



Concourse

55TH BRITISH NATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION (EASTERCON)

9-12 April 2004

Winter Gardens, Blackpool

Guests of Honour:
Mitchell Burnside Clapp
Danny Flynn
Sue Mason
Christopher Priest
Philip Pullman

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WORLD WIDE WEB SITE

<http://www.eastercon.com/concourse>

MEMBERSHIP RATES

£35 attending membership until Easter 2003 (see page 14).

THE CONCOURSE COMMITTEE ARE:

Marcus Streets – Co-Chair	Publicity/Promotions, Programme (standard, kidcon and adult), Late Night (gaming/filking), Extravaganzas etc.
Chris O'Shea – Co-Chair	Publications, Operations, Tech, Newsletter, Security
Jonathan Jones – Vice-Chair	Site (including access – Electrical Eggs), Exhibits (including art show & dealers), Membership, Guests, Web site

CONCOURSE STAFF:

Sharon Lewis	Membership
Vincent Docherty	Finance
Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer	Publications
Paul Hood	Publication Marketing
Pat McMurray	Dealers' Room
Tim Kirk	Green Room
Tim Broadribb and Richard Rampant	Tech



CONCOURSE PROGRESS REPORT 1
Produced by Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer (SRBAS) in October 2002.

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Letter From The Bench: The Theory Of The UHT

Welcome to the first progress report for Concourse, the 2004 British national science fiction convention (Eastercon).

As well as trying to produce an Eastercon with the best of all the Eastercon traditions, we're trying out a few different things this time. Running the Eastercon in a convention centre with surrounding hotels and B&Bs is a potentially risky option, but we're certain that the Winter Gardens is a brilliant venue for an Eastercon. We hope that the lack of a single central hotel with the majority of the membership in it will be offset by the reduction in costs, the increase in options for picking the accommodation that will suit each member, and the ability to have a city on the doorstep of the hotel with excellent restaurants, and all sorts of other facilities that somewhere like Hinckley (great though it is) just can't offer!

We are also trying something a little different in conrunning philosophies. Previous Eastercons have had an organising committee that could be up to a dozen people all trying to arrange meetings, divide up the work between them and so on. When this works, it works very well; when it goes wrong it can be a real challenge to 'rescue' that Eastercon. We're trying something different: a three-person topmost team (who, admittedly, are therefore taking the financial risk if it doesn't

work!) and department heads who have a lot more delegated authority over their area of the convention... and of course we are using the internet, phones etc. to ensure that cross-department communications are made as easy as possible without overloading people with information.

With our guests we have tried to be as innovative as possible: including well-known authors, an artist guest (an area that gets unfairly neglected far too often), a guest who combines both hard science and filking, and a fan guest who covers filking, costuming, art and a myriad of other areas (including fanzines and conrunning!)

We intend to be equally innovative with our programme. Already we are planning on doing more programming for younger members—especially since we have a father in our troika! For those of you with an interest in things that normally don't get mentioned in polite society, the 'After the Watershed' programming stream (which will include everything from politics to the occult, fashion shows to serious discussions of how substance abuse is covered in science fiction* and much more) should be something new, different and fun! And of course there will be the standard items as well, such as the Masquerade, a play*, talks, quizzes, panels, silly games, gaming, filking, the bar, the fanroom and so on.*

—CHRIS O'SHEA

*All programme ideas are subject to change, but these examples should give you some idea of what we're planning.

...And From The Editors...

As you can see from the inside front cover, Concourse has three chairs of varying kinds. That's half way to a full dining-room suite, but over at Concourse central they're operating as a tight-knit unit, a kind of collective entity; and as Fran Dowd has a prior claim to the title of sofa (and our guys aren't really the soft reclining types anyway) we're tending to think of them as a bench at the moment.

Speaking for the bench this time around, Chris has welcomed you to this progress report and set out something of the Concourse philosophy. A second welcome is probably redundant—it's not that we're not pleased to see you, you understand—but perhaps we can run to a little philosophy of our own over here in the publications mines...

This first progress report will be going to all current members of the 2004 Eastercon, and also to a number of people who are not yet members. It contains (we hope) material which will be of use to both groups, whether it's hard detail about this Eastercon or more general pieces which are designed to give a flavour of Eastercons and context for this convention.

Firstly, we'd like to give a bit more background to the guests of honour: Mitchell Burnside Clapp, Danny Flynn, Sue Mason, Christopher Priest and Philip Pullman. Their names may well be familiar to you already, but we'd encourage you to check out—or indeed revisit—their work between now and the convention, and in this and subsequent progress reports we'll be providing a few pointers. For a start, anybody unfamiliar with Sue Mason's artwork should have another look at her splendid cover for this PR.

Secondly, while most of you will have attended an Eastercon before, for anyone who wants a better idea of twenty-first century Eastercons we have two personal views of Helicon II, this year's Eastercon which was held in St Helier on Jersey. Peter Weston was one of the guests of honour, along with Brian Stableford and Harry Turtledove, and has been a regular fixture at British conventions since the mid-Sixties; Juliette Woods—originally from Scotland; latterly from Adelaide, South Australia; most recently from Austin, Texas—was a fan and writer attending her first Eastercon.

Finally, we want to provide some more information about this particular Eastercon and how it's going to operate. As you may be aware, the bid presented by Concourse at Helicon II offered two potential sites: a conventional hotel-based Eastercon using the Radisson Edwardian Hotel in London (venue for the 1996 Eastercon, amongst other events), or the previously untried approach of using a conference centre with a number of nearby hotels. Voters at the bidding session voted overwhelmingly for the latter approach, so Concourse is using the Winter Gardens in Blackpool. Because this is a new way of running an Eastercon it's virtually inevitable that there will be questions. We've collected some of these, and the committee's answers are set out here.

The next progress report will be available at Easter 2003 and should include information about booking hotel accommodation as well as news about the programme, and reviews and recommendations for the guests' work. Up-to-date information in the meantime can be found on the convention web site www.eastercon.com/concourse.*

—CLAIRE BRIALEY AND MARK PLUMMER

Guests Of Honour

The Concourse committee announce:

We are proud of all of our guests. We have two authors, a professional artist, a scientist who sings, and a fan who refuses to be pigeon-holed. We are aiming to create a convention that brings all the strands of science fiction fandom together, with something for everyone. We have chosen our guests for their ideas and will build the programme around them.*

Mitchell Burnside Clapp

On first meeting the clean-cut, square-jawed Mitchell Burnside Clapp, you could be forgiven for thinking that you have met a real life Dan Dare. Indeed, Mitch is a fully qualified test pilot. He has flown over forty different types of military and civilian aircraft, and is the only person outside the former McDonnell Douglas trained to fly the DC-X single stage research demonstration vehicle. Mitch backs up his pilot's skill and knowledge with a Masters degree in aeronautics from MIT. He holds several other degrees and also speaks at least eight languages.

Mitch led the design effort at the US Air Force's Phillips Lab which developed the design for the first cheap single stage to orbit launcher, the 'Black Horse' rocketplane. He has since taken his ideas into the grubby world of commerce as founder and joint-CEO of Pioneer Rocketplane. The goal is to produce cheap and flexible near-space vehicles that would use tried and tested technologies and could be operated from conventional military airfields or commercial airports. More information can be found at www.rocketplane.com.

He is also a singer, songwriter and guitarist who has won the filk Pegasus Award on several occasions, including as Best Performer in 1990; combining his specialisms, he is noted for writing 'Red Star, Rising', a stirring song of the Russian and American space programmes. Mitch's best-known work, however, is probably the parody 'Falling Down on New Jersey'—a song that was rewritten for a British audience as 'Falling Down on Milton Keynes'.

