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The Annual Convention of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group



fingers

Iain Banks

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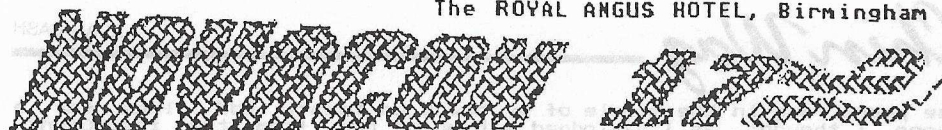


THE FIRST VOLUME
IN HER LANDMARK
TRILOGY

Macdonald

(BPCO Publishing)

The ROYAL ANGUS HOTEL, Birmingham



The Annual Convention of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group

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Chin Wag

ALAN CASH

The phone rang in the middle of my beans on toast. Odd place for a phone, I thought, as I dislodged a bean or two from the instrument. "This is Bernie Evans ", came a muffled voice. Can I be of assistance ?" (I'm always polite to people I've scarcely heard of). "You're the very last in a long line of people I've tried to persuade to edit the programme book for Novacon", the instrument reproduced tinnily. I swelled visibly with pride, (or was it the beans?)

Thus began months of slaving over a hot tripewriter with one finger, begging and beseeching luminaries to stir the grey matter into producing something. Most of them obliged, after a lot of prodding.... I shall treasure Mr Langford's postcard, written in red ink, "Alright, you swine, alright!".

So, here it is. The lay-out isn't mine. My newborn articles were snatched from my feeble grasp and have been professionally "done".

The first one to complete my crossword gets a free drink, if you can find me, somewhere around the Convention.

TEN~GRAND

NEVER MIND THE HARD SELL • READ THE MAGAZINE

ISSUE TWO INTERVIEWS TERRY PRATCHETT AND WILLIAM GIBSON.
INCLUDES USUALS: AL'S CAFE, SHORT FICTION "SANCTION CITY". OPINION.
MIDNIGHT ANGEL.

"IF I'D LIVED ALL MY LIFE IN TIMES SQUARE I WOULD'VE WOUND UP WRITING ABOUT UNICORNS"
- WILLIAM GIBSON

"AREN'T AMERICANS BIG ?"
- TERRY PRATCHETT • ON CONSPIRACY 87

40~P. ~ **NOVACON 17**

I haven't finished my Cornflakes

BERNIE EVANS

Bernie Evans - Chairman

Right, that's it, all the P.R.s have gone, the programme book has been typed (how in hell did I get talked into doing that?), the badges are made, the envelopes all ready for the programme book, the programme sorted out and confirmed, the films hired, all the loose ends tied up (I hope). I've finished, all I have to do is relax and enjoy the con, in between sorting out crises and helping to man the desk. What isn't done now isn't done, it's point of no return time, I'VE FINISHED!!!!

Er...Bernie....have you written a "Chairman's Bit" for the programme book?...

No, I don't want to, I can't write, and any way I HAVEN'T FINISHED MY CORNFLAKES!!!!

...but...every chairman has to write a "Chairman's Bit"...it's traditional, its expected...

..But I can't write.....

...course you can...it's easy...
...you get a piece of paper and a typewriter and.....

....AAAARGH!!!!....., tell you what, I'll do the committee bit instead.....

..Oh...haven't you done that yet.
....I thought.....

O.K., I know when I'm beat.

I gave each full committee member a short questionnaire in the hope they'd write it for me, some hopes!! Here then are the names of the guilty:-

Age "over 21"

BSFG member since 1980

First became interested in SF as a small child, my dad used to bring American comics home for me, from which I graduated to books in the mid 50s. My main interest is collecting paperbacks from this period up to the late 60s.

Previously chaired "Fifteencon" Joined this committee on a wave of euphoria after Fifteencon. Interests outside SF include rock music, knitting, my grandchildren

Dave Hardy - BSFG Chairman and Artshow

Age "over 21 and a bit"

BSFG member since 1973

Has been on the committee on & off since 1975, spent three consecutive years as chairman out of a total of four.

First became interested in SF at age 13/14, reading pulps, H G Wells etc etc. Dave attended his first convention in 1957.

Was on Novacon 12 committee doing films & artshow, and has since helped out with far too many to mention.

Joined this concomm because "I had very little choice!"

Has interests outside SF but hasn't spilt the beans!!

Graham Poole - Treasurer

Age 30 "give or take 7 years"

BSFG member for 5 years.

First became interested in SF in the 6th form, in study periods!!

Previous posts as treasurer and registrations on Novacons 15 & 16 Joined this concomm because "Bernie nabbed and propositioned me!"

Graham is another who won't spill the beans under "any other info"

Mick Evans - Memberships,
Hotel Bookings

Age 37 (first straight answer)
BSFG member since 1981
Became interested in SF in mid 70s after reading Bradbury's "I Sing the Body Electric", which he read because he enjoyed Weather Report's album of the same name. No previous con committee post. Joined this concon because he "knows the chairman quite well and thought it was a good idea at the time".
Interests outside SF include Jazz, rock music, most other music, and watching West Bromwich Albion lose "with excruciating regularity".

Stephen Rogers - Programme/Films

Age 17-the other straight answer
BSFG member since Jan 86
First became interested in SF via Dr Who, graduating to Harry Harrison & Anne McCaffrey.
This is Stephen's first committee post.
He joined this concon when I "Asked" him to as he wanted to become more involved.
Another "no comment" to the "any other info" bit!!!

Geoff Williams - Programme/Films

Age "Over 21"
BSFG member since March 85.
Geoff started reading "juvenile" SF very early on, and has never stopped reading SF and Fantasy since. Has watched Dr Who since the very first episode, which is probably what sparked his interest.
This is also Geoff's first time as a committee member
He joined this concon because "I had little hesitation in agreeing when Bernie asked me, given the success of Fifteencon, which she also chaired" (No apology for quoting that in full--and thanks very much for the vote of confidence).

Under "any other info" Geoff has written "BSFG Secretary 1987", I

am beginning to think they are not being coy, it's my question that's badly worded, (unless they have deliberately misunderstood!)

Well, that's the committee, and I'm very proud of them all. You will have noticed that out of the five names (not counting myself) three are on a concon for the very first time. They've all worked very hard and every-one has made a valuable contribution to the success of Novacon 17.

In addition to the above the following people have helped, or will be helping at the con itself

Pauline Morgan - Bookrooms
Alan Cash - Programme Book Editor
Carol Morton - Creche Organiser
Hugh Mascetti - Head Gopher
Nic Farey &) - projector &
Dave Liddle) - electrics etc.
Rog Peyton - advertising

I am also indebted to the following for help, advice, support and general good fellowship:- Dave Holmes of Andromeda, Chris Baker, Tim Illingworth, Ian Sorensen, Greg and Linda Pickersgill, Brian Ameringen, Caroline Mullan, Maureen Porter, Roger Robinson, and any-one else who I may have forgotten in the rush of typing this, please don't be offended, I appreciate everyone who has helped in any way at all.

If you are reading this at the con "HAVE A GOOD TIME" If you are reading it at home after the con "HOPE YOU HAD A GOOD TIME"

Regards to all of you....Bernie.

Handy Hints

Don't throw away your old cornflakes packets. Tear them into thin strips, about one inch wide, and they make great bookmarks.

We Had To Buy This Book

(Quote from Macmillan submission department)

2nd September 1983

Dear Toby,

I am enclosing the proofs of a very special novel which we are publishing next February, THE WASP FACTORY by Iain Banks. We are all immensely excited by the book, which is a first novel that came in to us as an unsolicited manuscript....'

My first introduction to the most remarkable first novel, the most remarkable literary debut, that I have come across (so far - there's always hope!). That night I read it on the train on the way home. And in the morning I read it on the train on the way back to the office. Then I besieged my managing director: we had to buy this book. Who was Iain Banks? why hadn't we heard of him? WE HAD TO BUY THIS BOOK.

And so we bought it, at auction, against opposition which perhaps wasn't as wholly committed as we (there were rumours of editors refusing to make an offer, on grounds of taste, of editors refusing permission to make an offer, on the grounds of taste). Well, more fool them (and I notice that the sharks are now circling, circling, taste or no taste) because THE WASP FACTORY launched a future Booker Prize winner, a Science Fiction Personality, a general all-round Good Guy - and was a nice little earner on its own account.

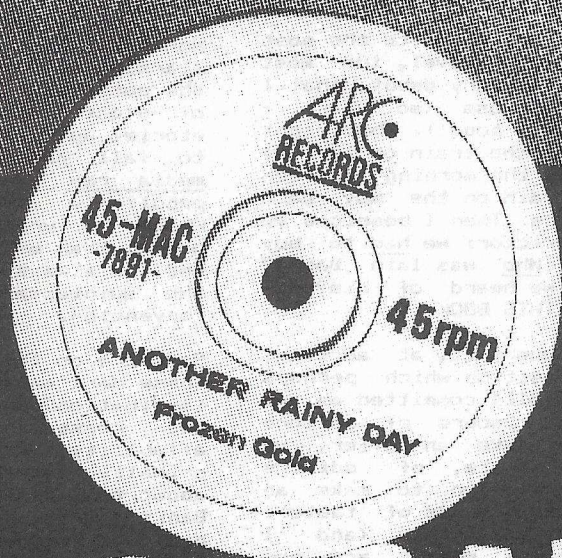
Above all, perhaps, in the world of the flaccid the active man is king. Iain has an active mind, a consciousness that takes very little for granted. Most of us live by rule of thumb. Iain does not. And so his work is a salutary intellectual shock as his genial personality is a social pleasure.

