Terry, and said that the publisher had offered £x, where x is large, but the agent had held out hopes of £y, where y was considerably larger than x. Terry said that in his experience it was wise to accept large amounts of money, and even wiser to accept considerably larger ones, and pointed out that if the publisher was offering us £x before we had an agent, then they would still offer us £x after we had an agent, so all we were risking was the agent's percentage. So we signed up with the agent, and duly received something like $\frac{\text{£}(x+y)}{2}$, which the mathematically minded among you will recognise as being better than £x but not as good as £y.

Then we suddenly had a contract, which committed us to finishing *Collapse* by the agreed deadline, so a certain sense of urgency accompanied subsequent pub lunches. We evolved a way of working together which basically we still use, which goes like this. First, we discuss the general area of the book, agree some themes, and Jack produces an outline -- say half a page per chapter. We tinker with that until we're both happy, and then Jack expands the agreed version into about four pages per chapter.

This version ranges from fully written discussions of macaques or mycorrhiza to plaintive pleas akin to: "Ian, write something here about chaos in pendulums". Then I take over, and using Jack's version as an informal basis, I turn it into about 20 pages per chapter. (One of the rules here is that I can ignore anything Jack has said if I want to.) By that point most of the material is in close to final form -- checked for spelling and grammar, reasonably organised -- but it may include "Jack, we need a section here about the role of dung in evolution". All such gaps are filled, and finally we have the first close-to-final beta-test version.

But we don't stop there, oh no.

Now we both read the manuscript, and scrawl all over it. "What's this bit doing HERE?" "Hang on, we've already done dinosaur sex two chapters

ago." "A haggis will only be stable at a unique height up the hill if the sides of the hill are concave, not convex." "I don't like this example of genetic assimilation: can't we do it with Darwin's finches and some snails?" And so on. Then we get together (an entire day, or two, works best) and work through the two annotated piles of paper, transferring anything that we agree about on to a third, previously virgin copy of the manuscript. We shout a lot at this stage. Then I go away and implement all the changes. Then we take another run at it. Eventually we reach a point where both of us are happy: we deem the book finished, and send it in to the publisher.

At that point their editor does a number on it, anything from pointing out obscurities to suggesting we choose a new main theme and rearrange six chapters into five in totally different places in the book, and the same sort of process happens again.

That's how Jack and I wrote *Collapse*, and it's pretty much how we wrote *Figments of Reality*. With one exception. When we'd finished *Collapse*, the agent wanted another book from us, and we sent a proposal for an early version of *Figments*. Unfortunately there were several 'mind' books in the pipeline from other people, such as Daniel Dennett, so the idea wasn't terribly popular with publishers. So I went off and wrote *Nature's Numbers* and various other things, until one day Jack told me he'd sold *Figments* to Cambridge University Press. Moreover, he'd reworked the outline into a much improved form. So for that book, the initial outline was much more a one-person effort.

We like to have fun with our writing, and we like to push out a few boundaries. Leaving aside the whole of *The Science of Discworld*, the Zarathustans in *Collapse* and *Figments* are the most extreme examples of this tendency -- weird aliens, obsessed with the number 8 (Pratchett influence here) whose role is to allow us to indulge in wild speculation without having to say so explicitly. We realise that by doing this we may put off some potential readers, but what the heck. When the reviewer of *Figments in Nature* (Henry Gee) started babbling about Z-shirts, we knew we'd done the right thing. And in a sense the Zarathustrans previewed the approach that led to *The Science of Discworld*. Which spent 13 consecutive weeks in the top ten of *the Sunday Times* nonfiction bestseller list, so there.

Throughout this time, Terry Pratchett played a substantial role behind the scenes. We felt that in many ways he was the person best qualified to advise us on alternative views of modern science, because Discworld was itself an alternative view on just about everything, and Terry was Wise on Matters Philosophical. He read both *Collapse* and *Figments* in manuscript, and had a major effect on both. Jack and I visited Terry for a day's discussion about three or four times a year, asking him for thoughts about

our next book, and offering our own suggestions for his. Out of this informal interaction grew a sense that the three of us were on much the same wavelength. So when *The Physics of Star Trek* opened publishers' eyes to a new kind of media tie-in popular science, it was only a matter of time before we came up with the idea of a pop science book hung around Discworld. The title *The Science of Discworld* seemed unavoidable.

Terry immediately recognised the main obstacle: there is no science in Discworld. It runs on magic and narrative imperative. The eighth son of the eighth son *has* to become a wizard, even if she is a girl and the midwife has made a mistake (*Equal Rites*). Yes, there's a lot of science-related stuff: Greebo in *Maskerade*; there are three states for a cat in a box -- alive, dead, and absolutely bloody furious. But there's no actual *science*. One morning, sitting in the Mathematics Institute common room, Jack and I had a flash of inspiration, which we quickly passed on: "Terry -- if there isn't any science in Discworld, you'll just have to *put* some there!" And so a new genre was born: the fact/fantasy fusion.

Terry wrote a 30,000 word novelette in which the wizards of Unseen University unwittingly set in train the Roundworld Project, a magical containment zone inside which magic does not work. Our own dear universe unfolds before the wizards' eyes, and being wizards, they interfere. Jack and I added what in effect were Very Big Footnotes on the science behind all the wizardly shenanigans.

That was a three-author collaboration, and I can tell you it's a bloody complicated thing to do. Terry couldn't write his bit until he knew what we intended to put in our bit; and we couldn't write our bit until we knew what he intended to put in his bit. To resolve the impasse, he asked Jack and I to give him a shopping list of scientific events and topics that we'd feel happy commenting on. Then he wrote about 15,000 words of the story, and we took a look and started adding the Very Big Footnotes. Once Terry had seen how that was working out, he carried on with the Discworld story. Then Jack and I spent about four months writing 80,000 words of science chapters. Along the way, the three of us met occasionally to work out where we'd got and plan ahead, and the book evolved as we went along. Terry made suggestions about the science parts, we made suggestions for the Discworld parts, and we put the jigsaw together. Those of you who've seen the book (if not, shame on you, go buy ten copies now!) will know that the chapters alternate between Discworld and Roundworld (though we got Terry to write the final Roundworld chapter summing up the message of the book, because he seemed to know what the message ought to be, and Jack and I didn't). One of the great things that Terry brings to a collaboration is perspective. From the beginning he had his eyes open for the big issues that would be coming up, and how they would affect the development of the

story. Jack brings original ideas and a lot of lateral thinking. Finally, Terry administered expert corsetry and a sprinkling of fairy-dust, going over the entire manuscript and making minor but crucial adjustments.

We finished writing SOD, as we referred to it on e-mail, on 4 January 1999. (There may well be a sequel, though. Already we know what we want to put in it -- and this time, we know that the format and the collaboration *work*.) One side-effect was that Warwick University awarded Terry an honorary Doctor of Letters -- so he awarded Jack and I honorary degrees at Unseen University, an event that made it to the hallowed pages of *Nature*. And the less hallowed pages of the *Independent* and the *Times Higher* (Education Supplement). Since then, Jack and I have been working on (and finished, except for some corsetry and a sprinkling of fairy-dust) an SF novel, *Wheelers*. It is about a boy who has an intuitive feel for the minds of animals, and incredibly ancient aliens on Jupiter who throw comets around. One comes this way... and the rest of the story is about trying to stop it. Oh, and Jack embedded it all in a deep philosophical theme.

We wrote that in a rather different way. It sort of began during a long car trip to Plymouth, by the end of which we had a plot and some characters. (It had been sort of hanging about *in potentia* for a while.) I still have some pages of hotel notepaper with these scrawled on them. It developed largely through conversations, and virtually all of the actual writing was done by me, section by section, with no four-page versions from Jack. A lot of the ideas, though, are his, or evolved jointly. Moreover, it was Jack who persuaded his SF agent Ashley Grayson to look at an outline and some sample chapters, and before we knew what had happened, Ashley sold the book to Time Warner. Then it took six months to agree the contract. Ho hum.

So what have I learned, gained, or lost from these collaborations? I've learned a lot -- a lot of offbeat science from Jack, a lot about writing from Terry. I've learned that the trick is to tell a *story*. I've learned that the biggest obstacle to collaborative writing -- apart from *choosing the wrong collaborator*, which I never do -- is today's computer technology. (Terry and I transferred files for SOD by e-mail. However, I work on a Mac in Write-Now and he uses a PC with Word Perfect. This led to a curious sequence of file translations, with Claris Works as an intermediary at my end and god knows what at his end. My main advice to would-be collaborators is: start by all buying the same computer systems.) I've gained two friends -- indeed, many others, *and* a lot of new acquaintances. I've gained a new career or three. And I've lost any inhibitions I might have had about breaking out of the traditional academic world and having some fun.

Ian Stewart by Jack Cohen

It's Novacon again, and the old gang has re-assembled in Birmingham. You look over at the bar, and there's this group of guys having a fine, serious-looking discussion about -- obviously -- the whichness of what, or the deep fundamental significance of Pratchett's Mort as Universal Lieutenant. They are, to be kind, an older generation of fans; they probably remember when *Analog* was *Astounding*, and their golden Age was long BSW. The one nearest you, with the magically renewing pint of Boddingtons, is the best-known mathematician in the world, Ian Stewart. Ian wants me to make clear that I didn't say "the best mathematician in the world" but the "best-known": the most well-known for plus things. However, from our point of view, I guess Ian is the best mathematician we could possibly have for our GoH.... Much depends, of course, on what you want your mathematician for. If it's for proving Fermat's Last Theorem, or working out how many Earth-type planets or usable spermatozoa there are, or doing your income tax, Ian probably won't be interested. But for explaining the problem of the Last Theorem, or just what assumptions are being made in the thinking about planets or sperms, or the iniquities of the Government's collection of income tax... he'll amuse, enlighten -- and criticise -- you at length. And he'll very rarely be solemn -- often serious, usually witty, always intelligent.

