



NOVAcon 51

PROGRESS REPORT 1

Guest of Honour
Gareth L Powell



11 – 13th November 2022

Palace Hotel Buxton

COMMITTEE

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A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

So, after the highs of Novacon 50 (which some doubted would ever happen due to Covid) with our three outstanding Guests of Honour, here we are plotting the next one, **Novacon 51**.

We will be returning to the Buxton Palace again this year, and we are pleased to announce that they have held the room rates to last year's prices. It is a picturesque location with facilities such as bars, restaurants, supermarkets etc all within a short walking distance. Last year was a learning curve for both the hotel and the convention, and though mostly positive there were a few issues. However, the hotel is keen to have us back and to build on last year, and are listening to our concerns.

There have been some changes on the Committee this year, with new members who bring different skills and ideas to the mix, but we still have the knowledge and experience of some of the longer-standing members to rely on.

I would like to welcome the new committee members. Firstly, **Helena McCallum** who will be running Programme. Helena (aka Adela Terrell) is a long-standing fan and has con-running experience including Eastercons and Lazlar Lyricon. We also say hello to **Phoenix Alexander** who will be running our social media. Phoenix is the Science Fictions Collection Librarian at Liverpool University and is also an author with stories published in *Black Static*, *Beneath Ceaseless Skies* and *Escape*



Learning Curve for new Chair – current position somewhere between 2 and 3!

Pod etc. We also welcome back **Helena Bowles** who after a period of ill health is re-joining the Committee as Secretary. I will also be adding to my role in Publications by taking over as Chair (eek!). Please be patient as I learn the ropes (though I do have an excellent team to keep me straight).

I should also note that work has been going on ‘behind the scenes’ to improve the website and this should hopefully go live very soon at www.novacon.uk/n51/

So, what can you expect this year? Well, all the usual. The Scientific Talks, the panel discussions, the art show (now in daylight!), some excuse for wine and nibbles on Friday, the beer tasting and guest banquet on Sunday night, and so on. There will also be the ‘Off Piste’ programme in the smaller function rooms at the Art Show end of the hotel. However, we can always do with new and interesting ideas from our members, so please feel free to contact us with any thoughts.

I am also very pleased that this year’s **Guest of Honour** is the wonderful **Gareth Powell**. He has been publishing SFF for over a decade and has won two BSFA awards. For those of you who aren’t aware of his work, there is more information later in this PR. We will also have the added bonus that Gareth will be accompanied by his fiancée, (his wife by the time of the convention), **J. Dianne Dotson**, who is also a published SF/Science Writer. Looking forward to seeing everyone in November.

Carol

HOTEL & CONVENTION INFORMATION



Palace Hotel Buxton
Palace Road
Buxton
SK17 6AG

For Novacon 51 we will be returning to the Palace Hotel in Buxton in the Peak District.

As before, all the convention rooms including Programme, Off-Piste, Art show and Dealers are all on the ground floor. The bars and toilets are also on the ground floor and there is plenty of seating.

We are pleased that we have managed to keep the Room rates the same as last year.

Convention room rates

Rooms are: £45 per person per night for a double/twin room

£60 per person for a single room.

Room rates include breakfast. There are also a limited number of family rooms (2 adults and 2 children) and a few accessible rooms. There is ramp access at the rear of the hotel for those with difficulty with steps. Please note if you have specific requirements, don't hesitate to contact the hotel directly at 01298 22001 option 6.



The whole hotel is light and airy with high ceilings and some impressive decor. And a conservatory. And the longest continuous wrought-iron bannister in Britain, or was it Europe? And possibly a ghost. There is a swimming pool (open at time of last hotel visit) and gym/spa facilities (service may be limited so please contact hotel directly for more information).

Buxton itself is a thermal spa town, with lots of interesting buildings and places to visit for those who wish to venture outside the hotel. These include the Opera House, the Devonshire Dome (once the largest unsupported dome in the world), a restored Georgian crescent and the ornamental Pavilion Gardens. There are supermarkets nearby (Waitrose, Aldi & Sainsburys Local) and plenty of cafés and restaurants. More information can be found at www.visitbuxton.co.uk.

To book, please fill in the hotel booking form and send it to the address on the form. The form can be downloaded from the website (www.novacon.uk/n51/). Once complete, send it to Steve Lawson at the address on the form as soon as possible for processing.

