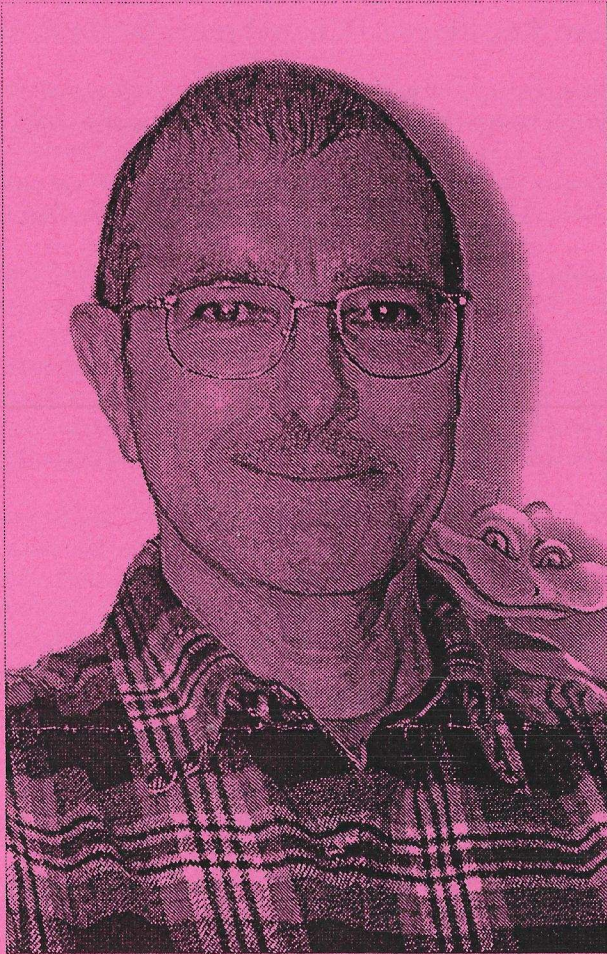


Novacon 30



Progress Report #2

Novacon 30

Date: 10th-12th November 2000.

Venue: The Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham.

Guest of Honour: Christopher Priest.

Special Guest: Rog Peyton. **Guest Artist:** David A. Hardy.

Membership & Enquiries: Full membership costs £32.00 by post or £35.00 on the door. Postal registrations should be received by 3rd November 2000, after this time please join on the door. Supporting membership costs £15.00 throughout. Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to "Novacon 30" and sent with your completed form(s) to: **Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.**

Further information: Check <http://www.cooky.demon.co.uk/n30/n30.html>.

Room Rates: £37.50 per person per night for people sharing twin/double rooms and £42.50 pppn for single rooms (inclusive of full English breakfast). NB: Hotel booking forms, and deposits of £20.00 per person, must be received by Steve Lawson no later than **14th October 2000**. Cheques for room deposits should be made payable to "The Britannia Hotel". Enquires regarding hotel bookings should be sent to Steve at the address above or to xl5@zoom.co.uk (tel: 0114-281-1572).

Advertising Rates: Advertising is welcome for both the next two Progress Reports and for the Programme Book. The rates are as follows (fan rates in brackets): Progress Reports - Professional £25.00 (£13.00) full page, £14.50 (£8.00) half page, £8.50 (£5.00) quarter page. Programme Book - Professional £60.00 (£31.00) full page, £32.00 (£15.50) half page, £18.00 (£9.50) quarter page. Anyone interested in advertising should contact Martin Tudor at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX (e-mail empties@breathemail.net). Deadlines for camera-ready advertising copy are detailed below.

Deadlines: PR #3: 1st July 2000, to be mailed late August 2000; PR #4: 1st September 2000, to be mailed mid October 2000; Programme Book: 15th September 2000, distributed at Novacon 30.

Book Room Rates: Tables will cost £15.00 each for the whole weekend. To book a table (or tables) you must be a member of the convention. Contact Steve Lawson (address below) for further details.

Committee: Tony Berry (Chairman), 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, B69 4EP, (morbius@zoom.co.uk); David T. Cooper (Treasurer), 51 Meersbrook Avenue, Sheffield, S8 9EB; Maureen Kincaid Speller (Programme), 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ, (novacon@acnestis.demon.co.uk); Steve Lawson (Registrations), 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ (xl5@zoom.co.uk); Chris Murphy (Operations), 126 McKean Road, Oldbury, B69 4BA, (chris.murphy@breathemail.net); Martin Tudor (Publications), 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, WV13 1HX (empties@breathemail.net).

Front Cover: Features David A Hardy, photograph courtesy of Dave Hardy.

