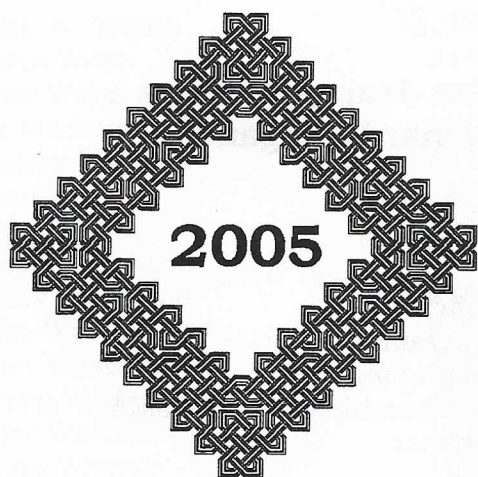




**PARAGON2**

PARAGON2

**Eastercon:  
The British  
National Science  
Fiction  
Convention**

25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> March 2005  
Hanover International  
Hinckley

**Progress Report 2  
April 2004**

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## Guests of Honour

John & Eve Harvey  
Ken MacLeod  
Robert Rankin

Ben Jeapes  
Richard Morgan

## Committee

Fran Dowd .....  
James Bacon.....  
Julia Daly .....  
John Dowd.....

Nigel Furlong .....  
Sabine Furlong .....  
Alice Lawson .....  
Steve Lawson .....  
John Richards.....

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## Contact information

Paragon2  
4 Burnside Avenue, SHEFFIELD  
S8 9FR UK

0114 281 0674

www.paragon2.org.uk  
members@paragon2.org.uk

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## What's a ... Hero?

**Glynn Christian (the mutineer's great-great-great-grandson):** "There is nothing new to say about Bounty, Bligh or Christian ... William Bligh was a magnificent navigator and a truly awful man just as Fletcher Christian was a wicked mutineer and an interesting pioneer of democracy and female emancipation."

**Lenin:** "All our lives we fought against exalting the individual, against the elevation of the single person, and long ago we were over and done with the business of a hero, and here it comes up again: the glorification of one personality. This is not good at all. I am just like everybody else."

**Ralph Waldo Emerson:** "A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is brave five minutes longer."

### Thoughts on the Philosophical Foundations of Heroism, by Dr Andrew Bernstein:

"What, the first question must be, is the distinguishing essence of heroism? What characteristics must one possess to qualify as a hero? What is it that unites Achilles, Cyrano, Isaac Newton, John Galt and Ayn Rand? What is it that differentiates them from: both the folks next door, and from Iago, Ellsworth Toohey, Adolf Hitler, Hilary Clinton? In short, what is the rational meaning of the concept "heroism"?"

Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary defines "hero as: a) "a mythological or legendary figure often of divine descent endowed with great strength or ability, b) an illustrious warrior, c) a man admired for his achievements and noble qualities, d) one that shows great courage." These

*cont. page 9*

# From the Depths of the Sofa

by Fran Dowd

Hello again. With less than a year to go, everything is starting to gather speed. You can now book your hotel room, there's more detail about that on page 14. We're working on the projects that need a lot of advance planning - these include the Richard III Project - more on page 12. PRs also include info on some of the other things we've got in mind - this issue features the wargaming strand (page 10).

There's some enclosures with this PR for you. As well as the Hotel Booking Form there's a Volunteer Form (one side for Ops, one side for Programme), a Membership Form for any of your friends who haven't joined yet, and a flier - please try and find a local bookshop, work noticeboard or library where this can be displayed.

This and future PRs will have detailed information about our Guests of Honour - Ken MacLeod and Robert Rankin are our highlighted guests in this issue (pages 4 and 7).

As I've said before, if you would like to be involved in Paragon2, we would love to hear from you. If you have programme ideas, or want to write for the publications, it doesn't mean you have to be involved in running the con on the day.

Conversely, if you want to work at the con, it doesn't mean you have to spend time between now and then in the planning.

## Masquerade and Costuming

You may have heard that we've announced that we're not going to have a Masquerade. This isn't *quite* true, we have not yet made the final decision.

Alice Lawson, who's our committee person responsible for special events, has been running Eastercon Masquerades for quite some time. She has been watching the number of entries slowly decline. At Seacon03, there were very few entries, and none who notified her in advance. Con-

course (04) announced that if they did not have enough advance entries or enquiries by April 1st, they would cancel the Masquerade, although they would continue with the increasingly popular Hall Costume competition. Alice is monitoring the response and we will make our decision based on this.

If we do decide that the Masquerade is not to go ahead, we will notify you in the next PR (November 2004). We have a range of ideas to replace it, and will do some of these even if we go ahead with the main event. These include Hall Costume Competition, an Easter Bonnet Parade, an Alter Ego Costume Ball, and the audience participation costumes for Richard III. There will be the usual capable support of Chaos Costuming.

We are also thinking of running some workshop items on Masquerading, to support people who are thinking of entering the Worldcon Masquerade later in the year.

If you have any comments or queries about this, please contact Alice or myself.

## Paragon2 Merchandise

We're experimenting with something new for Paragon2 souvenirs - T-shirts, mousemats, tote bags and the like. We have joined forces with a US company called CaféPress, who produce a wide range of products and print them individually with our designs to your order. Unfortunately, these products are only available through the souvenirs shop on our website. It does mean, though, that you can have a choice of T-shirts from 6-month baby size up to 4XL, and we've also got a special design for people who prefer to have an image between their boobs and not across them. You can even have Paragon2 undies! The service is fast, and they take credit cards. The greatest benefit for all of us is that we have not had to tie up your membership money in merchandise stock. If you visit our desk at conventions, we will have samples for you to look at before you order.