Mitchell Burnside Clapp lives with his wife (filker and scientist TJ) and their two daughters, Jessie and Tory.*

Danny Flynn

Since the mid 1980s, Danny Flynn has illustrated the covers of hundreds of sf, fantasy and horror paperback books, for most of the genre's best known authors including Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov and Arthur C Clarke—who contributed a foreword to Danny's first compendium book of paintings *Only Visiting This Planet* (published by Paper Tiger in 1994).

Since the book's publication, Danny has found himself sought after by computer games companies to work as a conceptual artist conjuring up alien worlds and their inhabitants. This has led to a long-term ambition of Danny's being fulfilled: the opportunity to make an animated children's TV series based around his own space characters. *Lunartics* is created using computer-generated animation; more information can be found at www.lunartics.co.uk. Danny's work has also appeared as poster art, greetings cards, album sleeves and is often featured

in specialist sf magazines.

Danny is currently working for Travellers Tales Games UK, conceptualising the gameplay worlds for the next title in the hugely successful 'Crash Bandicoot' series, as well as continuing to bring *Lunartics* to television.

Images of Danny's art—organised in five categories of fantasy, sf, horror, 'space oddities' and the natural world—can be found on his web site: www.dannyflynn.com. The website is about to be revamped and updated with more recent art.*

Sue Mason

Sue Mason famously refuses to be categorised, and even describing her as a fan who appeals to all elements of sf fandom would fail to encompass her activities as a commercial artist, pagan, canal boat enthusiast or civil war re-enactor (in which capacity she has developed a corset that defies gravity).

Sue won the Fan Artist Nova Award in 1997, 1999 and 2000 and as part of the Plokta Cabal shared in *Plokta's Fanzine* Nova win in 2000; *Plokta* has also been short-listed for a Hugo Award for the past four years, and Sue herself was short-listed for the Fan Artist Hugo for the past two years. She was elected a delegate of the Transatlantic Fan Fund in 2000, attending the Worldcon in Chicago, and will shortly complete her term as European administrator of the fund.

Sue will be familiar to many con attendees in the UK (and, increasingly, the US) who have ever been to masquerades, award ceremonies, fan fund auctions, filk sessions, or the dealers' room. Sue is a prolific fan artist whose work adorns fanzines, websites, and convention publications such as this; she has also recently provided the cover artwork for Fred Smith's history of *Unknown/Unknown Worlds (Once There Was A Magazine...)*

Examples of Sue's professional artwork can be found at www.plokta.com/woodlore, and the same web site provides links to her artwork and writing in *Plokta*.*

Christopher Priest

Christopher Priest's first published story was 'The Run' in 1965, followed in 1970 by his first published novel, *Indoctrinaire*. A select bibliography can be found on the facing page. In 1972 Chris won the John W Campbell Jr Memorial Award for *Fugue for a Darkening Island*, and since then it's much quicker to list those of his novels which haven't been nominated for awards than those which have.

Chris won both the World Fantasy Award and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for Fiction for *The Prestige* (1995), the BSFA Novel Award for *The Extremes* (1998) and *Inverted World* (1974), and the BSFA Short Story Award for 'Palely Loitering' (1979). *The Extremes* and *The Prestige* were also shortlisted for the Arthur C Clarke Award. *Inverted World*, 'Palely Loitering', the novella 'The Watched' (1978), and his controversial non-fiction work, *The Book on the Edge of Forever* (1994), were all shortlisted for Hugo Awards. He also wrote a range of material for fanzines throughout the 1970s and '80s and is currently a member of the sf literary APA Acnestis.

The Glamour (1984), *The Affirmation* (1981) and *The Space Machine* (1976) have also won awards as 'international' novels outside the UK. Chris is acclaimed throughout Europe; his

books are regularly translated into a range of other European languages and he has won the French Prix Utopia, a lifetime achievement award. Chris will also be a guest at the 2005 World Science Fiction Convention, to be held in Glasgow.

Chris Priest now lives in Hastings with his wife (author Leigh Kennedy) and their twin children Elizabeth and Simon. His latest novel, *The Separation*, was published this August. The movie option on *The Prestige* has just been renewed by Christopher Nolan—although unfortunately there's not yet any sign of an actual movie. Chris is currently working on a couple of short stories, and thinking about his next novel. *

Philip Pullman

Philip Pullman's first book was published in 1972, although he is reluctant to acknowledge his early work. His early novels were aimed at adults, and many adults continue to read and admire his work although it is predominantly marketed towards children. A select bibliography can be found opposite.

Philip won the 2001 Whitbread Children's Book of the Year Award with *The Amber Spyglass* (2000), the final volume in the widely acclaimed 'His Dark Materials' trilogy; he went on to become the first person to win the prestigious Whitbread Book of the Year with a children's novel—and also, of course, the first to do so with a work of sf or fantasy. The first book in the trilogy, *Northern Lights* (1995) had won the Carnegie Medal, the *Guardian* Children's Fiction Award, and the British Book Award for Children's Book of the Year. *The Subtle Knife* (1997) won the United Kingdom Reading Award, and *The Ruby in the Smoke* (1985) was awarded the International Reading Association Children's Book Award. *The Firework-Maker's Daughter* (1995) won the Smarties Gold Award and *The Shadow in the North* (1987), *The Tiger in the Well* (1990) and *Clockwork* (1996) won the Smarties Silver Award. *Clockwork* and all three of the 'His Dark Materials' novels have also been short-listed for other awards, and Philip has won a range of other awards in both the UK and Europe.

In 1996 he began writing full-time; until then, Philip had been a school teacher and part-time lecturer in Oxford. During this time he also wrote plays for his pupils, some of which later became the inspiration for novels—such as the first Sally Lockhart novel, *The Ruby in the Smoke*. In turn, there have been television adaptations of several of his books, most recently the BBC's version of *I Was a Rat!*—Philip's re-imagining of *Cinderella*.

Philip Pullman lives in Oxford with his wife, Judith. They have two sons, Jamie and Tom. *

Select Bibliographies

Christopher Priest

Novels

Indoctrinaire (1970)
Fugue for a Darkening Island (1972)
Inverted World (1974)
The Space Machine (1976)
A Dream of Wessex (1977)

The Affirmation (1981)
The Glamour (1984)
The Quiet Woman (1990)
The Prestige (1995)
The Extremes (1998)
The Separation (2002)

Short story collections

Real-Time World (1974)
An Infinite Summer (1979)
The Dream Archipelago (1999)

Anthologies

Anticipations (1978)
Stars of Albion [with Robert Holdstock] (1979)

Non-fiction

The Book on the Edge of Forever (1994)

More information can be found on Chris Priest's web site, hosted at <http://www.christopher-priest.co.uk/> where you can read an extract from *The Separation* or order the book via www.amazon.co.uk.

Philip Pullman

Novels

His Dark Materials
Northern Lights (1995)
The Subtle Knife (1997)
The Amber Spyglass (2000)

Sally Lockhart

The Ruby in the Smoke (1985)
The Shadow in the North (1987)
The Tiger in the Well (1990)
The Tin Princess (1994)

The New-Cut Gang

The Gas-Fitter's Ball (1994)
Thunderbolt's Waxworks (1995)

Galatea (1978)
Count Karlstein (1982)
How to be Cool (1987)
Spring-Heeled Jack (1989)
The Broken Bridge (1990)
The White Mercedes (1992)
The Firework-Maker's Daughter (1995)
The Wonderful Story of Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp (1995)—illustrated by David Wyatt
Clockwork (1996)
Mossycoat (1998)—illustrated by Peter Bailey
I Was a Rat! or The Scarlet Slippers (1999)
Puss in Boots: or The Ogre, the Ghouls and the Windmill (2000)—illustrated by Ian Beck
Sherlock Holmes and the Limehouse Horror (2001)

Anthologies

Detective Stories (1985)

Helicon - Now That's What I Call A Convention!