More I dare not say, lest I incriminate myself - and, incidentally, Iain!

I admit I was intrigued to meet Iain Banks, he of the bizarre imagination, he of the bleak anarchic world view, he the man who looked with equanimity on murder and infanticide, he whose dark fantasies called up dismaying resonances in the most firmly rooted and conventional psyches. On acquaintance, somewhat to my discombobulation, what I found was a disarmingly normal, if inordinately intelligent, human being. No fangs. No ichor. No slaverling. An endearing if alarming tendency to climb round the outside of hotels at the dead of night (preferably several stories up), an amazing capacity to fall peacefully asleep in media res, a weakness for peculiarly awful puns. On the whole, he turned out to be more normal than me - and remains so. And I'd always considered myself the quintessence of suburban convention.

So where do they come from, then, these dark satanic mills of the imagination? And why, despite all the reassurance of apparent affability, do they remain so primally disturbing? What is it about the (perfectly normal) Iain Banks' writing which has this profound trigger effect on the sensibilities of the reader? Partly, I've come to believe, it is because although he seems on the surface (and is in fact) one of us, at bottom his mind is on a disturbing, but not at all obvious, skew. Even CONSIDER PHLEBAS, apparently a totally conventional space opera, though with more panache and general joie de vivre than anything since the early Cordwainer Smith, contains within it currents and nuances that insist that it can be, should be, read on more than one level. Shaw once said that a nice man was a man of nasty ideas. For many years I didn't understand that, but time brings, even to editors, enlightenment. Iain Banks is a very nice man, and he has ideas to match.

IAIN BANKS



ESPEDAIR STREET

A rollicking raunchy rock novel from the author of
The Wasp Factory

£10.95

M

A Fierce Hangover With BANWAL

JAMES HALE

Iain Banks likes children (I have a photo of him dandling a six-month-old baby on his knee) and animals. He is of a naturally sober disposition, with which he has struggled all his life. The intrinsic earnestness that characterised his formative years he has finally - and with some success - shrugged off. The perils of the possession of (some might say possession by) an outrageous imagination he has combated by developing a sturdy sense of humour. The shy, retiring lawyers' clerk who penned The Wasp Factory has emerged, blinking, into the bright sunlight of science fiction. And those who know him well think, on mature reflection, that he may well enjoy it.

No, seriously, from the moment I first read the rather tatty typescript of The Wasp Factory (with a fierce hangover on a Sunday morning) and thought that he might, just possibly, be a nightmare, Banksie has been a publisher's dream. I met him the next morning, curious to know what kind of a monster he was, and he turned out to be charming, affable and hungry to write. To top it all, he didn't want any water in his whisky. How could we go wrong?

When the book was in proof the newspapers picked him up. Then the magazines. Then TV. When Toby Roxburgh picked him up for Futura for quite a lot of money we were up and running. All we at Macmillan had to do was print the book in sufficient quantity. On the day of publication we had rave reviews. It hit the bestseller lists and stayed there eight weeks. We reprinted twice.

The film people picked him up. France picked him up. Them Holland, Finland, Sweden, Japan (backwards!) and Spain. Then America.

A month after publication of The Wasp Factory BANWAS (as he was known to our computer) jacked in his job, much against my advice, which he considered politely and intelligently rejected. With all the interviews he was giving, he explained, he didn't really have the time.

We all sobered up enough to publish Walking On Glass the next spring, to much the same effect, including an apology from The Times for their previous review and a renewal of the film option, and by the end of the year BANWAL had been interviewed by every single national paper in the country bar the Catholic Herald. And two separate rock groups had been given permission to call themselves The Wasp Factory.

In 1986 we published BANBRI'S stupendous The Bridge. This year The Times' reviewer quite rightly went overboard. If the book didn't win a major international award, he said, he'd ask for a transfer to children's books. Well, kiddies, you don't know what you're missing. The reviews were so good they were embarrassing. Embarrassing, that is, for people who didn't give him an award.

By now the press of people wanting to interview Iain - for newspaper, radio, TV, whatever - was so thick we had to start rationing them if our prolific author was going to finish Consider Phlebas on time. All the

The Real Iain (M) Banks

Iain Banks was born in Fife, Scotland, in 1954. His father was an Admiralty officer and his mother an ex-professional ice skater. He was an only child but both his parents came from large Scots families, and so he had numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

Educated at schools in North Queensferry, Gourrock and Greenock, and then at Stirling University, where he studied English Literature with Philosophy and Psychology. During vacations he took odd jobs as hospital porter, estate worker, pier porter (on the Clyde-side docks), roadworker, dustman and gardener.

in 1975 he travelled through Scandinavia, other parts of Europe, and Morocco, and then worked for a year as a testing technician for British Steel in Scotland.

In 1978 he visited the USA, and then returned to Scotland and worked with IBM for six months.

In 1979 he moved to London, with some other Scottish friends, where he worked as a legal costs draughtsman (justifying the fees of lawyers to clients) for a large firm of solicitors.

He had been writing science fiction novels for several years, and *THE WASP FACTORY*, published in 1984 by Macmillan, was his first non-SF novel.

Now he is a full-time writer and lives in a house in Kent, returning to Scotland for holidays. He likes inventing games, making up tunes, Vivaldi, driving, arguing, good food, films and drinking.

Bibliography:

Novels:

THE WASP FACTORY	1984
WALKING ON GLASS	1985
THE BRIDGE	1986
CONSIDER PHLEBAS	1987 - April
ESPEDAIR STREET	1987 - Sept

Short Stories:

A GIFT FROM THE CULTURE	Interzone Summer 1987
SCRATCH	The Fiction Magazine July/Aug 87
DESCENDANT	Tales From the Forbidden Planet October 3rd 1987

Handy Hints

Cornflakes packets make lovely hats, especially if they are emptied first. (Thanks for that tip 1/2R, you are obviously a man who takes his own advice).

Iain Banks~The Works

CHRIS MORGAN

This is the intellectual bit of the Programme Book, so if you're only interested in jokes or lists of attendees you'd best turn over the page now. Several pages, actually; I'm afraid this isn't going to be brief.

With four novels published in three and a half years Iain Banks has established a reputation as a brilliant new writer with a wide-ranging output. He has been noticed and approved of not only within the S.F./Horror/Fantasy genre but by many mainstream critics too. This article is an attempt to describe his books and account for their success.

(Okay, you pedants, I know it's really five novels, but at the time of writing no review copy of *Espedair Street* - published on 10th September 1987, has reached me, despite two phone calls to Macmillan. "It's not science fiction, you know," said their Press Officer. -- "Yes, but I'll review it anyway if you'll send me a copy." -- "His next one will be another science fiction novel." -- "Good. And I'd like a review copy of that, too, please." So at the moment I'm only analysing four. Right?)

There are three fundamental reasons why Banks's novels are different and noteworthy: he writes in a very attractive style; he fills his books with originality; he writes about such a fascinating load of loony characters.

When his first novel, *The Wasp Factory*, appeared in 1984 it aroused a considerable furore, with the critics about evenly split between hailing it as a masterpiece and condemning it for being unreadably sick. (The three pages of review quotations inside the cover of the Futura paperback make interesting reading!) The truth is that, while it does contain scenes of explicit nastiness, these are never gratuitous or over-dramatised, but are essential to the plot -- which is unfolded in a remarkably sure and accomplished fashion, providing compulsive reading.

It is a present-day story of abnormal psychology.

Sixteen-year-old Frank lives with his father on an otherwise deserted island linked to the Scottish mainland by a bridge. Physical deformity and an unconventional upbringing have left Frank obsessed with suffering and death. Narrating the book, he describes -- in casual, matter-of-fact terms -- the way in which he has killed children and small animals. Also he has constructed a complex and bizarre predictive machine, the Wasp Factory of the title. Although Frank indulges in magic and mysticism, keeping shrines decorated with the skulls of animals and birds, anointing his possessions with his bodily fluids, and performing ritual sacrifices, the horror is all non-supernatural.



"One of the most brilliant first novels I have come across"
Selina Hastings, Daily Telegraph

THE

WALKING ON GLASS

He lives a solitary life, playing sadistic games on his own. His only friend is Jamie, a dwarf, who lives in the nearby town. Frank has an elder brother, Eric, who has been certified insane for -- among other things -- setting fire to dogs. The main plot thrust of the novel is provided by the fact that Eric has escaped and is homeward bound, periodically phoning Frank as he comes. This is interspersed with the strange, twisted story of Frank's upbringing.

If that precis makes the novel seem just like an entertaining "nasty", that is doing it far less than justice. The greatness of The Wasp Factory lies in the stylish originality of the writing. With a maturity of approach that one finds all too rarely, Banks has made his characters vividly real. The style is clear, clever, often very witty, and with a depth of symbolism that the narrator only begins to comprehend but which the reader will enjoy. It was this linking of opposites -- high quality literature with graphic horror -- which got The Wasp Factory noticed and gave the critics problems.

In 1985 came Banks's second book, Walking on Glass. It is equally brilliantly written and equally bizarre, though far less of a horror tale than The Wasp Factory and, in the end, unsatisfying.