## Ken MacLeod

by John Richardson

If for nothing else Ken MacLeod can be remembered for devising the latest format for the style of science fiction that Margaret Atwood does not write. While “squids in space” is hardly a complete description of the *Engines Of Light* trilogy, from that definition it is difficult to identify another writer from whom she was attempting to distance her novel *Oryx And Crake*. Quite why Ms. Atwood should be so keen to be seen as “Not Ken MacLeod” is, of course, a matter of much speculation. After all Ken’s works betray a ready wit, an interest in humanity and an ability to characterise that quite a few writers, Ms. Atwood among them, might do well to cultivate.

Described by Salon.com as “the greatest living Trotskyist libertarian cyberpunk science-fiction humorist” like many of us in the underworld of fandom Ken had been writing since he first discovered SF at the age of 13 and collecting the standard rejection slips.

“I got a rejection slip from *New Worlds Quarterly* for a story where the alien planet turns out to be Earth. Gosh! Too radical for *New Worlds*, obviously. Pity I didn’t know about *The Last Dangerous Visions* and I could have sent it to that! Over my 20s and 30s I very, very slowly collected rejection slips from *Interzone* and then gave up trying to write short stories...”

Through the urging of old school mate Iain Banks and the efforts of agent Mic Cheetham he burst upon the public scene with *The Star Fraction* in 1995; the first in a series that I find myself somewhat surprised to learn is called *The Fall Revolution*. *The Star Fraction* was runner up for the 1996 Arthur C Clarke award and, despite having a communist hero, winner of the 1996 Prometheus Award for Libertarian SF.

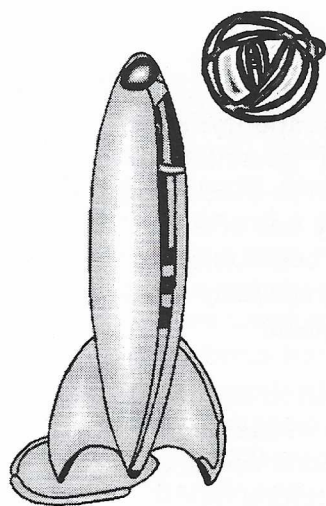
His second book *The Stone Canal* (1996) won the 1998 Prometheus Award. For me it was here that Ken really became someone to watch out for. Like an Iain Banks novel with the pseudonymous middle initial flashing on and off like a faulty neon sign *The Stone Canal* alternates between a cinematically drawn far future and contemporary Scotland with the ideas that crop up in late night political arguments in Student Union bars being given flesh. At once achingly familiar and breathtaking in its scope and with Ken’s sense of politics and sense of humour in top gear.

*The Cassini Division* (1998) broke Ken, by now a full time author, into the US. Despite a personal liking for the previous books Patrick Neilson Hayden of Tor books had considered them, with their European style of politics, not suitable for American publication. Once again Ken threw caution to the wind and came up with a lead character who has been described as “the most evil protagonist in the universe.” Unrepentant, in an interview for *Locus* Ken commented:

“I certainly don’t think she’s evil from a human point of view, and I don’t believe there’s an extra human point of view that matters to us. Ellen’s belief is mine, that fundamentally human beings are their own moral arbiters, our little moral centre. So there is no “good” external to the question of what is good for us. But without some form of religious belief, there’s literally nothing else to go on, to drive us. I don’t think morality has any meaning whatsoever once it moves beyond the human.”

Despite this attack on the morality of *Star Trek*, *The Cassini Division* was nominated for The Nebula Award, The BSFA Award, The Arthur C Clarke Award and The Prometheus Award.

cont. page 6



# INTERACTION

**The 63<sup>rd</sup> World Science  
Fiction Convention  
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The SECC Glasgow, Scotland**

## GUESTS OF HONOUR

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Robert Sheckley, Lars-Olov Strandberg  
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In 1999 Ken won the BSFA award with *The Sky Road*, the fourth and last in *The Fall Revolution* series. Set in the time between *The Star Fraction* and *The Stone Canal* it deals with a minor incident in history and shows how things could turn out differently. Once more split between events in one time and their consequence in another this is a quieter book than its predecessors, considering the nature of history and extrapolation.

Which brings us on to the *Engines of Light* trilogy and squids in space.

In an interview with Duncan Lawie in *The Zone* Ken said.

"I don't believe in the UFO mythology but I find it fascinating. Episodically, I find it fascinating. I did quite a bit of research on the web about Area 51 and read an interesting and entertaining book called *The Dreamland Chronicles* by David Darlington, which is about the whole subculture that's grown up around it. There's an interesting webzine, which is no longer active, called *The Groom Lake Desert Rat*. It was a newsletter about and for all the people who made attempts to penetrate Groom Lake and were turned back by the famous camo dudes. It's intriguing stuff because obviously the place exists and they do use it to develop very advanced aircraft and the mind just boggles. It's surrounded by this huge cloud of disinformation of which I think the UFO mythology may well be a part."

Unlike *The Fall Revolution*, *Engines of Light* has continuing characters and a chronological sequence, although *Cosmonaut Keep* does use Ken's favourite two timelines style. It has the victims of alien abductions and kidnapped spacemen, who for once happen to be Russians and intelligent dinosaurs. It also has squids who can navigate between stars. As by now seemed inevitable *Cosmonaut Keep* (2000) was nominated for the Hugo, The Arthur C Clarke Award and The Prometheus Award while *Dark Light* was nominated for the John W Campbell Award and on the short list for the James Tiptree Award. *Engine City* (2003) com-

pleted the series. "Heavy weaponry, alien symbiosis, a programme of "guerrilla ontology" featuring literal *Men in Black* and devastating intervention by one of the gods ... A highly enjoyable conclusion to a fizzy, fast-moving but persistently intelligent trilogy." (David Langford)

*Newton's Wake* (2004) is out in hardback in the UK and will soon be available in the USA. This is a stand alone novel, as the cover blurb insists on telling us twice, but retains several familiar MacLeod tropes - post human intelligences and a story which spans centuries - as well as the glorious occupation of Combat Archaeologist.