But then, I would say that, wouldn't I? After having had one's own personal slave for a few days, you do tend to look back with a certain fondness to the one convention that got it right. ('Another gin & tonic, Peter?' 'Go on, then, Pat, just one more. Make it a big one.')

Arriving at the airport, I intended to get a taxi to the other side of the island but when we came through the doors there was dear old Pat McMurray, right in front of us, beaming, a one-man Welcome Committee. He ushered Eileen and I into a luxurious minibus which he assured us was at our disposal throughout the Easter weekend; wherever we wanted to go, he would drive us there, any time, any place. Well, this was more like it! Although he did then go and spoil the effect a bit by allowing a few waifs and strays to get on *our* minibus, people like Robert Sneddon and some Birmingham fans. Cheek!

Still, they'd also done us proud at the Hotel de France. We had a very nice suite on the top floor, next to the other Guests of Honour, Harry Turtledove and Brian Stableford: a big room with picture windows looking out west over St Helier, and next door our very own private ballroom. Honest! It was huge, with a polished wooden floor, comfortable furniture, a separate entrance and bathroom, all seeming to just cry out that magic word, 'Party!'

However, they *did* expect me to do some work; the programme team, headed by Giulia de Cesare, had put me on no less than eight different items, ranging from serious scientifiction stuff through the American Civil War to a panel on silly fannish traditions, in which we demonstrated the Astral Pole along with the ancient art of knurdling. Throughout the weekend I'd come across Giulia, clipboard in hand, shepherding participants into the Green Room and quietly worrying in case something went wrong.

It was all fine by me; I always like to contribute at a con if I can. However, I had been more than a little worried about doing my Fan GoH Speech. Nearly two years since Martin Hoare's kind invitation ('Plenty of time,' I'd thought), and with only a couple of weeks to go I realised in panic that I had nothing whatsoever to say. Nothing at all. I toyed with various possibilities—whether to do a serious, sf-oriented talk (which I could easily have done, but which seemed wrong somehow), or whether to try for something more personal, ideally with a few funny bits. In the end I took the hard option, the lonely, perilous route to perdition.

On the day, it was sheer hell. For a start, I went on as the second item after the opening ceremony, on the Friday afternoon before the con had really got going. In a huge auditorium that could take a thousand and actually had about

100 people in it. Alone* on a wide, high stage, a long way in front of, and six or eight feet above, the audience. Then they shone spotlights on me so I couldn't see anybody.

An hour is a long time under these circumstances. I can usually get a bit of a rapport going with the audience (which consisted of friends and sympathisers in the front row or two, and total strangers beyond that), but not this time. My wife walked out after five minutes. Tony ('Buck') Rogers very obviously fell asleep after ten. Under those circumstances I could only plod on, desperately trying for a laugh, some feedback, anything. It was awful!

I felt a lot happier once that was out of the way. Stumbling out of the dark auditorium and into bright sunshine, I took a seat on the lawn and summoned Pat McMurray by rubbing on an old brass lamp. A couple of beers later I realised that I'd by now missed the next programme item, (something I'd really wanted to see, on alternative history). If you are new to conventions, be warned: *This Always Happens!*

Just then my pal Julian Headlong came along to remind me that we were 'on' in fifteen minutes, back in the dreaded auditorium with our programme piece, 'The Right Stuff'. This was subtitled, 'An exploration of Fifties sf, including stories you really must read, focusing on the Hugo Awards and the more recent retro-Hugos'.

This time it wasn't so bad up there: we were doing one of our 'duologues', a form that Julian and I have pioneered with some success on many previous occasions. It's easier on the audience than a monologue, more focused than a panel, and since Julian and I have similar tastes in science fiction we tend to complement each other, with the occasional difference of opinion to make it interesting. And I think it is rather important that conventions should do this sort of item, to remind audiences of our heritage, as it were, to put past works into context and to advise newer readers of stories they may have missed.

And after that, Helicon dissolved into total chaos!

Not literally, but in my mind's eye it seems that way, trying to look back after six months. I've absolutely no idea what happened on the Friday night, where I went, who I spoke to. By this time most of the fans had arrived in Jersey, more than 600 of them. That's not as big as some Eastercons of recent memory, but it's still a lot of people. Some were in the bars—I remember the 'balcony' bar at the restaurant end of the hotel (patronised mostly by Victor Gonzalez and the smokers), where you could only get a drink by ordering from a waiter. And do I mean *waiter!* The hotel would have sold twice as much if you could ever have got served in less than twenty minutes.

Fans didn't like this; they preferred the fan-bar (with real ale) at the other end of the corridor, packed though it was most of the time. Fans were in the corridors; fans were in late-night programme events, like 'Room 101'. (For some reason no one seemed to want to argue about my personal 'hates', which included slugs, the Roman Catholic Church, and Michael Barrymore.)

Then there were the room parties. This is an old tradition of British fandom which, with the advent of late-opening hotel

* Actually, Pat was joshing me. He was only there by coincidence, having arrived from London a little earlier, and having just collected the bus for the general convenience of the committee. Although he *would* make a good slave.

* Alone, that is, apart from a life-size cardboard cut-out of Steve Green which Dave Hicks had made hastily on his arrival. We intended to use 'Steve' again at the closing ceremony, but I forgot and left him in a cupboard—where he probably languishes to this day.

bars, at one time looked in danger of dying out completely. Never again, I'd thought, would we conga along the bedroom corridors behind a manic Ted Tubb chanting 'Get back to your wives'; no more to choke down Stroh rum and *vergutz*, and lock Charles Platt into Brian Aldiss's wardrobe. But fortunately the foreigners, bless them, have picked up the baton and they put on a good show this year, with hospitality provided by various hard-working teams of Norwegians, Danes, and Swedes, and maybe the Dutch too.

We had our own party too, up in our ballroom early on the Saturday evening. (I always prefer a quick in-and-out job lasting an hour or so, to those infinitely-protracted affairs that tie you up all evening.) To the amusement of fans relaxing on the lawn I'd spent part of the afternoon hauling heavy, clinking suitcases from the car park, walking them nonchalantly through the lobby and up to the sixth floor where we set up the drink.

Delving deep into Recovered Memory I seem to recall that propellor beanies were passed around and, taking a cue from the 'traditions' panel that lunchtime, we eventually held a knurding tournament, resulting in the crowning of a new Master, a young Australian* superhero who did a six-footer! (It turned out afterwards that he'd trained up by doing rock-climbing: 'It uses the same muscles,' he helpfully explained.)

All too soon the weekend was over, a few days of fantasy snatched out of the timestream for those lucky enough to have experienced it. My impressions of Helicon? A very well-organised convention, I thought, with no obvious glitches and a pretty strong programme, successfully focused around the general themes of 'science fiction and history' in obvious acknowledgement of the interests of the two professional Guests of Honour.

Let me also mention how very well the convention book reflected this theme. Not just a glossy compendium of advertisements from publishers this time, but something of real fannish appeal, with original essays from the Guests cleverly married with biographical and bibliographical material to enhance the understanding of the convention-goer. A shame, really, that most people probably didn't get to read it while they were actually at the convention, but only looked at it afterwards, back home.

A very *civilised* convention, too; perhaps because of the rather up-market ambience of the Hotel de France, with drinks on the lawn, the chocolate shop, and the indoor swimming pool (sadly under-utilised in the absence of Iain Banks and his Formation Drowning team). But also because Martin and his committee worked hard for that effect.