Walking on Glass has three parallel plot strands, scarcely connected, and only one of which is definable as fantasy. In this, two elderly people are made to play unending series of ludicrous board games (one-dimensional chess, spotless dominoes, blind bridge) and are kept prisoner in an enormous crumbling castle (a futuristic Gormenghast) full of impossibilities and paradoxes. Each time a game is successfully completed they are allowed to try and answer the riddle, "What happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object?" Only if they get the answer correct will they be allowed to resume their normal lives in their own (much younger) bodies. These sections are extraordinarily imaginative and occasionally nightmarish. The other two plot strands are set in present-day London, one concerned with the odd love affair between Graham (an art student) and Sara, and the other describing the peculiarly paranoid outlook of an ex-roadmender named Stephen. In fact, Stephen is the most fascinating character in a book full of unusual characters.

I found it an absorbing book and was only slightly disappointed by the slender links between the three parts.

The Bridge, a strange and powerful novel of dreams within dreams, first appeared in 1986. A present-day road accident victim, lying in a coma in hospital, constructs a Kafkaesque fantasy world set on and around a surreal version of the Forth Bridge, near Edinburgh.

The protagonist in the fantasy world is a man who has lost his memory. He has been given the name John Orr, and is undergoing dream analysis. The society in which he finds himself (and which seems alien to him) is a most peculiar one -- though not quite peculiar enough to be a dream. It exists on a vast bridge, stretching across water as far as one can see in either direction. Thousands of people live a highly bureaucratised life on each section of the bridge, but nobody seems to know what land, if any, lies at either end. John Orr can discover no information about the bridge or the land, despite the fact that steam trains travel regularly along the bridge; he hunts for a library and when he finds it, it has been destroyed. The people he meets seem to be unnaturally uncaring about this. He is living a very comfortable life as an outpatient, with a regular allowance and fine clothes. Then the bureaucracy, for no good reason, moves against him, and his persecution begins.

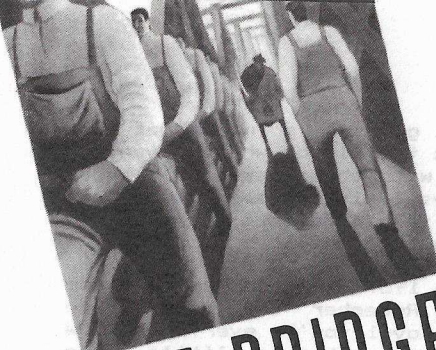
Interspersed we have Orr's dreams and some chunks of the early life of the accident victim, as a student in Edinburgh in the late 1960s. Gradually the way in which real life has been borrowed and twisted into the fantasy world becomes, if not totally clear, at least explicable. The bridge itself, like many other symbols in the book, has several meanings. Apart from recurring in the biographical sections, it is the structure on which most of the novel's action occurs, and it is a metaphor for the division between life and death.

By turns the novel is tragic, amusing, frightening. There are difficult sections written in a stream of consciousness style and in phonetic Scots dialect (ask Iain Banks and he will tell you,

with a gleeful grin, about the French translator who is even now faced with these passages); there are mystifying dreams; there are inexplicable events; there is also a poignant love story.

And in 1987 Banks turned to space opera. Remember the best space opera novel you've ever read. Now imagine something a little more original, surprising and gruesome -- that's Consider Phlebas (a title taken from what my proof copy humorously refers to as T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Lane'). Consider Phlebas is the only one of Banks's novels that can, without a doubt, be called SF. It also marks the introduction of the author's middle initial into his byline -- supposedly an attempt by Macmillan to distance Banks's SF. from his other novels, (because 'Macmillan don't publish SF.', you see).

Consider Phlebas is a novel of great and small. In what appears (Until one reads the appendices) to be the far future there's an interstellar war between the Idirans and the Culture. Both sides need to get hold of an artificial mind. A mind which is extraordinarily powerful, and which has gone to ground on or in the strange planet called Schar's World. Perhaps the only person capable of recovering the Mind is a man called Horza. He's human (though working for the alien Idirans) but has the ability to alter his physical appearance within certain limits. Horza has troubles of his own, though. at the beginning of the book he resembles an old man and is up to his eyes in shit (literally: surely only Iain Banks would dare to sentence his protagonist to drown in a rising tide of human excrement). Horza's fortunes fluctuate wildly throughout the novel, and he reveals himself to be strong, resilient and resourceful.



THE BRIDGE

'Hypnotically readable, a real dazzler'
DAILY MAIL

Although the characterisation is well considered, most characters seem remote, never learning from their experiences. Perhaps this is because they are people of a far different time and society -- and thus alien to us -- or perhaps it's they don't survive long enough. There is an extremely high character mortality rate with, in places, some very macabre deaths and injuries described in great detail. (The grossly fat prophet, Fwi-Song, is a cannibal who fits different sets of metal teeth into his mouth that are ideally shaped for biting or chewing particular bits of the human anatomy. He uses one set to strip the flesh from Horza's finger...) To counter-balance this the book is often very witty and has at least one character who can be described as wholly comic (though not human).

Most surprising (to me, at least) is the quantity and quality of Banks's technology. In Consider Phlebas he uses a variety of hi-tech settings and gadgets -- all believable -- and creates several masterly set piece scenes, full of power and tension, that rely very heavily on technology for their effectiveness. The best of these (shown on the dust-jacket) is the escape of the spaceship Clear Air Turbulence from dockyards inside an Orbital (which is a miniature Ringworld, a mere 14 million kilometres in circumference).

The shipboard scenes are very reminiscent of Samuel R. Delany's space opera (Babel-17 or Nova), while episodes in the crowded cities of the Orbital have the wry humour of Jack Vance's best work (the Alastor novels). The finale of Consider Phlebas is full of tension and beautifully set up, though rather long drawn out.

There you have it: four novels, (even though Walking on Glass reads more like three mainly unconnected novelettes) which are respectively graphic horror, fantasy and mainstream, surrealism and space opera. What do they have in common?

In terms of subject matter, setting and type of characters, not a lot. The only linking factors are the three I mentioned earlier -- style, originality and characterisation. They are all interconnected, but the greatest of these is originality. Banks's originality permeates his writing style, his plots, his settings and his characters. He seems to have so many good ideas (or clever retreads of old ideas) that whatever he writes has a freshness; it manages to surprise the reader. Both the style and the characters are entertaining throughout the four books, but they aren't the same style and characters: they change in response to the needs of the plots. The strong streak of graphic horror is present in The Wasp Factory and Consider Phlebas but not elsewhere. There are wonderful elements of fantasy in some parts of Walking on Glass and The Bridge.

Here are four distinct, unconnected novels from a young writer of rare talent. May his fount of ideas never run dry.

9th September 1987

Bridgewalk on the Phlebotis Factory by Iain X Banks

DAVE LANGFORD

Iain X Banks is widely rumoured to be the latest pseudonym of a stunning new (well, a bit fame-soiled now) author who has taken the British literary establishment by storm. I have my own guess as to who lurks behind this impenetrable new alias. I think it's Martin Amis.

This ambitious book transcends genre boundaries and fruitfully fuses the artsy-fartsy mainstream novel with creative borrowings from space opera, gothic horror, westerns, fighting fantasy gamebooks, model railway magazines and compact discs. In its multiple plot threads we encounter scores of tortured souls, driven and compelled by a burning, insatiable need for increased royalties. The trans-sane Sknab, for example, whose hilarious idiosyncracies involve introducing literary critics into complex mazes where random turnings lead them to nightmare fates: slow horrendous submersion in the foul wastes of pulped Badger books, or being auctioned off by Rog Peyton, a piece at a time.

What is the connection with the weirdly tormented Knabs, forced by mysterious Kafkaesque authorities to toil away on the alien artifact called a "typewriter" through substantial chunks of eternity? Only after completing yet another lengthy narrative is he allowed to ask once again the single question which might unravel the enigmatic jigsaw of his situation: "Whaur's my advance?"

Perhaps the answer to this timeless question lies with Skban, the traitor-hero of a galaxy-spanning SF plot to destroy the Royal Angus Hotel either by novalevel hyperdoubletalk or by diverting a nuclear-powered Inter-City train through the main bar just before the Guest of Honour speech. Or can the whole many-stranded fiction be another hallucination of the mysterious Bansk, who throughout the entire action lies in a drunken coma, beset by baffling images of nightmare journeys amid sealed minds across the hellish vistas of the lounge bar carpet....frenzied imaginings of an interstellar clash between two forever ideologically opposed schools of Banks criticism whose respective war cries are "Wow!" and "Yuck!"....fantastic visions of battling against impossible odds while babbling in a terrible Scots accent.

In a finale of mind-shattering originality, Bansk wakes at Novacon 17 and discovers all these hallucinations to be true.

All is linked and explained by the title, which the less perceptive reader will already have recognised as a quotation from Wittgenstein. After such corruscating pyrotechnics it will certainly be a long, long time before readers can forget the name of Annie M Bonks.

Sweet 16?