Chairman's Piece by Tony Berry

The main item of interest for members is the refurbishment of the hotel. The Britannia group is spending over £6million on a complete makeover of the place, hopefully without any help from Carol Vorderman or that long-haired cretin with no dress-sense. The bedrooms are being done first, with completion in August. Next will be the function space, which hopefully will also be ready for us to stick gaffer tape on. Your intrepid committee have seen several of the refurbished bedrooms (and bathrooms of course), and they are a vast improvement, with decent furniture and even a spare phone point for laptops. Gone are the dark and dingy corridors so beloved by us all and in comes the miracle of electric lighting. They are even promising to improve the lifts!

Apart from that, things are proceeding nicely, and we have a few ideas about the layout and content of the con, especially the Artshow. These days more and more artists are doing work on computers, which naturally leads to this work being on CD ROM. Therefore, we are adding a new feature to the Artshow, which will be a display of this work on screen using a PC projector. We also hope to have some prints available for display and sale. Artists confirmed so far are Dave Hardy and Dave Carson, with several more showing an interest. If you would like to display your artwork on CD, contact Martin Tudor or myself.

Unfortunately, Pat McMurray has had to resign from the committee for personal reasons. I would like to thank him for all the work he has already done for the convention, and he will still be running the Novacon website.

Reminiscences of Roger G. Peyton (aka 'Rog') by David A. Hardy

Martin e-mailed me: "It recently occurred to me that as all three of our guests have known each other for a while it would be nice to have pieces by and about one another in the PRs."

Well, yes, I have known Rog Peyton for quite a while. Since 1973, to be precise, when I came back to my home town of Brum after a six-year sojourn in the wilds of Norfolk to find that there was now a Birmingham Science Fiction Group and a rather small and poky Andromeda Bookshop there, which hadn't

been when I left, or if they were I hadn't known about them. (I'd found a card about the BSFG with Peter Weston's address on it in the local library.) It also meant that Rog and I were on each other's Committees for some years to come, as we became Chairman or held other posts in the Brum Group.

Rog knew of my work as an artist of course, being an aficionado and collector, but made it quite clear on many occasions that as far as he was concerned I was a SPACE ARTIST, and that none of my work, as he knew it, was SF. And I was never *quite* sure if he was just winding me up or not... (despite my 60-odd covers for *F&SF* and *Analog*.) He also commented that my rocks and mountains looked like marshmallows (some of my paintings, at the time, were based on Apollo photos, and you know how smooth and eroded the Moon in those photos looks - so unlike the Moon that Bonestell and Hunter painted.) In so doing, Rog unknowingly did me a great favour, as I decided to do a painting for the next Eastercon, with the most jagged, sharp mountains ever seen.

I called it 'Marshmallow Moon?' and it has proved one of my most successful paintings ever, even after he sold it at the con. (I presented him with a print of it at another con, so nobody can say I wasn't grateful!) It has appeared on the cover of *Interzone*, the leading US space gallery Novagraphics sells a print of it, and only a few weeks ago *Isaac Asimov Magazine* asked if they could use it as a cover. And those are only a few of the uses.

Rog and I also discovered a mutual interest in rock 'n' roll music. We both like, and collect records (now CDs) of many of the same artists - Gene Vincent, Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Holly - the list is endless, and includes instrumentals. Unfortunately, Rog also found out that I liked the Shadows, which he claimed he couldn't stand. The words "Yuk. Ptah!" come to mind. (Basically, it turned out that he couldn't stand any UK singers or groups, being whatever is the US equivalent of an Anglophile.) (Well - what is it? Yankophile?). So it could be said that in some ways we got off to a shaky start.

Rog has, believe it or not, mellowed over the years. We're pretty good mates now, and when he's feeling particularly mellow (did I say pissed?) after a meal will even admit that some of Cliff Richard's early efforts, such as *Move It*, are pretty good rock 'n' roll records. All of which must prove something, though I'm not sure what. Probably just that we're all getting old.

I can't close this trip down Memory Lane without publicly thanking Rog (and I can't miss out Chris Morgan here either) for all the times he has auctioned my artwork at cons. Cheers, Rog, you're a good 'un!

Novacon Programme by Maureen Kincaid Speller

There is weirdness inherent in programming a Novacon. For instance, when I wrote the article on programming for PR 1, Novacon 29 hadn't even taken place, so I had no idea what did and didn't work. And now, I'm writing for PR 2 while Novacon 30's programme is still a mess of thoughts and ideas, tempered by my experience of watching Novacon 29's programme unfold during the course of the weekend.