They re-introduced some old ploys like The Posh Banquet, long discredited in fannish wisdom. I think it worked, too, or very nearly worked; certainly it encouraged many fans to scrub up on the Saturday night (Tim Illingworth in a dinner suit—and very smart, too!) and some of the female fans looked stunning in their outfits (there is a wonderful picture of Caroline Wilson and myself, which has gone the rounds to vast amusement*). The highlight of the evening was provided by Ian Watson, with a truly wondrous speech which was quite surreal—even by his own high standards of bemusement.

* Although Julian swears our knurding champion was Swedish!

* It's not so much the revealing nature of Caro's dress, or even the red horns she was wearing, but fans think the shifty expression on my face is so funny!

On Sunday night we had the Helicon Masquerade: what British fandom used to call the fancy dress parade, with Brian Burgess and sundry idiots with cardboard boxes on their heads (to paraphrase a certain well-known criticism). You know, I haven't seen the fancy dress for years, but as one of the judges this time I have to agree that in the dreaded auditorium it really worked well; everyone could see and hear, and there were good costumes and presentations into which participants had clearly put a lot of time and effort.

The bit I liked best? It has to be the final afternoon. Pat McMurray had finally achieved his ambition of driving the Turtledoves and ourselves around Jersey in the minibus, but he cut it a bit fine, arriving back (to Giulia's vast relief) just as the last programme item was starting. This was titled 'When It All Changed', a panel discussion with Brian Stableford (by himself, until Harry and I literally ran into the hall and up the steps to the platform).

The idea was that we should look at various 'defining moments' and their consequences in history, such as 'What if Harold had won in 1066', and so on. Once again we were there in the auditorium, but this time with a large, enthusiastic crowd and a good subject; although I say it myself (and probably shouldn't) I thought it was an excellent session, covering a lot of ground—something in which I really enjoyed participating. Almost a 'defining moment' for Helicon, in fact: a torrent of speculative thoughts, ideas, concepts; the very substance of the best science fiction.

And then to the closing ceremony. Now, just before the committee took their seats for the last roundup, Martin had hissed in my ear, 'I shall want you to do an invocation.' This is a pretty tall order at five minutes' notice, and I wasn't at all sure how to handle it. However, Julian had been roped in on the gag, and he slipped behind the floor-length curtain at the back of the stage in costume, waiting for his cue.

So how *do* you perform an invocation in the middle of the afternoon in front of 600 people? You make it up as you go along, that's how! As the serious business finished, Martin looked at me expectantly and I started to flannel. 'Everybody stand up! We're going to invoke the Spirit of Conventions Past.'

And they stood up, bless 'em. 'We have to say the magic words,' I said, and the audience looked at me expectantly. 'On my count of three we'll say them together,' I said, thinking furiously, *Oh my god, what magic words?*

Suddenly it came to me. 'The magic words are, "Fandom is something special"; let's hear it,' I said, and 600 people chanted, 'FANDOM IS SOMETHING SPECIAL!'

'Louder!' I commanded, and as they hit full volume the Spirit of Conventions Past emerged with precision timing from behind his curtain: Julian Headlong swathed in muslin with glowing Sand-People eye-stalks and a ghostly wail, to embrace Martin in a deadly hug and pass on the sacred pork pie to Paul Oldroyd, chairman of next year's convention. It brought the house down!

Silly, really, but that's what it's all about—a bit of fun, a lot of talking, meet your friends, drink beer, buy books and have a great time. Helicon: now that's what I *call* a convention!*

—PETER WESTON



A Strange Tale of Jersey

or

What Does One Do at a Science Fiction Convention Anyway?

or

(some of) What I Did on My Holidays

or

Scenes from Helicon II**I. In which our protagonists play 'I spy'**

The urge is there, and it's a terrible one, to reduce people to their stereotypes. Lounging around Gatwick, waiting for our plane to Jersey, we could not help but scan our fellow passengers in search of a 'sensitive fannish face'. That is to say, for pale and puffy people (possibly with bad haircuts and clothes) parading their geek accessories before all. Damien Warman and I sat drinking coffee, thinking, 'But we don't fit that stereotype. (Except that we're pale and Damien's playing with his titanium laptop Macintosh while Juliette's poking at her PDA.) Besides, few of our fannish friends look like that, but... there's one! Over there! With the Totoro backpack—she must be One of Us. And the balding man with a ponytail and a waistcoat covered in badges... and that American woman over there...'

Should we join them? Engage them in conversation? Or remain in our corner, aloof and anonymous in our stealth geekdom?

For the moment, we choose stealth. One's conversation is seldom at a peak in airports and we have six days of heavy socialising ahead of us. We reserve our strength.

II. In which we encounter several Forces of Nature

From the top of Gorey Castle we can see the sea, pounding on the slate and granite of the shore. The sky is bright and relatively cloudless and the wind is high. And our New Best Friend, Lilian Edwards, is leaning perilously over a railing, doing her *Titanic* impersonation. 'On top of the world!' she cries as we are buffeted by sea, sun and wind all together. We look over the battlements to gaze down over the hewn rock and green grass, the towers we've climbed and the little town of Gorey far below. Out along the beach, people are flying kites larger than they are.

'So what now?' someone asks. The convention doesn't start until late tomorrow, so we have been forced (horrors!) to do proper sightseeing. We ponder. The people we're with are friends-of-friends we met the night before and we have no idea what their tastes are except that, once upon a time, each chose to attend an sf convention (and then lived more happily ever after).

But never fear; Lilian is here. We climb back down the castle and she marches us about in search of food. When the caf  s on the foreshore prove unsuitable, I wave a map at her. She seizes it and stabs it with a finger, saying in her best upper-class-Brit parody voice, 'We are here! And Jerry is here, here and here!'

Eventually she leads us to a place called The Secret Garden where we sit out on a patio, eating too much seafood and drinking too much wine. We discuss politics, food, Worldcons and *Buffy*. It takes us until 4 PM before we reach dessert, a round of sticky toffee puddings. I feel warm, sleepy and slightly mischievous. I consider putting on my best American accent for

the waiter and drawling, 'Do you take plastic?' and 'I'll use my credit card!' (*South Park* joke, sorry.)

I could get used to these afternoon-long lunches.

III. In which we attend the actual convention

Now that the convention has started, the corridors of the Hotel de France are full. Small children run pell-mell past the souvenir shop, greying con-goers amble by holding pints of beer, and small knots of friends ('I haven't seen *you* since Melbourne in '99!') block the way to the indoor pool. Others lounge on sofas, going through the con book, or loudly discussing whether they are (a) going to the bar, (b) off to buy some books in the dealers' room, or (c) planning on attending an actual scheduled convention event.

Our first actual scheduled convention event is a panel discussion called 'What is fandom that thou art mindful of it?' Much of it's nonsense, but we get to heckle our friends John and Eve Harvey, whom we haven't seen since meeting them in Melbourne in '99. Eve, an imposing woman who more or less gives seminars for a living, gives Damien the beady eye. We squirm in our seats but Damien, ever brave, says again, 'It's maths! It's a generative grammar!' It amuses us to provoke her wrath. She's lovely.

That evening I find myself volunteered to help at an auction. People have donated quirky items to raise money for the 'fan funds', which enable popularly-elected UK, US and Australian fans to visit each other's countries. Alison and Mike Scott are running the auction and I am their Beautiful Assistant (well, gopher). We sell publishers' proofs, oreos, tickets to the Arthur C Clarke Award, tatty novels and convention T-shirts. Damien buys a cartoon, drawn on the spot by Sue Mason, of Alison selling snow to Eskimos. It seems appropriate.

IV. In which Damien knurdles at an international level

So there's a bunch of us in the Fan Lounge, reading aloud our favourite pieces from fanzines. Alison describes her quest for a perfectly-fitting bra (published in *Attitude*) and Damien reads us a satire of Australian fandom in the style of A A Milne (as published in *Festzine*). Then someone produces two bottles of beer. They're both empty, but that's immaterial. We're not to think of them as beverage containers but as sporting equipment.