I first met him in 1990. I had been worrying at a biological chaos-type problem and rang him up; he invited me over to the Coventry Cross pub for lunch the next day -- the lunch finished about 5pm, as I recall. We found that, very unusually for such distinct disciplines as biology and mathematics, we were interested in the same problems, but usually from very different directions; our wide SF interests were probably the flux which enabled that alloying to work so well. Since then we have had a most enjoyable and productive collaboration, three books (including one with Terry Pratchett) and a variety of professional and popular articles ranging from coincidences to coat-patterns in their subject-matter, from *New Scientist* to *Nature* and newspapers. Both Ian's and my radio and TV appearances have also spread much wider since our association.

He is busy, amazingly busy, spreading that impressive intelligence about. He has regular commitments, especially his *Scientific American* Maths Column every month, his regular articles for *New Scientist*, his Royal Institution Christmas Lectures two years ago which took up all of six months. And his Ph.D. students. And his massive mail, snail and e- but he has avoided voice-mail on his phones; most of his home time seems to be advising journals, most often *New Scientist* and *Nature*. He is their Official mathematics consultant -- yes, both. And his books: about one per

six months over the last couple of years. You'll know some of them: *Does God Play Dice?* is the best Chaos book (and our joint *The Collapse of Chaos* is a good sequel...); *Life's Other Secret* is the best antidote to naïve DNA thinking; *The Magical Maze* is the book of the TV Christmas Lectures, nearly as much fun as the Lectures (which you can still get from the BBC)... and you don't know how much fun it was to collude with Ian (and against several safety officers) to find a good well-marked carnivore for his last Lecture, on Patterns in Nature: we looked at a young puma and several other beasts, but finally achieved a super ¾-grown tigress. A first for the RI, and all went beautifully!

The University of Warwick appreciates Ian. They have made him Professor of The Public Understanding of Science (as Oxford has Richard Dawkins). We jointly run a rather leisurely Maths Institute spin-off called MAC@W (for, among other versions, "Mathematical Awareness Centre at Warwick") and we do a few lecture series – we did a Science of DiscWorld Magic of RoundWorld series when the book came out. Our next is to introduce the worlds of the Media to our colleagues and post-graduates.

When Terry Pratchett came to get his Doctorate of Literature from Warwick last July, the Publicity Officer (some of you may know Peter Dunn in other, more fannish, guises...) helped set up a very impressive part of the Graduation Ceremonies, at which Ian and I were made Honorary Wizards of the Unseen University by Terry (with the associated advantages in life, including the grand permission about Very Large Dinners...); there was an impressive trio of red doctoral gowns, powerful wizards' staves (with a knob on the end, of course), and some very bad punning dog-Latin. Only the University of Warwick among the universities I know, and only Ian among the famous professors, would collaborate in such a lovely, silly, bit of fun; in the event, it resulted in nice friendly write-ups in *THES*, *Nature*, *Biologist* – a very positive, smiling response from a very wide span of the media.

So much for the praise – now it is customary for the write-up of the GoH to expose his peccadilloes – I'll follow the tradition, and start with the least heinous. He has published a series of novellas in *Analog*, about a *Joat* (jack-of-all-trades – he and I were impressed by the nexialist in Van Vogt's *The Voyage of the Space Beagle* in the mid-fifties – my cue to do the "before most of you were born" bit, I suppose); good, interesting puzzle stories where the *joat* had to combine several fields of expertise to be able to resolve the problem. Readers will have learned a bit of science in them, too. Worse even than that, for a serious academic, he has published a couple of series of cartoons, in French, quite funny ones too; they mostly centre around maths, but they evolved from a cartoon series about computers and computer-nerds... That's not surprising. Nearly all of Ian's

early books – I except the re-write of the famous maths textbook which was endorsed by no less than Einstein on the cover – were of the “Programming the Sinclair ZX-mumble-mumble” ilk – he has to take a lot of the responsibility for turning that generation into computer-whizzes, I guess. Ask him about that when you buy him a drink... Is he really responsible for some of the less attractive facets of our world..... Bill Gates, even? Even if he were, he has so improved our world, in many kinds of ways, that I guess he's still on the plus side - so do buy him drinks!

Ian Stewart: A Bibliography

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[Many thanks to Ian Stewart for the above information.]

The Programme

by Maureen Kincaid Speller

Please note that this programme may change slightly on the day. Events will be in the Gloucester Room on the 9th floor, except where indicated.

Friday

7pm

Opening Ceremony

7.10-8pm

Where's the Science in Science Fiction?

Given the number of books being published on everything from the physics of *Star Trek* to the philosophy of *Star Wars*, what is science fiction actually teaching us about science.

Ian Stewart, Dave Clements, Paul Kincaid. Moderator: Wendy Graham

8.15-9.30pm

It's The End of the World As We Know It

It's Monday morning, you've checked out of the hotel and ... the world has ended. What do you do next? All knowledge is contained in fandom, so Pat McMurray, Liam Proven, Yvonne Rowse, Andy Sawyer assess their survival skills.

9.30-10.30pm **ANROMEDA BOOKS** hosts a "Multi-Signing"

featuring Brian Aldiss signing *White Mars* and *In the Twinkling of An Eye*, and many other authors...

10.30pm

People's Disco

Bring your favourite tapes and cds and see if you can convince Nic Farey to play them...

Saturday

10am

Book Room opens

11am-midday **Two's Company ...**

Have you ever watched the crowds on New Street and wondered how it keeps moving. Keith Still talks about his work researching the behaviour of crowds.

Midday-2pm Book Auction**2-3.30pm Liar-to-Children and Speaker-to-Aliens
Guest of Honour Speech - Ian Stewart**

[Book room closed]

3.30-5pm Quiz - Brum versus the World

Chaired by quizmaster *sans pareil* Roger Robinson, two teams battle it out to establish world supremacy over science fiction and general knowledge.

**5-6pm Special Presentation: a representative from
the Royal National Institute for the Blind will
receive a cheque for the Talking Books Fund.**

Followed by:

Tanya Brown Julian Headlong and Mike Scott discuss some of the previous sf books chosen by fans to be made into talking books, and come up with some suggestions for future choices. Amongst the books discussed will be Greg Egan's *Permutation City*, Tanith Lee's *Don't Bite the Sun/Drinking Sapphire Wine* and John Brunner's *Shockwave Rider*. Moderator: Maureen Kincaid Speller

6-7pm Novacon debate - Wither the Nova Awards?

Eve Harvey leads a discussion on the future of the Nova Awards along with Tommy Ferguson (whose criticism of the Awards is featured in the Programme Book) and current Nova Administrator Tony Berry. Your views count, so come along and give your opinions.

7-8pm Fan Fund Auction

The United Fan Funds want your money. Dig deep into your purses and wallets, and support GUFF, TAFF, the Foundation and other good causes. Can you resist the canned platypus?

**9pm until late Music from local Black Country group, Onyx,
and disco.**

Sunday**10am****Book room opens****11am****Encore, with added Eastern promise**

Ian Stewart reprises his highly entertaining talk on the filming of his Royal Institution Christmas lectures, with new material about the lectures' reconstruction in Japan. Will he produce a big cat from a suitcase? Come and see.

Midday-2pm**Art Auction****2 pm-3.30pm****The Myths of Fandom**

Peter Weston, John Harvey and Steve Green reveal the shocking truth sbehind those stories about fandom in the Good Old Days.

3.30-5pm**Are there still Two Cultures?**

Marking the 40th anniversary of C. P. Snow's influential and controversial lecture on the Two Cultures (arts and sciences). Could science fiction could be seen as the point at which the two cultures intersect. Our panellists discuss.

Ian Stewart, Amanda Baker, Ken McLeod, Caroline Mullan. Moderator: John Rickett

5pm**Awards Presentation****7pm****Beer Tasting** (In the Stafford, 9th floor.)

The traditional Novacon beer-tasting. Sample unusual beers from around the world, and then sample them again, because you didn't believe it the first time.

Finally, we also have the Dave Lally Programme in the Severn Room (next door to Novacon Registration -- see the flip chart for details).

Whither the Nova Awards by Tommy Ferguson

Novacon, the annual Science Fiction convention organised by the Birmingham SF Group, is notable for two things. One, the intense gossip and scandal. There are the raging debates of who was sleeping with whom, who wasn't speaking to whom and why there was no great beer until Sunday night. But these things are ever so in fandom. And Birmingham. So to the second notable aspect of Novacon, the Nova awards.

These are the awards for Best fanwriter, fanzine and fan artist, voted on by the members of Novacon. The rules of the award state: "The Novas are awards for fanzines, fanwritings and fanart produced by science fiction fans--see rule 6--in the British Isles. It is the accolade of this specific peer-group, and committee rulings on eligibility should be made with this in mind."

Recently they have been awarded to whatever big general zine was published frequently that year and one of the writer or editors of that genzine and D West for best Artist. Strangely enough that was also the case last year and, frankly, it pisses me off.

In 1997, for example, *Banana Wings* and Mark Plummer, one of its editors, won the respective two awards (in a freak accident Sue Mason got best artist). Without a shadow of a doubt this was not the best fanzine of that year, nor was Mark the best fanwriter of that year. My only reasons for why they won was that they both published frequently, they were involved in other projects (conventions, BSFA) which got their name mentioned and were seen to be out and about doing stuff for fandom. For the record I believe that Mark McCann's writing that year was simply outstanding and perversely enough, *Bob* was the best fanzine. Oh, and D West...

Last year *Banana Wings* won the best fanzine again. This was three times in a row, and again I believe they weren't the best. This is an absolute travesty. It is not a great fanzine by any stretch of the imagination. Looking at the voting form, itself not comprehensive, I can see half a dozen zines more worthy of the award and I'm not even including *Götterdämmerung*. *Saliromania* or *International Revolutionary Gardener* were my own particular choices. Both had sharp and incisive writing: Ashley acerbic, Joseph and Judith intelligent. Either of them would have made fine choices.

