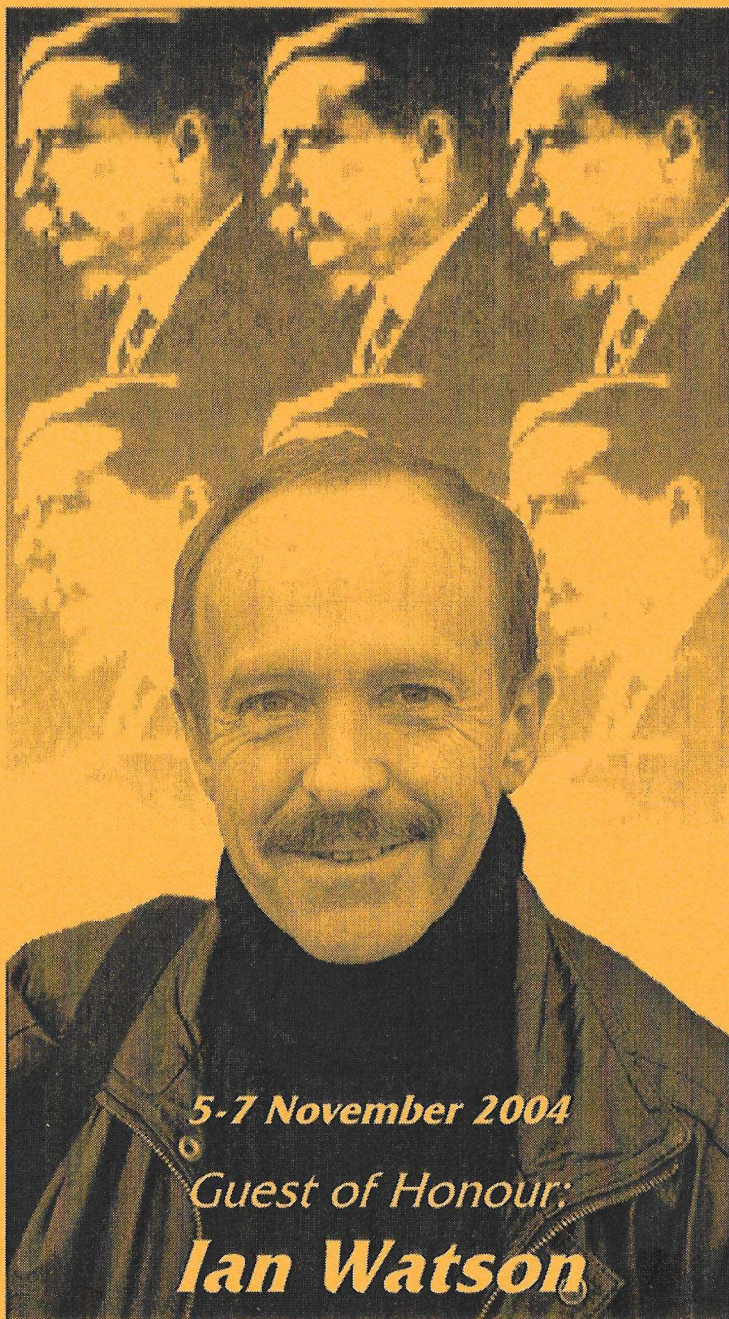


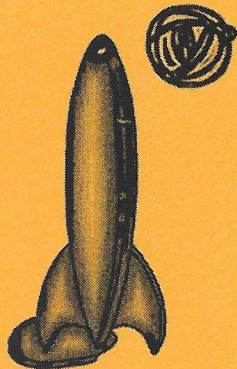


5-7 November 2004

Guest of Honour:

Ian Watson

2012CON 34



INTERACTION

The 63rd World Science Fiction Convention

4 - 8 August 2005

The Scottish Exhibition and
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Glasgow Scotland U.K.

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Novacon 34

Programme Book

Contents

4	The Gardens of Delight	by Martin Tudor
8	More Like Confrontationalist	by Dave Hicks
16	An Ian Watson Bibliography	
18	The Programme	by Yvonne Rowse
22	The RNIB	
23	The Committee	
26	The History of Novacon	
30	The Nova Awards	by Steve Green
33	Nova Awards: The History	
35	Nova Awards: The Rules	
40	List of Members	

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Advertisers: Page 2 Interaction; 7 NESFA Press; 15 Paragon 2; 39 BSFA
Inside Back Birmingham SF Group; Back Cover Immanion Press

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5-7 November 2004
Quality Hotel,
Bentley, Walsall
Guest of Honour: **Ian Watson**

The Gardens of Delight

by Martin Tudor

As mentioned in our final PR, we are delighted to welcome not only our wonderful Guest of Honour IAN WATSON this year, but also to welcome back several previous guests in the delightful form of: STORM CONSTANTINE (Novacon 22), DAVID A HARDY (Novacon 30), GWYNETH JONES (Novacon 31), IAN MCDONALD (Novacon 32) and JON COURTENAY GRIMWOOD (Novacon 33). I would also like to welcome YOU - hope you have (or had) fun!

Although, he said modestly, I'm fairly certain you will have fun because we have put together an amazing programme and we are still lucky enough to be in the truly wonderful Quality Hotel! We were briefly concerned earlier this year when the magnificent manager Colin Woods announced he was leaving, but once we had met his replacement Mike Stout, we were swiftly reassured: Mike is a veteran of the first Helicon (when they bought all the chocolate in the factory shop) and so is well versed in the peculiar demands of SF fans. Mike is also generous to a fault and quickly endeared himself to us by donating a third of the booze to our Guest of Honour's book launch on Friday night! Many thanks to Quality Hotels for this further evidence of their support. Don't forget to buy that man a drink when you see him!

Of course, things haven't always run so smoothly for Novacon - I've been involved on the committee of various Novacons since 1984 and at times it has felt like we would never find a perfect hotel....

Although the first Novacon I attended was Novacon 10, I didn't really become involved in the organisational side until a boozy weekend at RAcon in Edinburgh - after which I found myself signed up as one of the "Novacon Rebels", whose avowed intention was to wrest the defenceless Novacon from the tyrannous grasp of the Birmingham SF Group. The two main results of this grassroots movement were first to precipitate the return of Pete Weston (like

Arthur rising to save his realm...), who launched a fannish revival of the BSFG which defused the arguments of the Rebels, and secondly to remind the BSFG of its roots in fandom.