And so we are introduced to knurdling, an ancient Cambridge art. It is demonstrated thus: your feet are placed against a wall and you lean forward, holding the beer bottles in your hands. Only the bottles and your feet may touch the ground. You step your hands forward using the bottles, let go of one bottle, and then step yourself upright without collapsing. The aim is to move the bottle as far away from the wall as possible.

A half-dozen British fans try it, some experienced knurdlers, while Damien watches thoughtfully. 'It looks a bit like rock-climbing,' he tells me. 'The moves are similar.' And then he gets up to have a go.

Damien is tallish, long-limbed, limber and a decade younger than most of his opponents.

He wins by approximately three feet.

V. In which we fail to leave the gravitational pull of the bar for eight hours

'Oh look,' says Claire Brialey, 'I hadn't noticed the mixed drinks.' She waves a menu at me to see if I'm interested in something other than orange juice. Then Tanya Brown leans

over from the next table. 'Juliette!' she insists, 'you want a tattoo!'

All British conventions gravitate towards the bar—this appears to be a law of physics. Most Australian fans prefer cafés and US fans prefer something called 'the con suite' but your true Britfan spends hours in the bar, whether they are drinking or not. This seems to be because of varying licensing laws and rules on hotel parties: people simply end up in whatever venue is most convenient for hanging out in.

The Hotel de France is exceptionally well-equipped for this side of con-going. The restaurant, bistro and bar are all in the same open-planned area, merging into each other as the need arises. The day before (or was it the day before that? I am starting to lose track) we joined Lilian at a table which had been continuously occupied by fans for at least seven hours before we got there, what with new people arriving to replace anyone who'd left. (Keeping track of the bills must have been a nightmare for the staff.)

But tonight we have dined with John, Eve and others, in a sort of progressive dinner where we moved from table to table until the staff were able to serve us food. We had intended to eat fairly quickly and then head back to watch the Masquerade (maybe) and the BSFA Awards (almost certainly), but dinner took three or four hours and the British Science Fiction Association just had to go on without us as they announced 2001's 'Best Novel' and so on. Still, we had a good chat with the Harveys. I got sort of technical with John, a former engineer turned database designer. There was much discussion of fluid dynamics and web design and how bad most Asian food is in Texas. And how slow the service was in the hotel.

So by the time we finished, the formal part of the evening was already over and there was nothing for it but to move on to yet another table for after-dinner drinks.

Tanya was the BSFA Awards presenter, so she is still dressed up to the nines. She is diminutive, dynamic and short-haired. Scattered over the table in front of her is a transfer (temporary tattoo) kit, looking a bit like one of those magnetic poetry sets. She holds a pair of scissors. 'What do you want yours to say? And where do you want it?' (Arms and cleavages seem to be the order of the day.)

I opt for 'forbidden knowledge goddess' (on my arm) while Damien picks 'lights home, nobody on'.

It takes us until 3 or 4 AM before we manage to leave. Even then, the party is still going.

VI. In which it is necessary to briefly mention works of science fiction

On the last day of the con, we attend a panel on science fiction novels; in particular, those short-listed for the Arthur C Clarke Award this year. The usual suspects are up on the panel, including Claire and Tanya, both of whom look miraculously awake given the hours they've been keeping.

So the nominated works are:

- *Bold as Love*—Gwyneth Jones (Gollancz)
- *Fallen Dragon*—Peter F Hamilton (Macmillan)
- *Mappa Mundi*—Justina Robson (Macmillan)
- *Pashazade*—Jon Courtenay Grimwood (Earthlight)
- *Passage*—Connie Willis (Voyager)
- *The Secret of Life*—Paul McAuley (Voyager)

Naturally, no two panellists can agree on which is best.

VII. In which other events are briefly mentioned

On the plane back to London, I look out over the sea, munching British European peanuts and sipping water. Still addled from sleep deprivation, I'm suffering from a convenient literary device, a strange form of post-con flashback. I recall: the Astral Pole, Tobes for TAFF!, the smashing of the chocolate bunny, and the night I became an honorary Norwegian. The time-warp experiment, the dead-dog party, the aye-ayes of Jersey Zoo, Michael Abbott's impersonation of Michael Caine as Saruman. The three flights of stairs and enforced black pudding of our B&B. The talk on 'turning points in history' where Damien practically burst a blood vessel. And the hunt through St Helier's toy shops with Tanya in search of a plastic Boromir for highly immoral purposes (only he proved just not posable enough).

And hours spent talking to people, most of them named Tony. It was fun. And we must do this again sometime.*

—JULIETTE WOODS

Related URLs

Our numerous photos: www.mac.com/dmw

Damien knurdling and Tanya tattooing in Alison's report: www.plokta.com/pnn/stories.php?story=02/04/05/4614161

Convention website: www.helicon.org.uk

This article was originally published in Floss, edited by Lilian Edwards, and also appeared in John Foyster's eFNAC.

CONCOURSE AND OTHER CONVENTION WEBLINKS

Concourse:

www.eastercon.com/concourse

Mitchell Burnside Clapp

www.rocketplane.com

Danny Flynn

www.dannyflynn.com (general)

www.lunartics.co.uk (Lunartics children's TV programme)

Sue Mason

www.plokta.com/woodlore

Christopher Priest

www.christopher-priest.co.uk/

Philip Pullman

www.randomhouse.com/features/pullman/philippullman/index.html

Blackpool

www.blackpooltourism.com

Seacon '03 (2003 Eastercon)

www.seacon03.org.uk

Interaction (2005 Worldcon)

www.interaction.worldcon.org.uk

So What's This Convention All About?

Convention co-chair Marcus Streets answers some of your questions.

➤ First Off...

Why did you think it would be worthwhile moving the Eastercon to a conference centre?

As a committee we spent a lot of time looking at venues. We looked at hotels, holiday camps, cruise ships and ferries. You name it, we probably looked at it. We wanted a single location, preferably in a city centre—although if we had found an out-of-town hotel we would have used it. In the end, if you want to have over seven hundred fans on site, at a budget all fans can meet, there are remarkably few suitable venues, especially when you realise that many are booked by teachers, golfers, ballroom dancers and just plain holiday-makers.

Looking back at some previous venues, we could have gone to the Hanover International in Hinckley again but that would have meant we'd used the same venue three years out of four. We could have gone back to the Adelphi, but many fans said they didn't want to return there for various reasons, and we listened to them. We could have gone to the Hotel de France, if it was not on Jersey with the extra cost that implies. The Central in Glasgow really is too small. We offered you the choice of the Radisson Edwardian at London Heathrow and you overwhelmingly chose Blackpool.

➤ Blackpool

Where is Blackpool?

As the famous monologue *Albert and the Lion* goes:

'There's a famous seaside place called Blackpool,
That's noted for fresh air and fun...'

Blackpool is on Morecambe Bay—which is to say that it is on the west coast of England, to the north of Wales and south of Cumbria. For those who navigate by cities, it is north of Liverpool, south of Glasgow and due west of Leeds. Those arriving by car will find that the M55 takes them from the M6 into the heart of the town.

Is there a direct train service from:

- London?
- Birmingham?
- Glasgow?

At the moment there are direct services from London Euston (about 3½ hours), Birmingham (2 hours 40 minutes) and Leeds (2 hours) amongst other places. From Glasgow (just over 3 hours) or Bristol (about 4½ hours) you have to change at Preston—which is also an option on all other journeys. The exact state of the service in 2004 is in the hands of the railway companies.

The railway station is about 500 metres from the Winter Gardens.

Where is the nearest:

- domestic airport?
- international airport?