Also this year Maureen Kincaid Speller won best fanwriter. This is a vote I welcome, but it must be said not because she was the year's best fan writer. That accolade belongs to one of two people Michael Ashley or Lilian Edwards. Ashley once again shows by his disparaging remarks on Corflu

UK that whilst he proclaims to be outside of fandom, his insights are vitally important to any of us willing to see beyond the social life it gives us. Lilian, of whom I'm no great fan, wrote an article in *The Wrong Leggings 4* about the suicide of a friend, which had me choking back tears. It was powerful in its even toned approach, in its clear and unemotional details and I hope it is recognised as one of this year's better pieces of British fanwriting. That said, however, I was very happy indeed Maureen won. For many, many reasons beyond that she is a good writer.

I really do think it is time that every one involved in the awards, and that means every one attending Novacon, looked once again at the way in which the Novas are awarded. One thing that was noted last year was the criteria that a voter had to have read six of the fanzines listed on the reverse – which put off a few people who could manage, say, four. They didn't realise, as Tony so eloquently pointed out on Sunday night that this was only if Mr. Berry did not know who you were. Mr. Berry is an authority not to be repudiated in my book, but others may not see it this way.

What to do? History presents an interesting suggestion of an awards panel. To avoid hassle, have the preceding Novacon's membership elect the panel to select the awards the following Novacon, rather than the award itself. Makeup, organisation etc. can be talked about if it is thought this idea is sensible. But I really do think it is time that an award of this importance is acknowledged as representing the best of the year's British fandom and is elevated beyond, what it states in the rules: "The Nova Award is intended to provide a friendly pat on the back to the fanzine editor, fanwriter and fanartist whose efforts gave the greatest pleasure to the voters over the previous year. It has no vast cosmic significance. Should any difficulties of interpretation of these rules arise, those concerned are urged to follow the course most in keeping with this spirit."

'In keeping with the spirit,' and not about who gets theirs out most often. Then again, maybe Mark McCann would win after all.

[The above article has been reprinted from TOMMYWORLD "the forty-sixth issue of a sort of letter substitute, kinda thing, maybe weekly, maybe not," available from Tommy Ferguson, 40 Deramore Avenue, Belfast, BT7 3ER, Northern Ireland, e-mail: TommyWorld@net.ntl.com

[In order to assist the discussion, which is scheduled for 6pm on Saturday, the full Nova Rules are reproduced after the following piece.]

The Nova Awards by Tony Berry

The Nova awards were created in 1973 by the late Gillon Field and are presented annually by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group for work in fanzines. The awards are voted for by "informed fans". Until 1981 there was only one award for Best Fanzine, but now there are also awards for Best Fanwriter and Best Fanartist.

For a fanzine to qualify, one or more issues must have been published between 1st October 1998 and 30th September 1999. For artists and writers to qualify, a piece of their work must have been published for the first time between those dates. A "Fanzine" is defined as an amateur publication which is concerned with SF/Fantasy, SF and Fantasy fans and/or related subjects, copies of which can be obtained in exchange for other amateur publications or for letters of comment.

The Novas are awarded by informed vote, from informed fans. These are defined as Novacon members (or supporting members) who have received six or more fanzines during the relevant year. These must be different publications, not different issues of the same publication. The various official organs of a society or group do not count as different publications.

For further information please contact me at 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4EP.

The Nova Awards: Previous Winners

1973: SPECULATION ed. Peter Weston
 1974: ZIMRI ed. Lisa Conesa tied with BIG SCAB ed. John Brosnan
 1975: MAYA ed. Rob Jackson
 1976: MAYA ed. Rob Jackson
 1977: TWLL-DDU ed. Dave Langford
 1978: GROSS ENCOUNTERS ed. Alan Dorey
 1979: SEAMONSTERS ed. Simone Walsh
 1980: ONE-OFF ed. Dave Bridges.

YEAR	BEST FANZINE	BEST WRITER	BEST ARTIST
1981	TAPPEN ed. Malcolm Edwards	Chris Atkinson	Pete Lyon
1982	EPSILON ed. Rob Hansen	Chris Atkinson	Rob Hansen
1983	A COOL HEAD ed. Dave Bridges	Dave Bridges	Margaret Welbank

YEAR	BEST FANZINE	BEST WRITER	BEST ARTIST
1984	XYSTER ed. Dave Wood	Anne Hammill	D. West
1985	PREVERT ed. John Jarrold	Abi Frost	Ros Calverly
1986	PINK BEDSOCKS ed. Owen Whiteoak	Owen Whiteoak	ATom
1987	LIP ed. Hazel Ashworth	D. West	D. West
1988	LIP ed. Hazel Ashworth	Michael Ashley	D. West
1989	VSOP ed. Jan Orys	Simon Polley	Dave Mooring
1990	FTT ed. Joseph Nicholas & Judith Hanna	Dave Langford	Dave Mooring
1991	SALIROMANIA ed. Michael Ashley	Michael Ashley	D. West
1992	BOB? ed. Ian Sorensen	Michael Ashley	Dave Mooring
1993	LAGOON ed. Simon Ounsley	Simon Ounsley	Dave Mooring
1994	RASTUS JOHNSON'S CAKEWALK ed. Greg Pickersgill	Greg Pickersgill	D. West
1995	ATTITUDE ed. Michael Abbott, John Dallman & Pam Wells	Simon Ounsley	D. West
1996	WAXEN WINGS & BANANA SKINS ed. Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer	Alison Freebairn	D. West
1997	WAXEN WINGS & BANANA SKINS ed. Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer	Mark Plummer	Sue Mason
1998	BANANA WINGS ed. Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer	Maureen Kincaid Speller	D. West

The Nova Rules

(MARCH 1978 by Dave Langford)

(UPDATED SEPTEMBER 1983 by Dave Langford)

(REVISED & UPDATED FEBRUARY 1987 by Martin Tudor)

The Nova Award is intended to provide a friendly pat on the back to the fanzine editor, fanwriter and fanartist whose efforts gave the greatest pleasure to the voters over the previous year. It has no vast cosmic significance. Should any difficulties of interpretation of these rules arise, those concerned are urged to follow the course most in keeping with this spirit.

The Novas are awards for fanzines, fanwritings and fanart produced by science fiction fans--see rule 6--in the British Isles. It is the accolade of this specific peer-group, and committee rulings on eligibility should be made with this in mind. Since the Nova is awarded by popular vote, there is no way for editors, writers or artists to withdraw their work or themselves from consideration. Withdrawals could make the award meaningless; an editor, writer or artist determined not to be honoured can always refuse to accept his or her award.

- 1) The awards shall be called the Nova Awards, and may be symbolised by some appropriate memento at the option of the Novacon committee.
- 2) A Nova award shall be presented to the editor/editors of the fanzine winning the poll as detailed below, as well as to the fanwriter and fanartist winning their appropriate categories.
- 3) The presentations shall be made at the annual Novacon held by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group.
- 4) The Novacon Guest of Honour (or the chairman of the Novacon committee, should the GoH be unavailable) shall make the presentation on behalf of the voters and the Novacon committee.
- 5) Any fanzine published in the British Isles shall be eligible for the award, provided that ONE (or more) issues have been published between 1st October of the preceding year and 30th September of the current year.
- 6) For the purposes of this award a fanzine shall be defined as an amateur publication which is concerned with science fiction, fantasy, science fiction and fantasy fans and/or related subjects, and copies of which may be obtained in exchange for other amateur publications or in response to letters of comment. The Nova Committee (see below) shall have the final decision upon whether a given publication is a fanzine.
- 7) The eligibility criterion in the fanwriter category is that a piece of writing by the person concerned should have been published for the first

time between the 1st October of the preceeding year and 30th September of the current year in a fanzine ("fanzine" as defined in [5 & 6] above) and similarly for the fanartist category.

8) Any full or supporting member (of the Novacon at which the award is to be made) shall be qualified to vote, provided he or she has been active in fanzines (as detailed below) in the British Isles during the year terminating on 30th September of the current year.9)For the purposes of this award, to be "active in fanzines" means to have received SIX or more fanzines during the course of the relevant year. "Fanzines" in this rule means different publications, and not different issues of the same fanzine. The various official organs of a group or society shall not be treated as different fanzines for the purposes of this rule. The decision of the Nova committee concerning the eligibility of voters is final.

10) Under no circumstances shall any person be entitled to more than one vote.

11) Each year, the Novacon committee shall name one person to be Administrator of the award. The Administrator should have a good basic knowledge of British fanzines; but to prevent dispute, it is preferable that he or she should not edit a fanzine likely to qualify.

12) The distribution of ballots and organisation of vote-counting shall be the responsibility of the Administrator. Ballots are to be sent out with one of the Novacon progress reports, and shall also be available at Novacon itself. Should it not be possible to distribute ballots with a Novacon progress report, the Administrator may make other arrangements as in emergency rule [X.4] below.

13) The Administrator, in consultation with the Novacon committee, shall also be responsible for the appointment of the Nova committee, which shall consist of three persons qualified to vote under sections [8-10] above. Members of the Nova committee should have a considerable knowledge of British fanzines. They should also be prepared to attend the Novacon at which the presentation is to be made.

14) The Nova committee shall convene at the final counting of ballots, and shall make decisions where necessary upon the eligibility of each ballot and each fanzine voted for, and in the event of a tie in voting as noted in [29] below. The decision of the Nova committee upon these matters shall be final.

15) The Nova Award ballot shall take this general form, which should be self-explanatory:--

NOVA AWARD BALLOT

Please list, in the spaces below, the three fanzines you most enjoy and the three fanwriters and fanartists whose work you most enjoy, in order of preference. For a fanzine to qualify ONE or more issues must have appeared between the 1st of October xxxx and the 30th of September xxxx. For fanwriters and fanartists to qualify, a piece of writing or artwork by the person concerned must have been published in a fanzine for the first time between the 1st of October xxxx and the 30th of September xxxx. For the purposes of this award a fanzine shall be defined as an amateur publication which is concerned with science fiction, fantasy, science fiction and fantasy fans and/or related subjects, copies of which may be obtained in exchange for amateur publications or in response to letters of comment. Votes for yourself and/or a fanzine edited by yourself will be ignored.