GUEST OF HONOUR – GARETH L POWELL



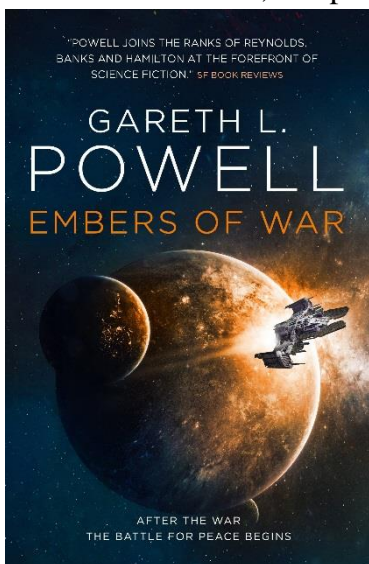
We are pleased that Gareth Powell has agreed to be our Guest of Honour. For those who aren't aware, he has been publishing SF for over a decade. I first saw him when he was Guest of Honour at Bristol Con and then again when he was also a guest at the Birmingham SF Group in 2019. I am sure you will enjoy meeting him.

Gareth was born in Bristol, England. He began writing at school and university and was fortunate to count Diana Wynne Jones and Helen Dunmore as early mentors. He has been described as “a creative and literate space opera author” by *Publishers Weekly* and as “an eloquent and engaging writer who manages to balance epic exposition, jaw-dropping action (or horror) and introspective personal moments without ever losing control of the pace” by *Grimdark Magazine*. All I can add, far less

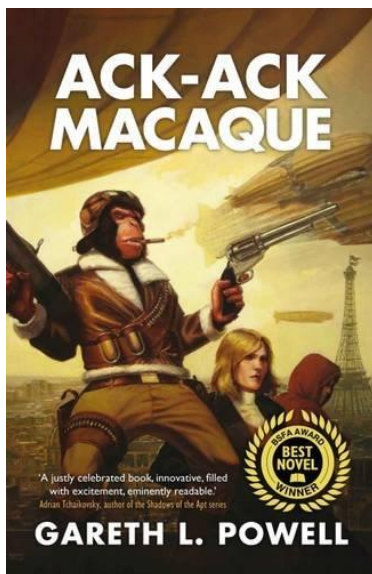
eloquently, is that he writes hugely entertaining space operas but with characters of depth, heart and compassion.

His first collection (THE LAST REEF AND OTHER STORIES) was published in 2008 by Elastic Press and featured stories around a theme of “Who will you try to save when your world falls apart?”. His first novel, SILVERSANDS was published by Pendragon Press in 2010 and was a cyberpunk tale of political intrigue, digital ghosts and corporate assassins.

Moving to a bigger publisher, Solaris (now part of Rebellion Publishing), his next novel was THE RECOLLECTION, a space opera involving time travellers, a machine mind and aliens in need of help. This has been recently re-published as a 10th Anniversary edition



was followed by two sequels, HIVE MONKEY and MACAQUE ATTACK. Following on, Gareth has written three novels in the

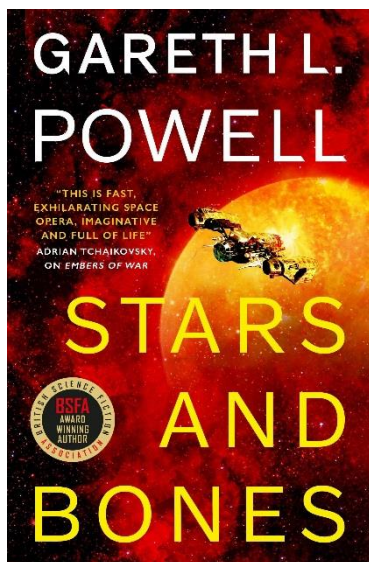


It was his next novel, ACK-ACK MACAQUE (Titan Books, 2012) which brought him to wider prominence. It features a cigar-chomping, hard-drinking, flying ace of a monkey who escapes from a videogame into an alternate 21st century! It won the BSFA Award for Best Novel in 2013 and was also a finalist for the Best Translated Novel in the Japanese Seiun Awards. This