I think it's fair to say we're in the grip of a new Novacon myth, whose story goes that there is not much point doing too much in the way of programme for a Novacon because it's all about socialising, about hanging out in the bar. The programme is mainly something for people to ignore while they get on with talking to their friends. I plead guilty, as much as the next person, in promulgating this Novacon wisdom in the last few years. Looking back, I can only ask, what was I thinking, for heaven's sake?

Was I not one of the many who rejoiced in the eclectic and demanding programme of the first Mexican, and didn't I contribute to the programme of several subsequent Mexicans? And didn't I, way back in the mists of time, help put on a strong literary-flavoured programme for an earlier Novacon? And wasn't I part of the team that produced Intuition in 1998, one of the best-programmed Eastercons in recent years (this is a trumpet – watch me blow it). Don't I enthuse about good programming, about the need for good programming, about the fact that a con-vention needs the backbone of a strong programme, to generate the atmosphere that permeates the hall, the bar, the corridors, and sets up discussion at breakfast next morning?

It's in the nature of myths, especially the new-minted ones, that they are seductive, convincing, and it's particularly in the way of fannish myths that they quickly become established as the immutable truth. And thus I was swayed by this Novacon myth. Okay, so I did the programme according to the perceived wisdom, inspected it as it took place, and found it wanting. Severely, in some parts.

Myth no. 1: you don't need much programming on Friday night because everyone will be in the bar.

Not true: Friday night is when you need lots of programme, to set the weekend's agenda, to create the atmosphere that will enfold the convention, and to provide a focus for those people, not all of them newcomers, who don't want to spend the evening hanging out in the bar. The programme will last well into Friday evening, and I'll be announcing the evening's schedule in advance of the weekend, to enable people to plan their arrival.

Myth no. 2: programme light on Saturday afternoon because people are out shopping, and on Saturday evening because they're out eating.

Well you either schedule your social lives around the good stuff or miss it. This year I'm programming straight through the day and into the night, no concessions, rounding off activities with one of Hicks' and Siddall's legendary productions, something no one can afford to miss. I'll also be starting the programme earlier on Saturday and on Sunday; there's so much to pack in, I need all the extra time I can squeeze out of the timetable.

A few things still frustrate me and I need answers, which is where you people come in. It's amazing how little feedback one gets after a convention, short of pinning people in corners and demanding their opinions, whereupon they shuffle and look embarrassed. I know that the Sunday afternoon debate on the Two Cultures was a great success, and that Peter Weston went down a storm. What I don't know are things like this:

- Why did so few of you attend Dave Lally's programme, despite the imaginative selection of cinematic gems?
- Do you want a band, or a disco, or would you be happy with a couple of extra programme items?
- And what sort of programming, format or subject, would you like to see?

You see, I can give you the kind of programme I want, and right now that's what I'm doing. But, like all humans, I have my likes and dislikes, my preferences and prejudices, and I have some slight compunction about imposing them on you wholesale (oh all right, not that much compunction, but you know what I mean). So, a simple few questions:

- what do you like about Novacon?
- what do you dislike?
- what's missing?
- what do we have too much of?

Replies to me, please, at 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ. Which is not to say that I plan to accommodate your every whim, but I do seriously want to know what you think.

A Piece About Christopher Priest

by David A. Hardy

Martin e-mailed me: "It recently occurred to me that as all three of our guests have known each other for a while it would be nice to have pieces by and about one another in the PRs." (Now where have I seen that before?)

It's true that I have known Chris for almost as long as I've known Rog. But how much time have I actually spent with him over that period? Only a few hours, probably. It's all to do with cons. You meet someone there, buy them a drink, have a chat, then another six-foot author (usually called Robert Holdstock) bustles up and off they go, talking about authority things. Until the next con. Well, that's how it used to be anyway, back in the days when authors like Chris and Rob would turn up at just about every con, and before they became so famous that they would only do so if they're asked to be a GoH....

Chris came to give a talk to the Brum Group in 1975 and signed my copy of *Inverted World* with the words: "**To David Hardy (Who'd have done a Better Cover!!) Christopher Priest.**" (And I would, too!) I enjoyed that book, and still do. In fact I think I've bought all of Chris's novels, which may surprise those who think I only read 'hard' science fiction. Like Rob's, Chris's fiction moved on, after *The Space Machine* (another book which I thought was a great idea, as a big H.G. Wells fan). Where was I? Oh yes, his fiction moved on into areas which are identifiably and uniquely his own; certainly not hard SF, yet not fantasy either. And I enjoy them all.