Interestingly Pete's return and my story starts shortly after the end of Pete's recently released book of British fandom ... (Copies of *With Stars In My Eyes: My Adventures in British Fandom*, NESFA Press, 2004 are available from Rog Peyton in the book room.) As one of the Novacon rebels, I found myself befriended by Steve Green and his Solihull SF Group (Steve was already an outcast from the BSFG, having upset the Old Guard several times before I'd even heard of fandom). Within the year, Pete had turned opponents to allies and the remaining Rebels and the SSFG found ourselves absorbed into the mainstream of the BSFG and running Novacon 14!

This was the time of the Birmingham Fannish Renaissance, with almost ever member of the BSFG and Novacon committees producing fanzines and/or apazines. I produced EMPTIES for APA-B, but my main concern was finding a replacement for the Royal Angus Hotel who, after Novacon 13, had declared themselves too small for the engorged Novacons of 400-500 attendees.

Having sat in with the old master Rog Peyton on a few Hotel negotiations I cut a savage deal with the Grand Hotel - too savage as it turned out. The Hotel felt so hard done by that it was almost 20 years before they'd consider having Novacon back!

By Novacon 16, I'd learned my lesson and the far more equitable deal I made with the DeVere Hotel encouraged them to have us back for Novacon 17. But by then, numbers at Novacons were shrinking and so Tony Berry was able to take Novacon back to the Royal Angus for 1988. But the ever-fickle management of the Angus decided to refurbish again, which meant the loss of our book room, so we were out searching for a venue again by the time I agreed to chair Novacon 19.

We eventually discovered the nicely laid out, but poorly located, Excelsior Hotel by the old Birmingham Airport - which proved an excellent venue for a couple of years, until the heroic Manager

David Welch moved on to bigger and better things.

The fickle Angus briefly accepted Novacon back for a few years, until we mushroomed to a larger size for Novacon 25. The Chamberlain initially wanted to charge thousands, but after some serious negotiating and quoting David Welch as a reference, I managed to get £7000 knocked off the function room costs and we held a delightful con there.

After the anniversary con 'though, numbers dropped again and after a real struggle we finally cut a deal with the Ibis. This was the first time we discovered that Hotels lie about function room sizes - since the disastrous book room there we carry a tape measure to negotiations!

Novacon 26 saw me chairing again and eventually we settled on the Abbey at Great Malvern - where we would've been happy to stay except they were refurbishing the following year, so the search began again...

Eventually, we cut a deal with the Britannia (whose area manager was the much-missed David Welch), but after a few years David left and service levels went down; and by Novacon 31 we decided we had to find somewhere else. For the first time since 1984, the Grand Hotel deigned to make us a reasonable offer, but the poor disabled access and other difficulties encouraged us to refuse and the search continued (the Grand closed down 3 years later).

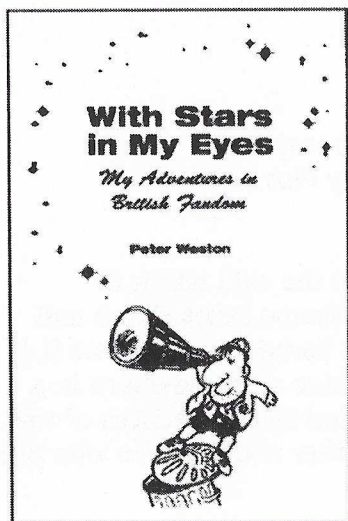
Then, on my doorstep, I discovered the Quality Hotel and we haven't looked back since!

I'm delighted to say that the Quality have agreed to host Novacon 35, but sorry to say I won't be involved. I'm taking a (I think) well-earned break and handing the reins over to others - I wish them, and you, well.

All the best

Martin Tudor,
Chairman, Novacon 34

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With Stars in my Eyes

My Adventures in British Fandom

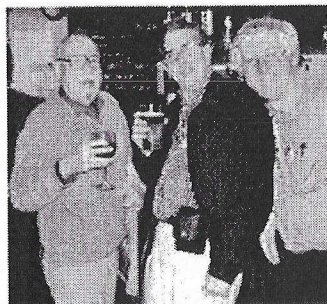
by Peter Weston

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"Brilliant book. Read to end of Chap 6 on Saturday and had the oddest dreams I've ever had set in strange, grimy parts of the Midlands that I've never visited and that probably don't exist any more—rather scary."—*Catherine Pickersgill*

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"It goes far beyond the simple reportage and anecdotes I expected. Your description of the Peterborough con was great. It plumbs the depths of what it means to be a fan. It has hooked me. Damn good stuff."—*Victor Gonzalez*



Mr. Weston and Associates
(He's the middle one.)

If you wish to obtain a copy of this fine volume, we suggest you browse the Dealers/Book Room at Novacon. You may also order a copy through our website, by fax, or by mail to: NESFA Press, PO Box 809, Fanningham, MA 01701, USA. If ordering, please include postage of \$5 ground (slow boat), or \$10 air per book. We accept US dollar money orders, Visa, or MasterCard. We accept credit card orders by fax to +1.617.776.3243.

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More Like Confrontationalist

A short appreciation of Ian Watson
by David Hicks

*"I can't see things in an ordinary way"
-- from an interview with Infinity Plus*

As the brown and orange leaves rustle in the chill winds of approaching autumn, the Novacon programme takes shape and Tony Berry scrapes the black bits off his barbecue and stows it in the garage for another year, the committee sit somewhere in a back street Black Country pub, surrounded by the detritus of real ale and pork scratchings, look at each other and say: "So who are we going to get *next* year?"

All right, we all know they actually sit there muttering "Never Again!"; but after that.

It's the perennial challenge of Novacon, of course. Thirty-three years of writers, artists, editors and fans with talent, presence, insight and wit places an awful burden on the committee to deliver. So each committee evolves a kind of checklist of the qualities of a good Novacon Guest of Honour. Little imaginary boxes of the mind are filled with ticks or crosses as names are put forward as the pros and cons of Pros at Cons are batted back and forth across the table and out of the fug a gradual consensus evolves until it's obvious who it should be; why have we been arguing all this time?

Out of this discussion the "shape" of the convention starts to form in the mind. By which I mean ask yourself: have you ever been to a good convention where they got the choice of Guest of Honour wrong? A good Guest energises the event, offers up juicy ideas for programming just by looking at their life's work, sets debates

raging that ripple through fandom long after the convention's over with their performance on stage. Even those foolish enough to stay in the bar and not hear what this year's Guest of Honour has to say for himself firsthand will find his words and his work in their conversations.

