

NOVACON 9

Organised by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group

2nd-3rd-4th November 1979

Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham

PROGRESS REPORT 4

As I type this PR, NOVACON 9 is just 3 weeks away - the programme is organised, the Programme Book is being printed, the badges are being pinned & written...what have we forgotten? Something will doubtless backfire in the next 3 weeks or at the event... well, it wouldn't be a real con if everything ran smoothly, would it? (That's the usual con committee's cop-out catchphrase stated just to get you in the right mood for turning a blind-eye to the committee's cock-ups!)

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT - As stated in PR 1/2 we are starting NOVACON 9 at 3.30 on Friday afternoon, not in the evening. GET THERE EARLY.

HOW TO GET TO THE HOTEL

If you live in Birmingham, you'll find it easy. To all those living outside of Birmingham we are enclosing a map issued by the Royal Angus which should prove to be useful.

In addition to this information we should point out that there is a bus route between New Street Station and the Hotel. The bus runs from Stephenson Street. After coming through the ticket barrier at the Station you will see escalators ahead of you. Go up an escalator and turn left at the top, walking past the indoor fountain through the exit to New Street. Emerging from the Station complex you will find yourself at the top of a ramp leading down to New Street. At the top of this ramp, on your left-hand side you will find a narrow staircase leading down to Stephenson Street. The bus stops at the bottom of this staircase. The bus required is the 101 and is always a single decker. There is a standard fare of 5p (no tickets are issued on this route). Following the map provided, the bus route is Stephenson St, Navigation St, up Hill St to Paradise St, around Paradise Circus, through Summer Row and into Great Charles St. Around St Chad's Circus and up Snow Hill Circus. The bus stops about half way up Snow Hill Circus - get off at this point and walk back down the hill to St Chads Queensway. NOTE this bus is the shopper's special and therefore does not run after 6pm or on Sundays. Up till 6pm it runs every 2 or 3 minutes.

HOW TO GET THE CENTRE HOTEL

If you are one of the few booked into the overflow hotel, directions are a little simpler. The Centre Hotel is situated in New Street, exactly opposite the Odeon Cinema (No 32 on the map).

Arrival by train - instructions as above out of New Street Station. Instead of descending stairs to Stephenson Street, go down ramp and turn right into New Street. The hotel is on the opposite side of the road about 30 yards along.

Arrival by car from M6 - At Spaghetti junction take A38M to city and continue to end of motorway. Take left side lane into Lancaster Circus and along James Watt Ringway and Moor Street Rinway, clockwise around St Martins Circus and turn into New Street by the Rotunda (high circular building not marked on map). Along New Street to traffic lights and turn left towards and then right into Stephenson Street. There is an NCP car park on the left as Stephenson Street ends and Navigation Street starts. This is the most convenient car park to the Centre Hotel.

Arrival by car from M5 - instructions as map to Royal Angus as far as Broad Street. At end of Broad Street turn left into Paradise Circus and follow around clockwise to the Town Hall (No 16 on map). Turn left into New Street. Continue down New Street until forced to turn left or right. Turn right. Then turn right again into Stephenson Street and the NCP car Park is about 60yds along on the left.

Arrival by Car from A34 - along A34 into Digbeth and follow City Centre sign into and clockwise around St Martins Circus. At the Rotunda (see Above) turn left into New Street and follow directions as from M6 above.

WHAT TO DO ON ARRIVAL AT THE ROYAL ANGUS

- 1) Book into hotel on Ground Floor and get to your room.
- 2) Proceed to 2nd Floor by lift. Turn right out of lift and you will come to the convention Registration Desk.
- 3) At Registration you will be asked for the balance of the registration fee. You have already paid £2 supporting membership. It is a further £2 to convert to Attending membership making a total of £4. (NOTE: Anyone wishing to register at the convention itself will be charged £5 so if you have friends or know someone who intends coming to NOVACON and hasn't bothered to register at all, you might warn them to register before the con.)
- 4) You will then be given your Programme Book and your convention badge. This badge should be worn at all times while walking around the hotel. If you don't wear your badge, you won't get served at the bar. With your Programme Book you will also get Nova Award voting forms etc plus a NOVACON SPECIAL - a limited edition booklet - Christopher Priest's sequel to INVERTED WORLD, "The Making of THE LESBIAN HORSE". Illustrated by Andrew Stephenson, it will be a 500 copy numbered edition.
- 5) Go to the bar and buy the committee drinks.