That Chris followed my own career came to light in 1978, after I appeared on *Pebble Mill at One*, upon the publication of *The New Challenge of the Stars* (with Patrick Moore). I demonstrated the airbrush on the programme, but my radio mike went down and I had to battle on until someone thrust a boom mike near my head. A day or so later I received a note from Chris, saying that he had seen me on the programme, and closing "now you know what SF authors do when they're supposed to be writing". Probably he still does, except that now he has about 1,000 channels to choose from, so wouldn't be watching *Pebble Mill at One* even if it was still on. Perhaps Chris will tell us?

One thing about those early meetings at cons. It was always easy to pick out Chris - you just looked for the long, shoulder-length hair. Over the years, it got shorter - I think the last time I saw Chris was at Bob Shaw's funeral (was Chris

the only other author to turn up?) He was wearing a suit and tie, and I have to say that if I hadn't known him, I'd never have suspected that his mind was capable of such incredible flights. I wonder what Bob, whom I *never* saw in a suit (even when we met the Lord Mayor of Stockport and Jack Straw at an SF art competition we jointly judged), would have said? Probably, "You look like my bank manager."! But I know he would have been glad that Chris was there, and it said a lot about Chris, too. I'm glad to know him.

'We can resist everything except temptation...' - the CD-ROM Art Show by Martin Tudor

As technology has advanced, British science fiction conventions have lagged *embarrassingly* far behind. In some ways this is inevitable given the *cost* of much of this new technology and the tradition of keeping membership fees low that handicap most British sf cons. But sometimes you just can't resist the temptation and that's what happened at last year's Novacon; I was tempted and I succumbed, dragging the rest of the committee with me....

Inevitably the temptress was one Linda Krawecka who enticed me from my tables in the Book Room, to a power point in Ops, with promises of wonderful visions to delight the eyes via a CD-ROM and her snazzy laptop. I was stunned. The CD-ROM contained some incredible "unfinished" work from her partner Dave Carson, but it wasn't just the quality of the work that stunned me – it was the way in which these glorious, full-colour, images leapt off the screen at me! I had no idea that such clarity, depth and colour was possible via CD-ROM let alone on a "mere" laptop.

Anyway, we chatted a while and bemoaned the fact that British convention art shows weren't willing to make use of the wonderful advances in technology that were now available. Then I threw my pint aside, leapt lithely onto a tabletop and declared that we could 'Put the show on right here – in our very own barn, sorry, function room!' (Okay that's not *quite* how it happened – I finished my pint first.)

Well, many, many committee meetings (and even more e-mails and notes and memos) later and I can now proudly announce that we have booked a Sanyo S-

VGA Mobile Type LCD Colour Data Projector, PLC-5605 series – further details available on request to any sad technophiles out there. Furthermore our illustrious Chairman has promised that it will only cost me my wife, daughter, home and eternal soul if it doesn't work! Easy terms really. Tony was quite laid back about it all: "It's the ****ing single most ****ing expensive ****ing item on the ****ing budget Tudor – if it isn't a ****ing enormous ****ing success it's *your* ****ing hide Tudor!" he murmured at the last committee meeting.

So, we've taken the first step, now we need your help. If you have work you wish to exhibit on CD-ROM or you know of someone who has, please contact either Tony Berry or myself as soon as possible (contact details on the inside cover). With your help this could be the most exciting Novacon art show ever!

Operations

As we are sure most of you are aware Novacon, like most conventions in Britain, is run by volunteers and we can't have too many of them! So if you are willing to help out at the convention - anything from moving chairs to helping with tech ops or working on the programme, please contact our Ops Manager, Chris Murphy, at 126 McKean Road, Oldbury, B69 4BA, (e-mail chris.murphy@breathemail.net).

Hotel Bookings

By the time you read this any Hotel Bookings we have received will have been passed on to the Hotel who will be sending out acknowledgements of the bookings. If you haven't received a confirmation of your booking please contact Steve Lawson (Registrations) at 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ, e-mail xl5@zoom.co.uk or telephone 0114-281-1572.

If you have not yet sent a booking form to Steve at the above address please do so NOW!

Steve would also appreciate it if you could let him know about any special requirements that you have regarding diet, room near a lift, quiet area, no-smoking, etc. He cannot guarantee to help in every instance, but he will pass on your requests to the Hotel.

Please remember that hotel booking forms and deposits of £20.00 per person must be received no later than 14th October 2000. Cheques for room deposits should be made payable to "The Britannia Hotel" and sent to Steve at the above address.