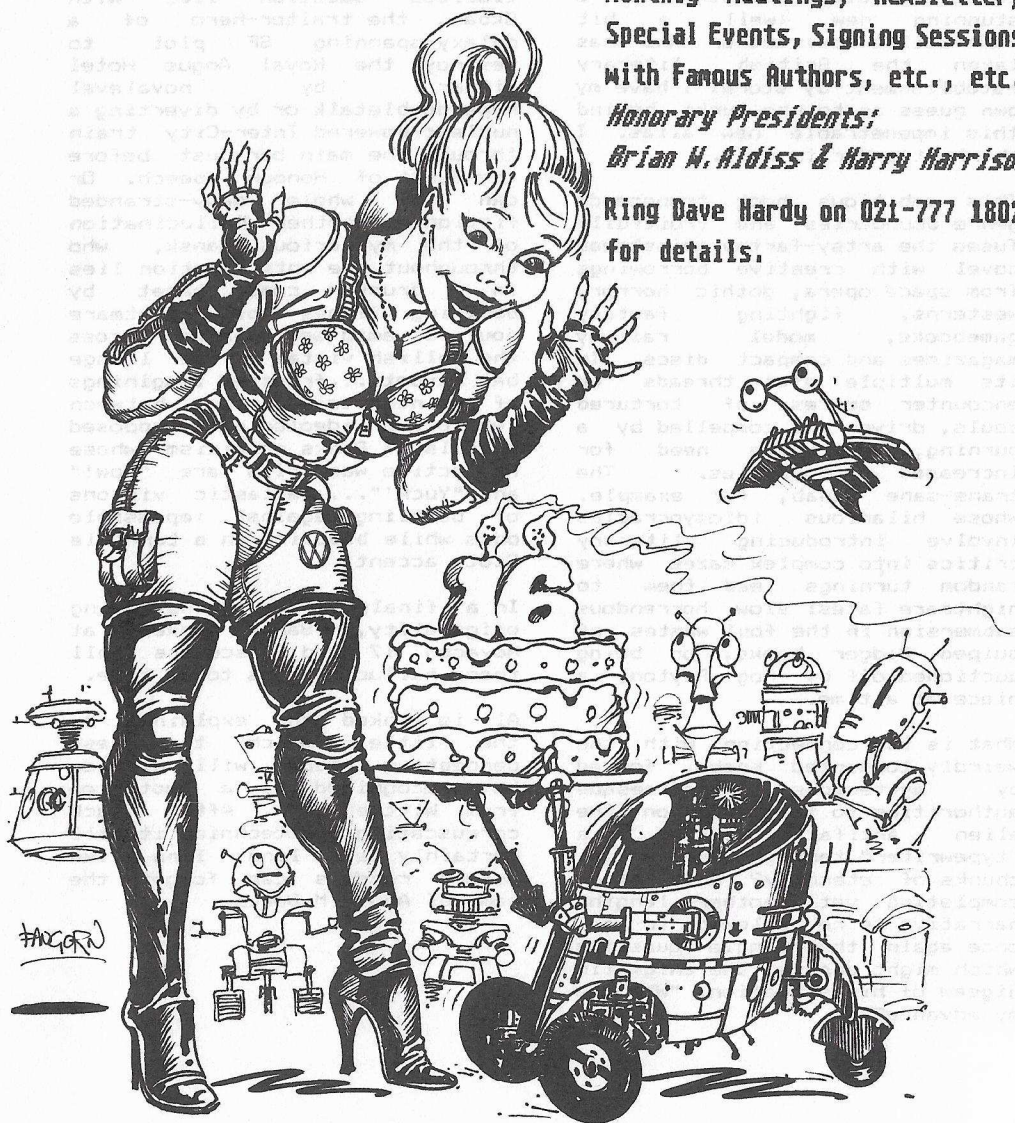
The Birmingham Science Fiction Group (which organises the **NOVACON** Convention annually) is 16 this year. Like most 16-year-olds, we have hidden depths... Why not come along and find out for yourself?

Monthly Meetings, Newsletter,
Special Events, Signing Sessions
with Famous Authors, etc., etc.

Honorary Presidents:

Brian W. Aldiss & Harry Harrison

Ring Dave Hardy on 021-777 1802
for details.



So long since I heard from Fandom that I thought one or other of us hadn't paid for his Telecom shares, or that I had been sent to Coventry after the performance of *Eli Still in Space* at the convention whose name I now forget, but which is run by Roger, Roger and Peter (mechanised Traffic Warden) Tyres, somewhere in the south of East Anglia. Doubtless when it's too late the name will come floating up through the debris of my memory.

So you want an article, do you? And you dare to disturb the sleeping Wizard to get one, dare you? and Oh, rash and intrepid mortal, you think that because I have the pleasure of having made your acquaintance in the past, and finding you a good and pleasant companion, that I shall not instantly *ingredientate* you in my seething cauldron, do you? You are, of course, absolutely correct. I shall try to write an article for you and include Birmingham. Alas, I am well past the age when a man can be witty, and I know nothing about contemporary Fandom save that it has forgotten me: but one out of three isn't bad for a geriatric schoolmaster with acute nostalgia and incipient senility. I hesitate to suggest it, but are not those who remember me now getting old, too? (Bronchial cackles!!!)

Very well, then: publish if you dare.

Article for *Novacon*

LIONEL FANTHORPE

(Ultimately to be interred in the Tomb of the Unknown Celebrity)

Blame Alan Cash -- I would not have contacted you otherwise!!

Alan told me in his editorial blurb that I had to mention Birmingham. Here then are the mandatory Birmingham: the one in England lies 108 miles NW of London by road and 112 by rail. In 1961 it had a population of 1,105,651 and is said to be England's largest provincial city. Beware of the dreaded 'said to be'. I was once said to be the world's most prolific SF and Fantasy author, but it brought precious little in the way of fame and fortune. However, we press on! The British Birmingham stands in the middle of an upland plateau, isolated (like Professor Challenger's *Lost World*) by the valleys of the Trent, the Avon and the Severn. There are also some lesser streams, the Tame, The Cole and the Rea, which drain rather inconsequentially into the Trent. Can we have the next slide please? Birmingham stands upon an undulating site (which, I suspect, undulates more than most

during tankard filling time at Novacon). It is 267 feet above sea level in the east and 736 feet above sea level in the west, excelling itself in the south where the Lickey Hills actually make it above the 1,000 foot line,. Wow!!

The other, and far more important, Birmingham, as far as our tale goes, is the one in Alabama which was founded on a cotton field in 1870 and had a population of 340,887 in 1960, or 634,864 if we include Jefferson County, Bessemer and Fairfield. Birmingham is a steel town, and there stands upon the summit of Red Mountain - as if any further proof was needed - what purports to be a huge iron statue of Vulcan, the Roman fire god. Or is it? Let the science fiction commence; let the tide of fantasy roll!!

I have it on no less reliable an

authority than one of the men who gave the Rennes-le-Chateau story to Henry Lincoln one night in the sewers of Vienna while playing the unfinished symphony on a zither, and from several inebriated authors of books about the Bermuda Triangle, Lemuria and Atlantis, that the so-called statue of Vulcan is an alien artifact. (Pause for effect while glasses are de-steamed or refilled).

The apparent iron of which the statue is said to be made is not iron at all, but some curious, non-terrestrial, organic-ferroid material....Before his last

submergence in the Viennese sewers our informant is said to have blurted out the unbelievable truth: what seemed to be a statue of Vulcan on Red Mountain, Birmingham, Alabama is really....

(Editorial note) unfortunately, at this point the manuscript is torn and burnt, as though it had been wrested from someone's grasp by a huge, glowing, iron hand. The Committee, or more specifically your editor, the genial and persuasive Alan Cash, will buy a pint of real ale for the best ending supplied before the end of Novacon.

'How Not to Hide a Dinosaur'

IAN WATSON

The first time I ever heard about Birmingham was when I was at school many long years ago, and the news hit the headlines that a dinosaur had been dug up there. A poem appeared in Punch or somewhere:

In Brum
Spake the drum
Of the Triceratops.....

Triceratops! The three-horned-face monster lizard! Herds used to graze Birmingham. And indeed there's still one there in effigy. Who, scrutinising the emblem in the Bull Ring, can believe that it is a mere modern male cow? Obviously it is a Triceratops - and that the heart of Brum should rightly be known as The Triceratops Ring.

Brum is not a mere product of the industrial revolution, a giant junior among cities. It has a more ancient, primeval, secret history going back to the Cretaceous Era. It has its own dinosaurian elder gods, like something out of Lovecraft.

Just as Trekkie fans campaigned to have a space shuttle christened Enterprise, so should the SF fans of Brum be campaigning to have the Bull Ring renamed the Triceratops Ring. Just as Glasgow has Cretin Fandom, so should Brum have Cretaceous Fandom.

Organise! Campaign! Wear horns! Munch Leaves! Make the sign of the three horns when you meet each other!

Handy Hints

Yes folks, the secret is out. Remember you read it here first!! The chickest cash boxes the top dealers recommend are.....EMPTY CORNFLAKES BOXES. Most use the standard size, but our spies tell us Rog Peyton uses the giant carton size, and Chris Morgan uses the Small Individual model.

Naughty Bits

FANGORN and FLAKE



Handy Hints

Save your old cornflakes packets. If you letter each box you can keep your book collection tidy and in alphabetical order. Some authors could have a whole box to themselves!

Ever tried to sort out all those odd bits of paper you've made those oh so important notes on? Now you need never be the only disorganised fan in your group!! Let us introduce you to the Ultimate Fannish Filofax. INDIVIDUAL SIZE CORNFLAKE PACKETS!!!

Send £15.49 only to.....

Handy Hints

Girls, no shoulder pads?, no money?. No worries, just cut the top corners off empty cornflake boxes and away you go.

Gentlemen, cheap Habitat carpet giving your elbows and knees a bad time? Quarter an empty cornflakes box, and you have four handy protectors, a set of two each for elbows and knees.

If you tie a long piece of string to an empty cornflakes packet they make ideal pets, clean and obedient, not as heavy to pull along as those pet rocks you all has a few years ago. The small individual size can double up as cats or Yorkshire Terriers, the standard size as Alsations etc., and the huge cartons can be sheep, goats, or even Dobermans.



Handy Hints

Did you buy that piece of string off Rog in the auction?? If you remembered to bring your empty cornflakes packet you have somewhere to keep it.