Conversely, of course, if the Guest of Honour's a dud, the whole event can just lie there as appetising as a plate of cold kippers when you're late for breakfast. We're not worried on that count, not with Ian Watson as our Guest of Honour.

I mentioned the little mental checklist of the convention committee when deciding whom to ask to be Guest of Honour just now. So let's run through it:

Firstly, the urge to exclaim: "You mean Ian Watson hasn't been GoH at Novacon *already*?" Consider: he's been writing all his life, professionally since 1969; full-time since the mid 1970s. His novels at that time made a lasting impression in the world of SF, winning the BSFA Award, the Orbit Award, the John W Campbell Memorial award and - in translation - the Prix Apollo. Not to mention the nominations for both Hugos and Nebulas. It wasn't just a single creative burst followed by a fallow period as happens to so many authors of early promise: look at the bibliography to see how much work Ian has produced since and continues to produce. Look at how many of those titles leave ripples to this day in the pond of British SF. All right, naff metaphor, but from *The Embedding* to *Stalin's Teardrops*, *The Martian Inca* to *The Lexicographer's Love Song* (yes - poetry, too!), Ian has been prolific without compromising a formidable facility with language, because we also demand that British SF authors know how to write a good sentence. Which is why Gollancz have kept some of those early novels in print.

It just feels so natural for Ian to be at this event that I went scurrying through the history of Novacon just to make sure he hadn't already appeared. If you're an old hand in fandom, admit it - it crossed your mind, too. As with so much in life - if it feels right, it probably is.

Secondly: can the person speak in public? We're not looking for novelty acts, but for some passion, eloquence and insight. It's got to be someone whose writing not only inspires people to curiosity about what he might have to say for himself in person, but who does so vigorously and entertainingly on the day. It's important at this point for the Guest to have a breadth and depth of work behind them that means whatever your particular interests in SF, they'll have something to say on a subject close to your heart. We thought about Ian's career, Ian's appearances at previous conventions (not least as panellist at last year's Novacon) and our experience of Ian in person and ticked another box in our heads.

Following on from that, it's no bad thing in a committee's eyes if their Guest of Honour has the odd controversial moment on stage. We promise nothing, mind you, and Ian has perhaps mellowed with age, but I remember my first ever SF convention, Yorcon 2, in 1981. A few of you may remember, too. At this convention, a certain Guest of Honour, in his main speech, called upon the convention to pass a motion of support for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The ructions within SF fandom went on for months, years even. Some people were never really on speaking terms again as a result of the heated debates within the fanzines of the day as to whether fandom was a place for politics, and if so where we stood. Novacon is more relaxed, perhaps, than an Eastercon and these days we have "issues" rather than "politics", but it does bring home the point that like all good writers of SF, Ian's never thought of the genre as being somehow separate from The World.

Yes, I'll get back to the writing shortly. Next is another quality that John Jarrold on occasion sums up, when he wants you to see a writer, editor or agent who's new to the environment SF fandom as a worthwhile person to get to know, as being "one of us". The Guest of Honour at a Novacon has to be someone you can walk up to at the bar and talk to. If you just want to tell them you enjoyed their last book, that's fine. If you want to take issue with the points they've just made on a panel then - provided it's done in a civilised way - that should be fine too. For the Guest's sake too, we strive to pick people who'll enjoy the company of a Novacon. You'll note

that many come back (see Martin Tudor's piece).

Oh yes, it's quite important for the Guest of Honour at a science fiction convention to be a good *writer*, too.

When interviewed, Ian Watson suffers the same fate as all science fiction writers; the focus is inevitably on ideas - of the future, of the world as it might be, of strangeness and of genres. If an author's work is to have lasting impact these can be a distraction. The world is full of people with interesting ideas; it's the ability to weave them into a worthwhile narrative that distinguishes talent. It's not a unique compliment but still uncommon that Watson has been described as the heir to H G Wells, a writer cemented not only into the history of science but literary fiction, too. His work is part of that canon which critics who sneer at SF in general welcome as an example of the genre that transcends its trashy roots in the pulp magazines. That they don't realise *how much* SF this is true of, is by the by for this article. The point is that Ian Watson not *only* has original ideas, but also can write a good sentence.

To give a personal example: many SF fans have stories they recall that gave them an unexpectedly intense intellectual or emotional experience. Greg Pickersgill once summarised: "It's like jazz - you think you've got the hang of the tune and then something wholly unexpected happens and captivates your imagination. You keep listening in eager anticipation..." (I paraphrase). To be more specific, the short story *Stalin's Teardrops* (1991) from the collection of the same name. Like so many SF writers, Watson is an adroit exponent of the short form, which has fallen into desuetude in so many other literary realms.

The premise is straightforward: the fear of sudden change imposed from above by bureaucrats who have achieved a certain modest comfort and certainty in their lives. The execution is stylish and engaging. With characters of a certain charm and universal recognisability (consider how many civil servants are at Novacon this weekend), this is a tale worth telling in itself. The functionaries in question abide in the Soviet Union at the dawn of

glasnost and have all their lives constructed maps of painstaking inaccuracy, designed to fool the enemy (*any* enemy). Beyond the comedy of the sudden demand that they produce accurate maps for the first time, when nobody has a real point of reference to address such a challenge, the story diverts both alarmingly and charmingly into the world that has evolved to fill the imaginary spaces created by the mapmakers. The fictitious terrain has become populated with a somewhat bucolic society of simple values and rustic charm that only the mapmakers themselves know how to visit, being transformed temporarily (and ultimately permanently) by the experience. It is the imagination and panache of the inhabitants of this imaginary space in responding to the threat to their existence that takes up the later part of the story, for accurate maps will deny them the terrain they inhabit and consign back to non-existence.

It's not something you could see coming. To take "the map is not the territory" is not a challenge, but to twist the pedestrian existences implied at the outset into something so romantic and to do so in a consistent literary style is no mean feat.

There's an implicit challenge of escapism in the above. I'm not of the camp that reads SF for this quality (although as a teenager, I'm sure, like many, that was part of what got me reading it in the first place). However, in the interview quoted at the beginning Watson opines that genuine SF is not escapist but "more like confrontationalist". *Stalin's Teardrops* is no mere retreat into fantasy, but an allegory of the uncertainty that is created by striving to force reality to conform to one's preconceptions and agendas. The villains of the piece all suffer obliteration accordingly. The reader is asked to confront the idea that arbitrarily redrafting (or rewriting) reality threatens unforeseeable consequences that could destroy their way of life, and at the same time that this activity can shape the world (at least the one we inhabit). How appropriate to set such a dialectic in the autumn of the Soviet Union.