The Nova Awards by Tony Berry

The Nova awards are presented annually for work in fanzines. For a fanzine or piece to qualify for this year's awards, it must be published for the first time between 1st October 1999 and 30th September 2000. Below is a list of fanzines that have come my way so far.

ANSIBLE #147-152. Dave Langford, 94 London Rd., Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU.

DID I SAY THAT OUT LOUD # 4. Debbi Kerr, 38 Bankfield Terrace, Burley, Leeds, LS4 2RE.

PLEASURE. Linda Krawecka, 1A Mountney Rd., Eastbourne, BN21 1RJ.

PLOKTA Vol. 4 #4 -Vol.5 #1. Steve Davies, Alison Scott & Mike Scott, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berks., RG30 2RP.

POGONOPHOBIA #6. Alison Freebairn, 41 Kendal Rd., E. Kilbride, G75 8QT.

THE REGISTER Vol. 2 # 2-3. Steve Green, 33 Scott Rd., Olton, Solihull, B92 7LQ.

SHIPYARD BLUES 2000. John D. Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, MK16 9AZ.

Nova Results

The results of the 1999 Nova Awards Ballot held at Novacon 29 were as follows:

Fanzine:

1. Barmaid – ed. Yvonne Rowse (55 points)
2. Plokta – ed. The Cabal (54 points)
3. Banana Wings – ed. Plummer/Brialeley (44 points)
4. Ansible – ed. Langford (19 points)
5. Fables of Irish Fandom – ed. John Berry (16 points)
6. OK Ken – ed. Tony Berry (14 points)
7. Anti-backuuous Vaclash – ed. Baker/Bradshaw/Rosenzweig (13 points)
8. Parakeet – ed. Brialeley/Plummer (11 points)
9. International Revolutionary Gardener – ed. Nicholas/Hanna (9 points)
10. Tortoise – ed. Sue Jones (6 points)
11. Fandom Guardian – ed. Hicks (4 points)
- 12= Bob – ed. Sorensen (3 points)
- 12= Olaf – ed. Cheslin
- 12= Balloons Over Australia/Never Quite Aboriginal – ed. Lake
- 15= Did I Say That Out Loud – ed. Kerr (2 points)
- 15= Mira – ed. Abbott
- 15= Everlasting Lamentables – ed. Elizabeth Billinger
- 18 Guffaw – ed. Davies/Headlong/Kincaid (1 point)

Fan Writer:

1. Yvonne Rowse (53 points)
- 2= Claire Brialeley/Mark Plummer (25 points)
4. Dave Langford (22 points)
5. Dave Hicks (17 points)
- 6= Christina Lake/Alison Scott (16 points)
8. Maureen Speller (15 points)
- 9= Tony Berry/Sue Jones (8 points)
- 11= Bridget Bradshaw/Joseph Nicholas (6 points)
- 13= Amanda Baker/Jo Walton/D. West (5 points)
- 16= Mike Abbott/Debbi Kerr (4 points)
- 18= Rob Hansen/Tanya Brown/Mike Siddall (3 points)
21. Elizabeth Billinger (2 points)
- 22= Tommy Ferguson/Judith Hanna (1 point)

Fan Artist:

1. Sue Mason (54 points)
2. Dave Hicks (50 points)
3. Steve Jefferey (40 points)
4. D. West (24 points)
5. Sue Mowbray (10 points)

- 6 Ken Cheslin (7 points)
- 7= Dave Mooring/Sue Jones (6 points)
- 9 Anne Stokes (5 points)
- 10 Teddy (3 points)
- 11 Harry Turner (2 points)
- 12 Miki Dennis (1 point)

[If you have any enquiries about the Novas or you want a copy of the Rules (50p to cover copying and postage), contact Tony Berry at 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4EP. Or check out the Novacon web site at <http://www.cooky.demon.co.uk/n30/n30.html/>

An Apology from Martin Tudor

If anyone has sent e-mails to me recently and not received a reply I can only apologise. My PC started crashing at the end of April and died completely at the end of May. (Installing a new operating system has cured it but wiped far too many bits of info!)

During the course of these problems I was off-line for four weeks and when I finally resolved those problems and downloaded 111 e-mail messages my system crashed again and wiped them.

So if you are waiting for a reply regarding Novacon publications (or anything else) please contact me again at empties@breathemail.net – or pop'a note in the post!

Acknowledgements: Thanks to Dave Hardy for his articles and the cover photo and to Tony Berry and Maureen Kincaid Speller for their pieces. Other text by Martin Tudor unless otherwise stated. This PR was printed on the Critical Wave photocopier, for details of Wave's competitive rates contact Martin Tudor at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, WV13 1HX.