FANZINE:

- 1)..... Edited by -
- 2)..... Edited by -
- 3)..... Edited by -

FANWRITER

- 1).....
- 2).....
- 3).....

FANARTIST

- 1).....
- 2).....
- 3).....

To be considered qualified to vote you should be either an attending or supporting member of Novacon xx and have received SIX or more fanzines during the course of the relevant year - 1st of October xxxx to 30th of September xxxx. Please list, in BLOCK CAPITALS, at least SIX British fanzines you have received during this period--

.....

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CONVENTION
 NUMBER _____ SIGNATURE _____

Please return this form to the Nova Administrator: ((NB insert name and address of current Administrator)) at least one week before Novacon, OR post it in the ballot box provided at the convention before the registration desk closes on the Saturday.

Other information may be added on the ballot form at the option of the Administrator. A vote for the Nova Award consists of filling in and handing in this ballot form.

16) The deadline for the return of completed ballots shall be at the time of latest closing of the Novacon Registration Desk upon the Saturday of Novacon in the current year.

17) A fanzine voted for in any position upon a ballot submitted by its editor or co-editor shall be struck out on that ballot.

18) A ballot shall be considered valid if --

(a) at least one fanzine/fanwriter/fanartist has been listed in the appropriate space; and

(b) an eligible voter has listed valid qualifications as detailed in [8-10] above; and

(c) the voter's name, address and signature are present.

However, when considering the validity of a vote (and/or the eligibility of a fanzine/fanwriter/fanartist) those concerned are again reminded that the Nova Award is intended to provide a friendly pat on the back to the fanzine editor/writer/artist whose efforts gave the greatest pleasure to the voters over the previous year. It has no vast cosmic significance. Those concerned are urged to follow the course most in keeping with this spirit.

19) The decision of the Nova committee, concerning the validity of a ballot, is final.

20) The counting of votes shall be performed by the Administrator and/or the Nova committee and/or members of the Novacon committee. The Administrator and the Nova committee shall in any case be present.

21) The fanzine/fanwriter/fanartist voted for first place upon a valid ballot is defined as the first eligible fanzine/fanwriter/fanartist to be listed in the appropriate space on that ballot (deletions excepted); and similarly for the second and third places.

22) Should a fanzine/fanwriter/fanartist be voted for in more than one position (in the same category) on a single ballot any appearance after the first shall be struck out. Likewise, should a voter submit two or more ballots, all but the first received shall be marked INVALID in ink, set aside, and excluded from all counts of ballots. Other ballots shall be treated likewise.

23) If fewer than three eligible fanzines/fanwriters/fanartists are listed in any of the categories upon a valid ballot, then that ballot shall not be counted in any count of third-place votes in the category concerned; if only one eligible fanzine/ fanwriter/fanartist is listed in any of the categories, the ballot shall not be counted in any count of second-place votes in the category concerned.

- 24) In each category each fanzine/fanwriter/fanartist receiving a vote in any position shall be noted and recorded, together with the number of first-place votes received by that fanzine/fanwriter/fanartist, and likewise the numbers of second-place and third-place votes.
- 25) The "TOTAL" for each fanzine/fanwriter/fanartist in each category is derived as follows: --
- (a) The number of first-place votes received by that fanzine/fan-writer/fanartist is multiplied by 5 (five);
 - (b) The number of second-place votes received by that fanzine/fan-writer/fanartist is multiplied by 3 (three);
 - (c) The results of [25a] and [25b] are added together, and the number of third-place votes added to this subtotal;
 - (d) The number thus obtained shall be called the Total corresponding to that fanzine/fanwriter/fanartist, and shall be recorded against the title/name of the fanzine, fanwriter or fanartist concerned.
- 26) The fanzine, fanwriter or fanartist having the highest Total shall win the relevant award.
- 27) Should there be a tie for highest Total in any category, the tied fanzine/fan-writer/fanartist having the greatest number of first-place votes shall win the relevant award.
- 28) Should there be a tie for first place, both in Totals and first-place votes in any category as in [27] above, then the tied fanzine/fanwriter/fanartist having the greatest number of second-place votes shall win the relevant award.
- 29) Should two or more fanzines/fanwriters/fanartists remain tied after second-place votes have been taken into account as in [28] above, the Nova committee shall have a casting vote.
- 30) When the winning fanzine, fanwriter and fanartist have been decided, the Administrator, Nova Committee and Novacon chairman all being aware of this decision, the ballots and notes made in the counting shall be sealed in an envelope to be retained by the Administrator. The envelope and contents shall be destroyed one calendar month after the presentation of the Awards, but may in circumstances of serious contention be scrutinised before this time by qualified voters at the discretion of the Nova committee.
- 31) In the announcement of the winners of the Awards, there shall be no reference to any other fanzines/fanwriters/fanartists voted for, nor shall those involved in counting the votes discuss the proceedings. Runners-up may be released after the presentation ceremony.
- 32) The members of the Nova committee may individually elect to remain in office; but no person may remain a member of the committee for more than three consecutive years.

- 33) The Administrator, in consultation with the Nova committee, may appoint a temporary replacement for any member of the Nova committee should that member be unavailable for the counting.
- 34) Any Nova committee member, if required to make a decision under [6] or [29] above upon a fanzine edited by him/herself (or under [29] above upon him/herself in the category of fanwriter or fanartist) ie if in such a case the other two members hold opposite opinions, shall be temporarily replaced as in [33] above.
- 35) Changes to these rules may be proposed and put into force at a meeting of the Nova committee and the Administrator. Suggestions for improvement may be submitted to the Administrator at any time by any person.

APPENDIX: EMERGENCY RULES

These additional rules are effective only in years when a Novacon convention is not held. They override the relevant sections of the main rules.

[X.1] The presentation shall be made at the following year's Easter convention (or another suitable annual convention) by some appropriate person, according to circumstances.

[X.2] The voting deadline shall fall upon the first Saturday of November in the given year.

[X.3] The requirement that a voter be a member of the current Novacon shall be waived.

[X.4] Distribution of ballots shall be conducted by post (through progress reports of conventions, by arrangement with the BSFA and/or fanzine editors, etc) and/or by hand at conventions or meetings of local groups.

[X.5] The Administrator shall be responsible for announcing the winner of the award, through as many as possible of the channels suggested in [X.4] above.

[X.6] In the absence of a Novacon committee, the Birmingham Science Fiction Group committee shall act in this capacity (or shall appoint a subcommittee to act for it) wherever required by the rules.

[X.7] Should two or more consecutive years pass without a Novacon being held, the Administrator, Nova committee and BSFG committee shall review the position with a view to either:

- (a) discontinuing the award; or
- (b) altering the rules (particularly regarding dates and deadlines) so the award may be geared to the annual Easter convention (or another suitable annual convention).

The Best Fan Nova by Carol Morton

Just prior to Novacon 25 the committee heard that Brian Burgess would not be attending the convention due to ill health. We felt that this was a shame as Brian had attended every other Novacon and to miss out through ill-health seemed unfair.

The committee all felt that something should be done to acknowledge Brian's fannish contribution to Novacon and we decided that a special Nova would be awarded to him. When it arrived it was engraved "Best Fan". That set us thinking. We acknowledge the writers of fanzine articles, the artists who illustrate them and the people who actually produce these fanzines. But where would they be without the fans who read and admire their work?

This special Nova pointed out a lack in the system. The committee of Novacon 25 decided that this must be addressed. It was decided that the "Best Fan" award would not be one that was voted on by Novacon members, it would just be an occasional award that the current Novacon committee could present if they felt that there was someone who deserved recognition for their contributions, in a fannish way, to Novacon.

When Bob Shaw died we felt that we had to acknowledge Bob's special contribution. Even though he was a "filthy pro" he was also a fan and that is why we gave him the second "Best Fan" Nova. Ken Slater was the recipient in 1997, celebrating not only his years in fandom but also his 80th birthday. There was no award granted in 1998, nor this year.

This is an occasional award and does not need to be awarded every year, but we are always open to suggestions from fellow fans as to who you think should be given an award. Remember they can be a professional, that's no problem, but first and foremost they must be a *fan*.

General Certificate of Science-fiction Education by Vernon Brown

[With thanks to everyone who helped with suggestions about the Quiz.]

On the next few pages you will find a GCSE Question Paper. You should also find a loose A4 sized Answer Paper. If you don't have one, please check with Registration.

Most questions in this Quiz require a short answer, but for various reasons this cannot be a written one. So each question has been given several "outline answers" which can be in full or abbreviated. The idea is

that you match your answer to one of the "outline" ones. It's a bit like being given specifications for making a key, together with five different locks. If the key is made correctly, it will fit one of the locks, if it is not, it won't. However, to make the instructions simpler, the terms "question" and "answer" are used, although, strictly speaking, these terms are incorrect.

Instructions

1. Each question on the Paper has several answers.
2. Mark the answer that you think is correct. Each correctly answered question is worth one mark. Many answers are given as acronyms, i.e. initials of words (e.g. VB = Vernon Brown). This is because giving answers in full often makes things much too easy.
3. Now choose which answers you will submit for marking. There are three sections -- Section B is easy, Section A is medium and Section C has harder questions. You have to submit two sections which must include Section A. If you submit Sections A and B you will obtain a GCSE Ordinary Certificate if you pass, if you submit Section A and C you will gain a GCSE Advanced Certificate if you pass. Pass mark is 40%. Depending on how well you do, you will obtain a Pass or Credit at "O" level, or Pass, Credit or Distinction at "A" level.
4. Having decided which two Sections to submit ignore the other.
5. The Answer Paper has numbered and lettered squares corresponding to the questions and answers in your Question Paper. The idea is that you carefully block out with blue or black ink, biro or felt tip the squares corresponding to the answers you think are correct. Do not circle or cross the squares or do anything else, or use pencil, as your paper will not be marked if you do. This is because marking will be done by placing a card over your Answer Paper with holes cut in it corresponding with the correct answer squares. Squares that show through are correctly answered. Signs, pencils, etc., are unsuitable for this type of marking. If you make a mistake put a large X through the incorrect square.
6. Now complete your Answer Paper. Block out the square corresponding to the Sections you have submitted, i.e. A and B or A and C, and print your name and address, which we will use as an address label to send you your certificate if you are unable to collect it on the Sunday of the convention.
7. Check that all is completed properly and post your Answer paper only in the box at Registration. Please only fold it once. Make sure that it is posted by 6pm on the Saturday of the convention.
8. As an incentive, all Answer Papers submitted will be entered in a free prize draw.