Ian Watson established his reputation with his first three full-length

novels, still in print today: *The Embedding*; *The Jonah Kit* and *The Martian Inca*. By the third he was successful enough to become a full-time professional. Multi-stranded plots and settings on Earth now or in the relatively near future were common to these works, although the choice of terrestrial locations was more adventurous than many writers use when an “exotic” locale is required, and consequently more integral to the plot. Perhaps this is because of the broad range of places Watson had been a university lecturer, such as Tanzania, Tokyo, and -erm - Birmingham (where he taught one of the earliest literature/SF crossover courses in the UK).

An example is the Andes Mountains, in *The Martian Inca*, where a returning space probe from Mars crash-lands, whereupon Martian viruses infect a local Indian who begins to manifest the charismatic personality of an Inca leader/mystic and attempts revolt against the contemporary rulers of his country. Meanwhile American astronauts on Mars acquire new transcendent insights and abilities. There is the implication that a higher level of understanding of the universe resides within the socially and intellectually limited viruses than within man.

Stanislaw Lem took great exception to this novel, in a review published in the mid-seventies, while praising the literary ability of Watson, reading the text as a literal thesis that true understanding of the order of things is to be had by abandoning rationalism for mysticism. Personally, I never felt the viruses necessarily had (within the milieu of the novel) to actually exist, but that the novel could be enjoyed by reading that they could merely be the explanation within the characters’ *own heads* (a theme with precedent in British SF) for experiences under stress and at the edge of reason. This suspicion is compounded by *Whores of Babylon*, written a decade later but where the question of what’s literally true is tested by the characters wondering if their entire experiences are computer-generated.

Lem was a harsh rationalist and his own fiction had great faith in literal explanations of the universe. However, this all depends on the validity of the information we’re receiving. Throughout his

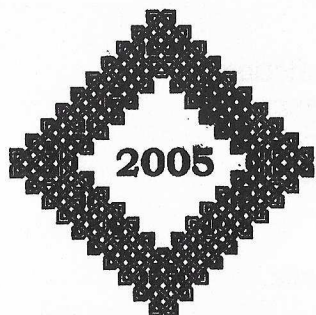
work, Watson's characters have to make decisions based on compromised understandings and manipulated perceptions. Sometimes they don't learn very much, Alien encounters such as *Under Heaven's Bridge* (with Michael Bishop) show anthropology and human patience tested to destruction in an attempt to understand an alien culture (and SF writers who claim to offer you truly revelatory understandings of the universe are best avoided anyway).

This is a cursory introduction, but beyond the theme of perception determining understanding, there's a dazzling range of material been produced by Watson these last thirty years. Elements of history, the occult, fantasy and horror are employed where appropriate alongside space opera, contemporary science, and virtual reality. Someone asked recently for a recommendation of an Ian Watson novel to read and it's really difficult to pick one - the eclectic mix of overt themes and tones employed in over thirty years of writing make it almost impossible to nominate a work that characterises Watson's work (*The Embedding* is often cited, but is merely the book most popularly associated with Watson, which isn't really the same thing).

There's the little matter of working full-time for Stanley Kubrick on the screenplay for *A.I.* as well. Not to mention the poetry and *Orgasmachine* for which you'll need to learn Japanese.

We'll be having a party hosted by Ian's publishers Immanion Press for his latest novel, *Mockymen* on Friday night.

More, *much* more about Ian Watson can be found at his web site: www.ianwatson.info



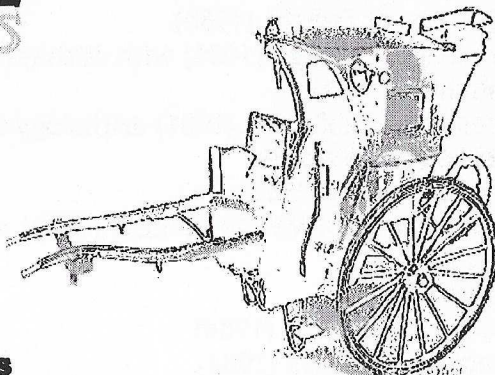
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**Eastercon:
The British
National Science
Fiction Convention**

25th-28th March 2005
Hanover International
Hinckley

Guests of Honour:

John & Eve Harvey
Ben Jeapes
Ken MacLeod
Richard Morgan
Robert Rankin



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An Ian Watson Bibliography

Japan: a Cat's Eye View (1969) young adult fiction
The Embedding (1973) -- in print from Gollancz
The Jonah Kit (1975) - in print from Gollancz
The Martian Inca (1977) - in print from Gollancz
Alien Embassy (1977)
Japan Tomorrow (1977) young adult SF
Miracle Visitors (1978) - in print from Gollancz
The Very Slow Time Machine (1979) stories
God's World (1979)
The Gardens of Delight (1980)
Under Heaven's Bridge (1981) with Michael Bishop
Deathhunter (1981)
Pictures at an Exhibition (1981) anthology edited by IW
Sunstroke (1982) stories
Chekhov's Journey (1983)
Changes: Stories of Metamorphosis (1983) anthology edited by IW & Michael Bishop
Converts (1984)
The Book of the River (1984)
The Book of the Stars (1984)
The Book of Being (1985) - the complete trilogy to reappear in an omnibus volume
entitled Yaleen from BenBella Books (2004)
Slow Birds (1985) stories
The Book of Ian Watson (1985) stories & non-fiction
Afterlives: An Anthology of Stories About Life After Death (1986) anthology edited by IW & Pamela Sargent
Queenmagic, Kingmagic (1986)
Evil Water (1987) stories
The Power (1987) horror
The Fire Worm (1988) horror
Whores of Babylon (1988)
Meat (1988) horror
Salvage Rites (1989) stories
The Flies of Memory (1990)

Warhammer 40,000: Inquisitor (1990) - reissued as Draco by The Black Library (2002)
Stalin's Teardrops (1991) stories
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine (1993)
Lucky's Harvest: The First Book of Mana (1993) - in print from Gollancz
The Coming of Vertumnus (1994) stories
The Fallen Moon: The Second Book of Mana (1994) - in print from Gollancz
Warhammer 40,000: Harlequin (1994) - reissued by The Black Library (2002)
Warhammer 40,000: Chaos Child (1995) - reissued by The Black Library (2002)
Hard Questions (1996)
Oracle (1997)
The Lexicographer's Love Song (2001) poetry
Orgasmachine (2001) - in Japanese only
The Great Escape (2002) stories

Mockymen (2003) (with special signed leather-bound collectors' First Edition available from The Easton Press)

The following are available as print on demand from www.e-reads.com

The Fire Worm

Converts

Hard Questions

Numerous short stories by Ian are available for downloading from www.fictionwise.com

A couple of short stories are available free on www.infinityplus.co.uk

Cosmos Book (Wildside Press) plan to release a three volume Best of Ian Watson (consisting of two volumes of SF and one volume of Horror) as print on demand, with individual introductions to each of the stories written specially for this edition.

