

Animation

If you manage to be up in time, don't miss *Laputa, the Flying Island*. It's ace. It's great. It's a chase movie with some fantastic pirates and has an upbeat, though somewhat cryptic ending. *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* is sadder, with the message that if the world is going to be saved, it is going to cost a lot.

Whisky Tasting

The Whisky tasting will be at 1830 in the Charles II suite (alternate). Details of the malts are in the Programme Book, though look out for Springbank comparisons of 12 and 21 years old and Linkwood 21 years old. Tickets will be available at registration, price £6 for six whiskies.

After that, there will be time to sit and listen to The Grinnigogs who play a fusion of folk and medieval. Their version of *The Rocky Road to Dublin* on replica medieval instruments has to be heard to be believed.

The Inklings have 'Flu

In place of the programme item on the Inklings, Guest Mike Harrison will give a "mystery" item and there will be a chance to hear the opening episodes of *Imperial Boy*, a new radio serial devised by Barry Hill with backing music by Bush Giant.

Island Nets

At 1700, there will be a discussion on different computer networks, a sampler, a menu of what is on offer.

The Write Stuff

The urge to write can end up wrapped in paper jackets, sold nationwide or in a fanzine, with a distribution of perhaps a hundred. Or it can be written for an apa, a type of writing club which requires regular input and preferably constructive mailing comments on everyone else's work.

Right up the Future

If you enjoyed this convention, you may be interested in going to one next year, or even the year after. There are leaflets near the registration desk and also representatives from Lucon IVy next February in Leeds, Illumination next Easter in Blackpool, Sou'Wester, which is a suggested bid to hold the big 1994 Easter convention in Bristol, Scone next August in Glasgow, Fourplay next January/February in Wolverhampton and an Anime Day in Sheffield in March, with more opportunity to see Japanese anime.

If, after attending *The Write Stuff*, you want to see more fanzines or find about apas, then leave your name at the registration desk with your address, so that samples and/or addresses can be sent out.

Of course, all this information is available in the British Science Fiction Association magazines (and there are, of course, leaflets about the BSFA at registration). Chris Fowler, who will interview Mike Harrison, is a former *Vector* editor (*Vector* is the critical and reviews magazine) and Jenny Glover co-edits *Matrix*, the newsletter with Steve Glover. If you want to know more, you know where to come ...

Issue the Third

X-aminer

Sunday morning

Stop Press

The check out time is noon and luggage can be left by the registration desk or near reception.

Rastislav Durman needs to catch an earlier train than originally anticipated, so his talk will be brought forward one hour. With Yugoslavia constantly in the news, it will be fascinating to hear how Science Fiction is coping there. That means that the Slipstream item will be cancelled, regretfully, and that the Closing Ceremony will be at 5pm.

If you want more ...

The next Leeds convention will be post-Valentines at the University Union with Gwyneth Jones, Tom Shippey and Colin Greenland as Guests: Colin tried to come last year, but the weather had something to say about that and cast a huge blanket of snow over the country: rather drastic measures to prevent a Guest getting out of his garden. Also, registration of £7 includes a free copy of Divine Endurance (Feb 21-23, details Lucon IVy, Leeds Univ. SF Society, PO Box 157, Leeds LS1 1UH).

After that, the choice widens. Fourplay, at Wolverhampton, is specialised to the extent that everyone will be singing, wanting to or trying to, or perhaps playing: it's a folk convention with a heavy emphasis on music and participation. Colin Pine, who was here on Friday night, playing a harp when he wasn't singing, will be Guest, with Cynthia McQuillan and Jane Robinson from the States (Jan 31-Feb 2, membership £15, details from Alison Scott, 2 Craithie Road, Vicars Cross, Chester CH3 5HJL).