9. I will have certificates with me on the Sunday -- please contact me for them and find out whether you have a prize as well.
10. Finally, no one else will know how well you have done unless you tell them, so please have a go; you may do better than you think.

Section A

1. What planet was being attacked in *This Island Earth*?
a) Barsoom b) Earth c) Metaluna d) Ultra e) Venus
2. In the *Ship who Sang* stories, what do the ships call their human companions?
a) Brains b) Brawns c) Corps d) Mouses e) Muscles
3. Who was first editor of *Amazing Stories*?
a) HG b) HW c) JC d) JV e) TP
4. Who played *Barbarella*?
a) BE b) ET c) JF d) JM e) MM
5. Who wrote *The Dying Earth*?
a) ERB b) HH c) JB d) JV e) RRL
6. What caused *The Death of Grass*?
a) Disease b) Drought c) Heat d) Radiation e) War
7. Who is the supercomputer in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*?
a) Colossus b) Deep Thought c) Deep Throat d) Mike e) Satan
8. When was the film *Metropolis* originally released?
a) 1922 b) 1924 c) 1926 d) 1928 e) 1930
9. Who wrote *The Mote in God's Eye* (1974)?
a) A+M b) C+N c) D+G d) N+P e) W+V.
10. What are the aliens like in Turtledove's "Worldwar" series?
a) Bears b) Cats c) Cyborgs d) Frogs e) Lizards
11. Who wrote about Jason din Alt?
a) ACC b) BA c) JB d) HH e) BS
12. *Armageddon 2419AD* introduced which hero?
a) BR b) JC c) LK d) TEC e) TT

13. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* was filmed as?
a) BR b) ET c) JD d) TC e) TT
14. Who originally wrote *The Lost World*?
a) ACD b) EES c) EMF d) IAB e) RHH
15. In which year was the film *Destination Moon* released?
a) 1935 b) 1940 c) 1945 d) 1950 e) 1955
16. Who was the first Commander of Babylon 5?
a) JB b) SH c) CS d) JS e) KW
17. What book title is the temperature of burning paper?
a) C233 b) F451 c) K506 d) P900 e) R186

Section B

18. Who was Dan Dare's alien archenemy?
a) Bygon b) Drakon c) Gorgon d) Mekon e) Paragon
19. Around what was L. Niven's Ringworld constructed?
a) Blackhole b) Comet c) Generator d) Planet e) Star
20. Who wrote *The Man Who Sold the Moon*?
a) AMC b) EES c) ERB d) JFK e) RAH
21. What is Clifford Simak's middle initial?
a) A b) B c) C d) D e) E
22. What did the *Predator* want humans for?
a) Cyborgs b) Food c) Pets d) Slaves e) Trophies
23. Who wrote the "Witch World" series?
a) AM b) AN c) CS d) LG e) MM
24. On which planet are Anne McCaffrey's "Dragon" stories set?
a) Darkover b) Dune c) New Terra d) Odyssey e) Pern
25. Who was *The Warlord of Mars* (ERB)?
a) Carter b) Ish c) Mason d) Ming e) Oscar
26. Who are the Hugo Awards named after?
a) HE b) HG c) HH d) JB e) JC

27. In *Day of the Triffids* what afflicted mankind?
a) Blindness b) Deafness c) I.Q. loss
d) Radiation sickness e) Sterility
28. What make was the time travelling car in *Back to the Future*?
a) Bentley b) DeLorean c) La Manga d) Mercedes e) M.G.
29. Who is the author of the "Eternal Champion" novels?
a) BS b) DG c) HH d) JB e) MM
30. What process changes Dr Who's appearance?
a) Embodying b) Enhosting c) Regeneration
d) Transhumance e) Transmutation
31. What additional initial does Iain Banks use when writing SF?
a) D b) H c) J d) M e) T
32. Who wrote *The Sleeper Awakes*?
a) ACD b) ERB c) HGW d) JV e) MS
33. In *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* who was the robot?
a) Enia b) Gort c) Hal d) Marvin e) Robby

Section C

18. In *War of the Worlds* (Novel, HGW) which battleship was destroyed with a heatray?
a) Enterprise b) Lightning c) Revenge d) Thunderchild e) Titanic
19. What was A.C. Clarke's first professionally published SF story?
a) Empire b) Loophole c) Mistake d) Sandstorm e) Sentinel
20. In *A Martian Odyssey* (SGW) what is the Martian's name?
a) Black b) Dravit c) G'ruth d) Toiler e) Tweel
21. Who is also credited with Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics?
a) ACC b) CMK c) JWC d) RAH e) RAP
22. How many letters are used to classify lifeforms in the "Sector General" hospital series (JW)?
a) 3 b) 4 c) 5 d) 6 e) 7

23. What film is based on *Vintage Season* (Moore)?
a) Harvest b) Holiday c) Hunting Party
d) Timeport e) Timescape
24. Where was *Things to Come* set?
a) Centrecity b) Everytown c) Metropolis d) Newville
e) Yorkham
25. What was the Forbidden Planet called?
a) Virgo 2 b) Rigel 3 c) Vespa 3 d) Altair 4 e) Sirius 4
26. In which language did the word "robot" first appear?
a) Czechoslovakian b) English c) Polish d) Russian e) Swedish
27. Who became editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1937?
a) JWC b) HG c) HLG d) FP e) FOT
28. In which PA novel do crusading English conquer aliens?
a) BW b) SPC c) THC d) TTT e) TZ
29. In which series does a Tormal appear?
a) Draka b) Foundation c) Medship d) Sector General
e) Wander
30. Which SF artist designed the Skylab 1 patch?
a) CF b) DH c) FF d) KF e) KT
31. Whose survival changed history in Garrett's "Lord Darcy" stories?
a) Alexander b) Jesus c) Harold d) Richard I e) Charles I.
32. How many races of humanity are in *Last and First Men*?
a) 6 b) 10 c) 14 d) 18 e) 22
33. What was Professor Quatermass' first name?
a) Avram b) Bernard c) Ian d) Peter e) Vincent

TAFF 2000: the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund **by Maureen Kincaid Speller**

The TAFF 2000 Race is launched! Do you have what it takes to be the Millennial fan?

It's a tough task: flying to Chicago; attending Chicon, the 2000 Worldcon, as the representative of European fandom; enjoying the wonderful hospitality of American fandom, having parties arranged in your honour; drinking, taking, having a great time, all in the line of duty; and not forgetting the endless arguments about whether 2000 really marks the passing of the Millennium.

If you think you have what it takes to be the Millennial fan, here's what you need to do:

- * Find five fans to nominate you, two from America, three from Europe;
- * Write a 100-word platform, extolling your virtues and explaining why European fandom should send you to America;
- * Pay a £10 bond and swear that, come hell or high water, you will travel to America and attend the Worldcon.

Your platform, bond and the five signed nominations need to be with the administrator by 1st December, 1999... and we're talking paper here, not email.

The race itself will run until 6th May, 2000, so you've plenty of time to campaign.

And remember, whether or not you're planning to stand for TAFF, it needs your support, as do the other fan funds, so come along to the United Fan Funds Auction on Saturday evening, and spend, spend, spend!

For further details about TAFF, see the administrator, Maureen Kincaid Speller, during the convention, or else contact her at 60 Bourne-mouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ. Tel: 01303 252939, or email taff@acnestis.demon.co.uk.

G'ready, G'set, GUFF **by Paul Kincaid**

GUFF is variously described as the **Get Up-and-over Fan Fund** or the **Going Under Fan Fund**, depending on whether you're travelling from Australia to Europe, or the other way round. It was established in 1979 by Chris Priest and John Foyster after Priest's visit to a writers workshop in

Australia brought him into contact with Australian fandom. It was felt that something needed to be done to bring Australian and European fans closer together, along the lines of TAFF between Europe and America, and DUFF between Australia and America. GUFF has been going its idiosyncratic way ever since, sending a fan one way or the other every couple of years or so, without the controversies or the scandals of the bigger fan funds.

Okay, that's the boring bit. GUFF is a worthy cause we all ought to support. WRONG! GUFF is one of the best things in fandom, Australian fandom is a great place to be, and you all ought to be fighting like mad to get yourself onto the ballot the next time we send a European Down Under.

As the 1999 GUFF delegate I set out for Australia looking forward to a good time. I came back absolutely enthused. In the scant three weeks I was able to spend in the country I met more people, enjoyed more good conversations, found myself swept up in a more exhilarating swirl of fannish activity, than I can remember for a long long time. Oh and the winery tours and the scenery and the food and making friends with kangaroos are all pretty damned wonderful too.

Of course you see things differently as a fan fund winner. You're the centre of attention, people want to meet you, there are parties in your honour. You see things more concentratedly than you could any other way. It's hard to explain the difference unless you actually experience it, but the reason fan funds are important is because they do make a difference. I don't have the slightest doubt that I would have had the time of my life in Australia however I went, but as the GUFF delegate the experience was heightened, in sharper focus, brighter colours, altogether richer. And that's why you should be trying to get yourself on the ballot for the next Europe to Australia race.

But for now you've got a chance to sample something of Australian fandom, because the next GUFF race to bring an Australian to the 2001 Eastercon has just been opened. Nominations are open until just before Easter next year, so if there are Australian fans you'd like to meet in person persuade them to stand now!

Naturally, all of this is only possible because of your generosity. So, how can you help GUFF? Come along to the United Fan Fund auction during the convention, I've brought a few goodies back from Australia I'm sure you're going to like. Pat McMurray has suggested that everyone who has visited Australia and still has Australian change left over might like to donate it to GUFF – and believe me, I'll be happy to relieve you of any money you care to donate. There will be a GUFF web site real soon now (honestly, I'm working on it) and that will have a running sale of things like books, fanzines and anything else that comes my way.