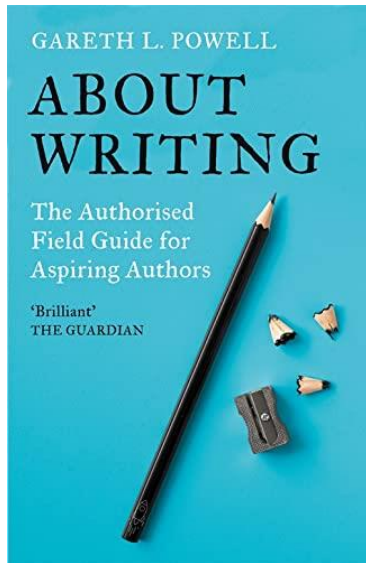
space opera series, *Embers of War*. The first novel in the series, EMBERS OF WAR was published in 2018, followed by FLEET OF KNIVES (2019) and LIGHT OF IMPOSSIBLE STARS (2020). They feature the spaceship, *Trouble Dog* and her crew. Unlike many SFF novels, the story is set after a massive interstellar war as people try to rebuild. The characters (including *Trouble Dog*) are emotionally damaged and have left the military and joined the House of Reclamation, an organisation devoted to rescuing people in distress. Needless to say, it all goes wrong and they encounter ‘David versus Goliath’ confrontations, chases and extinction-level threats. EMBERS OF WAR won the BSFA Award – Best Novel in 2018 and was shortlisted for the Locus Awards. The sequels were both shortlisted for BSFA Awards, with FLEET OF KNIVES also being shortlisted for the *Locus* Award. The series is currently being adapted for television by Stampede Ventures, with Breck Eisner (who directed many episodes of *The Expanse*) as Director.

His latest novel, STARS AND BONES was published last month (March 2022) and is the first in a new series, *The Continuance*. Set 75 years into the future, humanity has been cast from a dying Earth to wander the stars in a vast fleet of arks, and now a terrifying new threat is killing the last remains of humanity.

As well as longer fiction, Gareth has written shorter fiction including novellas and short stories, appearing in various magazines and collections such as *Tor.com*, *Newcon Press*, *Interzone* and *Clarkesworld*. His fantasy/detective novella RAGGED ALICE was a finalist for the BSFA for Shorter Fiction in 2019. As we go to press, his novella LIGHT CHASER (co-written with Peter Hamilton) is a finalist for the BSFA Award for



Best Shorter Fiction, and his short story “Ride the Blue Horse” was also a finalist in the 2015 BSFA awards.



He has also written about Science Fiction and the craft of writing. His non-fiction book ABOUT WRITING (Luna Press) was published in 2019, and an expanded and revised version is being published later this year by Gollancz. The original was a finalist for BSFA Non-Fiction Award in 2019.

He has also written freelance articles, interviews and reviews including for *The Guardian*, *SFX* magazine, *2000 AD* and *The Irish Times*. He is also a regular monthly

columnist for *The Engineer*.

He is well-known in the SFF community for mentoring creativity and nurturing new talent and has run creative writing workshops and given talks at UK universities, Arvon Foundation, and various literature festivals and is also very supportive of new writers via his Twitter profile (@garethlpowell).

(Based on information taken from www.garethlpowell.com and www.isfdb.org)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fiction Series

- *Ack-Ack Macaque* (Titan Books)
 - ACK-ACK MACAQUE (2012)
 - HIVE MONKEY (2013)
 - MACAQUE ATTACK (2014)

- *Embers of War* (Titan Books)
 - EMBERS OF WAR (**2018**)
 - FLEET OF KNIVES (**2019**)
 - LIGHT OF IMPOSSIBLE STARS (**2020**)
- *The Continuance* (Titan Books)
 - STARS AND BONES (**2022**)

Stand-Alone Novels

- THE RECOLLECTION (Solaris Books, **2011**)
- SILVERSANDS (Pendragon Press, **2010**)

Novellas

- LIGHT CHASER by Gareth L. Powell and Peter F. Hamilton (Tor.com, **2021**)
- DOWNDRAUGHT (**2020**)
- RAGGED ALICE (Tor.com, **2019**)

Collections

- ENTROPIC ANGEL & OTHER STORIES (NewCon Press, **2017**)
- THE LAST REEF & OTHER STORIES (Elastic Press, **2008**)

Non-fiction

- ABOUT WRITING (Gollancz, **2022**) – Expanded and republished.
- ABOUT WRITING (Luna Press, **2019**)

CONVENTION TABLES

These are free to anyone who is running a convention. Contact Tony for reservations.

CODE OF CONDUCT

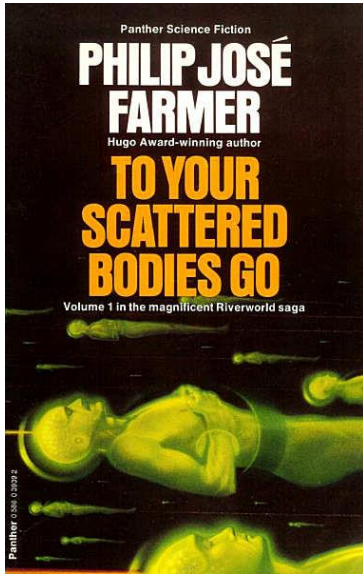
A Convention is a private event and, as such, the Committee has always had the right and the ability to remove any attendee for antisocial behaviour. Over recent years, it has become standard practice for such events to publish a Code of Conduct providing guidelines as to what that antisocial behaviour may include.