Blackpool has an airport, with scheduled services to the Isle of Man, Dublin and Belfast (and charter flights to holiday destinations abroad). For most international travel use Manchester. There are direct trains from Manchester Airport station to Blackpool (1¼ hours).

What attractions are there in Blackpool?

To quote *Albert and the Lion* once more:

'So, seeking for further amusement

They paid and went into the zoo,

Where they'd lions and tigers and camels

And old ale and sandwiches too.'

Blackpool Zoo still has all these—but these days they try to prevent the lion from eating small boys.

Aside from the zoo, Blackpool has a host of other attractions, as you might expect from one of the country's premier tourist destinations, including:

- miles of sandy beach;
- three piers, each offering different entertainment;
- an 'Eiffel' tower—with added circus and ballroom;
- Louis Tussaud's Waxworks;
- the Sea Life Centre;
- a model village;
- the Grundy Art Gallery;
- the 'Golden Mile' of amusement arcades and restaurants along the promenade offering Blackpool rock, 'kiss-me-quick' hats, saucy postcards and the rest of the British seaside experience;
- and last, but not least, the Pleasure Beach—the rollercoaster capital of the world.

A short drive away lie the Lakes, the North York Moors, the Peak District, the North Wales coast, and Manchester, with the new Lowry Art Centre and Imperial War Museum. So whether you want scenery, castles, stately homes, museums, or galleries, you can find them close to Blackpool.

There is much more information on Blackpool's web site (<http://www.blackpooltourism.com>)

What is Blackpool's restaurant scene like?

Hundreds of wonderful restaurants, from burger bars and fish & chip shops through all the international cuisines and fine dining. There are just too many to make any recommendations here. Concourse will try and put a ~~famish~~ guide together, to complement the official guide offered by Blackpool; for a taste, see the web site above.

What's the best way of travelling around Blackpool?

Many of the hotels are within walking distance of one another and the Winter Gardens. The ~~main taxi rank~~ is outside the front of the Winter Gardens, and a taxi between the Winter Gardens and your hotel will cost under £4—even to the most distant hotel late at night. More generally, you can use the trams and buses; Concourse will have a discounted travel card on sale allowing unlimited use of trams and buses.

➤ Hotels

Why can't we all be in the same hotel?

There is only one hotel in Blackpool that could accommodate us all: the Norbreck Castle. This is the hotel that let down Paragon

Concourse

(the 2001 Eastercon), provoking their move to Hinckley. None of the other hotels have either enough bedrooms to accommodate us all or enough function rooms to host an Eastercon.

The option of going back to the Radisson at Heathrow, where most people could stay in the main hotel, was on offer but people at the Eastercon bidding session voted overwhelmingly in favour of Blackpool instead. We're trying to make sure it's as easy as possible for people to book the type of accommodation they want, recognising that Eastercon attendees have different priorities.

How many hotels will the con be using?

The con will be using a number of hotels and B&Bs. We can't give you an exact number yet.

Will you be having:

a) a main hotel?

b) a party hotel?

c) any other hotel for a designated purpose?

There will be a designated hotel—the Clifton—with a large bar, where we expect some parties to happen. I am not sure that you could call it the main hotel as it only has 77 rooms. We will also be directing interested con members to hotels that cater for special needs, as well as to hotels that are child-friendly.

How far apart are the hotels and how far are they from the Winter Gardens?

From the side entrance of the Winter Gardens you can see a dozen bed and breakfast hotels (the nearest is just across the street). That was one of the main reasons for choosing this venue. Rates in the B&Bs will be about £15 per person per night.

The cheaper hotels are about 5–10 minutes' walk away. The four star hotels are twenty minutes' walk away. If you choose not to walk, the taxi rank is at the front entrance to the Winter Gardens and a cab to the furthest of these hotels will cost about £4.

Will I end up in a hotel where there are loads of members of the public, or no other fans I know, or other fans I really don't want to spend Easter with?

If you prefer four star luxury, you will probably share your hotel with some 'mundanes'. If you want to be with other fans we suggest that you arrange with your friends to block-book a hotel. There are a number of small hotels/B&Bs (e.g. with 10 or less rooms in each hotel) in Blackpool, quite a few very near the Winter Gardens, which should be a reasonable size to arrange this in. We'll be doing our best to coordinate with the Blackpool Tourist Board to help you with this.

When will we know the room rates? When and how will we book accommodation?

We will publish a hotel booking form at Easter 2003, on which you can select a range of options and send back to Blackpool Tourist Board.

Will parents with accompanying children (or any other group with perceived special needs) be given hotel booking preference?

Concourse will recommend hotels that are child-friendly or suitable for those with special needs. We will be working

closely with the Blackpool Tourist Board to ensure that any convention member with special needs has an appropriate hotel room (e.g. wheelchair accessible) and these requests will be given preferential treatment by the Blackpool Tourist Board Accommodation Booking Service.

Is there free car parking at any of the main hotels?

Most hotels and guesthouses have free parking included in the price.

➤ Winter Gardens

What are the convention centre's opening hours?

The centre will open at 9 AM, and close at 2 AM, or later if we manage to obtain an extension to the licence.

Is the Winter Gardens sealed off to the public when someone's using it?

In the same way that the lobby, restaurants and some bars are usually open to the public at convention hotels, we too have an equivalent 'lobby' area open to the public, which consists of the main concourse that runs through the middle of the Winter Gardens. This includes a coffee shop, a bistro, some small stores, the amusement arcade and two public bars. The main halls, dealers' room and art show are on one side of this concourse, and the other function space (con bar(s), smaller function rooms, social/mixing areas, late night programming etc.) are on the other side. These areas will be restricted to convention members only, with stewards at each lobby.

Is anyone else using function space in the Winter Gardens? If so, is our function space open to them?

We are using about half the function space. It is possible that there will be a theatrical event or concert in the Opera House, or an exhibition on in the Olympia Hall. The only point of contact will be in the public areas.

All our function rooms and bars are reserved for our private use and will have stewards placed on the entranceways.

How many programme rooms have you got?

We have seven main rooms:

- the Ballroom—seating 2000, this will be only used for the major events such as the masquerade;
- the Arena and the Pavilion theatre will be set for about 400 and will be our main daytime function rooms;
- the Baronial and the Renaissance rooms will be set for about 100 as smaller function spaces;
- the Horseshoe room will contain the artshow and dealers' room;
- the Spanish Hall is a very large (and gorgeously decorated) room that will be used for the convention lounge.

Of these, the Ballroom, Arena, Pavilion and Horseshoe are on the ground floor; the Spanish Hall, Baronial and Renaissance are on the first floor and there is a wheelchair capable lift.

There are another twenty or so smaller rooms that will be used for workshops, offices etc.

How far apart is everything?

No two function rooms are more than 200 metres apart. Although they may be on different levels, the Winter Gardens is fully wheelchair accessible.

How many bars will there be in convention facilities?

There are two bars in the Spanish Hall suite, plus two public bars downstairs if you feel you want a change. In addition, the venue can set up bars and food in all the function rooms for official parties, the ceilidh etc. There will be at least one bar open in our area downstairs for people wanting to get a drink between programme items.

Is there any lounge space in the Winter Gardens? Is there an obvious social centre, to avoid fragmentation of the convention?

The social centre of the convention will be the lounge in the Spanish Hall. It will be set with informal seating. We will be serving food in this room. The main con bar (serving real ale etc.) is adjacent in the same suite (the Windsor Bar).

The Spanish Hall and its adjacent bar form a natural focus, much like the Adelphi lounge—except bigger and even more over the top. In the late evening Concourse may close the downstairs rooms to keep the convention focused.

There are plenty of quiet spaces around the Winter Gardens if people prefer to find somewhere more private to relax.