I'm also producing a regular GUFF newsletter-cum-fanzine, GUFFaw. Ask me for a copy.

[For further details about GUFF contact Paul Kincaid at at 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ.]

The British Science Fiction Association (BSFA) by Mark Plummer

The observant amongst you will have noticed, I trust, that there is something missing from Novacon this year. Yes, the BSFA tombola, a fixture of the dealers' room for several years now, is conspicuous by its absence. Where have we gone, I fondly imagine you all asking, your voices full of genuine concern as you speculate that perhaps we have all been abducted by aliens or have even forsaken the traditional pastures of Novacon for a small *Dr Who* convention in Potters Bar.

Well, I should stress straight off that the explanation is entirely mundane. It's not that the BSFA has collapsed totally in the wake of the departure of long-time Administrator Maureen Speller earlier this year (not that her absence has gone unnoticed, you understand); nor is it that we are in fact now so splendidly affluent as an organisation that the committee all draw substantial salaries, live on champagne and use rare Philip K Dick first editions as lavatory paper. It's simply that we don't have enough stock to run a stall right now so, rather than have a half-hearted effort for only part of the convention, we thought that for this year we'd put what we do have aside for Eastercon. There, I said it was mundane.

I would like to think that we'll be missed. It does seem from public reaction that an awful lot of people really rather like the BSFA tombola and welcome the chance to come along to the table at Novacon, give us a couple of quid and win an exciting prize — which is just as well really, as we need the revenue that the tombola generates. Perhaps I can suggest, as a compromise, that anybody who is feeling that their Novacon is somehow lacking could seek out either myself or Claire Brialey and give us a couple of quid anyway. That way we get some money for the BSFA, you get to feel that your Novacon experience is complete *and* you don't have to take home the BattleTech novel that you didn't want anyway. That way *everybody* wins.

On a personal level, aside from the financial benefits to the BSFA itself, I too will miss the tombola. It's a good place to hang out and meet

people; virtually everybody at the con drifts by sooner or later, and several have something positive to say about the Association — particularly about the publications, which I always endeavour to pass on to the editors. But I will not miss the odd soul who glances at us disdainfully before stomping off with some comment to the effect that they would never have anything to do with the <spit> BSFA, especially after that incident when the mailing was late in 1757.

Anybody who's ever helped out on the BSFA desk will probably have encountered this — admittedly minority — viewpoint that sees the Association in terms of events in the remote past. I don't want to imply that the current administration is trying to distance itself from its origins or what the organisation was like in its earlier years and reinvent itself as a New BSFA for a New Millennium; but it's only just dawned on me that, following the resignation of Paul Kincaid about a year ago, there is now nobody on the committee who is old enough to remember 1958 when the BSFA was founded, and — strange as this may seem — even Paul wasn't writing for *Vector* in the early days, he having not graduated much beyond 'What I Did on My Holidays' at that point (although, of course, what the young Paul Kincaid did on his holidays was write essays about structuralist and post-structuralist trends in the works of Enid Blyton).

Not least because of Novacon's own history, I know that the majority of the people reading this will probably at least have heard of the Association. Many of you will be members. There will, however, also be a few of you who've had bad experiences with the BSFA some years ago, or who've looked at and rejected the BSFA in the past. If you happen to fall into one of these camps then *maybe* you should give it another chance now. It's potentially a massive hostage to fortune to say this, so I'm dreading a phone call from the mailing house telling me that the entire print run of the next mailing has been eaten by rabid badgers or something: but I do think that what the BSFA is producing now is at least as good as ever before — due, I might add, to the efforts of a lot of activists, past and present, on both the administrative and creative sides.

So if you're even a little tempted by my vague claims that the BSFA is doing Good Things, you may be looking for something a bit more specific. Currently, members receive 14 magazines a year in six mailings: six issues of *Matrix*, the news magazine; six issues of *Vector*, the critical journal; and two issues of *Focus*, the writers' magazine. This will cost you £21 per year (£14 unwaged, overseas rates available on request). It's not a small sum, I know, but I think it's worth it. If, however, you're reluctant to commit that much money up front, you can write to Paul Billinger at the address below enclosing five first class stamps, and Paul will send you sample copies of each of the three magazines, the most recent issues to hand. (This is a

special offer for Novacon members — please mention Novacon 29 when writing.) Alternatively, Andromeda carries stocks of recent issues of *Vector*.

If you're reading this at Novacon and you want to either join or renew a membership while you're there, please see either Claire or myself. We'll even answer questions if we can, although please don't expect us to explain why that mailing in 1757 was late.

[The BSFA Membership Secretary is Paul Billinger at 1 Long Row Close, Everdon, Daventry, Northamptonshire NN11 3BE, UK.]

Fandom and the R.N.I.B.

by Roger Robinson

Through the years Fandom has generated money for worthy causes -- some fannish (helping fans and/or committees in need), some outside (Cancer research etc.). Many conventions nowadays have a nominated charity which they list in their programme books and which they, to varying degrees, donate money. This is done in various forms, from the simple waving a fee for a table in the dealers' room to a straight donation from their profits and the rattling of collecting tins under noses (with appropriate arm twisting).

Over the years Novacon (and the Brum group) has been one of the leaders in raising money for charity and especially for one specific charity -- the Royal National Institute for the Blind's "Talking Book" Library. Some of you may remember Gill Smith of the RNIB visiting Novacon 22 and being presented with a cheque for £2,500. The look of surprise on her face was genuine as we had kept the amount secret until the cheque was presented. This was, however, nothing to the surprise she got a week or so later when I rang her to tell her that the amount was incorrect -- it should have been £4,500! The extra money had been donated by the Albacon committee from Glasgow who had decided to stop running conventions, and to donate their accumulated profits to RNIB.

Each book recorded for the "Talking Book Library" costs £500 to produce, and their library now runs to over 10,000 titles. Although they reserve the right to veto any suggested title, they recognise that fandom is uniquely equipped to suggest suitable SF titles, so that there is a very good chance that any title that we nominate will be recorded. As far as I am aware the first specific title requested as the result of a general collection at a con was *The Demolished Man* -- which was nominated to honour Alfie

Bester who, due to ill health, was unable to visit Brighton as one of Conspiracy's Guests of Honour. This was an especially appropriate book for a Worldcon collection as the book won the first ever Hugo for Best Novel. The money was mainly raised at the (in)famous auction of anti-hotel-manager cartoons which had previously decorated the walls of a corridor in the Metropole.

It would be impossible to list all the fannish events and individuals who have raised money for the RNIB over the six years but they range from Picocons, through beer auctions at Mexicons to the rattling of ice buckets at Prefab Trout. Fannish groups and conventions from as far afield as Glasgow, Winchester and Leeds have joined the Birmingham habit.

It was no surprise when the nominated charity for the DRABBLE PROJECT was announced as the RNIB -- after all the idea of the drabble was formed in Birmingham. So far three limited edition books have been published by Becon Publications with all of the contributors waiving their fees and/or royalties in favour of the RNIB. Various other publications from the Becon stable have also had all or part of their profits ear-marked for the RNIB. The most recent of these is *A Load of Old BoSh* -- a collection of Bob Shaw's hilarious Serious Scientific Talks. This was published to honour Bob's selection as GoH at Confabulation, the 1995 Eastercon.

At Confabulation (Eastercon 1995) the committee actively supported the RNIB and as part of the closing ceremony a couple of presentations were made -- one from the RNIB and one to them. Colin Greenland's *Take Back Plenty* had been nominated as one of the books to be sponsored with the money donated at Novacon 22. In what we think is a "first" for an SF author Colin offered to read his own book and, after an audition, was accepted. Colin was presented with a certificate recognising the work he had done, and in reply a further cheque was presented to the RNIB. The money came from the profits to that date of the third drabble book *Drabble Who* together with various donations made into the general pot over the previous year or so and the proceeds of a very-well-supported collection after Bob Shaw's talk at the con. This time the cheque was for £4083, and once again we managed to startle the RNIB's representative who hadn't been told how much to expect.

Novacon 29 has once again nominated the RNIB as their charity - please give generously!

Books published to raise money for RNIB by Becon Publications:

Date	Title, Authors/Editors	Status	So Far	On sell out
1988	<i>The Drabble Project</i> ed. Rob Meades & David Wake	sold out	£1593	£1593
1990	<i>The Dunken Rabble Project</i> ed. Gytha North	nearly sold out	£288	£300
1990	<i>Drabble II : Double Century</i> ed. Rob Meades & David Wake	available @ £5		£1200
1993	<i>Drabble Who</i> ed David Howe & David Wake	sold out	£3793	£3793
1995	<i>A Load of Old BoSh</i> Bob Shaw	available @ £4.95	£794	£1100

Novacon and the R.N.I.B.

by Martin Tudor

Novacon has supported the Royal National Institute's Talking Books for the Blind project since Novacon 18 in 1988, when Tony Berry (the chairman of the con) first suggested it, and has raised funds for a number of books over the years.

Raffle tickets will be on sale throughout the convention and there are a number of wonderful prizes to be won. All proceeds from the raffle will go to the RNIB's Talking Books for the Blind project. So track down Anne Woodford and her book of tickets now!

In addition, this year the Birmingham Science Fiction Group have guaranteed that *however much is raised* they will make it up to the £500 necessary to nominate a title and invite the members of Novacon 29 to suggest titles.

[For further information, or to make donations directly (cheques payable to "Becon Publications"), contact Roger Robinson at 75 Roslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG.]

The Brum Group (sort of) by Yvonne Rowse

People have asked me, over the years, why I chose the Birmingham Science Fiction Group as the first victim, I mean, beneficiary of my drive for world domination.