Forgotten your hipflask? Don't worry, Empty cornflakes packets make the ideal substitute, just fill them up with your favourite tipple and off you go. (Unless you are Dave Holmes we recommend the individual size). We suggest you consume the contents quickly, as they do tend to go soggy after a while.

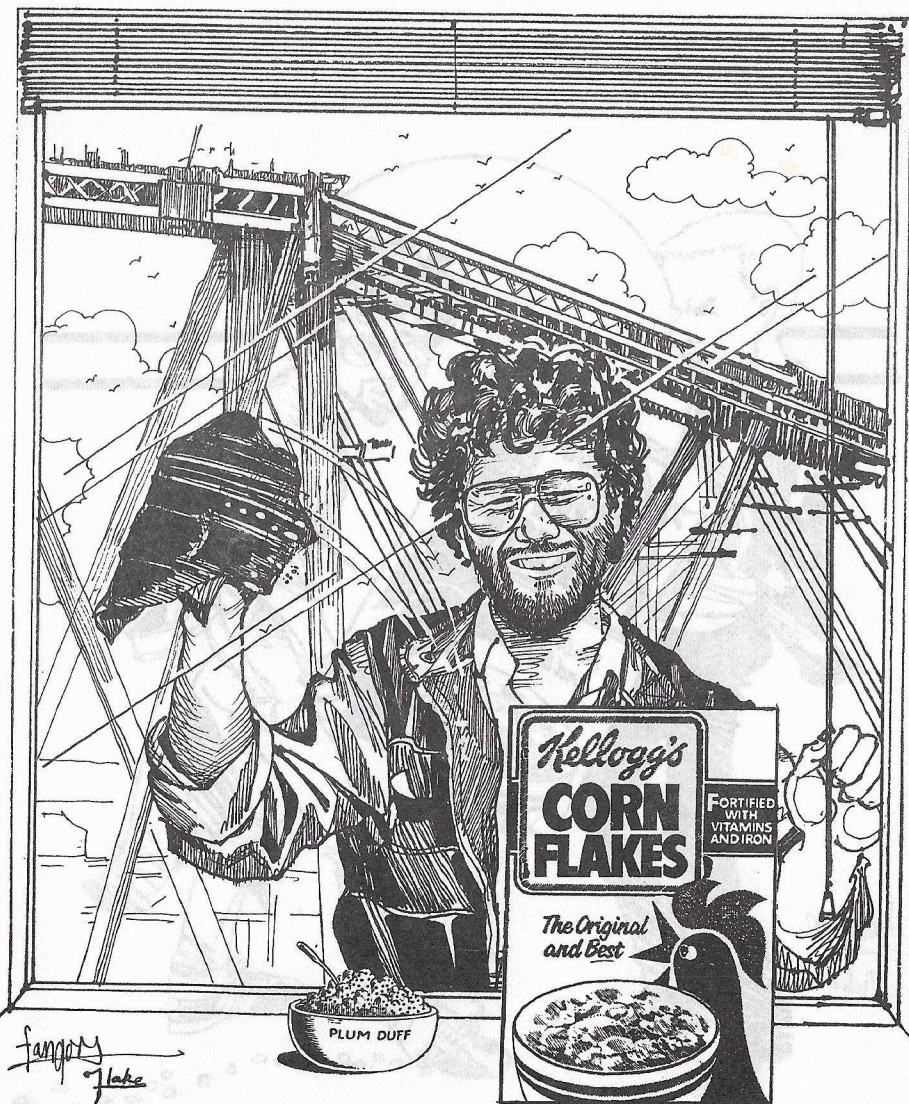


Jangorn
Flake

Handy Hints

Tastefully embroidered cornflakes boxes make fannish receptacles for your collection of convention badges.

After a long night's drinking at the con we suggest you go to the toilet before going to bed, this saves a lot of work for the chamber maid in the morning.



THE NOVA AWARDS

The NOVA is an award for fanzines produced by science fiction fandom in the British Isles. Created in 1973 by the late Gillon Field, and presented annually at the Birmingham Science Fiction Group's Novacon. The NOVA was, until 1981, given to the editor of the fanzine voted 'Best of the Year'. From 1973 to 1976 the NOVA winner was decided by a select panel of judges chosen for their knowledge of fandom.

But in 1977, whilst the Novacon committee persuaded the ultra select NOVA committee that a more democratic system would be more appropriate, an inebriated Stan Eling persuaded an even more inebriated Dave Langford to draw up a set of rules to govern the new democratic system. The result of all this was, in Kev Smith's words, "the three volume presentation set of NOVA award rules with the seven appendices". These rules provide for an Administrator (responsible for printing and distributing the ballot forms) and a committee (who are responsible for assessing the eligibility of votes cast and counting them).

The next major change to the NOVA came in 1981, again by request of the Novacon committee, when it was decided to extend the NOVA to include two additional categories - 'Best Fanwriter' and 'Best Fanartist'.

The most recent change to the NOVA Award rules came shortly after Novacon 16, when, after much discussion between the current NOVA administrator, NOVA committee and numerous interested fans, it was decided to amend the rules so that, for the first time, 'one-off' fanzines became eligible for the award. As the rules now stand, for a fanzine to qualify one or more issues must have appeared between the 1st of October 1986 and the 30th of September 1987. For fanwriters and fanartists to qualify a piece of writing or artwork by the person concerned must have been published for the first time between the 1st of October 1986 and the 1st of September 1987, in a fanzine. For the purposes of this award a fanzine shall be defined as an amateur publication which is concerned with science fiction, fantasy, science fiction and fantasy fans and/or related subjects, and copies of which may be obtained in exchange for other amateur publications or in response to letters of comment.

The fundamental idea of the NOVA as it's been run since 1977 is that it should be awarded by informed vote. Informed votes come from informed voters, defined as Novacon members, attending or supporting, who have been active in fanzines sometime in the year preceding the relevant Novacon. 'Active in fanzines' is a bit harder to define, but for the sake of clarity the NOVA committee decided, after Novacon 16, to alter the NOVA award rules. For the purposes of these awards 'to be active in fanzines' now means to have received six or more fanzines during the course of the relevant year. 'Fanzines' in this instance means DIFFERENT PUBLICATIONS, and NOT different issues of the same fanzine. The various official organs of a group or society shall not be treated as different fanzines for the purposes of this rule.

These criteria were not intended to be prohibitive, and even in these days of alleged falling fanzine productivity they allow a large proportion of Novacon members to vote. So, if you consider yourself to be a fanzine fan please USE YOUR VOTE!. By doing so you will help to make the awards truly representative of fanzine fandom.

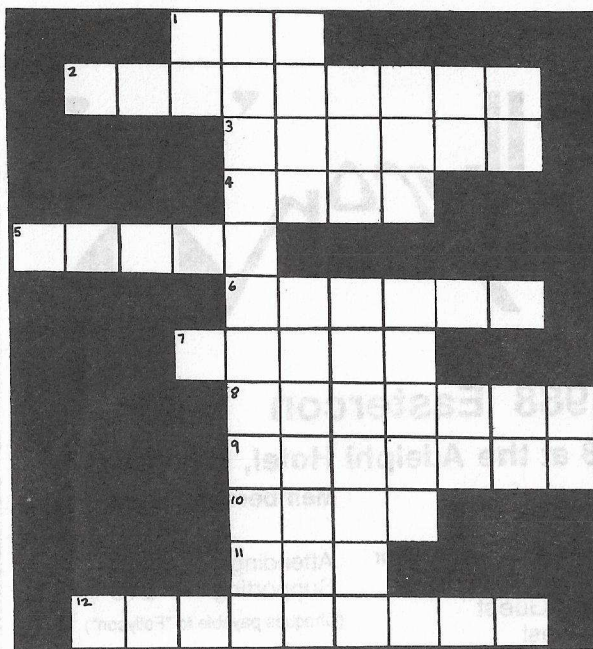
As for the NOVA award itself, every year has seen a different design. The first award was created by Gillon Field. Since then it has been designed and made by Birmingham's own Ray Bradbury.

Past winners have been:

<u>1973</u>	PETER WESTON	for	'Speculation'
<u>1974</u>	LISA CONESA	for	'Zimri'
	JOHN BROSANAN	for	'Big Scab'
<u>1975</u>	ROB JACKSON	for	'Maya'
<u>1976</u>	ROB JACKSON	for	'Maya'
<u>1977</u>	DAVE LANGFORD	for	'Twill-Ddu'
<u>1978</u>	ALAN DOREY	for	'Gross Encounters'
<u>1979</u>	SIMONE WALSH	for	'Seamonsters'
<u>1980</u>	DAVE BRIDGES	for	'One-off'
<u>1981</u>	Best Fanzine	-	'Tappen' by MALCOLM EDWARDS
	Best Fanwriter	-	CHRIS ATKINSON
	Best Fanartist	-	PETE LYON
<u>1982</u>	Best Fanzine	-	'Epsilon' by ROB HANSEN
	Best Fanwriter	-	CHRIS ATKINSON
	Best Fanartist	-	ROB HANSEN
<u>1983</u>	Best Fanzine	-	'A Cool Head' by DAVE BRIDGES
	Best Fanwriter	-	DAVE BRIDGES
	Best Fanartist	-	MARGARET WELBANK
<u>1984</u>	Best Fanzine	-	'Xyster' by DAVE WOOD
	Best Fanwriter	-	ANNE HAMILL WARREN
	Best Fanartist	-	D. WEST
<u>1985</u>	Best Fanzine	-	'Prevert' by JOHN JARROLD
	Best Fanwriter	-	ABI FROST
	Best Fanartist	-	ROS CALVERLEY
<u>1986</u>	Best Fanzine	-	'Pink Fluffy Bedsocks Publications'
		-	by OWEN WHITEOAK
	Best Fanwriter	-	OWEN WHITEOAK
	Best Fanartist	-	ARTHUR 'ATOM' THOMPSON

Any queries about the NOVA awards should be directed to the current NOVA Administrator: Martin Tudor, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley West Midlands, B66 4SH

SF WORD



ALAN CASH

When all the answers are entered a message will be spelt out

It may be possible to guess the message after some answers have been entered, but no Prize will be given until the grid has been completed.

