

NOCTURN

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PROGRESS
REPORT: 1



^{'ER} eastcon '90

The 1990 British Easter Science Fiction Convention

April 13-16 1990

Cobden Hotel/Clarendon Suite

Birmingham

Guest of Honour

Iain M. Banks

Fan Guest of Honour

Anne Page

Guest Artist

SMS



**EASTCON '90, Unit 28, Metropolitan Works
Enfield Road, London N1 5AZ**

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

Chairman's Address

Why run a convention? Strangely enough, Ken Slater has been trying to encourage us to do this for years, but there is no site large enough in Norwich, so the idea had been shelved. Then, one fateful day at Beccon '87, I wandered into the Fan Room in search of friends and chat. There I heard Helen McCarthy give an impassioned speech about a venue near Cromer that she had intended to use for a Fanderson con. Unfortunately the Con had to be cancelled, but the package she had put together was most attractive. She was desperate for someone to use it for an Eastercon. She sold me the idea and at the first opportunity, I grabbed her for more information. Thus Eastcon was born.

Why Eastcon? Well, the original idea as I have said had been to hold an Easter convention in East Anglia. The site Helen had in mind turned out to be booked over the Easter weekend, so I was left with an idea and no venue.

I got in touch with the East Anglian Tourist Board and Conference people but there was nothing the size we needed with enough close accommodation.

Novacon came and with it several more committee members. Eventually the choice of venue narrowed down to four sites that had conference facilities large enough and adequate accommodation close at hand. They were: The Adelphi in Liverpool; the Metropole in Birmingham at the NEC; the Clarendon Suite in Birmingham; and Brighton. For obvious reasons Brighton was not considered. The NEC wasn't available on the Good Friday, and the Adelphi was too expensive and not very forthcoming about returning our calls and letters. That left the Clarendon Suite and the Cobden Hotel.

Stu and I went over to meet the manageress of the hotel and see round its facilities and those of the Clarendon Suite opposite. We were knocked out with what we saw. The place had atmosphere, similar to the Adelphi, but not quite so dauntingly Gothic. The rooms gave us as much flexibility as any Con could ask. They hold functions there for groups of one hundred (wedding receptions), yet can still accommodate up to three thousand people if every room is fully utilised.

Now obviously we won't need to cater for a con that large, but Follycon did have 1,000 people attending, so it's nice to know that if we have the same numbers, we can accommodate them comfortably. By the same token, since all our rooms will be on two floors, the ground and first floor, it is nice to know that the programme items will be close to each other and that for a small Con, we have plenty of small areas where an audience of around a hundred won't feel like it's rattling around in an amphitheatre.

In 1990 Eastcon will be celebrating all the decades of Science Fiction, past, present and future.

Our Guests of Honour at present include the popular writer Iain Banks, Anne Page as our Fan Guest, and SMS as both our Art Guest and our Convention Artist. We are also in the process of lining up some special Science Guest speakers for your delectation.

For the first time in Europe, we will be presenting a programme of Space and Environmental Sciences alongside the Science Fiction which complements them.

The traditional aspects of Eastercon will all be there too. The Book Room, Art Show, Fan Room, Films, Masquerade, Awards Ceremonies and much more, all bound together by innovative and stimulating programming, plus our subtle twist of anarchy!

As for our hotels, there will be an extra discount on rooms in addition to the usual Eastercon reduced rates. The staff of the Cobden are very nice, very friendly and co-operative (makes a difference, doesn't it?) and the food is excellent. And the drink? We're offering a full real ale bar and scrumpy for the connoisseurs of the fermented apple. Plus of course there is the swimming pool, sauna and polygymn to work off the hangovers. These facilities are free to all con attendees.

The future is Science Fiction – see it at Eastcon '90.