The Programme

By Yvonne Rowse

Friday

7.00 Opening Ceremony

In which the committee introduces Ian Watson, Guest of Honour, reads any important notices and escapes as soon as possible.

7.30 Ian Watson

Ian introduces us to H G Wells.

8.00 Publisher's Party

Immanion Press, publisher of Ian Watson's most recent book, *Mockymen*, provides the wine for this party, along with Novacon and the Quality Hotel.

9.00 Concussion/E:D:E:N

Concussion, the 2006 Eastercon in Glasgow, informs us of their plans, followed by *E:D:E:N*, a short Italian film.

E:D:E:N [Italy, 2004]: Fresh from its UK premiere at the Festival of Fantastic Films, where it was named best foreign short, this 14-minute sf thriller is a powerful calling card from co-directors Fabio Guaglione and Fabio Resinaro, now planning their first full-length feature. [Special thanks to Giulia Achilli and Simon Puccini at Fast&Forward for their assistance with this screening.] (SG)

Also - 30-Second Bunnies Theatre: We're delighted to have several of the American animator Jennifer Shiman's acclaimed remakes of SF and horror classics, re-enacted with bunnies. Titles and times will be posted outside the main hall. [Special thanks to Jennifer, whose work is posted at www.angryalien.com.]

9.30 Room 101

Steve Green quizzes Ian Watson about the things he hates most in all the world, and decides which should be consigned to Room 101.

10.30 The Annotated Trout

Long, long ago, in a Glasgow far, far away, fans made films. Not videos: films. Now preserved on DVD, we present a rare glimpse of fans making complete fools of themselves. See Christina Lake as a stormhoofer, Lilian Edwards as Chewbacca the Nookie. Boo the Fake Bob Shaw and cheer as a youthful Ian Sorensen gets kneed in the groin. Novacon presents three short movies with explanations and apologies by Ian Sorensen. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll want to buy the DVD and smash it.

Saturday

10.00 Peter Weston, Author

Pete invites you to get up bright and early for his talk about his new book, *With Stars in My Eyes: My Adventures in British Fandom*, published by NESFA. Catch him in the bar later and he will sign your copy.

11.00 Religion

Is religion, as Ian Watson suggests, a specialised psychopathology? And even if it is, do the benefits (and I would suggest there are many) outweigh the drawbacks?

Ian Watson, Mike Siddall, Ian McDonald and Pauline Morgan.

12.00 Book Auction

The Novacon Book Auction, brought to you by those celebrated auctioneers, Chris Morgan and Rog Peyton.

1.30 Nick Pope

Nick Pope used to head the British Government's UFO project, run by the Ministry of Defence. In his lecture, he'll lift the lid on his work. Why does the MoD have a UFO project? What does it do and what are the most mysterious cases to have been investigated? Get ready for an insight into the real X-Files.

2.30 What Disease Shall We Cure Today?

What makes a disease 'sexy' to drug companies and governments? What are the dangers of neglecting diseases of the poor? With Gwyneth Jones, Julian Headlong, Mike Siddall and Charlie Stross.

3.30 Ian Watson, Guest of Honour

Paul Billinger interviews our Guest of Honour.
The Dealers' Room will be closed for this item.

4.30 Centre or Edge of Power?

Where's the drama most intense? We ask writers whether it's easier - and better- for characters to be at the heart of things or eking out an existence on the periphery?

With Ian McDonald, Charlie Stross, Jon Courtney Grimwood, Andy Sawyer and Dave Hicks.

5.30 Firefly

Margaret Austin, Martin Easterbrook and Tony Berry talk about the best SF series ever.

6.30 McMasters of the Universe

Julia Daly, Julian Headlong and Yvonne Rowse choose their favourite three characters and ask would we have a better social life if Miles Vorkosigan didn't keep dragging us off into a book.

7.30 Tony Keen's Radio Play

Your last chance to see a fabulous Tony Keen play at Novacon, next year, he assures me he will enter a monastery in Ulan Bator rather than do this again. Rapturous applause might persuade him otherwise.

8.30 UFOs Again

Nick Pope, Ian Watson and Simon Bradshaw debate the UFO question.

9.30 Worldcon - Will 12 Step Recovery work?

Ian Sorensen tries to persuade our intrepid Worldcon representatives to accept that Recovery using his Twelve Step Program is possible. Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer, Alison Scott and

Pat McMurray contend that Worldcon is a valuable fannish activity. Can they be brought to admit that they are powerless over Worldcon and that their lives have become unmanageable? Or can Ian be seduced to the Dark Side?

10.30 Fan Fund Auction

An opportunity to take home things that if they didn't exist there'd probably be no need to invent them, and all the more fun for it.

11.30 Novacon Disco

Sunday

10.00 Science Presentation

With Julian Vincent, Professor of Biomimetics at Bath University, Henrik Altov made his living writing technical science fiction, though sadly only four of his stories have been translated from their native Russian into English. He is best known for producing a method for writing original stories, developed from his system for creative innovation in engineering, which he developed under his real name, Genrich Altshuller. The presentation will include some biological mechanisms, which are being considered for biomimetic robots for space exploration.

11.00 Art Auction

A chance to take home some of the work you've admired over the weekend.

12.30 Not the Hugos

They've read *everything*, (although Julian no longer manages a book a day since he finally bought a TV) Pete Weston and Julian Headlong ask who *should* have won the Hugos.

1.30 Small Press - Joy of Debt

Is running your own imprint only for lottery winners? Is there more freedom for writers and editors? Rog Peyton, Martin Tudor, Gabriel Strange and Ian Watson share their experiences of the small press movement.