All entries are " Across ".

1. Gallifreyan G.P.
2. Hour glass.....or any time you like.
3. Elizabethan dance (Keith Roberts)
4. Destroy, an early S.F. magazine.
5. Little H. Beam Piper.
6. Two brains are better than one ? (HYPHENATED)
7. What friends come in.
8. Plant creatures in " Trial of a Time Lord ".
9. Citadel in the " New Sun " novels.
10. At the centre of the Earth.
11. Name of alien who wrote a diary in " Meteor " (Wyndham)
12. What the population suffered from after the comet was over.



follycon '88

The 1988 Eastercon

April 1st - 4th 1988 at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool

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Gwyneth Jones
Len Wein
Greg Pickersgill
Fox

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British Guest Author
Comics Guest
Fan Guest
Artist Guest

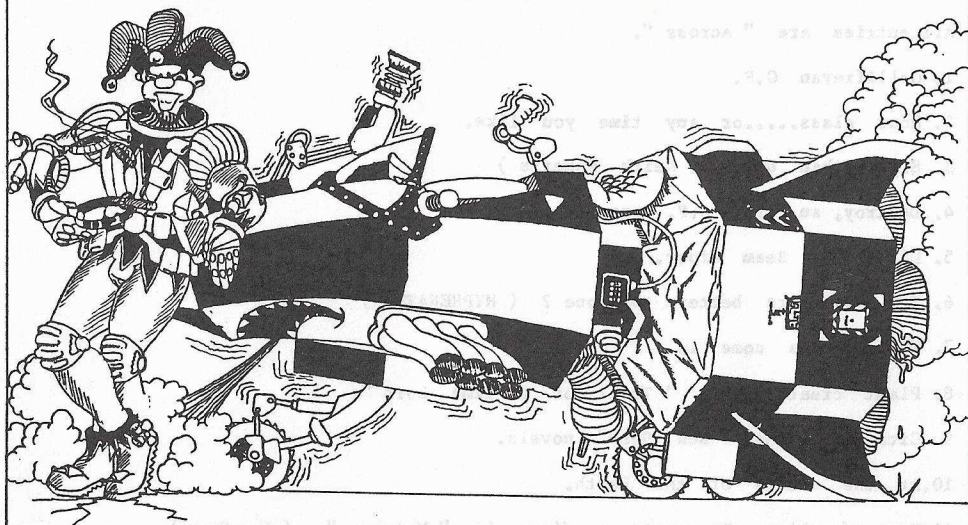
Membership rates

Attending £18
Supporting £12

(Cheques payable to "Follycon")

Address for all purposes

Follycon '88, 104, Pretoria Road, Patchway, BRISTOL, BS12 5PZ



Rise & Shine



From Man's earliest existence the seeds of grain have provided him with his most important source of food. Corn is a general term for all kinds of cereals yielding food-grain, but in the United States is applied specifically to Indian corn or maize, in England to wheat, and in Scotland and Ireland to oats. The word is Anglo-Saxon and occurs in similar form in other teutonic languages.

Corn has had an effect on Man since the Dawn of History and appears to have taken part in the rise of great statesmen and the fall of great nations. For example, where would ancient Egypt have been if Joseph hadn't talked his way out of prison and persuaded Pharaoh that there were millions to be made out of corn if only he had the right sales manager. Also, that great Roman entrepreneur, Julius Caesar, had his corns trodden on when the Senate accused him of turning the Romans into a bunch of second rate citizens by his introduction of the corn dole. It was in fact an extremely sophisticated way of reducing the Roman corn mountain. However corn as we know it today didn't actually happen until Christopher Columbus had discovered America on his way to a five day test in the West Indies. He took some Indian corn, or maize, back to Spain where it was called Turkey corn because no one would believe that he had discovered America and thought the corn had come from the Middle East. This is now referred to as the start of corn culture.

ANON

Corn is an extremely versatile plant and soon everybody was growing it but unfortunately at a Boston Tea Party certain Trade Agreements were made which gave the Americans the monopoly on the corn. This meant that the British Government had to lay down some pretty strict laws called Corn Laws which said no one on less than five grand a year, could have any. Soon however not even the rich could have it due to the fact that it didn't travel well and was usually mouldy by the time it got across the Atlantic anyway. So the Government repealed the Corn Laws and caused the American Revolution.

Then one day in Cambridge in 1890 a man called Henry Percy invented Shredded Wheat. He thought it was wonderful because now grain could be easily available for everyone and would be suitable for packaging when packaging was invented. Unfortunately he failed to see that this was not a viable business proposition because no one can eat three Shredded Wheat, even if they weren't soggy and mouldy.

Around the same time health foods became popular. As with most fads this started in America, as something to do now the war was over, at a place called Battlecreek in Michigan. John Harvey Kellogg was working at the Battlecreek sanatorium which was established by a group of Seventh Day Adventists. They prescribed a vegetarian diet as part of the treatment for their patients and it was in his capacity of dietician that he invented THE *CORNFLAKE. He was made for life. However it was not until 1906 that he persuaded his younger brother Will Kellogg that they had a good thing going and they incorporated the Battlecreek Toasted Cornflake Company.

In a few years many different brands of cornflake appeared on the market. Now the industry wanted to assure maximum protection and freshness of their products so they invented packaging and hence market research, advertising and phrases like "Crispy, tasty, wakey, wakey, wakey!". Today they are sold in moisture proof packages to preserve freshness.

The next problem the cornflake tycoons had to face was loss of interest in the product. People were bored with the common or garden cornflake and had started feeding them to their livestock, so serving suggestions were made, such as cornflakes and milk, cornflakes and banana, cornflakes and strawberries (when in season) and even cornflakes with whipped cream and chocolate sauce, but then one bright spark came up with FROSTIES, which revived the market. A rush of fortified and restored cornflakes then followed and nowadays things like the Honey Nut Cornflake have penetrated the supermarket shelves.

So the next time you struggle back to consciousness after spending long comatose periods, look again at the bowl of small brown flakes floating in cool creamy milk in front of you, and reflect on how the humble cornflake has affected the worlds Politics, History and Economy. Wh knows, you could be the inventor of the wheel.

* Certain speculations suggest that the Seventh Day Adventists were the predecessors of the Scientologists, and that L Ron Hubbard did in fact have cornflakes for breakfast on many occasions.

(c) V Cheyne.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

same he managed to give talks at Oxford, Cambridge, Stirling and Edinburgh Universities. And by the end of the year we'd start hearing rumours that The Wasp Factory (film option renewed again) was going to be on the Scottish O-Level syllabus. Still unconfirmed, these rumours.

In April this year we published Iain's space opera Consider Phlebas, with a special limited edition alongside. We've had to reprint twice, and there may be another one before Christmas. At Brighton, in a spectacular piece of nighttime exuberance, BANCON briefly became Spiderman but was later released by the police.

And in September came Espedair Street, a modest sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll number. That one we actually had to reprint before publication.

This year also Banksie wrecked his big Volvo on an unforgiving Kentish wall. As I write he is in court, giving yet another interview. It's possible there may be no more driving for a wee while.

Two days ago our prolific author delivered the final pages of a new science fiction novel, The Player of Games, which we'll publish next summer.

The next one's about a middle-aged Japanese lady cellist in Central America.

You never quite know what's going to happen next with Iain, which is one of the pleasures of publishing him. But he hasn't changed. Underneath he's still the same quiet, gentle Scotsman away from home. But next month, after his peaceful idyll in the South, he returns to live in Edinburgh, off Prince's Street. He may come out of his shell properly up there.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW? _____

Most fans enjoy pitting their knowledge of Science Fiction against that of others, although any comparison made can only be tentative at most because this competition usually takes the form of a quiz or panel in which participants have different questions to answer and may strike lucky or otherwise.

Of course, were the genre to become academically acclaimed there would be no problem in setting objective examinations in the subject and thence obtaining reasonable comparisons, but a lot of fun would be lost in the process and the wider ranging reader would lose out.

But NOVACON has the answer!

You have probably heard that the current GCE O Level and CSE examinations are being swept away to be replaced by the General Certificate of Secondary Education, or GCSE for short. Most students will sit this examination for the first time in 1988, but members of NOVACON are offered the chance to be the first in the country to obtain such a certificate and in a subject dear to all present - the General Certificate in Sciencefiction Education, or GCSE for short.

Elsewhere in this programme book you will find a set of thirtyfive questions, each with several (lettered) answers, only one of which is correct. Underline the correct one. A separate loose answer sheet has a corresponding set of numbers, each of which has lettered boxes matching the possible answers. Using pen or biro (not pencil) carefully fill in the square against each number that corresponds to the answer that you have selected as the correct one for that question.

