

# **SECOND**

## **THE SECOND SECCON**

### **PROGRAMME BOOK AND READ ME**

**GUEST OF HONOUR - PAUL J. MCAULEY**

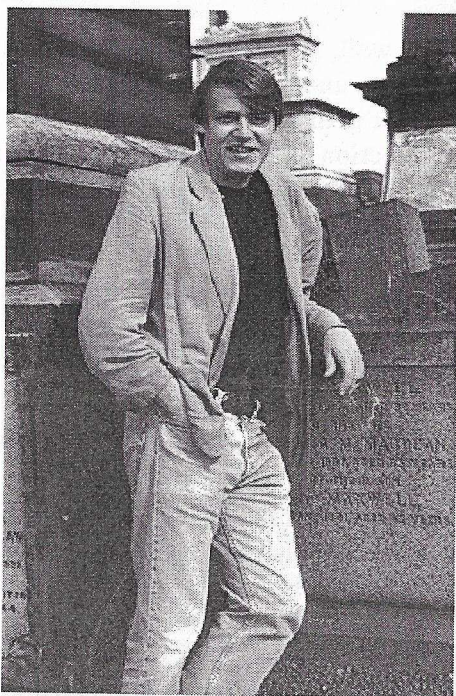


Photo by Beth Gwinn

# WELCOME TO SECCOND

Back in 1998, we were bemoaning the lack of small general-interest sf conventions. True, there were general conventions, but they tended to be rather big. Similarly, there were small and more intimate conventions, but they were almost always run by and catering to a special-interest subset of fandom. 'Why not try running one?' we thought. 'But what to call it?' 'Well, we want it to be a small, enjoyable and cosy convention...'

So SECCON it became, and it ran over the late May bank holiday weekend 1999 in Stevenage, with Stephen Baxter as the GoH. (So we could have called it SteveCon, but then the next one would have to have been PeteCon with Peter F Hamilton in Peterborough. Or DaveCon with David Langford in Daventry).

It all seemed to go very well, so less than the usual amount of prodding was needed to get us to run another one. We've moved to Swindon and to a rather nicer hotel, but in all other respects we hope that SECCOND will follow the same direction as SECCON: more programme than a true relaxacon, lighter than a true sercon, and with no particular theme other than 'meet friends and enjoy yourself - with SF thrown in'.

Looking forward to seeing you around SECCOND,

Simon and Bridget Bradshaw (Committee)

## **Paul J McAuley - a brief biography**

Born in 1955 in Gloucestershire, Paul gained a PhD in Botany, and spent many years as a biology researcher and lecturer in universities across the world before writing full time. He currently lives in London.

His novels and short stories are very diverse: from space opera to alternate history, from hard rad SF to the epic of Confluence, they combine cutting edge biology and nanotech with finely-spun political intrigue and believable characters. Many of his books investigate the



ethics and effects of biotech developments, especially in *The Secret of Life*, a relatively near future of 2026 where greens, scientists and corporations conflict over the recently discovered life on Mars in a realistic extrapolation from current debates about GM technology.

Usually, his visions of future Earths use different dominant nations, which allows society to act in ways other than the ubiquitous USA/West. Instead, we see China or Brazil in control.

As well as novels and short stories, Paul has "committed trilogy" in the form of the Books of Confluence, an epic tale which features the heavily sciencefictional trappings of terraforming and bioengineering, yet in a world with a fantasy ambience. Orphan Yama travels through places where the religious leaders consider technology to be heretical, yet he discovers a strange affinity with the ancient machines left over from war.

Paul's first novel, *Four Hundred Billion Stars*, won the Philip K. Dick Memorial Award, *Pasquale's Angel* won the Sidewise Award for alternate history for its portrayal of Renaissance Italy changed by Leonardo do Vinci's inventions, and *Fairyland* won both the Arthur C. Clarke and the John W. Campbell Awards.

### **Bibliography - novels and collections**

*Four Hundred Billion Stars* (1988)

*Secret Harmonies* (1989, vt *Of The Fall*)

*The King of the Hill* (1991, collection)

*Eternal Light* (1991)

*Red Dust* (1993)

*Pasquale's Angel* (1994)

*Fairyland* (1995)

*The Invisible Country* (1996, collection)

*The First Book of Confluence: Child of the River* (1997)

*The Second Book of Confluence: Ancients of Days* (1998)

*The Third Book of Confluence: Shrine of Stars* (1999)

*The Secret of Life* (2001)

*Whole Wide World* (forthcoming from HarperCollins Sep 2001)

*In Dreams* (Ed, with Kim Newman)

We would like to thank HarperCollins for donating two copies of *The Secret of Life* to the convention.