The Code of Conduct is a living document. It evolves, intending always to reflect current best practice. The version in use at each Novacon is fixed in advance of the convention, and the version for Novacon 51 will be available on the website (www.novacon.uk/n51/) and will be printed in the convention Programme book. It should be noted that the Code of Conduct governs not only behaviour at Novacon, but also in certain spaces elsewhere, including but not limited to activity online, such as in messages or replies to Novacon accounts on social media, and posts in Novacon pages and groups. The Novacon Code of Conduct team receives complete information from preceding Novacon Code of Conduct teams, and passes complete information to future Novacon Code of Conduct teams. It also maintains an awareness of activity which has been of concern to other conventions. For most people, the simple principle of, “Behave like a decent human being,” is enough of a guideline. However, if in any doubt, please consult the Novacon website or contact the team at CodeOfConduct@novacon.uk

ART SHOW

If you want to show your art it is free to convention members, but you will need to reserve space. So, contact us to discuss what you need and so that we can do a little planning. If you have any questions related to the art show, please contact Serena.

1972 AWARD WINNERS – WHO DO WE REMEMBER?



Looking at the recently published Hugo and BSFA finalists made me think back to how different the SF field is now compared to then. I wondered how many of the names in the 1972 lists would still be familiar some 50 years later? I also wonder how well-remembered some of today's crop of writers will be another 50 years into the future, although unfortunately unless medicine suddenly makes massive strides in anti-aging, I am unlikely to find out. Who are going to be the classic writers of the future?

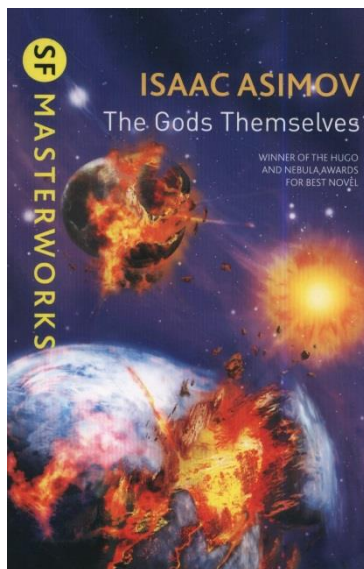
While I can only speculate about the latter, and I am sure each of us have different ideas, we can look back those 50 years to see who was being lauded in the Awards. Whether we still remember their names will also vary, depending on the age of the person and at what age they started reading SF. Some of us got an early start: thanks to my Dad's bookshelves and being a precocious reader, I was started reading SF while still in single figures and into my early teens. Others will have not started till later. That being said, there will still be some names that most people will recognise.

So at Novacon 2, what would your keen, young SF fan be reading? In the SF world, the finalists for the Hugo Award for Best Novel included Ursula K Le Guin (*THE LATHE OF HEAVEN*), Anne McCaffrey (*DRAGONQUEST*), Roger Zelazny (*JACK OF SHADOWS*), Robert Silverberg (*A TIME OF CHANGES*) and Philip José Farmer who was the winner with *TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO*.

Of note is that all of them (as far as I am aware) were US authors. The Brits do get a mention in the Best Novella category, with Arthur C. Clarke (A MEETING WITH MEDUSA) and John Brunner (DREAD EMPIRE). Again, these are authors most of us will know. Interestingly, although I know all the names, I am not aware of some of the works mentioned e.g. those by Silverberg, Zelazny and Brunner. What is also interesting is that 2 of the 5 Best Novel finalists were women, which was not usual then. In contrast, as far as I know (and apologies if I mis-gender someone) there are four women and two men on the current list. The list is still US-dominated, though there are at least now more people of colour gaining recognition.

I wanted to compare the BSFA Awards (as more representative of British interests) but unfortunately there were no awards that year due to insufficient votes. The winners from the surrounding years were Brian W. Aldiss (1972) for a collection THE MOMENT OF ECLIPSE (not familiar to me) and Arthur C Clarke (1973) for RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA which I should hang up my SF fan credentials if I didn't know.