In addition to the above, Ken's novella *The Human Front* (nominated for the Sidewise Award this time) is available in a Gollancz 'binary' edition and *Cydonia* is available in *Web 2028* or in a stand alone edition from Orion's Children.

As for the standard biographical details...

Ken MacLeod was born in Stornoway, on Isle of Lewis, Scotland, on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1954. He went to school with Iain Banks and was published in the school magazine while Banks wasn't. He graduated in Zoology from Glasgow University in 1976 and did an M.Phil in biomechanics at Brunel where he joined The International Marxist Group. He worked as a computer programmer before becoming a full time writer in 1997. He's been married to his wife Carol since 1981, and has two children, Sharon and Michael. His favourite film is *Blade Runner* and he admits to liking the film of *Starship Troopers*.

The 2003 Prometheus Award was won by Terry Pratchett's *Nightwatch*. When I remarked to Ken, at P-Con in Dublin, that this seemed to indicate that Libertarian SF was in a bad way Ken replied "there are only two good Libertarian SF writers and they are both at this table". I leave it as an exercise for the reader to guess who the other one is. A clue might be available in the dedication to *Newton's Wake*.

# Robert Rankin

by Michael Carroll

In his early days in Victorian London, Robert Rankin performed street magic alongside such greats as Bernard the Man-Cabbage and The Amazing Fabuloso of Penge. Robert's act often grabbed the attention of hundreds - sometimes even dozens - of passers-by.

His most popular trick was most probably "sawing a plank in half", a feat of such incredible prestidigitation that no magician since has dared to perform it in public.

Blessed with the power to heal the sick using only a hospital, and the power to return sight to the blind, Robert Rankin's reputation grew and grew. He gathered about himself a band of followers, men and women who gladly abandoned their professions and former lives to spread the word about him.

They shouted his name from the rooftops, they circulated his name on Ye Internette, they posted posters in the post office, and by the turn of the century almost everyone in London had heard of this man who, they said, could perform miracles.

Unfortunately, at the peak of his career Robert Rankin was cruelly struck down by a runaway offal cart - the first of many signs of his apotheosis, according to followers of The First Church of Rankin - and wasn't heard from again until his reincarnation in 1949 - the first of many signs of his deification, according to the followers of The Second Church of Rankin.

The *Book of Jeffrey*, Chapters 12-14, states: "There shall be a sacrifice of the fatted calf and thigh, and, lo, verily even, shall come again a man who will work miracles, and if within a week you can find the same miracles cheaper anywhere else, he will refund double the difference."

In accordance with the prophesy, Honest Bob's Miracle Warehouse was established in 1978, and offered solutions to many world problems, including all seven of the armageddon scenarios (plague, famine, ecological disaster, comet smashing into earth, punk rock, alien invasion, single European currency). It should have signalled the start of a new Aquarian Age, but sadly after a mere three weeks the business was forced to close due to the number of complaints lodged with the advertising standards association. The building, it turned out, was not a warehouse but a converted storage shed.

Unperturbed by this, Robert Rankin formed the Brentford Poets and Paramilitary Association. This is where he learned that his word could be spread more widespread if the word was written down, along with some other words, and published in hefty religious tracts, or "books."

Robert Rankin's first book was, is, and ever shall be *The Antipope*. It was quickly followed by two more, then a little pause, and then a fourth. These books, plus a more recent one, have become known in many circles as *The Blessed Trilogy* - the miracle of five books in three. The books tell of the exploits of Jim Pooley and John Omally, two reluctant heroes who continually save the world from such diverse enemies as a resurrected Pope, an alien invasion fleet, and Hugo Rune. They are aided in their struggle by their old friend Professor Slocombe, a man of great mystery and power, who, according to James Bacon, the leader of the Fifth Church of Robert Rankin, will eventually be seen to be none other than Mister Rankin himself.

Robert's next series of books was the *Armageddon Trilogy*, which deal with the struggle of humanity against a meddling alien race. The hero of these books is one

cont. page 8

Rex Mundi, aided by Elvis Presley, who in turn is aided by a sapient, time-travelling sprout called Barry. These books are probably the most complex that Mister Rankin has written to date, and on re-reading they offer up much in the way of fresh nuggets for the observant reader: they're not so much a trilogy as an investment.

Subsequent books include the *Hugo Rune Trilogy*, in which the young heroes Cornelius and Tuppe are faced with finding that ancient master of the mystical arts, Hugo Rune, and his book *The Book of Ultimate Truths*. Indeed, so popular was this series that fans of Robert Rankin tend to find themselves on their own quest for *The Book of Ultimate Truths*.

Thus, art becomes life... Was it prediction, or mere chance? Both of the followers of the Twelfth Church of Robert Rankin believe it to be the former. "Most Holy - that's Robert, by the way - knows what has gone before and what is to come," said the Church's founder James Bacon.

There are also a number of stand-alone novels, such as *A Dog Called Demolition* and *The Garden of Unearthly Delights*. Like most of his other novels, both of them present a complex parable, which the layman (you, in other words) must interpret as best as possible. Interestingly, the followers of the Zeroth Church of Robert Rankin believe that the true path is not the reading and understanding of the books, but the purchasing of the books.

The Zeroth Church is the most recent of the many churches, their name chosen by their leader James Bacon in the belief that they'd be listed first in the phone book. They subsequently discovered that the entries in the phone book are listed alphabetically, not numerically, so they're last instead.

Robert Rankin has also written about his own life, though many believe those books to be allegorical, or, in their terminology, "fabricated from lies and half-

truths." However, among his followers those criticism of those books is regarded as tantamount to blasphemy, punishable by sneering.