### **Finding Your Away Around the Corridor**

We will be using three main areas: the Wilton as the programme room, with a separate bar and a section as the smoking lounge; the Ashton as a non-smoking lounge with noticeboards and displays, fanzine tables, and the SECCON Central desk; and the Bowden, which holds the Dealer tables. We have the function space to ourselves, but the public toilets and the Health Club are on the same floor so there may be some passing non-members. Please wear your SECCOND badge during the convention. The door at the end of the corridor may be used to exit to the car park, but must be left closed (NB you won't be able to get back in this way). There is wheelchair access throughout, and the Wilton programme room and Ashton fan lounge are non-smoking.

### **Help Us to Help You**

**Problems** If you have any problems at the convention, let us know. If you have any problems with your room, let the Hotel know - and then let us know if you don't feel that the matter has been resolved. We will be around the Convention and wearing committee badges, or people with CONVENTION STAFF on their badge may be able to help.

Please try to keep the convention safe and secure for everyone; particularly, do not leave your bags unattended.

Posters may not be stuck to the Hotel walls, as they may damage the decor; please use the display boards in the non-smoking lounge. Also, we find our insurance policy does not include hovercrafts, so please keep your eels well away from them.

**Beer** We have 288 pints of Goff's Joustier for sale to SECCOND members at £2.50 per pint. This will be strictly by voucher only, a condition of the agreement with the Hotel to include the corkage charges. Vouchers will be on sale at most times from our desk in the

Ashton; we suggest a limit of 3 or 4 vouchers per beer drinker initially, to enable the beer to be widely enjoyed. We plan to slightly overprint the vouchers; when the beer runs out we will refund any unused vouchers presented to us by the end of the convention.

### **Dealers Room**

The Dealers will be in the Bowden room. Opening hours are 10am-6pm Saturday and Sunday, closing for the GoH talk.

### **Hotel Information**

There is a variety of places to eat in the Hotel, which open for long hours:

<b>Breakfast</b>	7am-10am (Sun/Mon 8am-10am)
<b>Pulse Café</b>	6am-10pm (salads, coffee, bagels)
<b>Terrace Bar</b>	10am-9.45pm (burgers, baps, light meals)
<b>The Park Brasserie</b>	12.30pm-2pm (lunch), 7pm-10pm (dinner)
<b>Leisure Club</b>	7am-9:30pm
<b>Room check out</b>	11am

### **Swindon**

**Shopping**      The main shopping area in Swindon's New Town is roughly triangular, bounded by Commercial Road, Faringdon Road/Fleet Street, and Princes Street. Through this runs Bridge Street and Regent Street, which have High Street chain shops, most banks and building societies, and several pub/café/grill-type eateries. There are two Waterstone's in Swindon, one at 27 Regent Street and one in the Brunel Shopping Centre. Of interest also is Spot-On Models, which has some fantasy war-gaming stock as well as customised train and aircraft models in the window. A few yards down the road from this is Skywalkers, a fancy dress store specialising in SF, with some neat-looking stuff in the window. Swindon's Outlet Village is also nearby, with designer clothes and lots of shoes.



**Restaurants**    These are particular recommendations:

*Connie's* (Chinese): Authentic cuisine from several regions - best Chinese for food. 53 Devise Road, Old Town (01793 521515)

*The Chinese Experience* (Chinese): One of the nearer restaurants, overlooking a lake. Best Chinese for ambience, with good food too. Be warned - Friday is disco/karaoke night, and on Sunday it is closed for a wedding. Mead Way, Peatmoor, West Swindon (01793 877888)

*The Lakeside Brasserie* (Indian): Excellent and unique, with modern decor. Roughmoor Village Centre, Peatmoor Lagoon, West Swindon (01793 887799).

The Leisure Park itself holds a few eating places you may have noticed on your way in; Pizza Hut, Wimpy, and TGI Fridays, plus the Eros Nightclub and Jackson's Pub (though should it be called Jackson's Whole?). For Saturday Night activities, there is bowling and a cinema. Luckily, Battlefield Earth is not currently showing.

Across the road in the Link Centre there are several takeaways such as fish & chips, Domino's Pizza.

Other selected restaurants include:

*Curry Garden* (Indian): Curry Club recommended. 90 Victoria Road, Old Town (01793 521114)

*Fabios* (Italian): Bath Road, Old Town

*Jalapenos* (Mexican): 16 Wood Street, Old Town (01793 616622)

*Pear Tree at Purton* (English): "Award-winning modern British food". Dinner from £29.50. Church End, Purton (5 mi from Town Centre) (01793 772100)

*Pizza Express*: "best pizza in Swindon" Bath Road, Old Town

*Stanton House Hotel* (Japanese): The Avenue, Stanton Fitzwarren (01793 861777)

*Swindon Rendezvous* (Chinese): 11-12a Theatre Square, Town Centre (01793 523570)

There is a copy of a guide to Swindon's restaurants on the noticeboard, and there may be some copies available at Reception.