Finally, the Nebula Awards were quite different to the Hugo finalists with nobody appearing on both lists. The Best Novel went to Isaac Asimov for THE GODS THEMSELVES. Obviously, people still remember Asimov (for good and bad reasons) and the novel is still reasonably well-known though not his most famous. Other finalists were Norman Spinrad (THE IRON DREAM), John Brunner (THE SHEEP LOOK UP – a superb book), David Gerrold (WHEN HARLEY WAS ONE) and George Alec Effinger (WHAT ENTROPY MEANS TO ME). Personally, I have never heard of Effinger and

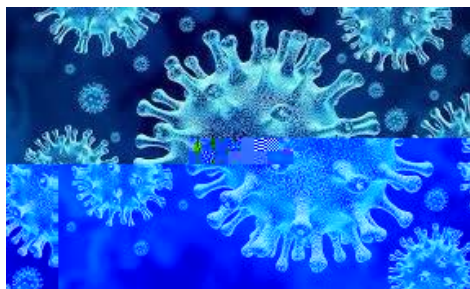


I only know of David Gerrold because of *Star Trek* and Tribbles. While I have heard of and read some Spinrad, I suspect he is someone who is slipping out of memory as newer generations arrive. Unlike the Hugos, there is no female representation on the list, and as far as I am aware, all authors were white and with the exception of John Brunner, all were American.

As I said at the beginning, my views of who has been remembered will be different to other people. It would be interesting to see how different those views are – perhaps a bar conversation to be had sometime!

Carol Goodwin

COVID POLICY AT NOVACON



While there are no official government coronavirus restrictions at the moment, we cannot be clear about what the situation will be in November, or what the government or the venue will require then. Therefore, we

can't produce a risk assessment or policy until much closer to the day. We are monitoring the situation and will liaise with the hotel as well. When we have clearer information, we will assess and inform you if any restrictions are needed.

DEALERS' TABLES

Dealers' tables (6 ft) are available at £20. Dealers normally have to be a member of the convention but we are happy to talk about this. Also, we are open to discussion if you wish to only come for one day. Contact Tony at the email address on Page 2



MEMBERSHIP LIST APRIL 2022

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Gareth L Powell | 21. Niall Gordon |
| 2. Carol Goodwin | 22. John Coxon |
| 3. Phoenix Alexander | 23. Chris Stocks |
| 4. Helena Bowles | 24. Rob Jackson |
| 5. Serena Culfeather | 25. Caroline Mullan |
| 6. Steve Lawson | 26. Brian Ameringen |
| 7. Helen McCallum | 27. Emjay Ameringen |
| 8. Alex Storer | 28. ½r |
| 9. John Wilson | 29. Dave Hicks |
| 10. Tony Berry | 30. Peter Hicks |
| 11. Alice Lawson | 31. Cat Coast |
| 12. Nick Mills | 32. William Goodall |
| 13. Marcus Rowland | 33. Charlotte Bulmer |
| 14. Jim Walker | 34. Jamie Scott |
| 15. Simon Dearn | 35. Omega |
| 16. Luke Smith | 36. Harry Payne |
| 17. Adrian Snowdon | 37. Hal Payne |
| 18. Anne Woodford | 38. Jodie Payne |
| 19. Alan Woodford | 39. Martin Smart |
| 20. Steve Dunn | 40. Melica Smith |

41. Christine Davidson
42. Michael Davidson
43. Vernon Brown
44. Pat Brown
45. Morag O'Neill
46. Vanessa May
47. Tim Kirk
48. Chris Morgan
49. Pauline Morgan
50. James Odell
51. Roger Robinson
52. Mike Scott
53. Flick
54. Alan Bellingham
55. John Harvey
56. Eve Harvey
57. John Dowd
58. Fran Dowd
60. Angela Rosin
61. Douglas Spencer
62. Pete Randall
63. Jackie Burns
64. Colette Reap
65. Dave Tompkins
66. Claire Brialey
67. Eira Short
68. Smuzz
69. Cuil Short
70. David Langford
71. George Ternent
72. Linda Ternent
73. DC
74. Jean Thompson
75. Harpal. Singh
76. Yvonne Rowse
77. Ian Sorensen
78. Sally Rowse
79. Ron Gemmell
80. Hazel Ashworth West
81. Steve Davies
82. Giulia De Cesare
83. Alison Scott
84. Steven Cain
85. Pat McMurray
86. Julie McMurray
87. Kate Solomon
88. Malcolm Davies
89. John Bray
90. David Cochrane
91. Claire Wardell
92. Henrick Palsson
93. Ian Roll
94. Mike Richardson
95. Sue Edwards
96. Alexander Clarke
97. Kevan Grayson
98. J Dianne Dotson