The belief of The Fort Chruch of Roburt Ranken that he is the Davine Savier is particularly strong, as expressed in their mannyphesto, written by the Chruch's leader, James Bacon\*: "Roburt is probly the best ever savier that weve ever had. When officer Joans reads the book's to me I go all cam and sadated."

For the less fanatical, there is another group of people who frequently gather to pay homage to the great man. Calling themselves "Sproutlore", they publish a fan magazine four times a year and provide news about forthcoming events. It is with this group of fine bodies that I, your humble servant, am affiliated. It has been predicted that one day every person on Earth will be a member of a Robert Rankin Appreciation Society, so I strongly urge you all to join the One True Society, Sproutlore, before you are indoctrinated into any of the other, lesser, groups.

For those of you who are still unsure, I urge you to read - and re-read - as many of the Great One's books as you can find. Please bear in mind that each copy of his books can only be properly read once: as soon as the words have been absorbed into your brain, the books lose their power. For this reason, you should only buy new copies, and to re-read them, you must buy additional copies.

In the unlikely event that you ever get to meet Mister Rankin, the correct way to greet him is as follows: Respectfully grasp the left side of your collar in your right hand, bow your head slightly in supplication, and mutter the sacred words, "He's right in front of me, all units close in."

You should then proffer at least three shiny new Robert Rankin books for signing. It is not necessary to have three different books, as long as they are all new. Note: you may be asked by one of his Apostles to show proof of purchase.

Once this is done, you should close the ceremony by making a token sacrifice of a twenty-pound note, an ancient tradition whose origin has long since been lost, but without which you could very well bring bad luck upon yourself. You should also be wary of the many Robert Rankin impersonators who attempt to cash in on Most Holy's success. Most of them can be easily spotted, for they are not tall and dashing and handsome, and do not carry about them an air of divinity, but there are others who are masters of disguise. These charlatans should be approached with caution. Remember, only the true Robert Rankin knows the answer to this question: "Where do you get your ideas from?"

Should you suspect the Robert Rankin you meet to be a fake, simply ask the question. If the answer fails to satisfy you, then that Robert Rankin is most likely false. You should then remove your clothes and stand naked in front of him, as a sign of protest, but only if you are female.

*\* Note: perhaps I should make it clear at this point that "James Bacon" is the honorary title bestowed upon the leaders of all Robert Rankin societies.*

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## What's a ... Hero?

*continued from page 2*

attempts at defining the nature of a hero are woefully inadequate. Observe first the predominant emphasis on the physical, on great strength, courage and warlike prowess - second the absence of any mention of the mind or intellect - and third the attenuated reference to the criterion of a man's moral character ("noble qualities" is listed as one of the term's meanings). The American Heritage Dictionary, though endowed with such a promising name, provides a set of definitions essentially no different. Based on this definition, one might conclude that an Arnold Schwarzenegger character is a hero but that Howard Roark or Ayn Rand are not. Sadly, this is a common perception in our culture.

A hero is (this is my definition, not Webster's): an individual of elevated moral stature and superior ability who pursues his goals indefatigably in the face of powerful antagonist(s). Because of his unbreached devotion to the good, no matter the opposition, a hero attains spiritual grandeur, even in he fails to achieve practical victory. Notice then the four components of heroism: moral greatness, ability or prowess, action in the face of opposition, and triumph in at least a spiritual, if not a physical, form.

Of these, the hero's moral stature is unquestionably the most fundamental. An uncompromising commitment to morality is the foundation of heroism. Although the point can be stated simply—the hero is a "good guy"—its reasons are philosophical and apply to all instances of the concept."

**From a school essay:** "Macbeth was a true Shakespearean tragic hero. He had many noble qualities as well as several tragic flaws. He was a courageous, brave and good nobleman who was haunted by superstition, moral cowardice and an overwhelming ambition. Progressively through the play, his flaws started consuming his qualities until they are all that can be seen of him."

**Ernest Renan:** "As a rule, all heroism is due to a lack of reflection, and thus it is necessary to maintain a mass of imbeciles. If they once understand themselves the ruling men will be lost."

**Solomon Short:** "Nature abhors a hero. For one thing, he violates the law of conservation of energy. For another, how can it be the survival of the fittest when the fittest keeps putting himself in situations where he is most likely to be creamed?"

# Wargaming Strand

by Gary Stratmann

*Some of us have been fascinated with the Time Commanders TV show, featuring modern teams re-fighting historical battles - and we've all thought We Could Do Better. But we wanted to fight the battles we really knew and loved - Helm's Deep, for example. So to give us all a chance, as well as the regular gaming programme strand, Paragon2 is going to have a wargaming room. Our partners the Society of Fantasy and Science Fiction Wargamers will be bringing games and expertise. We've asked Gary Stratmann to run us through some of the basics. (Ed.)*

Wargames date back to earliest antiquity, when model soldiers were used to re-enact battles. For centuries generals used miniature soldiers for planning and strategy. The birth of the amateur wargame dates back to the publication of *Little Wars* by H G Wells in 1913, which introduced a simple rule structure enabling amateurs to use model soldiers to fight miniature battles. At this time European armies used a hugely complicated system called *Kriegsspiel*, as an essential training tool, but as the Appendix of *Little Wars* points out it was not suitable for amateur gamers.

"*Little Wars*" (stated Wells) "is the game of kings - for players in an inferior social position. It can be played by boys of every age from twelve to one hundred and fifty - and even later if the limbs remain sufficiently supple, - by girls of the better sort, and by a few rare and gifted women."