Lisanne Norman—Chairman

EASTCON '90

THE GUESTS

Guest of Honour:

A User's Guide to Iain Banks

No: I didn't rush out and buy the bestselling 'Wasp Factory' by Iain Banks as soon as it came out. Any book trendy enough to merit reviews by all the hip music papers simultaneously is, in my book, worth avoiding. You can always be sure that you can pick up a second-hand copy in five years time (with the most recent Douglas Adams best-seller), when all the fuss has died down. Only a common-law marital breakdown could force me to fork out for this sicko tale of Scottish animal abusers and homicidal maniacs, so it was in 1986 that I finally settled down with my very own copy. "You shouldn't read that; it'll only make you more sick" advised our resident Habitat Mother Superior. She may have been right; it WAS the only book I could stomach reading. Her reaction to hearing me laughing my way through its pages was "I suppose this is the sort of book you'd love to illustrate?" Again, she was right.

Life being almost as funny a thing as 'The Wasp Factory', it was only a few months until I found myself at a convention, listening to a manic Scotsman enthusing about a "Brilliantly sick comic strip called 'Screaming of the Beetle'". Upon discovering I was the bloke who had done it, the Scots git nearly crushed my windpipe. Since then, I've had the pleasure of doing illo's for a short story of his that ties in with 'Consider Phlebas' (his first 'proper SF novel'), read 'Walking on Glass' and 'The Bridge' and co-operated with Iain on plans for a graphic novel.

Iain isn't strictly a 'hardcore' SF writer. Since SF exists in a rarefied world in which 'The Galaxy' is rather less cosmopolitan than East Croydon and is inhabited predominantly by people with less depth of character than the characters in an Australian soap opera—people who find it easier to affect the destiny of whole worlds than to have a convincing dialogue—this must be a good thing. Iain's books seethe with the kind of mundane unlikelihood that we read escapist literature to avoid. An account of male lavatory etiquette is to me a sure mark of a well-written book, and here Iain has outlined the over-flow pipes of the human psyche more clearly than even Philip K Dick. All too often, SF deals with invention at the expense of description, so it's warming to note that Iain's extravagant inventions, ranging from Kafkaesque to Peakuant, rest upon a bedrock of good Celtic Scone.

On a more practical level, visualise the average Guest of Honour: he/she wanders around the convention seeking assurance that there is some connection between their writing and a lot of loud people in a provincial hotel. Like a Flying Dutchman who has recently come ashore, they stagger between panels in euphoric culture shock before retreating to the Real World of reassuring alienation. Iain Banks, on the other hand, is more likely to be the subject of a desperate search by the Convention Committee whilst he gleefully leads a boiler-sabotaging party in the basement.

There are two points to all this (aside from the fact that I was asked by Lisanne to write 'something personal about Iain'):-

First: to let you know that you have enrolled for a Con which has had the good taste to choose a Guest of Honour who is a traction-engine enthusiast and absails down hotel walls.

Second: to hammer home that conventions are great places for chance meetings and outrageous coincidences and that EastCon has every indication of being one of the most interesting of these.

You're very lucky you joined—Now Spread The Word.

SMS

Sickest Southampton 1988

WARNING! IAIN BANKS' WRITING COULD PROVE ADDICTIVE

THE GUESTS

Fan Guest of Honour:

Anne Page

Anne has been a friend for a good many years now. I can't remember whether Stu introduced us or not, but we were bound to come across each other since in those early days of the mid '70s there weren't many women involved in Fandom in their own right.

I asked Anne for her Fannish CV and when I read it was astounded by several facts. One was the volume of Cons she attends per year in a working capacity—nine of them! Then the fact that she had attended her first Con only a year before me. I had always thought of her as an ageless permanent fixture in the Con firmament, so that must put me in the same Aunty of Fandom category.

Another fact we have in common is the Women's APA, TWP. Anne was a contributing member for 18 months.

Her interests are varied, starting with cats, historical re-enactment societies, antique and futuristic costumes, herbalism, archeology, stone circles, and she has just qualified as an aromatherapist. I suspect the list is endless, since she is also a trained teacher.

How do I describe her to anyone who doesn't know her? Well, I think I'll use her own words.

"Single, blonde (by nature, not bottle), 5ft 10½ tall." So when you come to Eastcon in 1990, look out for a tall blonde lady and buy her a drink, especially if you happen to be male, footloose and fancy free.