2.30 David A Hardy - Art in Space

Many of you will have seen Dave's slide show as Artist GoH at Novacon 30 (not 25, despite PR2!). Earlier this year, Dave completely revamped this, with many new paintings from his book with Sir Patrick, *FUTURES: 50 YEARS IN SPACE*, using Keynote, which is Apple's version of PowerPoint. He first gave this video presentation at Worldcon in Boston in September (nothing like jumping in at the deep end), and was amazed when the room was literally full to bursting. The talk covers the evolution and changes in space art since 1874, with many SF allusions too, and some surprises. . .

3.30 Being GoH

Ian Watson, Jon Courtney Grimwood, Ian McDonald and Gwyneth Jones advise Eve Harvey, one of the Guests of Honour at next year's Eastercon, about the fun and pitfalls she can expect.

4.30 Awards Ceremony

In which awards are presented, the raffle is drawn, the Nova Awards presented and the convention is officially closed (until next year), except for...

7.30 Beer Tasting and Finnish Food

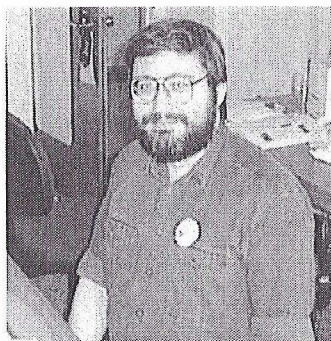
The convention winds down with our Guest of Honour's choice of national cuisine and the usual vast range of beers, ales, pop and - um - *beverages*. Don't forget to buy your food tickets and Beer Badges at Registration!

Novacon and the R.N.I.B.

You'll notice raffle tickets are on sale throughout the weekend for prizes beyond the dreams of avarice. These are in aid of our regular good cause, the RNIB. Novacon has supported the Royal National Institute for the Blind's *Talking Books* project since Novacon 18 in 1988, when it was suggested by then chairman Tony Berry, and we've raised funds for a number of books since then. So dig deep when you see Anne Woodford and her book of tickets and buy as many as you can afford!

The Committee

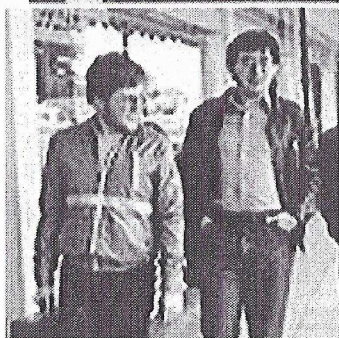
The Chairman - Martin Tudor (right) is a well-known veteran of Birmingham fandom and Novacon in particular, has achieved every fan's dream by having finally managed to arrange an annual convention virtually on his doorstep.



Also serving again are the redoubtable **Steve Green**, handling promotions, (second right) about whom it has often been said, and his charming wife, **Mrs. Ann Green**, to be more accurate, is running the art show again (below right).



It's a tough life below as Steve and Ann relax after a hard day's conrunning (or something), while bottom right you can see the svelte shapes of Martin and Steve before their fannish careers took off. (Yes - that really is Steve Green and Martin Tudor, taken in 1984!)

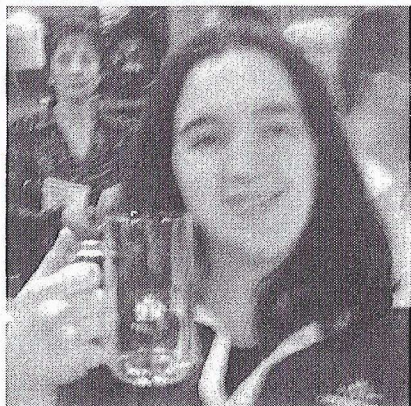




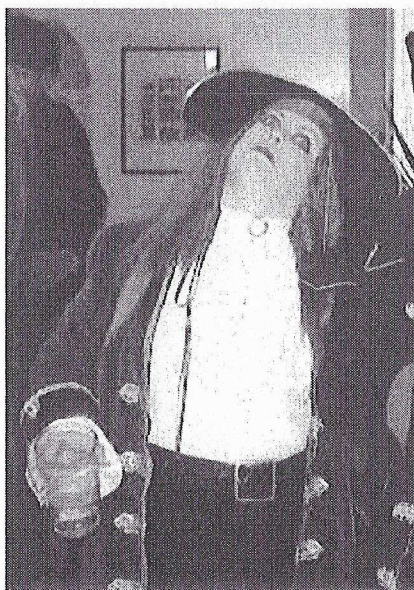
Meanwhile, the talented and beautiful (you promised me a pint for writing that, remember...) **Yvonne Rowse** joins for her first Novacon to run programme. (Left - remember Ploktacon 2?)

Also serving on her first Novacon committee is BSFG regular **Vicky Cook** (below left). Vicky's taken over as secretary because the rest of us are too addled to remember what we've agreed to do (oh, *the power*).

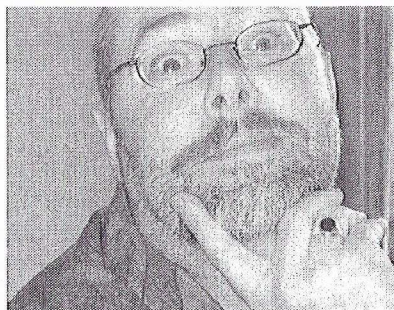
Our treasurer **Alice Lawson** (bottom, at Ploktacon 3 asking who spilled her pint) has kept the event on budget sufficiently for a modest committee meal (I'll have cheese and onion this year).



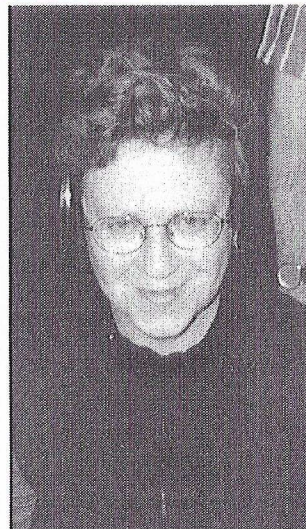
Indeed, being a committee member is a dignified and responsible job, which brings us to...



Steve Lawson (right) - is once again running registration. Steve is a keen fan of fireworks and - rather alarmingly for a non-smoker - often carries two cigarette lighters with him. (We asked once about having fireworks at Novacon - "Hmm... so you want to let off fireworks right next to one of the busiest motorway junctions in Europe?" said the police)



Meanwhile, **Cat Coast** (second right) takes time out of maternity leave to run operations and **Dave Hicks** (bottom) takes advantage of being in charge of publications to avoid submitting a more embarrassing picture (like I'm still that thin...)