**Travel** The hotel has a deal with a few local minicab companies and can arrange cabs for you from Reception. Otherwise, they recommend Club Cars (01793 729999), Millennium (01793 513333), or Abbey (01793 521666). If you need a London-style black cab, Swindon Taxis (01793 536666) runs them.

Buses run from the LinkCentre over the road; timetables are pinned on the noticeboard.

Car Parks tend to charge, even in the evening (usually around 60p).

**Attractions** Lydiard House is a short walk from the hotel, a Georgian House and grounds open to the public for a small charge. It is open from 10am-5pm (from 11am Sunday).

The Museum of the Great Western Railway has recently opened, and is near the Outlet Village.

If you fancy roaming further afield (perhaps on your way home on Monday) the village of Avebury with its famous stones is a few miles away, near Marlborough.

**Maps** There are various maps of Swindon, the Hotel Reception displays one and has some handout maps of the central shopping area. Also there is a map showing the most local eateries on the display board in the Ashton.

**Space for Notes**



## PROGRAMME

The programme will run in the main part of the Wilton room. For programme participants, we don't have a separate 'Green Room', but if they meet up at the SECOND desk in the Ashton Room fan lounge we will organise drinks for them.

<b>Friday</b> 7pm - 11pm	7pm	Opening Ceremony
	7.30pm	Paul McAuley Interview <Break 8.30 - 9pm>
	9pm	Food Fandom
	10pm	Aliens Stole My DangerCon
<b>Saturday</b> 10am - 11pm	10am	Second Thoughts
	11am	Conrunning and The Law <Lunch 12 - 1pm>
	1pm	New Scientist vs Science Fiction
	2pm	Paul McAuley GoH Talk <Break 3 - 3.30pm>
	3.30pm	What's Scary now that Vampires are Cute?
	4.30pm	A Living Genre: Biology in SF
	5.30pm	SECOND Quiz <Evening Break 6.30 - 9pm>
	9pm	Would You Prefer Yellow Spandex?
	10pm	Fan Fund Auction
	11am	Who Are We Influencing Now? <Lunch 12 - 1pm>
<b>Sunday</b> 11am - 10pm	1pm	Who Mourns for the Master?: Classical Influences in Media SF
	2pm	Mapping the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century: Future Geopolitics <Break 3 - 3.30pm>
	3.30pm	The Story of <i>The Leaky Establishment</i>
	4.30pm	The Weakest Link <Break 5.30 - 6pm>
	6pm	Closing Ceremony
	6.30pm	If SECOND Was A Fanzine... <Evening Break 7.30 - 9pm>
	9pm	You Had To Be There



## **Opening Ceremony**

A chance to meet the Guest of Honour and Committee, and to find out more about what we have in store for you over the weekend.

## **Paul McAuley Interview**

Our Guest of Honour is interviewed by Tanya Brown

## **Food Fandom**

*Chris O'Shea, Giulia de Cesare, Fran Dowd (Mod)*

Are fans food fiends? Are we all gourmands, or is there an unhealthy obsession in fandom with eating as our way of socialising to the point where a good Con hotel has to be near ten restaurants?

## **Aliens Stole My DangerCon**

*Claire Brialey, Guy Dawson, Martin Easterbrook (Mod)*

Wacky conventions dedicated to frantic fannish fun are very popular these days. Is this (a) jolly good fun, (b) a betrayal of trufandom, (c) just another fringe fandom, or (d) a return to the traditions of 1950s conrunning?

## **Second Thoughts**

*Eddie Cochrane (Mod), Ben Jeapes, Sabine Furlong*

SECCOND is a sequel to a convention. How do sequels to conventions, books or films stand in relation to their originals? How far can such trends go?

## **Conrunning and The Law**

*Simon Bradshaw (Mod), Fran Dowd, Steve Lawson*

Changes to legislation such as disabled access are potentially making the organisation of conventions more difficult and complicated. Are cons being legislated out of existence or can we apply common sense and carry on?

## **New Scientist Vs Science Fiction**

*Julian Headlong (Mod), Tanya Brown, Amanda Baker*

Julian Headlong suggested this panel as he finds he's more likely these days to get his sensawunda from popular science magazines than sf. Is real science now more spectacular than SF writers imaginations?

### **Guest of Honour Talk**

Paul McAuley's guest talk. Please note that the Dealers' Room will be closed during this item.

### **The Buffy Item - What's Scary Now That Vampires Are Cute?**

*Lilian Edwards, Dave Clements, Margaret Austin (Mod)*

What scares us now that vampires and other traditional objects of terror are either slayer-fodder or love interest? Are we creating new bogeyman myths (e.g. government conspiracies) and how are these being reflected in series like Buffy?