Lisanne Norman

Guest Artist

SMS

I don't know; how do you write a witty and knowledgeable introduction to somebody whose name you've never managed to find out? I thought Gamma's real name was Ray for months, but that's another story, and besides I never had to write a piece on him. Anyway, SMS's real name is SMS, I suppose, working on the principle that people ought to be able to choose what they're called. I first met him at the Eastercon two years ago, in Birmingham (or the NEC Metropole, as it is sometimes called). I spent the first five or so minutes after we hadn't been introduced telling him what a brilliant artist SMS was and how 'The Screaming of the Beetle' was the best thing that had appeared in *Interzone* for ages... he just sat there grinning. Yes, I'd been set up by my girlfriend.

SMS is a remarkably talented artist, and a gifted story-teller as well; not that common a combination. He's a nice guy too; probably his only major character flaw is a liking for deeply unpleasant books like *The Wasp Factory*, but then nobody's perfect. He's always looked to me like he's in the wrong age somehow; I have this mental picture of him dressed like some mediæval troubadour, or in Sherwood green or whatever; he really ought to have one of those funny pointed caps shaped like a compromise between an up-ended gravy boat and Concorde, with a feather sticking out of the side. A surprise entry for the Masquerade, mayhap? Maybe not. On the other hand, I think we should dispense with the usual GoH speech and get him to give an illustrated lecture on Philosophy: a man, a podium and a pot of paint. Sort of Rolf Harris meets A.J. Ayer. This is exactly as mad as it sounds, but the guy does have a frighteningly comprehensive grasp of philosophical ideas, and, dammit, if he can successfully integrate them into a 2000 AD strip he can probably do anything else he wants with them. Personally, though, I'll settle for finding out what those initials stand for.

Iain Banks

Chairman:**Lisanne Norman**

I'm a Primary Teacher by profession, Mum by choice and have delusions of getting into print as a serious SF writer. I was on the committee of the first Easter Albacon in 1980 in Glasgow. I was involved in Memberships and Hotel Liaison. For Eastcon I thought my talents would be better utilised as Chairman, seeing to Committee liaison and keeping us all on track with our plans for what promises to be an excellent Easter Convention.

Hotel Liaison:**Helen McCarthy**

I'm the Hotel Liaison person for Eastcon, and will also, at the con, have special responsibility for the care and feeding of gophers. They are too important to a successful convention for their well-being to be left to chance, so EASTCON considers it vital to have a committee member responsible for them. I probably volunteered for the role because of the long-term psychological effects of being the eldest of eight children. This may also account for my fondness for soap-boxes and affectionate sympathy with their occupants.

I live with Steve Kyte, who is a very good artist and washer-up, in an untidy flat in East London. I don't read or socialise enough—through lack of time, like most people—but when I read it's usually history, biography, sf/fantasy, or cookery books. I draw a bit, too. I love to cook and my favourite sort of entertainment is an evening at home with friends and food. I look forward to meeting lots of like-minded sociable medievalist foodies at Eastcon!

Memberships:**Douglas McCallum**

Douglas McCallum is membership secretary and, er, well, that's it.

Publicity:**Stuart Andrews**

From humble beginnings Stu took to the role of Publicity Officer for Eastcon '90 like a duck to water—he got thrown in! However, after the obligatory coughs and splutters he surfaced and when we promised to return the incriminating negatives, he accepted the job graciously. Here's his bit.

My profession is broadcast TV so I'm used to dealing with sycophantic creep who... (remember the negs! ed.) ...err, I'm used to dealing with media campaigns and overcoming their related difficulties.

I was one of the founder members of the original Norwich SF society in 1974, though my passion for Science Fiction stems from twelve years as an amateur astronomer. A quest for inner space prompted a protracted study of psychology and group sociology: professional public relations courses followed. I've run a number of successful press campaigns over the years and was recently responsible for the PR for Norwich CND and Monseigneur Bruce Kent's lecture tour of the city. I'm currently lobbying parliament and the House of Lords in defence of shooters' rights.

Secretary:

Henry Balen

A Short History of H Balen by himself: Born a long time ago, has been involved with various conventions. Finally proved to be brain dead when he was easily persuaded to join the Eastcon Committee.