The Committee also like to thank in advance all the people who'll be helping out before, during and after the convention with Transport, Child Care, Registration, Tech Ops, Art Show, Dealers' Room, Operations, and who've agreed to take part in the programme.

The History of Novacon

The first Novacon was organised in 1971 as a one-off event by the Aston University SF Group, but its success led to the convention being adopted by the neighbouring Birmingham SF Group from 1972 onwards. For the first seven years, the choice of guest of honour alternated between pro authors and leading fans,

In the list below, the figure in brackets relates to membership numbers at the time each programme book went to press, rather than the final attendance (in addition, problems with the printing of Novacon 14's programme book meant an entire month's new members were effectively excluded). Committee details appear beneath the guest(s) of honour; the chair's initials are shown first. Note: the Excelsior changed its name to the Forte Post House.

Novacon, 1971 (144)	Imperial Centre Birmingham	James White VB, RB, AD, AD2, PD
Novacon 2, 1972 (144)	Imperial Centre Birmingham	Doreen Rogers PD, SE, JH, RN, MP, HR
Novacon 3, 1973 (146)	Imperial Centre Birmingham	Ken Bulmer HR, SE, GF, MP, GW
Novacon 4, 1974 (211)	Imperial Centre Birmingham	Ken Slater JC, PD, SE, GF, RH, AP, RP, HR
Novacon 5, 1975 (272)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Dan Morgan RP1, RB, PD, RH, LM, AP
Novacon 6, 1976 (317)	Royal Angus Birmingham	David Kyle SE, HE, LM, AP, RP
Novacon 7, 1977 (278)	Royal Angus Birmingham	John Brunner SE, HE, LM, AP, RP

Novacon 8, 1978 (309)	Holiday Inn Birmingham	Anne McCaffrey LM, DH, KH, CW, JW
Novacon 9, 1979 (290)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Christopher Priest RP, HE, SE, CM, PM, PO
Novacon 10, 1980 (495)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Brian W Aldiss RG, JN, KO, KO2, PO, CW
Novacon 11, 1981 (362)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Bob Shaw PO, HE, SE, JN, PP
Novacon 12, 1982 (373)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Harry Harrison RP, CB, DH2, EP, PP
Novacon 13, 1983 (339)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Lisa Tuttle PP, CD, EP, SG, DH3, JH, PO, PV, JW2
Novacon 14, 1984 (333)	Grand Birmingham	Robert Holdstock SG, KC, AG, DH3, EP, PP, MT, PV
Novacon 15, 1985 (340)	De Vere Coventry	James White PP, TB, CP, EP, GP, MT
Novacon 16, 1986 (257)	De Vere Coventry	E C Tubb Chris Evans TB, NM, DP, RP2, GP, MP2
Novacon 17, 1987 (315)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Iain M Banks BE, ME, DH2, GP, SR, GW2
Novacon 18, 1988 (336)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Garry Kilworth TB, BE, RP, GP2, LP, MT
Novacon 19, 1989 (426)	Excelsior Solihull	Geoff Ryman MT, TB, HB, BE, NM, PW
Novacon 20, 1990 (330)	Excelsior Solihull	Dr Jack Cohen BE, AJ, AL, SL, NM, RS

Novacon 21, 1991 (200)	Forte Post House Solihull	Colin Greenland NM, DC, BE, AJ, AL, SL, CM2
Novacon 22, 1992 (300)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Storm Constantine HB, TB, BE, JG, SG2, CM3, RS
Novacon 23, 1993 (350)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Stephen Baxter CM3, HB, BE, TM, RS
Novacon 24, 1994 (214)	Royal Angus Birmingham	Graham Joyce RS, HB, SF, CM3, TM, CM2, MT
Novacon 25, 1995 (338)	Chamberlain Birmingham	Brian W Aldiss Harry Harrison Bob Shaw Iain M Banks TM, TB, CM3, CM2, RS, MT
	Special guest:	
Novacon 26, 1996 (281)	Ibis Birmingham	David Gemmell CM3, SF, TM, CM2, RS, MT
Novacon 27, 1997 (277)	Abbey Malvern	Peter F Hamilton MT, CM3, TM, CM2, MS
Novacon 28, 1998 (265)	Britannia Birmingham	Paul J McAuley MT, SL, PM2, CM3, TM, CM2
Novacon 29, 1999 (239)	Britannia Birmingham	Ian Stewart CM3, MKS, SL, PM2, TM, CM2, MT
Novacon 30, 2000 (224)	Britannia Birmingham Special guest: Guest artist:	Christopher Priest Rog Peyton David A Hardy TB, MKS, SL, PM2, DC, CM2, MT

The Nova Awards

Steve Green, Administrator

Since 1973, the annual Nova Awards have celebrated British science fiction fanzines. Originally handed down by a panel of judges, the Novas are now decided by all Novacon members who can demonstrate a basic knowledge of current fanzines. Following Novacon 32, the three categories - best fanzine, best fanzine writer, best fanzine artist - were extended to cover fanzines produced in Eire.

Congratulations to Pete Young, Claire Brialey and Sue Mason, who were presented with their Nova Award statuettes at Novacon 33 by guest of honour Jon Courtenay Grimwood. A total of 37 valid ballots were cast, with points distributed 3-2-1 for first, second and third choices.

The complete breakdown for 2003 was as follows:

Best Fanzine: 1, *Zoo Nation* (ed. Pete Young), 59 points; 2, *Plokta*, 39; 3, *Banana Wings*, 33; 4, *Tortoise*, 16; 5, *Head*, 14; 6, *Quasiquote*, 11; 7, *Floss!*, 10; 8, *Ansible*, 5; 9, *Conver[saj]tions*, 4; 10=, *Convertible Bus*, *Halo of Flies*, *Joie de Vivre*, 3 points each; 13=, *Album*, *Bogus*, *No Sin But Ignorance*, *Outlaw Mutation Boogie*, *Parakeet*, *Swiss Tony Speaks to the Nation*, *Vibrator*, 2 each; 20=, *Brum Group Newsletter*, *Once More With Fanfunds*, 1 each.

Best Fan Writer: 1, Claire Brialey, 29 points; 2, Tony Keen, 22; 3, Pete Young, 17; 4, Max, 16; 5, Tanya Brown, 14; 6=, Alison Scott, Dave Langford, Mark Plummer, 13 points each; 9, Lilian Edwards, 10; 10=, Doug Spencer, Sue Jones, 8 each; 12=, Doug Bell, James Bacon, 6 each; 14=, Graham Charnock, Sandra Bond, Yvonne Rowse, 5 each; 17=, Dave Hicks, Ian Watson, Jim de Liscard, Maureen Kincaid Speller, 3 each; 21=, Christina Lake, Ian Sorensen, Ron Bennett, 2 each; 24=, Alison Freebairn, Ang Rosin, Guilia de Cesare, 1 each.