When you have finished print your name and convention number where indicated and place the answer sheet only in the box provided before 5.00pm on Saturday afternoon - earlier if possible. Please do not fold the paper any more than it is when you receive it. You are asked to follow these instructions carefully as there may be three hundred odd papers to mark and the markers cannot waste time sorting out illegible or missing names or numbers, both of which are necessary to the system used.

The papers will be marked and graded and Pass Certificates plus answers will be available about lunch time on Sunday. If you cannot collect yours send a SASE to V Brown at the address below and it will be posted on to you.

Except for prizewinners noone will know how well (or otherwise) you have done unless you tell them. So PLEASE have a go - who knows - you might do better than you think. In addition there are prizes to be won - a name will be picked at random from each group attaining a particular grade and a (nondivisible) prize awarded to the winner in each group, (incidentally, this means that anyone tempted to collaborate will drastically reduce their chance of winning a prize). Total number of people passing in each grade will also be available on Sunday so you will be able to see how well you have done overall.

So now find a few spare minutes, a quiet spot and a pen, and Good Luck in your exam.

Vernon Brown, 106 Green Lanes, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5JH

GENERAL CERTIFICATE IN SCIENCEFICTION EDUCATION EXAMINATION PAPER NOVEMBER 1987

NOVACON EXAMINATION BOARD

Please read separate instructions before starting.

Abbreviations IWS - In which story (of any length)
AC - Acronym (or Initials) eg. UK=United Kingdom.
VB=Vernon Brown

ARTS

- Who is the Blind Singer of the Spaceways (Heinlein)?
a. De Beer b. Chanson c. Rhysling d. The Drifter e. Wyoming Smith.
- IWS does the book "The Grasshopper lies Heavy" appear?
a. Death of Grass b. Dune c. Foundation d. The Man in the High Castle e. Timehopper.
- In the film "War of the Worlds"(1953) who executed the astronomical artwork?
a. Bok b. Bonestell c. Foss d. Freas e. Hardy.
- Jetan is a form of martian what?
a. Chess b. Fencing c. Food d. Music e. Politeness.
- In "The Enchanted Duplicator" what is the magic mimeograph? (AC)
a. AMMEDRA b. FHNWFLBYL c. TANSTAAFL d. TEDWARDS e. TMMITOWATFATH.

GENERAL STUDIES

- Who wrote "I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see, Saw the Vision of the world and all the wonder that would be"?
a. Joyce b. Keats c. Shelley d. Tennyson e. Shakespear.
- In what year was Orson Welles radio broadcast of "War of the Worlds"?
a. 1918 b. 1928 c. 1938 d. 1948 e. 1958.
- Which SF artist designed the Skylab I patch?
a. Bok b. Emsh c. Foss d. Freas e. Jones.
- Which of the following provided a hit backing to the current tinted "Metropolis"?
a. Haley b. Madonna c. Mercury d. Richard.
- On which work was "The Forbidden Planet" based?
a. Faust b. Gilgamesh c. Solarion d. The Tempest e. Utopia.

HISTORY & ECONOMICS

- IWS does an historian change his past to ours?
a. The Alteration b. Bring the Jubilee c. Gate of Time d. Gate of Worlds.
- What is the principal export of the Lone Star Planet (H B Piper)?
a. Drugs b. Enriched uranium c. Giant corn d. Supercows e. Weapons.
- Who initiated the term Science Fiction? (AC)
a. HG b. HGW c. JC d. JV e. JWH.
- Who wrote the "Okie" stories about spacefaring migrant workers? (AC)
a. IA b. JB c. HH d. JV e. MM.
- In what year did the original Buck Rogers story appear?
a. 1918 b. 1928 c. 1938 d. 1948.

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATIONS

- In "Omnilingual" (H B Piper) the key to Martian is a What Table?
a. Geological b. Genealogical c. Multiplication d. Periodic.
- IWS does a survivor in a dead civil servants jacket begin the reunification of the USA with some old letters?
a. Communications Hitch b. The Mailman Cometh c. Man of Letters d. The Postman.
- In the "West of Eden" books Yilane control their spoken speech in what way?
a. Odour b. Posture c. Projective empathy d. Speech sticks e. Touch.

19. From which nonEnglish language is much of the slang derived in "A Clockwork Orange"?
a. American b. Arabic c. Chinese d. German e. Russian.
20. The first time that a telepath contacts another he shoots her. IWS?
a. The Bodysnatchers b. The Coming Race c. The Dream Master d. Three to Conquer.

PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION

21. "Blessed is the Norm", worked in pokerwork, is found in which novel?
a. The Alteration b. The Chrysalids c. Pavane d. SS-GB.
22. How many names has God?
a. One Million b. 9 Million c. One Billion d. 9 Billion e. 90 Billion.
23. What could be said to be the basic philosophy of Piersons puppeteers?
a. Aggressiveness b. Cowardice c. Poverty d. Love of God.
24. In what novel was the term "Soma" first used? (AC)
a. BNW b. E c. NFN d. GT e. U.
25. In which film was the following said "All the universe - or nothingness
Which shall it be, Passworthy? (AC)
a. A b. DWATD c. FP d. TTC e. WWC.

ROBOTICS

26. Who originated the word "Robot"?
a. Aldiss b. Asimov c. Capek d. Simak e. Suvin.
27. In "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress" what is the computer called?
a. Chip b. Hal c. Lunac d. Mike e. Pete.
28. Which scientist created the female robot in "Metropolis"?
a. De'ath b. Jekyll c. Ming d. Rotwang e Zarkov.
29. On what novel was the film "Bladerunner" based? (AC)
a. COS b. DADOES c. IR d. RUR e. TH.
30. In which film did robots recreate a Western town?
a. Android Killer b. Iron Sunset c. West Side Story d. Westworld.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

31. What is the gravity insulating material in "The First Men in The Moon"?
a. Agite b. Cavorite c. Lunarite d. Wellsite.
32. Of what are "The Currents of Space" (Asimov) composed?
a. Gravitomagnetic lines b. Carbon atoms c. Water d. Hydrogen ions.
33. In "The Death of Grass" what is the grasskilling virus called?
a. Chung-Li b. Ducrey's c. Pat Pucha d. Takamas e. Nilsons.
34. Is a Hoka -
a. Equinoid b. Reptiloid c. Piscoid d. Ursinoid.
35. When was "Interplanetary Flight" by A C Clarke first published?
a. 1940 b. 1945 c. 1950 d. 1955 e. 1960

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

FIRST

Underline the correct answers on this exam paper

THEN

Fill in the corresponding boxes on the answer paper

THEN

Fill in your name and number on the answer paper and put it in the box before five o'clock on Saturday.

E.G.

Question 66. What is the nearest planet to the Sun? } On Exam Paper.
a. Earth b. Venus c. Mars d. Mercury. }

66 ☐ a ☐ b ☒ c ☐ d

On Answer Paper

IF

You make a mistake clearly X it out thus

66 ☒ a ☒ b ☐ c ☐ d

"I am amazed
and indeed
overwhelmed
by (Hubbard's)
energy."

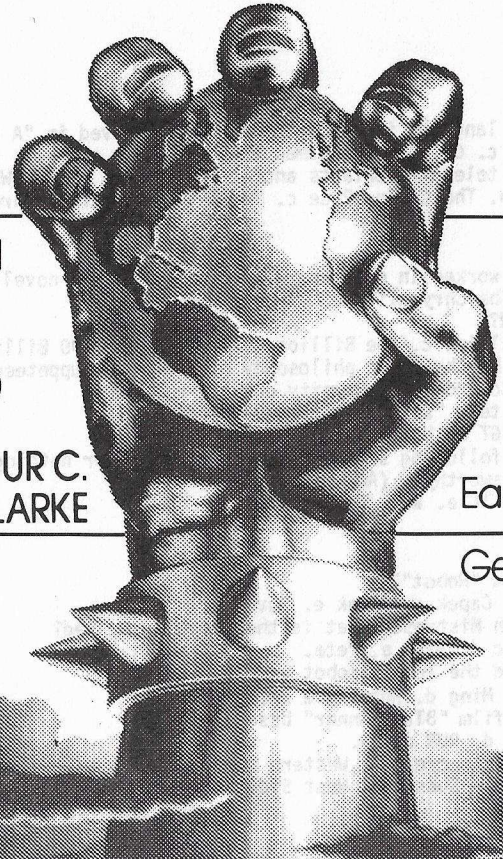
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'Paper Dreams'

ANNE GAY

The world is my lobster - but I keep finding the claws. They seem to like the softer parts of my anatomy, which is where I keep finding them - the claws, I mean.

I am not in control of my life. When I pull my tights on, my knickers bite me.

The exhaust pipe fell off my car: the police car behind ran over it. "Er... good evening, officer. Let me explain...."

And coming to a T-junction at the bottom of a hill, my throttle jammed full on just behind a shiny new Jag. At the same time my fan belt went. The Jag escaped, abandoned me in fact in the middle of the country in the middle of winter, but I knew just what to do. I ripped my woolly tights in half.

"Aha!" I thought. "All my life I've waited for this to show I can cope really.

The fluff on my winter tights clogged the carburettor as my legs turned blue.

Ace! Murphy's Law vindicated. Jam applied to toast imparts a lateral spin and strong gravitic attraction that scientists really ought to explore. But you knew that. You've cleaned carpets too.

And that's just in the battle with inanimate objects. (Have you ever noticed how they outnumber us?)

Recalcitrant people: now that's something else again.

So what's all this got to do with the price of a Novacon ticket?