Treasurer, and Art Show (with Jon Harvey):

Sylvia Starshine

Having willingly participated in an orgy in front of approximately a thousand people and then being massacred by He-Man for a few thousand more at Lisanne's behest, it seemed a natural progression to help her organise a convention. I've been doing this sort of thing on and off for about fifteen years (con-running, not orgies or massacres) and, no, I still don't know why I do it.

Operations:

Hugh Mascetti

Hugh is a native of Wales living in exile in Walthamstow. He got into fandom almost by accident, in 1977, by walking into the back bar in a pub in Oxford, where a group of Fans were singing 'In Old Mexico.'

He was irresponsible for the first Becon fireworks display; Becon also started his interest in conrunning. He has served on various con committees and resigned from the odd one or two. His main interest in con-running is trying to make things work as smoothly as possible: most of his con-running experience has been related to operations in one way or another. Hugh has finally succumbed to temptation, and landed himself with the job of ops manager at an Eastercon. Like most ideas of this sort, it arrived at about 2 a.m. at the bottom of a glass.

He is married to Barbara, who refuses to have anything to do with running conventions, but likes to share things, especially if someone else is paying. Hugh's other interests included filking, shooting, and the current subject of conversation.

Bookroom:

Ken Slater

"The Oldest and Tireddest Fan in Fandom", he says. He's been on Con committees before, in fact, he's done just about everything there is to do in Fandom. Way back in the 40's, he was a prime mover to get it all started, so present-day Fandom and SF conventions owe a lot to this gentleman. I don't think one needs to say any more about his credentials, and as for his personality, well, go and talk to him yourself in the book dealers' room. Even better, buy him a drink in the evening and sit back and enjoy his company.

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THE FACILITIES

The Hotels — A Brief Outline

The Cobden and the Norfolk are our two main convention hotels. They are close to each other on the Hagley Road, which contrary to popular rumour did not strike those of us who walked along and over it on our site visits as either a motor-race track or a haunt of vice. I must admit it really amused me to sit at the bid session in a hotel on Lime Street and hear someone say that a site's potential for attracting prostitutes would count against it in the vote! Still, Follycon had no trouble with the locals and neither, I'm sure, will we.

Both these hotels are very comfortable, with attractive, spacious rooms, and are well supplied with bars. Our main convention bar, after the Clarendon closes, will be in the Cobden, but as we have exclusive use of both these hotels they will of course regard anyone wearing a convention badge as a bona-fide resident or guest. An all-night video room will run in the Cobden for those who don't feel like sleeping; again, anyone wearing a badge will have no problems from the staff (though anyone in a sleeping bag might...). We also plan to locate the late creche here. Other facilities in the Cobden include a lovely garden (if it's warm enough to sit outside) and a fitness centre complete with an ace gym instructor.

The Apollo and The Strathallan Thistle are the other two hotels we will be using. With these two we do not have exclusive use of the hotel, as is usual for convention overflows.

The Apollo, though, is a particularly good choice for anyone in a wheelchair or struggling with prams, pushchairs etc, as it has a number of rooms which open directly onto the front entrance and car park and so have very easy access. (Of course anyone with a mobility problem will get practical assistance whichever hotel they stay in.)

The Strathallan is probably the most 'luxurious' of our four hotels in terms of style and furnishings (it's also the most expensive), but the rooms and bathrooms are smaller than in the other three, and some are very unusually shaped, as the hotel is round.

All four hotels are within a couple of minutes' walk of the Clarendon Centre. Unless you have a particular preference for one hotel over another, or request, say, a room with direct access from the car park, we will allocate rooms in the Cobden/Norfolk until they are full, and then in the Apollo and Strathallan, in accordance with usual con practice. Meanwhile, if you have any questions or any special problems relating to your Eastcon hotel, please let me know and I'll do my best to help.

Helen McCarthy
Hotel Liaison



THE RATES

Membership rates

	Full attending	Supporting
Up to and including December 1st 1988	£15	£6
Up to and including December 1st 1989	£20	£9

Conversion from supporting to attending is always at the current difference in rates.