PROGRAMME

As stated earlier the programme starts at 3.30 on Friday afternoon. It will continue through to 6.30pm. It will resume at 8.30pm and continue till after midnight. On Saturday it starts at 10am and runs to 7pm with a lunch break at 1pm. It will resume at 10pm for the Fancy Dress followed by the Disco till 1.30am Sunday. Sunday programme starts at 10.30am and runs till 4.30pm with a break for lunch at 12.30pm.

The programme consists of films, talks, the NOVACON Chat Show, Auctions, a formal debate, panel discussions, a quiz designed along the format of University Challenge, Fancy Dress Competition, Disco, etc.

EATING

Where you eat and what you eat is entirely at your discretion. There is no banquet this year. The Hotel Restaurant will be open Friday and Saturday evenings and Friday and Sunday lunch time. It will not be open on Saturday lunch time. In addition, the Hotel will also be providing a Buffet on Saturday & Sunday lunch time, for those requiring only light meals. It will consist of one Hot dish with alternative Cold dish. Cost will be in the region of £1. Those wishing to sample exotic dishes (Chinese, Indian, Wimpy, etc) will find several good eating houses outside the hotel with 10 minutes walking distance.

NOTE: those who wish to eat in the Hotel Restaurant on Friday and Saturday evenings should book their tables early to avoid disappointment. It might even be advisable to book a table by phone before the con (Tel: 021-236 4211)

DRINKING

The bar will stay open through Friday afternoon and remain open till approximately 1am Saturday morning. Reopening at 10.30am it will be open through till approx. 2am Sunday morning. It will reopen at 11am and close at 2pm. It will not be open on Sunday afternoon as we will have ceased to be residents at noon. The Friday night and Saturday night closing times are provisional. They will not close before those times and they will stay open as long as people are buying and consuming drinks.

THE BOOKROOM

Books will be on sale during the weekend, from various dealers who will be only too happy to part with various literary delights. Books will be on sale at the following times:

Friday: the bookroom will open at 2pm and close at 6.30pm.

Saturday: from 9.30am to 6.30pm (it will close during the Guest of Honour's talk from 2.15pm to 3.15pm).

Sunday: from 10am to approx 4.30pm.

Dealers please note: Setting up will be allowed on Friday morning only - not Thursday evening.

BEST WISHES TO NOVACON FROM THE INTERPLANETARY SPACE TRAVEL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (United Kingdom)

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S.A.E. to:- The Interplanetary Space Travel Research Association
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1984

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We expect support from all the Fan Groups in the United Kingdom and the USSR will no doubt wish to provide Russian space material for display. Marconi's Black Knight rocket is hoped for to display.

APPLICATIONS FOR VIP
TICKETS should be sent
to the following
address:

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THE ART SHOW

This will be in the Lower Angus room as in previous years. It will open at the same times as the Book Room except that on Friday afternoon it may open slightly later due to the fact that many artists won't be arriving till during the afternoon. It will close on Sunday at noon to allow artwork to be taken down, sorted and entered into the Art Auction at 2pm.

FANCY DRESS COMPETITION

The Fancy Dress will be at 10pm on Saturday night. Competitors must notify our registration desk - details should be left of name, costume/character, special requirements, etc. Suitable forms will be at the Registration Desk. This must be done by 4.30pm on Saturday. Martin Hoare will be announcing the Fancy Dress - make sure he has your name, character pronunciation correct and familiarise him with any things like timing, background music, etc. Don't arrive 5 minutes before the start of the Competition, having forgotten to fill in the necessary forms because you were drunk or something, and then ask us to find a record of the National Anthem or some such obscure piece for your background music. We might not like it.