There are those who have theorised that it was the Brum Group's immense wealth that attracted me. Not at all! Although, there was some financial incentive; being able to receive books to review meant that a large part of my income, instead of going to line the Andromeda till, was freed up to buy beer to befuddle the massive brain of Guardian of the Critical Wave Photocopier, Martin Tudor. Whilst Martin was gazing into his beer, dreaming of the time when he'd get a full nights sleep and be free of his serfdom to the Copier, I was slipping control of the newsletter away from him.

Once the instrument of propaganda was in my hands I began to plan how to wrestle the chairmanship of the group from Tony Morton. It was a long and bitter struggle (Ha!) but finally, under the severe eye (and loud tie) of our legal expert, Tim Stannard, Tony handed power to me.

I now paused to assess the group. I needed loyal people to assume positions of power in my future government. The Brum Group, full of charming and competent people would provide them.

Pauline Morgan handed her book reviews in on time, a sign of an exceptionally fine character (mine are always late). Would she be the person to take control of the World Transport System? Indeed yes! In my world the trains run on time.

Tony Berry was obviously suitable as Chief of Internal Security. A decisive man capable of locking up wrong-doers and throwing away the key, but equally capable of cutting a new one if the culprit renounced rap-music or whatever other crime Tony had found him guilty of.

Chris Morgan became my Spokesman for the more formal occasions. Behind the scenes he is also Chief Interrogator.

Anne and Alan Woodford are jointly in charge of the Treasury after a successful (and honest) run at the Brum Group. Whilst Alan stays at home guarding the petty cash box (contents: five buttons, an IOU for a pizza and thirty seven billion pounds), Anne is on the road most of the time, bags full of books, beer and chocolate selling raffle tickets in the fine tradition of Brum Group fandom. Unfortunately Belgium has complained formally that tax revenue for the world is being raised entirely in that country. A re-assessment is underway and volunteers to be raffle monitors working on Anne's successful team are being called for.

Rog Peyton and Dave Hardy have proved to be fine advisors (Dave has redesigned the world currency to include space ships and other planets -- a welcome change from the former dowdy historical theme) and Vernon Brown, under the supervision of Pat, has stopped asking 'But is it Science Fiction' (except as an occasional treat) and is auditing the quality of my government by asking 'But is it good for the world?'

So why, you ask, with the world running more efficiently than ever before (Andromeda taking over the Waterstones chain meaning quality SF being available everywhere), am I looking for a replacement World Dictator? Well actually I rather fancy being Queen of the World. The petty details could be safely left in another's hands while I could swan around the world. Nice frocks, fast cars, immense wealth, that sort of thing. My replacement will be the person who can offer me the best pension plan, guarantee free beer for life and keep the world running to my advantage. In the meantime, Carol Morton is planning my coronation festivities.

[The Birmingham SF Group has been meeting monthly since June 1971. Currently they meet on the second Friday each month in the Lichfield Lounge of the Britannia Hotel in Birmingham. The annual membership is £15.00 per person (or £20.00 for two people at the same address), which includes 12 issues of a monthly newsletter and reduced price entry to meetings. Cheques should be made payable to "the Birmingham SF Group" and sent to The Treasurer, Alan Woodford, 81 Harrold Road, Rowley Regis, Warley, West Midlands, B65 0RL. For further information contact Yvonne Rowse, Group Chair, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimley, Worcs., DY12 1NP, e-mail yvonne@hallsfarm.softnet.co.uk]

The History of Novacon

CON & YEAR	HOTEL	GUEST(S) OF HONOUR	CHAIR
1	Imperial Centre	James White	Vernon Brown
1971 (144)	Committee: Ray Bradbury, Alan Denham, Alan Donnelly, Pauline Dungate.		
2	Imperial Centre	Doreen Rogers	Pauline Dungate
1972 (144)	Committee: Stan Eling, Jeffrey Hacker, Richard Newnham, Meg Palmer, Hazel Reynolds.		

CON & YEAR	HOTEL	GUEST(S) OF HONOUR	CHAIR
3	Imperial Centre	Ken Bulmer	Hazel Reynolds
1973 (146)	Committee: Stan Eling, Gillon Field, Meg Palmer, Geoff Winterman.		
4	Imperial Centre	Ken Slater	Dr Jack Cohen
1974 (211)	Committee: Pauline Dungate, Stan Eling, Gillon Field, Robert Hoffman, Arline Peyton, Rog Peyton, Hazel Reynolds.		
5	Royal Angus	Dan Morgan	Rog Peyton
1975 (272)	Committee: Ray Bradbury, Pauline Dungate, Robert Hoffman, Laurence Miller, Arline Peyton.		
6	Royal Angus	David Kyle	Stan Eling
1976 (317)	Committee: Helen Eling, Laurence Miller, Arline Peyton, Rog Peyton.		
7	Royal Angus	John Brunner	Stan Eling
1977 (278)	Committee: Liese Hoare, Martin Hoare, Ian Maule, Janice Maule, Dave Langford.		
8	Holiday Inn	Anne McCaffrey	Laurence Miller
1978 (309)	Committee: Dave Holmes, Kathy Holmes, Chris Walton, Jackie Wright.		
9	Royal Angus	Christopher Priest	Rog Peyton
1979 (290)	Committee: Helen Eling, Stan Eling, Chris Morgan, Pauline Morgan, Paul Oldroyd.		
10	Royal Angus	Brian W Aldiss	Rog Peyton
1980 (495)	Committee: Joseph Nicholas, Keith Oborn, Krystyna Oborn, Paul Oldroyd, Chris Walton.		
11	Royal Angus	Bob Shaw	Paul Oldroyd
1981 (362)	Committee: Helen Eling, Stan Eling, Joseph Nicholas, Phil Probert.		
12	Royal Angus	Harry Harrison	Rog Peyton
1982 (373)	Committee: Chris Baker, Dave Hardy, Eunice Pearson, Phil Probert.		

CON & YEAR	HOTEL	GUEST(S) OF HONOUR	CHAIR
13 1983 (339)	Royal Angus	Lisa Tuttle	Phil Probert
	Committee: Chris Donaldson, Steve Green, Dave Haden, Jan Huxley, Paul Oldroyd, Eunice Pearson, Paul Vincent, John Wilkes.		
14 1984 (333)	Grand	Rob Holdstock	Steve Green
	Committee: Kevin Clarke, Ann Green, Dave Haden, Eunice Pearson, Phil Probert, Martin Tudor, Paul Vincent.		
15 1985 (340)	De Vere (Coventry)	James White Dave Langford	Phil Probert
	Committee: Tony Berry, Carol Pearson, Eunice Pearson, Graham Poole, Martin Tudor.		
16 1986 (257)	De Vere (Coventry)	E C Tubb Chris Evans	Tony Berry
	Committee: Nick Mills, Darroll Pardoe, Rosemary Pardoe, Graham Poole, Maureen Porter.		
17 1987 (315)	Royal Angus	Iain Banks	Bernie Evans
	Committee: Mick Evans, Dave Hardy, Graham Poole, Stephen Rogers, Geoff Williams.		
18 1988 (336)	Royal Angus	Garry Kilworth	Tony Berry
	Committee: Bernie Evans, Rog Peyton, Greg Pickersgill, Linda Pickersgill, Martin Tudor.		
19 1989 (426)	The Excelsior	Geoff Ryman	Martin Tudor
	Committee: Tony Berry, Helena Bowles, Bernie Evans, Nick Mills, Pam Wells.		
20 1990 (330)	The Excelsior	Dr Jack Cohen	Bernie Evans
	Committee: Al Johnston, Alice Lawson, Steve Lawson, Nick Mills, Richard Standage.		
21 1991 (200)	Forte Post House (ex-Excelsior)	Colin Greenland	Nick Mills
	Committee: David T Cooper, Bernie Evans, Al Johnston, Alice Lawson, Steve Lawson, Chris Murphy.		
22 1992 (300)	Royal Angus	Storm Constantine	Helena Bowles
	Committee: Tony Berry, Bernie Evans, Jenny Glover, Steve Glover, Carol Morton, Richard Standage.		

CON & YEAR	HOTEL	GUEST(S) OF HONOUR	CHAIR
23 1993 (350)	Royal Angus	Stephen Baxter	Carol Morton
	Committee: Helena Bowles, Bernie Evans, Tony Morton, Richard Standage.		
24 1994 (214)	Royal Angus	Graham Joyce	Richard Standage
	Committee: Helena Bowles; Sarah Freakley, Carol Morton, Tony Morton, Chris Murphy, Martin Tudor.		
25 1995 (338)	The Chamberlain	Brian W. Aldiss Harry Harrison Bob Shaw	Tony Morton
	(Special Guest: Iain M. Banks) Committee: Tony Berry, Carol Morton, Chris Murphy, Richard Standage, Martin Tudor.		
26 1996 (281)	The Ibis	David Gemmell	Carol Morton
	Committee: Sarah Freakley, Tony Morton, Chris Murphy, Richard Standage, Martin Tudor.		
27 1997 (277)	The Abbey (Great Malvern)	Peter F. Hamilton	Martin Tudor
	Committee: Carol & Tony Morton, Chris Murphy, Mike Siddall.		
28 1998 (265)	Britannia	Paul J. McAuley	Martin Tudor
	Committee: Steve Lawson, Pat McMurray, Carol & Tony Morton, Chris Murphy.		
29 1999 (239)	Britannia	Ian Stewart	Carol Morton
	Committee: Maureen Kincaid Speller, Steve Lawson, Pat McMurray, Tony Morton, Chris Murphy, Martin Tudor.		

Please note that hotels were in Birmingham unless otherwise stated and that the attendance figures above (the number in brackets under each year) have, in the majority of cases, been taken from the members listed when each Programme Book went to press. They are not final totals of the attendees at each of the Novacons. For example the final membership at Novacon 17 was 352 (not 315) and at Novacon 18 was 411 (not 336).

Novacon Committee Biographies by Martin Tudor

Please note: In order to protect the guilty many of the "facts" below have been altered....

Carol Morton, Chair:

Carol, the token woman on this year's committee, exploded dramatically onto the Birmingham fannish scene fifteen years ago. An outrageous flirt, the sultry Carol has left a trail of broken hearts and dashed dreams behind her as she ploughed through the hearts and minds of numerous Brum Group and Novacon committees. After serving in various posts such as Secretary and Newsletter Editor she emerged as Chair in 1995.