How late and how early will the site be licensed?

The public bars are restricted to normal opening hours. We expect bars in the convention areas to be open from 10 AM until they have to close. The site is licensed until 2 AM. We have applied for an extension until 4 AM.

Will there be

- a) real ale
 - b) reasonably-priced soft drinks
 - c) draught cider
 - d) decent wine
 - e) decent coffee
- on site?

- There will be real ale in the main convention bar.
- Soft drinks will be available and the prices will be reasonable.
- We have asked for cider in all bars. It may only be on draught in the main bar.
- The house wine will be available by the glass at all bars, with a wider range in the main convention bar. I am not a wine snob, and your definition of decent may be different to mine, but even the house wine is drinkable.
- The coffee and tea in the coffee shop were reasonable when I visited. Tea and coffee will also be available in the Spanish Hall.

Can you smoke in the Winter Gardens? Will there be a non-smoking bar?

You can smoke, except where the convention asks you not to. We will probably make all function rooms non-smoking, as well as the Spanish Hall, as that is where we will serve food. We expect to make one of the convention bars non-smoking. It would be useful to know how many con attendees smoke in order to get the balance right.

Will there be cheap food on site?

Yes, food will be served in the Spanish Hall and in the public bistro and coffee shop. We will have more details of prices by Easter 2003.

Can we bring our own food in?

No. You cannot bring food or drink—except baby food—on to the premises. As with a convention in a hotel, the reason we can afford to use the site is that they are expecting you to buy food and drink. We will have to enforce this. Members found to break this rule may have their membership of the convention withdrawn.

Are there nearby sandwich shops and snack food bars? Are there nearby restaurants?

There are plenty within walking distance. Almost anything you want is within 400 metres. See the Blackpool web site (address above).

Will the site be concerned about dress codes (e.g. bare feet) or unconservative behaviour?

The site has been warned what to expect. They are used to ballroom dancers, hairdressers, aerobics fanatics, George Formby enthusiasts, Danny la Rue, and the Labour and Conservative Parties amongst others.

Are there secure cloakroom facilities at the Winter Gardens, and if so for what hours are they manned?

Yes, there are secure staffed cloakroom facilities in the Winter Gardens. They will operate during the normal convention opening times of 10 AM - 6 PM. The committee is in discussions with the Winter Gardens about extending this until 2 AM. There will be a small fee for the use of this service.

During the day in the convention centre, will there be a crèche? If so, who is organising it and how can they be contacted for more information?

Many parents have already contacted Concourse with their concerns. Concourse plans on having a staffed crèche at the convention operating between 10 AM and 6 PM. This will be run by a local agency and jointly funded by the convention and Blackpool City Council. Parents will be expected to make a donation to assist with the funding of this facility.

What's the dealers' room like? What's the art show room like?

The dealers and art show are going to share the same space: the Horseshoe room. This space surrounds the Pavilion theatre and has natural light from large windows in the roof.

Is there free car parking at the Winter Gardens? If not, is there free car parking anywhere nearby?

If you are lucky you may find some on-street free car parking. There is a NCP car park across the street, but this does not offer 24-hour access. However, most of the hotels have free car parking, and the venue strongly recommends leaving your car there. It's easy to get between the Winter Gardens and most hotels on foot, by taxi, or using Blackpool's trams and buses (for which you can get a discounted card from Concourse).

How convenient is the parking and access for dealers and artists to unload their stuff into the rooms you're using?

While there is no parking, there is loading access. The Winter Gardens is used for exhibitions most weeks of the year and the organisers are used to people bringing in everything up to cars and yachts so access is good.

➤ Convention

What's your philosophy for this convention?

To run a good Eastercon that everyone can afford to come to: a convention that includes everyone, and a convention that everyone enjoys.

What are your aims for the programme?

To have interesting items that will attract lots of people, trying to create items that will cut across the perceived boundaries—say between the filkers and the fan-room fans.

What programme streams are you going to run?

Concourse is trying to have programming that cuts across boundaries, rather than fitting items into streams as such. Having said that, there will be serious science items—we hope not too biased towards space science. There will be filking. There will be discussion of children's literature—for adults and kids. There will be literary criticism and other serious discussions. There will be silly games. We hope that there will be a play.

There are two programme streams that we ought to mention now:

- *After the Watershed* is a stream of items of an adult nature. These programmes will include frank discussion of sexuality and other issues that TV usually keeps until after 9 PM. These items will be restricted to full (adult) members of the convention; the stewards will have strict instruction to turn away anyone wearing a child membership badge.
- On the other hand, for items in the *Not in front of the adults* stream, adults may be turned away unless they bring a responsible child. This stream will have silly games, readings, and panels aimed at children.

A final programme item of note: The Winter Gardens regularly hosts 'medieval banquets' of dubious authenticity in the Renaissance suite. If there is enough interest Concourse will arrange such a banquet, open to members only, on the Thursday before the convention starts.

Will you be having a newsletter at the convention and who's doing it?

We will be, and we are talking to people about this. We'll let you know in a future PR!

You haven't got an American author as a guest—how will you be taking account of American sf on the programme?

While Concourse is the British national sf convention, we are not restricting our programme or coverage to just British sf. Note that Mitchell Burnside Clapp, our Science Guest and Filker of Note, is Australian-American and that our guests cover areas well beyond the confines of traditional literary sf to include comics, costuming, art and so on. Concourse is an inclusive convention and will not be restricting our programme to just British sf.

Will there be any programming outside the Winter Gardens?

Not during the day. There may be late night programming in one hotel, but this is still subject to negotiation.

➤ Late Night Activities

Where will the con take place outside the opening hours of the convention centre?

I intend to sleep at least some of the time; the convention centre will be open between 9 AM and at least 2 AM! However, I expect there will be some partying. Some of this will be unofficial.

Will there be overnight programming in at least one hotel to give non-resident con members a legitimate reason to be there after normal hours?

Concourse has booked the entire Clifton hotel and it has a bar open to non-residents. However, after normal licensing hours you will need to get a resident to buy your drinks. We may have some small late night items in their function room.

Can we have parties in the hotels?

We'll be arranging for some parties to take place in the Clifton. Otherwise, what you do in your hotel room is between you and the hotel. We're envisaging that most parties will take place in the Winter Gardens.

Are there facilities in the Winter Gardens to have parties late at night?

Yes—but they do have to close at 2 AM, although as I said we're trying to arrange an extension to 4 AM. If you want to hold a party, please contact the committee and we can discuss the options for private bars, corkage etc.

What if we want to get into a hotel where there's a party but where we're not staying?

I am afraid that has to be between the person arranging the party and their hotel.

How can people with children (who need to remain in the same hotel as their sleeping sprogs in the evening) participate in the evening socialising?

As the parent of a small child, this was a worry for me too. Make sure Concourse know who you are and we will do our best to help with arrangements.*

Questions generated by: Margaret Austin, Cat Coast, Dave Hicks, Tony Keen, Pat McMurray, Caroline Mullan, Mike Scott (and Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer).

ADVERTISING RATES: PROGRESS REPORTS

	Full (professional) rates	Fan (convention and club) rates
Full page	£60	£35
Half page	£35	£20
Quarter page	£20	£10

These rates may rise in subsequent progress reports. Black and white camera-ready copy must be supplied. Contact Paul Hood at the convention address for details of deadlines, dimensions etc. Reciprocal advertising arrangements may be available.

CONCOURSE MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The current Concourse membership rates are set out below.

The unwaged rate will be kept fixed. Other rates will rise regularly until the start of the convention. Weekend and day memberships will be available on the door, and we will announce these rates nearer the time of the convention.