THE NOVA AWARD

The NOVA Award is presented at each NOVACON to the best British fanzine of the preceding year. It has been presented every year since 1973. Early awards were decided by a select panel of judges - since 1977, however the rules were changed and the Award thrown open to popular vote. Ballots and copies of the full, incredibly complex rules will be available at the Registration Desk. Voting is open to any NOVACON member who in the last two years has published a fanzine or had contributions or letters printed in other zines (see rules for precise details). Thus the Award is voted for by people who do know something about the fanzine field. Voting closes with the registration desk on Saturday evening of NOVACON 9. And just what is a fanzine? By the rules: "an amateur publication which is concerned with SF, Fantasy, SF & Fantasy fans and/or associated subjects, and copies of which may be generally obtained in exchange for other amateur publications or in response to 'letters of comment'." The NOVA committee (not judges but expert consultants) interprets this and verifies ballots; the Administrator collects said ballots; and each year Ray Bradbury (the Birmingham one, not the American imitation) creates an amazing and unique trophy for presentation to the winner. Use your vote if you have one!

Past winners

1973 SPECUALTION ed by Peter Weston
1974 (tie) BIG SCAB ed by John Brosnan
ZIMRI ed by Lisa Conesa
1975 MAYA ed by Rob Jackson

1976 MAYA ed by Rob Jackson
1977 TWLL-DDU ed by Dave Langford
1978 GROSS ENCOUNTERS ed by Alan Dorey
1979 ? ? ? ? ? ? ?

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

The 'University Challenge' type quiz will be held this year. 4 teams have entered - Scotland, Cambridge University, the Surrey Limpwrist and the home-team The Brummies. After trying to get teams to enter for months, now, 3 weeks before the con, we start getting teams wishing to enter! It is now too late! Too much preparation has to go into an item of this nature for us to be able to accept late entries. Sorry.

Round 1 will be the Surrey Limpwrist vs The Brummies and will be at 8.30pm on Friday evening. Round 2 will be Scotland vs Cambridge University and be at 10am on Saturday morning. The winners of each round will be in the Final at 10.30 Sunday morning. Team captains please make sure your team is in the Con Hall on time. In the event of a team not turning up or, for any reason, being unable to participate, a replacement team (chosen, if possible, from the late entries we're receiving) will be entered.

AUCTION

The auction is the traditional place where con committees raise money for convention funds. This money is raised in 2 ways:-

- (1) from money for items donated to the convention, or
- (2) from a 10% commission taken by the committee for items sold belonging to con members.

If you have books you wish to sell, we will sell them in the auction, take 10% of the amount raised and give you the balance. Alternatively, you may wish to be an entirely generous person and donate the whole item to the convention. Whichever you choose, please hand your goods in at the Registration Desk as soon as you arrive. If they are goods to be sold at 10% commission, there are forms to be filled out and signed.

We need goods - books, magazines, artwork, fanzines, old Programme Books, records, models, etc. - anything we can make money on, in fact! Please donate.

And that's about it.

Remember that it is your responsibility to pay the hotel for your room. You must be out of your room by noon on Sunday otherwise you may be charged for an extra day. A special room will be allocated for you to leave your luggage in for the balance of the Sunday.

By the time you receive this, you will have received your hotel confirmation. Check to see that the details are correct. If you haven't received your hotel booking confirmation, or any details are wrong on the one you've received, contact Stan Eling, 124 Galton Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B67 5JS (Phone 021-420 1369) or Rog Peyton, 19 Eves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham B32 3QL (Phone 021-477 6901 at home or 021-236 1112 at the shop in the daytime).

GUEST OF HONOUR Christopher Priest.

COMMITTEE Rog Peyton (Chairman); Stan and Helen Eling
Chris and Pauline Morgan; Paul Oldroyd

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