### **A Living Genre: Biology in SF**

*Paul McAuley, Del Cotter, Caro, Julian Headlong (Mod)*

A panel featuring GoH Paul McAuley, much of whose fiction deals with issues arising from biology and biotechnology. To what extent is sf predicting or warning about the future of biology, and what developing areas should writers like Paul be looking for ideas from?

### **The SECCOND Quiz**

Pit your brains against those of the SECCOND quizmaster. (Ed - that shouldn't be too stressful...)

### **Would You Prefer Yellow Spandex? SF Attire**

*Sue Dawson (Mod), Farah Mendlesohn, Doug Bell, Cal Loveridge*

Just what are those superheroes/heroines wearing? How did pulp-magazine cover-girls manage with those incredibly skimpy spacesuits? Are we stuck in an eternity of black leather? For that matter, what will we be wearing in the future, and will it have inbuilt anti-gravity support?

### **Fan Fund Auction**

Bring your tat (or exotic fannish memorabilia) and sell it for the benefit of the United Fan Funds.

### **Who Are We Influencing Now?**

*Stephen Baxter (Mod), Steve Davies, Julian Headlong*

NASA engineers grew up reading Heinlein and built Apollo. Computer



enthusiasts read cyberpunk and built the internet. Who are the sf writers of today influencing and what will they create?

### **Who Mourns for The Master? Classical Influences in Media SF**

Tony Keen talks about the influences of classical myth on media SF.

### **Mapping the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Future Geopolitics**

*John Dallman, Paul McAuley, John Bray (Mod)*

What will the world look like in twenty/fifty/a hundred years' time? Who will be the big players, and who the has-beens? How well has sf done in anticipating successive New World Orders?

### **The Story of The Leaky Establishment**

Dave Langford reveals the true story behind his hilarious satire of the nuclear weapons industry, as recently republished by Big Engine.

### **The Weakest Link**

Nine spectacularly brave and/or foolhardy contestants take on SECCOND's answer to Anne Robinson. Not for those of a sensitive disposition!

### **Closing Ceremony**

...not actually the end of SECCOND, as we then have:

### **If SECCOND Was a Fanzine...**

*Claire Briailey (Mod), Alison Scott, Mike Abbot*

What would SECCOND be like if it was a fanzine? What would Banana Wings be like if it was a convention? Attitude and <plokta.con> have forged close links between fanzines and conventions - how has this affected fanwriting and conrunning?

### **You Had To Be There**

*John Dallman, Yvonne Rowse, Roger Robinson (Mod)*

Our panel draw back the veil from the great legends and horror stories of conventions and fans past, and wonder what fans of the future will remember about us.

## SECOND Members - 102 as of 20 May 2001

Michael Abbott	Mike Damesick	Sue Mason
A <sup>3</sup>	Steve Davies	Square Bear
Brian Ameringen	Guy Dawson	Catherine McAulay
Meriol Ameringen	Sue Dawson	Paul J McAuley
Margaret Austin	Chris Donaldson	Alex McLintock
Amanda Baker	Paul Dormer	Pat McMurray
Cherith Baldry	Fran Dowd	Farah Mendelsohn
John Bark	John Dowd	Nick Mills
David Bass	Tara Dowling-Hussey	Carol Morton
Stephen R Baxter	Martin Easterbrook	Tony Morton
Doug Bell	Lilian Edwards	Caroline Mullan
Austin	Sue Edwards	Paul Oldroyd
Sandra Bond	Janet Figg	The Magician
Bridget Bradshaw	Mike Figg	Greg Pickersgill
Simon Bradshaw	Alison Freebairn	Mark Plummer
John Bray	Mary Frost	Roger Robinson
Claire Brialey	Karen Furlong	Yvonne Rowse
Gordon Brignal	Nigel Furlong	Naomi
Tim Broadribb	Sabine Furlong	Alison Scott
Tanya Brown	Julian Headlong	Mike Scott
Jonathan Cain	Richard Hewison	Ken Slater
Marianne Cain	Dave Hicks	aRJay
Steven Cain	Tina Horswill	Nojay
Stuart	Ben Jeapes	Ian Sorensen
Giulia de Cesare	Squaddie	Michael
Dave Clements	Tony Keen	Richard
Cat Coast	Christina Lake	Graham Taylor
Eddie Cochrane	David Langford	Barry Traish
Nolly	Alice Lawson	Paul Treadaway
Steve Cooper	Steve Lawson	Peter Tyers
Del Cotter	Maxine Lehmann	Huw Walters
Tony Cullen	Gav	Bridget Wilkinson
John Dallman	Cal	Anne Wilson
Julia Daly	Selina Lovett	Caro