Carol has served on eight Novacon committees of which she has chaired three - but denies she is a control freak, and claims to be "retiring" this year.

Maureen Speller Kincaid, Programme:

Back in the 1980s an early version of this "fembot" was launched at Novacon 16 under the codename "Porter", but unforeseen expenses forced a dramatic rethink until the mid-'90s when a more successful "Speller" version was released.

Eventually, last year, the noted robotics firm Brialey-Plummer convinced the Novacon 29 committee that they had ironed out previous production problems and assured us that the "Speller Kincaid" model was ideally suited to meet all our programming needs. Despite the occasional teething problems (which involved sending the model to the USA and Australia for essential maintenance) we have been pleased with this latest version. So pleased in fact, that Novacon 30 has ordered an updated model to undertake next year's programming.

Steve Lawson, Registrations:

Following a disastrous attempt at running the country's finances Lawson (now considerably thinner -- he recommends his SlimFast and beer diet) took to working on Novacons. This is his fourth time on a Novacon committee and he has agreed to do Registrations again next year.

Steve... *[the rest of this paragraph has been censored by Alice Lawson, all enquiries should be addressed to her at the Paragon table at Novacon.]*

Pat McMurray, Hotel Liaison:

This International Man of Mystery was defrosted last year to run the Novacon Programme and immediately reintroduced such out-dated ideas

as meal breaks -- many of which hadn't been seen since his accidental freezing in 1973 (he *had* been warned the lager was too cold).

A strange (Pooh)bear-like creature with a penchant for wearing women's clothes and talking into wally phones, he has worked as Hotel Liaison this year but, despite his decision to do Hotel Liaison again next year, it is hoped he will recover shortly.

Tony Morton, Treasurer:

Born during a messy bout of political in-fighting Tony was abandoned (for his own protection) by his father, the one true King of the Gypsies. Since which time Tony has spent his life, in hiding, denying his true heritage. Unfortunately those powerful Romany features are hard to disguise and he was swiftly snapped up some years ago by Black Country mega-group, BAD INFLUENCE, to join their line-up as the compulsory "moody, sexy, guitarist".

However, *blood will 'owt* and so Tony has given up the life of driving teeny-boppers wild with his savage guitar solos for a life at the cutting edge of politics in Dudley Council. As well as serving as Treasurer on this year's Novacon he has chaired a couple of Brum Group committees, served as their Newsletter Editor and worked on seven Novacon committees.

Chris Murphy, Operations:

Following his dramatic adventures in Mexico, Chris left his seven friends, grew his hair and purchased a false beard in order to slip into sf fandom through the backdoor of SIX OF ONE (THE PRISONER Appreciation Society). It says much for the tolerance of fandom that despite having "enjoyed" such careers as teacher, programmer and auditor Chris was not prevented from serving on several Brum Group committees and was even allowed to chair the Group.

Despite his "media" inclinations Chris is a recently "outed" fanzine fan (with several hilarious published articles to his credit) and a closet costumer. He has served on seven Novacon committees and will be doing Operations again on Novacon 30.

Martin Tudor, Publications:

This teetotal, debonair, suave and exceptionally slim fan has become renowned for his charm, good looks and impeccable manners since appearing on the Birmingham sf scene nearly twenty years ago.

Despite his innate abhorrence of the drunken behaviour and foul language of the majority of active Birmingham fans, his tolerance is boundless and he has served on eleven Brum Group committees and ten Novacons (chairing two), he has also foolishly agreed to do Publications on next year's Novacon.

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Join at the Novacon Registration desk or contact:

Steve Lawson, Registrations, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield,
S2 3HQ, England, e-mail xl5@zoom.co.uk, or check out
our webpage at <http://www.cooky.demon.co.uk/n30/n30.html>

**Novacon 29
Members
as of 31st October
1999:**

142	SMS	221	Mike Christie	229	Helen Glassborow
89	Michael Abbott	124	David Clements	228	Martin Glassborow
92	Andrew Adams	169	Norman Clinton	74	Niall Gordon
224	Brian W. Aldiss	140	Cat Coast	13	Wendy Graham
97	Brian Ameringen	42	Elaine Coates	100	Ann Green
219	Jim Anderson	181	David Cochrane	99	Steve Green
111	Margaret Austin	156	Jack Cohen	161	Urban Gunnarsson
32	Mark Bailey	69	Noel Collyer	166	M. Helen Hall
123	Amanda Baker	233	Chris Cowan	222	Rob Hansen
150	Chris Baker	33	Dave Cox	101	David A. Hardy
151	Rachel Baker	28	Arthur Cruttenden	102	John Harold
215	Lee Banyon	213	Patrick Curzon	40	Sue Harrison
177	Jim Barker	155	John Dallman	159	Eve Harvey
205	Allen Baum	39	Julia Daly	158	John Harvey
27	Chris Bell	160	Mike Damesick	206	Donya Hazard White
144	Doug Bell	58	Steve Davies	15	Julian Headlong
198	Austin Benson	137	Guy Dawson	139	Dave Hicks
133	Tony Berry	136	Sue Dawson	208	Katherine Hodges
16	Caroline Bott	183	Peter Day	188	Mary Ann Hollingsworth
103	Robbie Bourget	59	Giulia de Cesare	210	Anders Holmstrom
240	Ray Bradbury	44	Simon Dearn	55	Simon Hovell
148	Jill Bradley	190	Vincent Docherty	17	Mark Huntley James
149	Phil Bradley	25	Chris Donaldson	235	Marcia Kelly Illingworth
47	Bridget Bradshaw	84	Paul Dormer	234	Tim Illingworth
46	Simon Bradshaw	165	Chris Dunk	77	Niall Jackson
38	Claire Brialey	209	Steve Dunn	225	Janet Jenkins
125	Gordon Brignal	126	Roger Earnshaw	86	Al Johnston
30	Pat Brown	112	Martin Easterbrook	193	Marsha Jones
68	Tanya Brown	135	Lynn Edwards	57	Steve Jones
31	Vernon Brown	195	Sue Edwards	60	Sue Jones
152	Jackie E. Burns	62	Bernie Evans	185	Dick Jude
72	Roger Burton West	61	Mick Evans	75	Tony Keen
83	Steven Cain	85	Nic Farey	171	Richard Kennaway
117	Stuart Capewell	18	Tommy Ferguson	200	Debbi Kerr
223	Avedon Carol	242	Janet Figg	187	Matt Kiessling
189	Ken Cheslin	241	Mike Figg	230	Michelle Kiessling
106	Chris Cheyne	116	Mike Ford	49	Paul Kincaid
107	Susie Cheyne	231	Syd Foster	5	Maureen Kincaid Speller
		48	Sue Francis	204	Wayne King
		78	Dave French	212	Linda Krawecke
		79	Shirley French		
		22	Gwen Funnell		
		132	Nigel Furlong		
		131	Sabine Furlong		

141	David Laight	168	Susan Peak	227	Christopher Thurston
143	Christina Lake	120	Mali Perera	65	Alison Tomkinson
134	Dave Lally	110	Rog Peyton	64	Neil Tomkinson
109	Dave Langford	90	Mark Plummer	128	Dave Tompkins
95	Eira Latham	129	Sheila Pover	232	Jean Townsend
194	Lee Lawrence	9	Sherrie Powell	182	Paul Treadaway
71	Alice Lawson	67	Liam Proven	4	Martin Tudor
8	Steve Lawson	35	Jennifer Quin	170	Stuart Turner
114	Erhard Leder	203	Peter Redfarn	153	Terry Twine
146	Gavin Long	186	Andy Rice	211	Lennart Uhlin
145	Caroline Loveridge	93	John D Rickett	162	David Roy Upton
41	Peter Mabey	196	Julie Rigby	163	Victoria Amanda Upton
180	Kari Maund	29	Roger Robinson	237	T. C. Valois
154	Ken MacLeod	73	Tony Rogers	197	Mark Waller
184	Sue Mason	87	John Rowbottom	175	Huw Walters
201	Jean Maudsley	130	Marcus Rowland	26	Peter Wareham
118	William McCabe	36	Yvonne Rowse	119	Gerry Webb
178	Pat McGowan	202	Andy Sawyer	218	Barbara Weidman
7	Pat McMurray	220	Georgia Schmitt	14	Pam Wells
216	John Meaney	82	Alison Scott	122	Eileen Weston
217	Yvonne Meaney	21	Mike Scott	121	Peter Weston
63	Nick Mills	20	Bob Shaw	70	Laura Wheatly
173	Debby Moir	11	Ina Shorrock	34	Nik Whitehead
172	Mike Moir	12	Norman Shorrock	19	Janet Wilkins
81	Chris Morgan	226	Mark Simmons	147	Bridget Wilkinson
80	Pauline Morgan	207	Ken Slater	138	Gary Wilkinson
2	Carol Morton	43	Mark Slater	88	Anne Wilson
3	Tony Morton	98	Martin Smith	199	Caroline Wilson
94	Steve Mowbray	76	Robert Sneddon	53	Alan Woodford
96	Caroline Mullan	115	Adrian Snowdon	52	Anne Woodford
6	Chris Murphy	108	Ian Sorensen	164	Hanna Worrall
157	Carol Murtha Irving	127	Tim Stannard	91	Diana Wynne Jones
179	Phil Nanson	10	Avril Stewart		
51	Cherry Newton	1	Ian Stewart		
50	Henry Newton	176	Billy Stirling		
56	Lisanne Norman	45	Chris Stocks		
214	Phil Nye	174	Neil Summerfield		
23	Chris O'Shea	113	Lesley Swan		
66	Krystyna Oborn	238	Jennifer Swift		
24	Paul Oldroyd	192	David Symes		
54	Sue Oliver	191	Fay Symes		
239	Brian Parsons	104	George Ternent		
236	Joanne Parsons	105	Linda Ternent		
167	David Peak	37	David Thomas		

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