Not perhaps the most politically correct message for the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

*Little Wars* used lead soldiers and spring loaded guns to simulate warfare, casualties being determined by how many soldiers are knocked over by the rounds. Modern wargaming turned to the more useful and safer option of using dice to determine combat results. Wargaming

with miniatures is still a huge popular hobby and certainly has the most visual impact, however for space and convenience wargames played with card counters representing the units are also extensively used and are probably the most common type of wargame played. There is the added benefit that large armies do not have to be made up and painted before battle can commence. Wargames now cover almost every conceivable period from Prehistory to the latest Gulf War.

It was a natural progression to go from recreating historical battles to fictional ones. Some of the earliest examples I can remember are games based on *Lord of the Rings* and *Valley of the Four Winds*, both in the late 70s. The latter was based on a story serialised in *White Dwarf* and was originally a miniatures game with figures from Minifigs. It was also one of the first four games produced by Games Workshop. There was also a long running strategy game based in the world of Conan which was serialised as battle reports in *Military Modelling*.

In the science fiction arena one of the oldest and best games is *Star Fleet Battles*, originally appearing in the early 80s as a game which allowed the players to fight battles between rival *Star Trek* Universe races. The game, which is still in production, has grown through numerous editions to perhaps one of the most complex, comprehensive and detailed games ever produced. Possibly only the classic *Advanced Squad Leader* rivals its pre-eminence. A word of warning about *Star Fleet Battles*, for various copyright and other reasons the background, while firmly rooted in the *Star Trek* milieu has undergone parallel evolution and has many differences from the current version seen on film and TV.

cont. page 19

# EVER WANTED ...

... to beat the Daleks?

... to send an army  
thundering through the  
Gap of Rohan?

... to defend the skies  
of Victorian England?

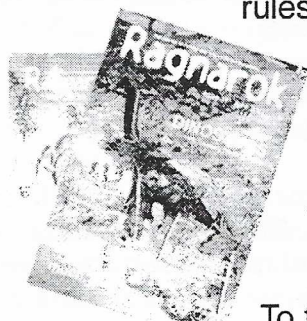
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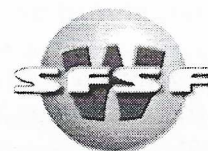
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# Richard III Project

by Alice Lawson

People in costumes shouting at the cast and joining in with the play. Sound familiar? Been there, done that?

Oh yes I hear you say. *The Rocky Horror Show* ...

Well you would be wrong. I am talking about Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Yes, I said *Richard III*.

Anyone who has read Jasper Fforde's *The Eyre Affair* will know immediately what we are going to do. For those who don't, well I suggest you could do worse than read the book. I will not spoil the plot. I will only tell you the bit that started off this project.

*The Eyre Affair* takes place in Swindon in an alternate universe. In this Swindon *Richard III* has been performed every Friday night in The Ritz theatre for 15 years. The audience turn up and are given parts, so you have a different cast each week. There are all sorts of fun things like the Battle of Bosworth in the auditorium with all the audience involved.

Jasper Fforde has kindly given his consent to us using his idea and staging the show. I say given his consent, what I mean is he said, "Yes please, Can I be Richard"...

## "Can I play too?"

I hear you cry. Like any good project, we need volunteers.

We would like to put together a group of people to write (or should I say cut) the play into a manageable length. As good as it might be, I think three to four hours is enough fun for anyone.

This group would also work on the script for the audience. We have the opening lines:

Richard opened his mouth to speak and the whole audience erupted in unison:

"When is the winter of our discontent?"

"Now," replied Richard with a cruel smile, "*is the winter of our discontent ... made glorious summer by this son of York ...*"

On the word "summer" six hundred people placed sunglasses on and looked up at an imaginary sun.

(from *The Eyre Affair*, by Jasper Fforde)

In the Swindon play, the parts are given out on the night. Now this has taken 15 years to happen, in a world where everyone quotes Shakespeare the way we quote the parrot sketch. So for our play I think we need a cast and some rehearsal. John Dowd has already taken dibs on the part of The Viking. (A Norse, A Norse ... )

Who knows, if it takes off and other conventions carry it forward, 15 conventions down the line maybe it can be cast on the night ...

We will also need costumes, so it follows we will need people to make them. You know who you are!

So please volunteer for any area that suits you, but remember ...

Even as just a member of the audience, you have a part. There will be audience participation and remember: we have a battle to fight!

If you want to know more please get in touch with us. At Concourse (Eastercon 2004) there is an introductory workshop, there will be a space on the Paragon2 website dedicated to the Project, and we will arrange script workshops and rehearsal events during the next year.

# NOVACON 34

5-7 November 2004

The Quality Hotel,  
Bentley, Walsall

Guest of Honour  
**Ian Watson**



Author of *The Embedding*; *The Martian Inca* ; *The Jonah Kit*; *Mockymen*

"A phenomenon, a national resource to be conserved. Ian Watson resembles H.G. Wells in both invention and impatience." *Times Literary Supplement*.

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Registration: Steve Lawson,  
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e-mail: [xl5@zoom.co.uk](mailto:xl5@zoom.co.uk)

Web Site: [www.novacon.org](http://www.novacon.org)

# Booking Hotel Rooms

*by John Dowd and Alice Lawson*

## What's this hotel booking form thing?

With this PR we have sent you a Hotel Booking Form. It is your opportunity to book a room in the hotel and tell us about any special requirements that need to be arranged with them. You must be a member to book a room. You can join at the same time as you book your hotel room. If this is your first Eastercon please read the following article - it may help you understand how to get the room you want. If you are an old hand, we may be doing things a little differently and there may still be useful information. Jaded pedantic old fans who know everything about conventions might like to read it to find misplaced semi-colons and split infinitives.

## The hotel

There are more than seven hundred beds in the hotel. These are spread amongst three hundred and fifty bedrooms. A small number of rooms are for single occupancy, most are twins or doubles, some are modified for disabled access and some can accommodate up to four adults plus children. The family rooms have a double bed and a comfortable double sofa bed.