Every year, people escape from the dire Easter tv (repeats, religion and blockbusters you've already seen seven times) to a national convention which was held in Glasgow last year, is scheduled to be in the Channel Islands next year, but which is safely in the middle at Blackpool in this coming Easter. Geoff Ryman is one of the Guests (he was a popular guest at Octocon in Dublin, among others, though a few people, observing his long, thin stature, wondered, in a rather puzzled way, which part he played in Star Trek. Admittedly his next book, Was, is about Judy Garland and the Oz legend (coming in about May); it's true that Geoff was in a Fringe item in Edinburgh and also in Harrogate in May with a play simultaneously about self-revelation and SF; yes, he has been involved in dramatising works from Philip K. Dick to Gilgamesh. But that's as near to Star Trek as he does. Or intends to. The other Guest at Easter is Paul McAulay and there will inevitably be many other authors too. (April 17-20, membership £20, details from 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield S2 3HQ). Though if you want to see a galaxy of authors, the place to be is Dublin in February for Trincon. Due to a massive grant from the University, they have invited something like 38 authors as Guests from "locals" like Anne McCaffery and Diane Duane to more geographically separated people like Terry Pratchett and Iain Banks. (Details 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP - not because I'm involved with it, but because I've forgotten the **!!** leaflet).

Going back to specialised conventions, no-one can possibly omit Inconsequential in May. Sure, it's in Derby, a town not noted for hilarity, but the convention's theme is Humour and it is run by the group Octarine

are devoted to researching SF humour in the lightest possible way and having as much fun as they can. Robert Rankin is the Guest there. (May 22-25, membership £21, details from 12 Crich Avenue, Littleover, Derby DE3 6ES). Equally specialised, but in a completely different way (but aren't they all?) will be Uniscone in Glasgow. It is one of a series of Unicons which only means that they are held at "places of Higher Education" and consequently the room rate is pleasantly low, provided you don't mind sleeping in the monastic single beds which students are expected to use). They also have a theme: Games in SF and justify this by saying: SF is not just Armageddon and Aliens, awful thoughts before bedtime and wet dreams. It's chess games that decide the destiny of worlds and wrestling matches that determine the fate of Enterprises. (August 7-9, membership £12, details from the Glasgow University Union, 32 University Avenue, Glasgow G12 8LX). And who can deny that Carcon is the most specialised (if that is the right word) of the specialised? A convoy is to proceed in parallel (filk vehicle bringing up the rear) to a restaurant just by Huntingdon, shaped like a flying saucer and the programme will take place in the restaurant (when open) and in the carpark (when closed). The best person to ask about this is Dave Hodges, who can be found up in Room 111, refining his Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy database. Finally, Xasm is loosely associated with a stream of conventions all including -asm. The next one is Protoplasm next June in Manchester at Parker's Hotel Manchester. You must have seen the flyers for it by now. For any more information, or even to join (!), see any of Nick, Steve or Neil behind the tech desk. The convention will have a vaguely biological theme, as befits its title, but nothing too serious. There'll also be some fun and games and the now legendary Cabaret on the Saturday night. So come on, for a convention that offers all the pluses of Xasm, but with a committee at least four times the size, join PROTOPLASM.

The whisky tasting was a great success, to the extent that many people will be walking round, gently recovering: as will I, but from overdosing on Mai Thais following a pleasant dinner at the local Thai restaurant. We couldn't resist getting one (or two), after seeing an adjacent table being served with huge goblets, though the barman checked first whether we were driving. There's a good few wee spirits in there he said. However, we walked back, arriving in a rosy good temper. Mike Harrison's talk was taped and will be transcribed in the next month (the quality is excellent, according to the technical people). Highlights for me as I look back: Charles Stross and Statford Kirby bouncing ideas off each other in the Just around the Corner: Fantasy in an Urban Setting panel; having a heated discussion on fanzines which may result in an Xasm fanzine. The idea is that the people there - people interested in fanzines by definition, since they went to the item - should write a paragraph on the word processor in Room 114. There are six entries so far ranging so far that they will make fascinating reading. I enjoyed the anime videos, wish I'd been around for the music, dancing and body workshop. I wish I had the nerve to be body painted: Nesa drew intricate designs, highlighted in gold, on willing bodies. Although the pens are supposed to be indelible, they do wash off ... eventually. Still, explaining why you have a nautilus on your hand is merely one of the more minor ways of justifying your attendance at this con.

Thank you for coming. There's other people to thank too, the ones who lent equipment and videos, the technical people who not only sat through all the programme items, but brought their own equipment and the people who talked panels. Plus Mike Harrison, Rastislav Durman, Barry Hill, Hilda Birchall and Dave Hodges. But there's no space for more.