Conversion from Pre-supporting is at current rates less £1.00

Soft toy membership	Badge Only	£1.00
Child under 9 in May 1990	Badge Only	£1.00
Juvenile 9-12 in May 1990	half the current adult rate (must register with parent(s))	

Dealer's tables

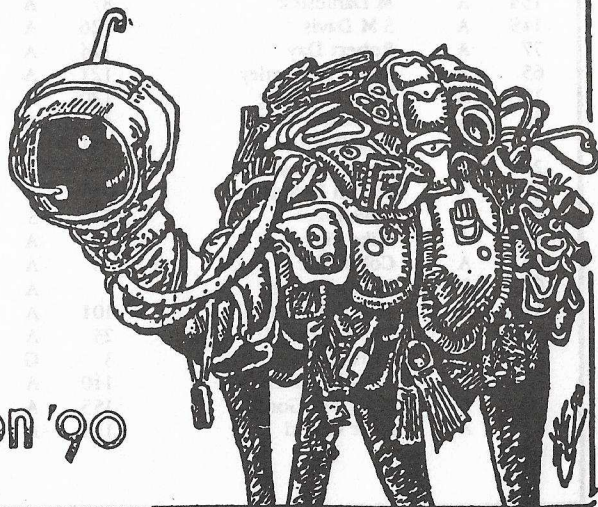
Up to and including December 1st 1989	£15 per table
After December 1st 1989	£20 per table

Advertisements

(progress reports only)

	Pro	Fan
Full page	£25	£15
Half page	£13	£ 8
Quarter page	£ 7	£ 5

Please supply camera ready copy.



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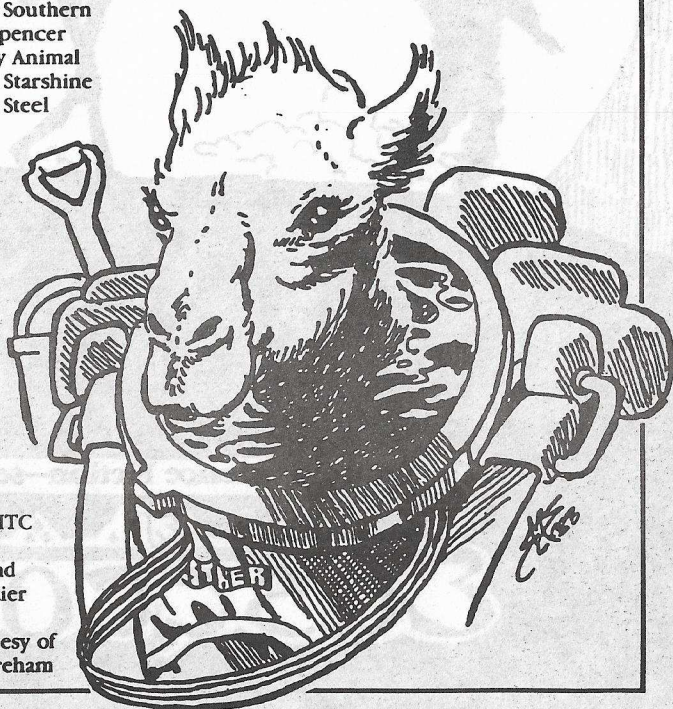
THE MEMBERS