## Why book early?

We will deal with bookings strictly in order of receipt. If it is essential for you to have a single room, you must book early. Numbers of single rooms will be very limited. If you book at or shortly after Easter 2004, you will almost certainly get what you want. Book after Christmas and single rooms will probably have been all allocated.

If you have special needs or need one of the disabled access rooms then early booking is strongly advised.

If you need a double or twin then early booking is not as urgent but we may fill the hotel. If we do, there are not many hotels nearby to act as overflow. None are within easy walking distance. We are making no overflow arrangements and prices at these hotels are likely to be substantially greater than those in the Hanover. Details of possible overflow hotels will be posted on the website and in future PRs.

Finally, early bookings help your committee. If we can show the hotel substantial early numbers, it helps in negotiations on such things as bar prices, beer quantities and cheap food. It also helps us arrange room allocations earlier spreading our work over a longer period as we lead into the convention.

## What kinds of room occupancy are there? (or How do I get a single/someone to share with?)

You can ask for one of several different types of room occupancy either as a single or sharing with someone else. You can find the person you wish to share with or you can ask us to find you a sharer. The options are;

### Single- I will not agree to share a room.

We will book you into a single room if available. If you book after all the available singles have been allocated we will not book you into the hotel but contact you to inform you of the situation. If this is your position, early booking is essential.

### Single- I will agree to share a room if no singles are available.

We will book you into a single room if available. If you book after all the available singles have been allocated we will treat you as a Twin- please find me a sharer.

**Twin- please find me a sharer.**

We will match you for gender and smoking with someone else who has asked to be found a sharer. You will be booked into a twin room. A completely unscientific survey suggests that people who have used this service at previous conventions have met people they would not have met otherwise and in some cases had sharers with such completely different activity patterns that they have hardly seen them.

**Double- sharing with.**

We will book you into a room with a double bed with the person you name on your booking form. The sharer you name must be a member and the booking will not be made until we have a booking form from both sharers. A single form from both sharers at the same address is acceptable but if you live at different addresses a form each please.

**Twin- sharing with.**

We will book you into a room with twin beds. Otherwise, it is the same as Double- sharing with.

**Family- triple/quad.**

We will book the three or four people named on the form into a room that has a double bed and a substantial double sofa bed. This room is charged on a per room basis. We will want only one form for each room. All names on the form should be members at the time of booking.

**When can I stay?**

The convention runs from Friday to Monday afternoon but you may book at the same rates for Thursday and Monday nights. Although the convention has closed there are often parties following the tear down on Monday and staying the extra night can be fun.

**What sort of special requirements can I ask to have met?**

You can ask for anything. We will try to meet any request but remember the sooner you ask the more time we have to

deal with it and the more reasonable your request the easier it is to get the hotel to help.

We anticipate some fairly standard requests and they are listed on the hotel form. These include:

- Room in no smoking part of hotel
- Room in quiet area
- Cot in room
- Vegetarian meals

There is also a space for you to list specific needs and requirements. Please continue on a separate piece of paper if the space is not sufficient.

**If you do not tell us what you need, you will not get it.** If you have a problem with the hotel, your room, or the staff, we will do our best to sort it out. If however you complain that you have four pillows when you like six and you have not told us, tough! It is also fair to say that only viable requests will be entertained. If you ask for a lilac coloured room or a round bed, Alice will refer you to our resident psychiatrist. (*Oooh, I want one - Ed.*)

**What do I do about children?**

Over 16 they count as people and need a room booked in the usual way. Under 16s in the parents' room stay free. Many rooms have a sofa bed that can be used. A truckle bed can be supplied at a cost of £10 per night. The children would be charged for breakfast. Under fives are free. Five to sixteen year olds will be charged £6.50 for each breakfast taken. The children need to be members of the convention.

**Deposits**

We need a deposit of £20 per person with the completed hotel forms. This amount will be applied to your bill by the hotel. Cheques should be made payable to Paragon2. There will be an online booking system with the opportunity to pay by Paypal available after Concourse (Easter 2004). No room will be booked without a deposit. The date of a booking will be the date both the hotel form and payment are received.

*cont. page 16*

## Paying for your room

You are wholly responsible for your hotel bill including any extras such as phone bills and drinks or meals charged. Your deposit will be credited against your bill. If you are sharing, you are responsible for your share of the bill. Room rates are

- £31 per **person** per night sharing
- £41 per **person** per night in a single room and
- £73 per **room** for up to 4 adults in a family room.

All these rates include full breakfast.

## What do we do with your booking form?

On receipt of your form, we will record the important details in our database (we already have your membership details), checking that you and any sharer you name are members. If you are a member, we will send a copy of the details we have about your booking to you. We prefer to do this by email and if we have an email address for you, we will use it. If you have named a sharer who is not yet a member, the message will include this fact. When your sharer joins, naming you, we will confirm this fact by email.

Necessary information about your booking will be passed to the hotel. The hotel will have none of your membership details and limited information about your booking until shortly before the convention. Any queries you may have should be sent to the convention contact address below.

## How should you fill in your form?

Legibly. If you have handwriting that is difficult to read consider completing the form in block printing or possibly using the online form and paying the deposit by Paypal.

## Who should you contact with queries?

Do not contact the hotel directly. They will not have your details. All membership and hotel booking matters should be sent to:

John Dowd  
4 Burnside Avenue  
SHEFFIELD S8 9FR

Tel 0114 2810674

Email [members@paragon2.org.uk](mailto:members@paragon2.org.uk)

The fastest response is likely to be email. It is usually checked daily.