Category of membership	Rate until Easter 2003
Adult (aged 18 and over)	£35
An attending membership entitles you to attend the convention, receive all our publications and vote in the popular-vote awards presented at the convention.	
Child (7-17 years of age)	£18
Child membership applies to the age of the child on 9 April 2004 (the first day of the convention).	
Infant (under 7)	Free
Infant membership applies to the age of the child on 9 April 2004.	
Family	£18
A family membership is available for an adult who wishes to travel to the convention with a family member who is attending, take advantage of convention accommodation rates, and perhaps attend some social functions at the convention, but who does not wish to attend convention programme items.	
Supporting	£15
A supporting membership entitles you to convention publications only. It can be converted to full membership at any time by paying the difference at that time between the supporting and full rate.	
Unwaged	£25
The unwaged rate applies to full time students in the UK and to those in receipt of UK state benefit only. If you stop being unwaged you can upgrade to the full rate at any time by paying the difference at that time between the unwaged and full rate. Proof of continuing unwaged status will be required when you register at the convention; otherwise you will be asked to upgrade to a full-rate membership at the on-door rate. The committee's decision is final.	



54th Easter Convention

The Hanover International
Hinckley
Leicestershire

18 - 21 April 2003

GUESTS

CHRIS BAKER (FANGORN)

CHRISTOPHER EVANS

MARY GENTLE

Membership: £40 attending, £22 supporting (valid until 1/11/2002)

Contact: Seacon Memberships, 8 The Orchard, Tonwell, Herts. SG12 0HR

www.seacon03.org.uk

CONCOURSE MEMBERSHIP LIST

(Members as at 30 September 2002)

Forename	Surname	Number	Age	Udo	Emmerich	62	A	Trevor	Reynolds	125	A
Mitchell	Burnside Clapp		G	John	English	63	A	Julie Faith	Rigby	196	A
Danny	Flynn		G	David	Farner	64	A	Roger	Robinson	192	A
Sue	Mason		G	Mike	Figg	65	A	Tony	Rogers	127	A
Christopher	Priest		G	Colin	Fine	66	A	Steve	Rogerson	128	A
Philip	Pullman		G	Brian	Flatt	67	A	Howard	Rosenblum	129	A
Michael	Abbott	14	A	Susan	Francis	188	A	June	Rosenblum	130	A
Andrew A	Adams	195	A	Anders	Friagon	68	A	Michelle	Rosenblum	131	C
Paul	Allwood	16	A	Gwen	Funnell	69	A	Stephen	Rothman	132	A
Brian	Ameringen	112	A	Carolina	Gomez	70	A	Marcus	Rowland	133	A
Meriol	Ameringen	113	I		Lagerlof			Yvonne	Rowse	134	A
Diane	Anderson	17	A	Urban	Gunnarsson	71	A	Marjorie	Sachs	135	A
John	Anderson	18	A	Colin	Harris	72	A	Mike	Scott	137	A
Johan	Angiemark	19	A	Eve	Harvey	74	A	Janet	Shepherd Figg	138	A
Linnea	Angiemark	20	A	John	Harvey	73	A	Mike	Simpson	198	A
Andrew	Armstrong	22	A	Julian	Headlong	75	A	Anthony	Smith	139	A
Helen	Armstrong	23	A	Valerie	Housden	76	A	Dan	Smithers	140	A
Mark	Bailey	190	A	Marcia	Illingworth	78	A	Lucy	Smithers	141	A
John	Bark	24	A	Tim	Illingworth	77	A	Nathaniel	Smithers	142	I
Andrew	Barton	144	A	Ian	Jackson	79	A	Kate	Soley Barton	143	A
Covert	Beach	25	A	Rhodri	James	80	A	Janice	Sorrell	99	A
Chris	Bell	173	A	John	Jarrold	202	A	Christopher	Southern	146	A
Paul	Blair	107	A	Jonathan	Jones	81	A	Jennifer	Southern	145	A
Jaap	Boekestein	26	A	Tony	Keen	83	A	Michael	Spiller	147	A
Duncan	Booth	28	A	Peter	Kievits	84	A	Jesper	Stage	148	A
Judy	Booth	29	A	Tim	Kirk	85	A	James	Steel	149	A
Clare	Boothby	30	A	Alice	Kohler	102	A	Susan	Stepney	150	A
Jill	Bradley	32	A	Dave	Lally	172	A	Alastair	Stewart	151	A
Phil	Bradley	31	A	David	Langford	193	A	Christine	Stewart	152	A
Bridget	Bradshaw	33	A	Alice	Lawson	88	A	Lars	Strandberg	153	A
Simon	Bradshaw	34	A	Steve	Lawson	87	A	Gary	Stratmann	155	A
John	Bray	35	A	Sharon	Lewis	82	A	Linda	Stratmann	154	A
Claire	Brialey	36	A	Marisa	Lohr	89	A	Marcus	Streets	201	A
John	Brown	47	A	Gavin	Long	91	A	Lesley	Swan	156	A
Edmund	Buckley	37	A	Caroline	Loveridge	90	A	Lorna	Sweetman	194	A
Bill	Burns	38	A	Peter	Mabey	92	A	Alyson	Taylor	157	A
Jim	Burns	40	A	Helen	MacNeil	94	A	Dave	Tompkins	158	A
Mary	Burns	39	A	Justin	MacNeil	93	A	Paul	Treadaway	159	A
Roger	Burton West	41	A	Ian	Maughan	96	A	Cristina	Ulvang	160	A
Simon	Callan	42	A	Rory	McLean	97	A	Pulido			
Jane	Carnall	43	A	Scotty	McLeod	98	A	Tor	Ulvang	161	A
Arthur	Chappell	44	A	Alex	McLintock	197	A	Christian			
Malcolm	Cohen	136	A	Pat	McMurray	100	A	Jan	Van 'T Ent	162	A
Noel	Collyer	45	A	Hazel	Meades	103	C	Peter	Wareham	163	A
Stephen	Cooper	46	A	Leo	Meades	104	I	Eileen	Weston	165	A
Gail	Courtney	186	A	Rob	Meades	101	A	Peter	Weston	164	A
Dave	Cox	48	A	John	Meredith	105	A	Charles	Whyte	166	A
A G	Cruttenden	174	A	Judith	Miller	106	A	Colin	Wightman	167	A
Rafe	Culpin	49	A	Cheryl	Morgan	108	A	Sarah	Wightman	168	A
John	Dailman	50	A	Tim	Morley	109	A	Anne	Wilson	15	A
Martyn	Dawe	95	A	Steve	Mowbray	110	A	Alan	Woodford	170	A
Guy	Dawson	52	A	Caroline	Mullan	111	A	Anne	Woodford	169	A
Sue	Dawson	51	A	Ronan	Murphy	199	A	Ben	Yalow	203	A
Peter	Day	53	A	Andrew	O'Donnell	114	A	Mark	Young	171	A
Chantal	Delessert	54	A	Roderick	O'Hanlon	117	A				
Vincent	Docherty	55	A	Chris	O'Shea	200	A				
Chris	Donaldson	116	A	Paul	Oldroyd	115	A				
Paul	Dormer	56	A	Arwel	Parry	118	A				
David	Drysdale	57	A	Brian	Parsons	119	A				
Steve	Dunn	58	A	Andrew	Patterson	120	A				
Roger	Earnshaw	59	A	Tommy	Persson	121	A				
Sue	Edwards	60	A	Mark	Plummer	122	A				
Herman	Ellingsen	61	A	Silas	Potts	189	A				
				Thomas	Recktenwald	123	A				
				Peter	Redfam	124	A				
				John	Rees	191	A				
				Campbell							
				Patricia	Reynolds	126	A				

A: Adult Attending
C: Child Attending
I: Infant (under 7 at the convention)
S: Supporting

Some members asked to have their details excluded from any published membership list.