Members as of November 1st 1988

2	G		31	S	Alan Gunn
5	G		43	A	Urban Gunnarson
6	G		88	A	Tony Hammond
55	A	Kay Allan	62	A	Susan G Harding
29	A	Brian Ameringen	95	A	Dave Hardy
91	A	Michael Ancell	24	A	Katie Hoare
167	A	Fiona Anderson	20	A	Martin Hoare
8	A	Stuart Andrews	133	A	M Holroyd
30	A	Margaret Austin	154	A	T J Ibbs
164	S	Jon D Axtell	14	A	Tim Illingworth
157	A	Henry Balen	90	A	Matt Irving
1	G	Iain M. Banks	141	A	G R James
119	A	Trevor Barker	71	S	Wilf James
109	A	Phil Barnard		A	A D Jones
99	A	David Bell	82	A	Steve Jones
105	A	Matt Bishop	48	A	David Lally
124	A	Jill Bradley	117	A	Henry J Landis
123	A	Phil Bradley	74	A	Adrian Last
81	A	Michael Braithwaite	165	S	Eira L Latham
145	A	Richard Brandshaft	146	A	Steve Lawson
158	A	Paul Brazier	136	A	Dave Lermitt
131	A	C Bulmer	64	A	Steve A Linton
97	A	Liz Burak	25	A	Hans Loose
112	A	Bill Burns	56	A	Peter Mabey
111	A	Mary Burns	168	S	Bruce McDonald
129	A	Chris Bursey	16	A	Samuel Mackay
63	A	J Christian	58	A	Bobby McLaughlin
110	A	Brigid Cooling	79	A	Rory O MacLean
162	A	Jonathan Cowie	100	A	Joyce Mains
37	A	Adrian Cox	15	A	Chris Marriot
33	A	Neil Craig	84	A	P Marrow
80	A	P M Cray	27	S	Krsto Mazuranic
51	A	1/2r Cruttenden	142	A	Angus McAllister
107	A	Patric Curzon	9	A	Douglas McCallum
39	A	John Dallman	10	A	Helen McCarthy
134	A	M Damesick	87	A	Nick Mills
149	A	S M Davis	126	A	Minnie the Moocher
77	A	Robert Day	114	A	Mike Molloy
65	A	Roger Dearnaley	121	A	Chris Morgan
118	A	Zoe Deterding	120	A	Pauline Morgan
45	A	Vince Docherty	49	A	Wim Morisson
60	A	Paul Dormer	161	A	Caroline Mullan
21	A	Roger Earnshaw	138	A	Harry Nadler
32	A	Martin Easterbrook	139	A	Steven Nadler
53	A	Dave Ellis	72	S	Duncan Nedderley
128	A	Mike Figg	85	A	Jeroyen Nijenhuis
26	A	Colin Fine	46	A	Andrew Norcross
61	S	Susan Francis	7	A	Lisanne Norman
44	A	Anders Frihagen	101	A	Andrew O'Donnell
52	A	Gwen Funnell	23	A	Chris O'Shea
152	S	Jenny Glover	3	G	Anne Page
153	S	Steven Glover	140	A	David Parkins
75	A	Margaret Gordon	155	A	Joan Paterson
82	A	Mike Gould	135	A	Roger Perkins

THE MEMBERS

156	A	Norman Plumpton	68	A	Alex Stewart
93	A	Jean Porter	35	A	John Stewart
92	A	Jim Porter	41	A	Lars Strandberg
76	A	Terry Pyle	54	A	Marcus Streete
166	S	Feryal Rajah	122	A	A J Sullivan
143	A	Andrew Rammage	98	A	Graham Taylor
144	A	Deborah Rammage	86	A	Tom Taylor
94	A	David Raw	160	A	David Thomas
137	A	Suzanna Raymond	78	A	Donald Thompson
96	A	Martin Reed	127	A	Ray Thompson
132	A	M Reid	28	A	Ivan Towlson
163	A	Dov Rigal	151	A	P Treadaway
106	A	N G Robson	19	A	Larry van der Putte
	S	Doreene Rogers	17	A	Jan Veldhoen
	S	Phil Rogers	34	A	Dai Walters
150	A	Tony Rogers	36	A	Huw Walters
38	A	Howard Rosenblum	50	A	Peter Wareham
40	A	June Rosenblum	57	A	Gerry Webb
22	A	Marcus Rowland	59	A	Gerry Webb 2
147	A	Marjorie Sachs	66	A	Kathy Westhead
69	A	Lena Sarah	67	A	Mike Westhead
130	A	Mike Scott	47	A	Peter Weston
18	A	Angus Scott-Brown	113	A	Elda Wheeler
102	A	Chris Seller	89	A	Kim Whysal
103	A	Gill Seller	104	A	Colin Wightman
12	A	Joyce Slater	148	A	Bridget Wilkinson
11	A	Ken Slater	108	A	Paul Winship
4	G	SMS			
115	A	Chris Southern			
116	A	Jenny Southern			
42	A	Phil Spencer			
125	A	Spikey Animal			
13	A	Sylvia Starshine			
73	A	James Steel			



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The future is Science Fiction—see it at

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