## My Booking Details

For your own record, you can make a note here of your booking information:

Date sent:

Room type:

- ☐ single(must have)
- ☐ single (accept share)
- ☐ twin(please find sharer)
- ☐ twin
- ☐ double
- ☐ family

Date confirmed:

Sharer:

Preferences:

- ☐ quiet
- ☐ non smoking
- ☐ cot
- ☐ vegetarian

Nights booked:

- ☐ Thursday
- ☐ Friday
- ☐ Saturday
- ☐ Sunday
- ☐ Monday

## Paragon2 Membership List as of March 2004

(A = Attending, S = Supporting (receives publications etc. but is not entitled to attend the convention), J = Junior, C = Child, I = Infant)

|                       |     |   |                          |     |   |
|-----------------------|-----|---|--------------------------|-----|---|
| 1/2r                  | 65  | A | Matthew Cooper           | 64  | C |
| A3                    | 171 | A | Steve Cooper             | 12  | A |
| Michael Abbott        | 46  | A | William Cooper           | 70  | J |
| Dawn Abigail          | 144 | A | Cardinal Cox             | 164 | A |
| Brian Ameringen       | 81  | A | Tony Cullen              | 223 | A |
| Meriol Ameringen      | 82  | I | John Dallman             | 128 | A |
| Chris Amies           | 204 | A | Julia Daly               | 3   | A |
| Diane Anderson        | 55  | A | Martyn Dawe              | 14  | A |
| John Anderson         | 56  | A | Jim de Liscard           | 135 | A |
| Andrew Armstrong      | 92  | A | Giulia DeCesare          | 137 | A |
| Helen Armstrong       | 93  | A | Vincent Docherty         | 97  | A |
| AuntieChrist          | 134 | A | Chris Donaldson          | 34  | A |
| Margaret Austin       | 169 | A | Paul Dormer              | 58  | A |
| Barbara-Jane          | 159 | A | DougS                    | 21  | A |
| Meike Benzler         | 136 | A | Fran Dowd                | 1   | A |
| Michael Bernardi      | 24  | A | John Dowd                | 25  | A |
| Tony Berry            | 191 | A | Tara Dowling-Hussey      | 183 | A |
| Blind Pew             | 73  | S | Dr Bob                   | 166 | A |
| Jaap Boekestein       | 38  | A | Dr Tones                 | 104 | A |
| Hans-Ulrich Boettcher | 112 | A | David Drysdale           | 72  | A |
| Sandra Bond           | 111 | A | Roger Earnshaw           | 22  | A |
| Jill Bradley          | 117 | A | Martin Easterbrook       | 170 | A |
| Phil Bradley          | 116 | A | Eddie Cochrane           | 148 | A |
| Simon Bradshaw        | 175 | A | Sue Edwards              | 132 | A |
| John Bray             | 182 | A | Elaine                   | 187 | A |
| Claire Brialey        | 39  | A | Herman Ellingsen         | 74  | A |
| E.D. Buckley          | 208 | A | Udo Emmerich             | 45  | A |
| Bug                   | 174 | A | Iain Emsley              | 213 | A |
| Bill Burns            | 36  | A | Mike Figg                | 149 | A |
| Mary Burns            | 37  | A | Brian Flatt              | 68  | A |
| Cal                   | 131 | A | Susan Francis            | 194 | A |
| K.I.M. Campbell       | 50  | A | Anders Frihagen          | 91  | A |
| Diane Capewell        | 172 | A | Gwen Funnell             | 20  | A |
| Stuart Capewell       | 173 | A | Nigel Furlong            | 4   | A |
| Cat Coast             | 94  | A | Sabine Furlong           | 5   | A |
| Chris                 | 219 | A | Gav                      | 130 | A |
| Chris                 | 52  | A | Carolina Gómez Lagerlöf  | 43  | A |
| Ethan Coates          | 189 | I | Niall Gordon             | 118 | A |
| Joel Coates           | 188 | I | Steve Grover             | 199 | A |
| Steve Cockayne        | 220 | A | Urban Gunnarsson         | 80  | A |
| Paul F Cockburn       | 165 | A | Dave Hardy               | 206 | A |
| Peter Cohen           | 142 | A | Colin Harris             | 140 | A |
| Colette               | 30  | A | Julian Headlong          | 42  | A |
| Baby Cooper           | 66  | I | Rick Hewett              | 158 | A |
| David T. Cooper       | 62  | A | David Hicks              | 95  | A |
| Jane Cooper           | 63  | A | Marcia Kelly Illingworth | 120 | A |