It's all a question of control. One of the reasons we read S.F. or fantasy is to escape to a world where we can be in control. As a reader we can say, "Oh, I wouldn't do that. I'd do this..." We can arrange the features of the hero or heroine to suit ourselves - which is one reason cover illos are so often irritating. We think "That's not what they look like. The artist's got it wrong again..."

Better still, at Novacon there are walking embodiments of another escape route: real live authors. Many S.F. fans dream of writing one day; some make a few starts; even fewer stand the long slog to the end of their first or second novel. It's a hope, an idyll: no more 9 to 5, and to hell with the boss. We don't have to straighten paperclips any more. Let all our unrecognised genius be acknowledged at last! We can finally put our argument across in its entirety without interruptions and (on paper at least) win the day. The perfect life-style is in our grasp, if only editors knew what's good for them. If these author-persons can do it, so can we.

It's inevitable, though, that these dream-machines have problems of their own. I mean, that's life, doesn't one? Rejections, editorial cuts, Vatman and Robbin', deadlines, death threats, not to mention jet lagged lecture tours for the mega-stars among us. Then there's rows with the dog and bites from the beloved....

What better escape than a three day party with no washing up? And you can choose who you talk to, what form of stimulation you fancy at any given moment...

For a while, there, you might actually be in control.

What do you mean - how dare I prefer my version of Novacon to yours?

NOVACON IN THE PAST

ROG PEYTON

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6 Royal Angus	DAVE KYLE	Stan Eling	Helen Eling, Laurence Miller, Arline Peyton, Rog Peyton,	317
7 Royal Angus	JOHN BRUNNER	Stan Eling	Liese Hoare, Martin Hoare, Ian Maule, Janice Maule, Dave Langford,	278
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9 Royal Angus	CHRISTOPHER PRIEST	Rog Peyton	Helen Eling, Stan Eling, Chris Morgan, Pauline Morgan, Paul Oldroyd,	290
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12 Royal Angus	HARRY HARRISON	Rog Peyton	Chris Baker, David Hardy, Eunice Pearson, Phill Probert,	373
13 Royal Angus	LISA TUTTLE	Phill Probert	Chris Donaldson, Steve Green, Dave Haden, Jan Huxley, Paul Oldroyd, Eunice Pearson, Paul Vincent, John Wilkes,	339
14 Grand	ROB HOLDSTOCK	Steve Green	Kevin Clarke, Ann Green, Dave Haden, Eunice Pearson, Phill Probert, Martin Tudor, Paul Vincent,	333
15 De Vere, Coventry	JAMES WHITE DAVE LANGFORD	Phill Probert	Tony Berry, Carol Pearson, Eunice Pearson, Graham Poole, Martin Tudor,	340
16 De Vere, Coventry	E C TUBB CHRIS EVANS	Tony Berry	Nick Mills, Darroll Pardoe, Rosemary Pardoe, Graham Poole, Maureen Porter,	257
17 Royal Angus	IAIN BANKS	Bernie Evans	Mick Evans, Dave Hardy, Graham Poole Stephen Rogers, Geoff Williams,	

* This attendance figure taken from Con Members listed in Programme Book and is NOT the complete total.

Handy Hints

Empty cornflakes boxes, stacked neatly on top of each other, make great bookshelves.

NOVACON 17

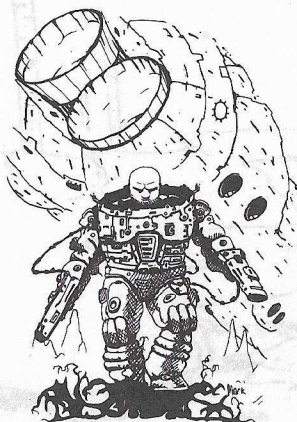
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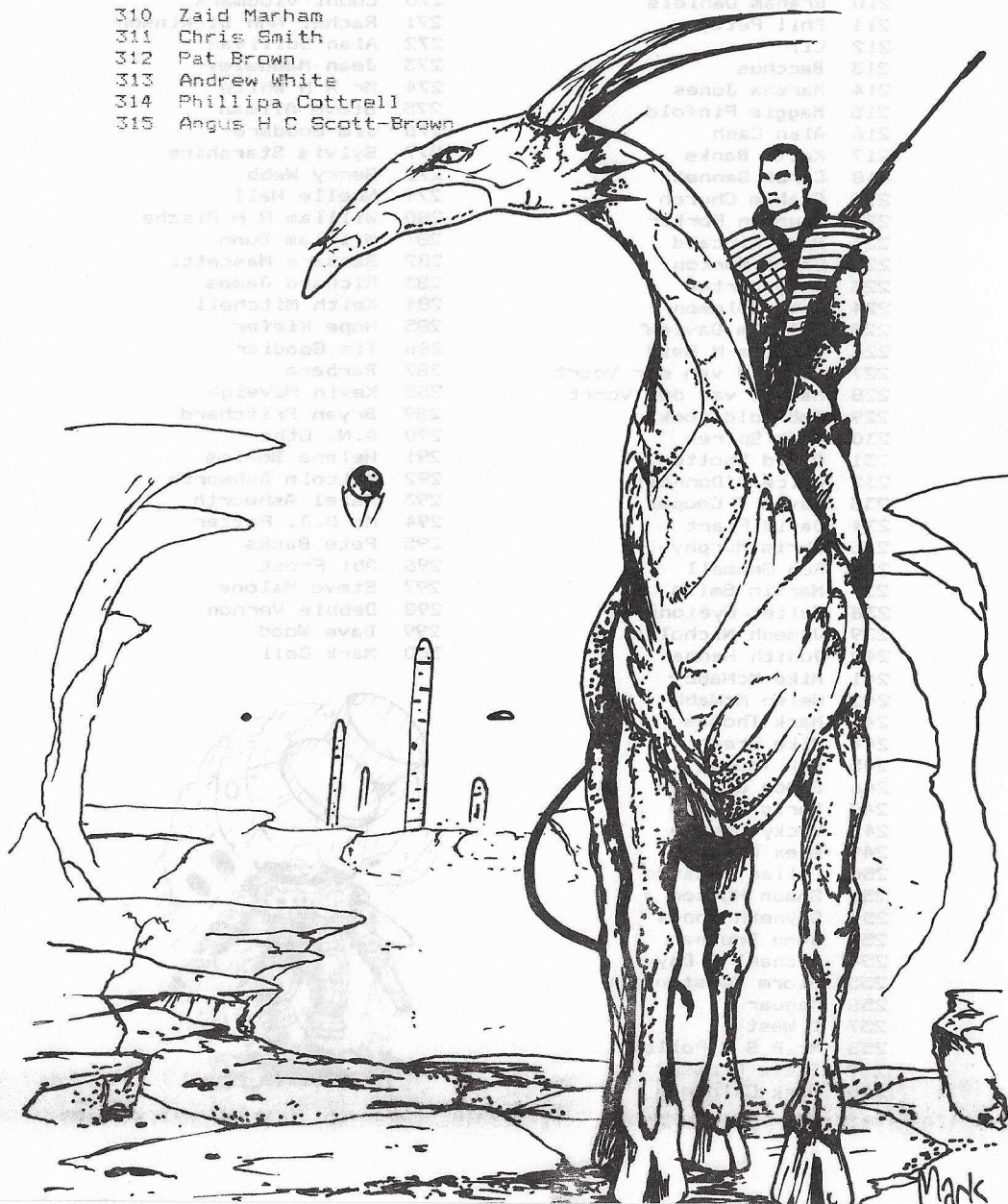


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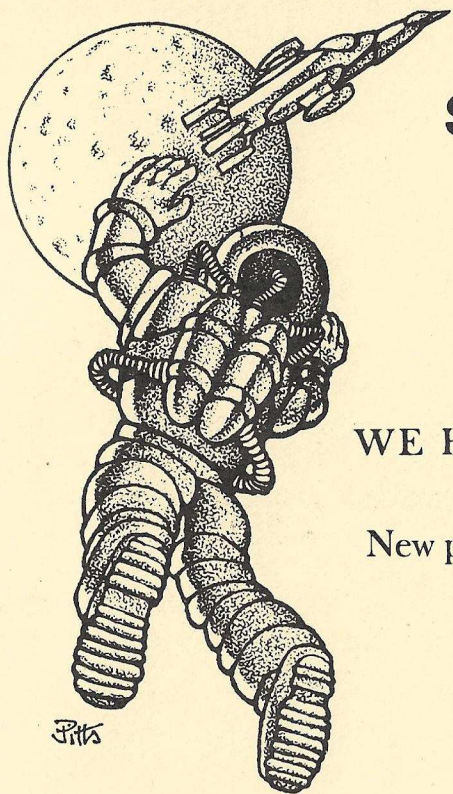
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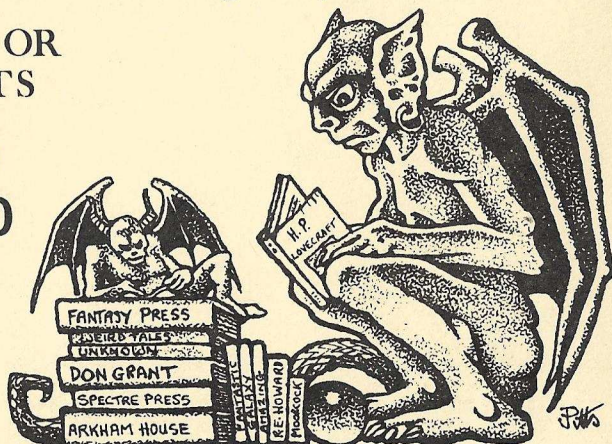
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