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|                       |     |   |                     |     |   |
|-----------------------|-----|---|---------------------|-----|---|
| Tim Illingworth       | 119 | A | Mark Plummer        | 40  | A |
| James                 | 2   | S | Silas Potts         | 77  | A |
| Rhodri James          | 44  | A | Thomas Recktenwald  | 32  | A |
| Wilf James            | 41  | A | Peter Redfarn       | 195 | A |
| Janet                 | 150 | A | Trevor Reynolds     | 88  | A |
| Jenny                 | 51  | A | John Richards       | 9   | A |
| Jess                  | 147 | A | Roger Robinson      | 69  | A |
| Sue Jones             | 79  | A | Rod O'Hanlon        | 26  | A |
| Dick Jude             | 212 | A | Roger P             | 126 | A |
| KAT W                 | 203 | A | Mic Rogers          | 10  | A |
| Kate                  | 103 | A | Tony Rogers         | 184 | A |
| Peter Kievits         | 99  | A | Steve Rogerson      | 48  | A |
| Steve Kilbane         | 202 | A | Stephen Rothman     | 198 | A |
| Tim Kirk              | 49  | A | David Row           | 114 | A |
| Kris                  | 210 | A | Marcus Rowland      | 71  | A |
| Dave Lally            | 6   | A | Yvonne Rowse        | 193 | A |
| Dave Langford         | 167 | A | Alison Scott        | 192 | A |
| Alice Lawson          | 7   | A | Ina Shorrocks       | 168 | A |
| Steve Lawson          | 8   | A | Mark Sinclair       | 186 | A |
| Erhard Leder          | 78  | A | Sally Sinclair      | 185 | A |
| Ruth Leibig           | 122 | A | Mark Slater         | 190 | A |
| Oscar Logger          | 160 | A | Dan Smithers        | 75  | A |
| Lor                   | 152 | S | Lucy Smithers       | 163 | A |
| Lostcarpark           | 151 | S | Nathaniel Smithers  | 76  | I |
| Peter Mabey           | 153 | A | Smurf               | 133 | A |
| Mali                  | 85  | A | Adrian Snowdon      | 129 | A |
| Keith Marsland        | 197 | A | Michael Spiller     | 96  | A |
| Martin                | 161 | A | Square Bear         | 27  | A |
| Rory McLean           | 157 | A | Jesper Stage        | 200 | A |
| Pat McMurray          | 29  | A | Stef                | 28  | S |
| Cheryl Morgan         | 100 | A | Andrew Stephenson   | 90  | A |
| Chris Morgan          | 154 | A | Susan Stepney       | 109 | A |
| Pauline Morgan        | 155 | A | Steve               | 18  | A |
| Tim Morley            | 11  | A | Steve Davies        | 138 | A |
| Carol Morton          | 180 | A | Ian Stockdale       | 121 | A |
| Tony Morton           | 181 | A | Lars Strandberg     | 54  | A |
| Caroline Mullan       | 83  | A | Marcus Streets      | 123 | A |
| Murphy's Lawyer       | 176 | A | Mathilda Streets    | 125 | C |
| Paul Neads            | 222 | A | Rae Streets         | 124 | A |
| New Moon              | 115 | A | Charlotte Taylor    | 107 | C |
| Nojay                 | 98  | A | Ian Taylor          | 105 | A |
| Nolly                 | 156 | A | Kathy Taylor        | 106 | A |
| Paul Oldroyd          | 33  | A | The Bellinghman     | 31  | A |
| Omega                 | 179 | A | The Magician        | 23  | A |
| Ken O'Neill           | 201 | A | David Thomas        | 145 | A |
| OwlMoon               | 141 | A | Tibs                | 139 | A |
| Arwel Parry           | 57  | A | TJ                  | 127 | A |
| Brian Parsons         | 61  | A | Dave Tompkins       | 35  | A |
| Pat Reynolds          | 89  | A | Paul Treadaway      | 113 | A |
| Andrew Patton         | 205 | A | Chris Tregenza      | 146 | A |
| Hal Payne             | 178 | C | Valerie             | 207 | A |
| Jodie Payne           | 177 | I | Larry van der Putte | 53  | A |
| Catherine Pickersgill | 60  | A | Jan van 't Ent      | 84  | A |
| Gregory Pickersgill   | 59  | A | David Wake          | 143 | A |
| Marion Pitman         | 221 | A | Nick Walker         | 13  | A |

|                |     |   |
|----------------|-----|---|
| Mark W. Waller | 15  | A |
| Danie Ware     | 214 | A |
| Peter Wareham  | 19  | A |
| Ian Watson     | 196 | A |
| Jessica Watson | 211 | A |
| Alan Webb      | 87  | A |
| Gerry Webb     | 86  | A |
| Karen Westhead | 218 | A |
| Kathy Westhead | 216 | A |
| Mike Westhead  | 215 | A |
| Peter Westhead | 217 | A |
| Eileen Weston  | 102 | A |
| Peter Weston   | 101 | A |
| Laura Wheatly  | 108 | A |
| Charles Whyte  | 110 | A |
| Anne Wilson    | 47  | A |
| Woad Warrior   | 162 | A |
| Alan Woodford  | 17  | A |
| Anne Woodford  | 16  | A |
| Ben Yalow      | 67  | A |

### ***What's a ... Badge Name?***

When you join a convention, you may be offered the option of having a *Badge Name*. Your given name will not be shown on your membership badge at the convention, but will be replaced with a name of your own devising.

Some fans become so well known by their badge names that their given names are only known to holders of membership databases.

It is a matter of courtesy that a badge name becomes your public name as far as the convention is concerned. It will be used in any publication of the membership list and in any mention of you in the programme.

If your real name is shown here and you would prefer a badge name, please let John Dowd know.

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## **Wargaming Strand**

*continued from page 10*

A rather less successful game that appeared in the wake of *Star Wars* was *Freedom in the Galaxy*, an attempt to create a strategy game of rebels against the evil empire. Unfortunately it didn't really work as a game.

The development of the role-playing game, itself a spin off from skirmish (small unit) wargaming greatly increased the interest in SF and Fantasy settings and companies began to produce a huge range of games. Everyone was jumping on what looked to be a popular and therefore lucrative bandwagon. A leader in the field was Steve Jackson Games. As well as creating one of the most popular role-playing systems, *GURPS (Generic Universal Role Playing System)*, he produced classics like *OGRE*, the game of supertank combat, and the immensely popular *Car Wars*.

One of the leaders in the field of miniature wargaming is Games Workshop with their *Warhammer (Fantasy)*,

*Warhammer 40K (Science Fiction)* and *Lord of the Rings* lines of rules, miniatures and accessories. However they are not the only player in the sandbox, there are many other manufacturers producing genera games. Ground Zero Games produces miniatures and rule books for several SF games including *StarGrunt*, *Full Thrust* and *Pig Tickler*, the latter for an alternative Victorian setting.

Others have produced games of giant robot combat (*Battletech*), alternative 1920s flying adventures (*Crimson Skies*), rampaging monsters (*The Creature that Ate Sheboygan*, *Bug Hunter*), classic SF (*Starship Troopers*), classic Fantasy (*John Carter Warlord of Mars* - regrettably the Plan 9 from Outer Space of games).

Basically if anyone has been able to imagine it there's a pretty good chance someone has produced a game of it. Drop along to the games at the convention and see for yourself.

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