Best Fan Artist: 1, Sue Mason, 69 points;
2, Dave Hicks, 44; 3, Alison Scott, 18; 4, Pete Young, 15; 5, D West,
14; 6, Steve Jeffrey, 10; 7, Sue Jones, 3; 8, Mark Plummer, 2.

The Best Fan Nova

Occasionally, the Novacon committee also presents its own Nova, for "Best Fan". In 2003, such veteran figures as Ken Slater and the late Bob Shaw were joined by Ina Shorrocks, commemorating a half-century in fandom, most of it in the company of her much-missed husband Norman; the award was presented on the committee's behalf by Brum Group vice-president Harry Harrison.

Special thanks to Cat Coast for her assistance with the count, to Ray Bradbury for once again designing the statuettes and to Jon and Harry.

The following fanzines were received between 1 October 2003 and 30 September 2004, and are eligible for nomination in the 2004 Nova Awards:

Ansible #195 (10/03), #196 (11/03), #197 (12/03), #198 (1/04), #199 (2/04), #200 (3/04), #201 (4/04), #202 (5/04), #203 (6/04), #204 (7/04), #205 (8/04), #206 (9/04; all A4, 2pp), Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU (electronic version downloadable from <www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/ansible>); *Banana Wings* #19 (A4, 20pp), Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer, 59 Shirley Road, Croydon, CR0 7ES (note coa) <banana@fishlifter.demon.co.uk>; *The Banksoniain* #1, #2, #3 (all A5, 12pp), David Haddock, 84 Foxhollow, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8ES, <david@haddock.me.uk> or <banksoniain@yahoo.co.uk>; *Bogus* #7 (A4, 6pp), Sandra Bond, 7 Granville Road, London, N13 4RR; *Brum Group News* #387 (12/03) #388 (1/04; both A5, 8pp), #389 (2/04), #391 (4/04), #392 (5/04; all A5, 12pp), #393 (6/04), #394 (7/04, all A5, 16pp), #395 [8/04, A5, 8pp], #396 [9/04, A5, 16pp], Rog Peyton for the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, 19 Eves Croft, Bartley Green, Birmingham, B32 3QL, <rog@rogpeyton.fsnet.co.net> or

<bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk> *Convers[at]ions* #3, #4 (both A5, 8pp), Douglas Spencer, 51 Fountains Garth, Wild Ridings, Bracknell, RG12 7RH, <conversations@dial.pipex.com>; *Dark Volumes* (playtext, A5, 28pp), Tony Keen, 48 Priory Street, Tonbridge, TN9 2AN, <keentony@hotmail.com>; *Erg* #164, #165, #166 (all A5, 16pp), Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, YO12 5RQ; *Farisheen* #2, #3 (both A5, 24pp), James Bacon, 211 Black Horse Avenue, Dublin 7, Eire; *Joie de Vivre* #4: *Dissolution* (A4, 12pp), Yvonne Rowse, Evergreen, Halls Farm Lane, Trimpey, DY12 1NP, <yvonne@hallsfarm.demon.co.uk>; *Floss* #4 (A4, 53pp - plus an extra p37), Lilian Edwards, 39 Viewforth, Edinburgh, EH10 4JE, <l.edwards@ed.ac.uk>; *Halo of Flies* #3 (A5, 40pp), Tony Keen, address as above, <keentony@hotmail.com>; *Head* #6.5 (A4, 6pp), Doug Bell & Christina Lake, 13 Florence Road, Falmouth, TR11 3NJ; *Let's Kiosk!* (A4, 20pp), Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, Tottenham, London, N15 4JU, <jehanna@gn.apc.org> or <josephn@globalnet.co.uk>; *No Sin But Ignorance* #46: *The Journal of Lutraphilia* (A4, 12pp), Claire Brialey, address as above; *Outlaw Mutation Boogie* #62 (A4, 10pp), Mark Plummer, address as above; *Plokta* #30, #31 (both A4, 12pp), #31.5 (A4 con programme, 6pp), Steve Davies, Alison Scott, Mike Scott & the Cabal, 24 St Mary Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 9RG, <www.plokta.com>; *This is Three Minute Access* #2 (A4, 2pp), Kev McVeigh, 30 William Street, Millhead, Carnforth, LA5 9HE; *Tommyworld* #70 (A4, 2pp), #71, #72 (both A4, 3pp), #73 (A4, 4pp), #74 (A4, 3pp), #75 (A4, 2pp), #76 (A4, 3pp), Tommy Ferguson, 30 Ava Park, Belfast, BT7 3BX (electronic version downloadable from <www.tommyworld.net>); *Tortoise* #18 (A4, 20pp), #19 (A4, 19pp), Sue Jones, Flat 5, 32/33 Castle Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2BQ, <sue.tortoise@btinternet.com>; *Zoo Nation* #4 (A5, 32pp), #5 [A5, 28pp], Pete Young, 62 Walmer Road, Woodley, RG5 4PN, <zoo-nation@macunlimited.net>. Fanzines received since 30 September will be listed in the first Novacon 35 progress report.

Ballot forms were distributed with the final Novacon 34 progress report, and further copies are included in your membership packs. A copy of the full rules has been posted next to the registrations

desk, so you can peruse them whilst purchasing raffle tickets, entrance for Sunday's post-con festivities or discounted memberships for Novacon 35. Now go and vote!

Voting for the Nova Awards closes at midnight Saturday (signed forms should be placed in the box near registrations or handed to the administrator), and the winners will be announced on Sunday evening.

Nova Awards: The History

For its first eight years, only one Nova Award was presented each year, for "Best Fanzine". Peter Weston's *Speculation* took the inaugural award in 1973, followed by Lisa Conesa's *Zimri* (1974), Rob Jackson's *Maya* (both 1975 and 1976), Dave Langford's *Twll-Ddu* (1977), Alan Dorey's *Gross Encounters* (1978), Simone Walsh's *Seamonsters* (1979) and Dave Bridges' *One-Off* (1980).

From 1981 onwards, two further categories were introduced, "Best Writer" and "Best Artist". Although these do not technically need to be UK residents (so long as they have had work published in a UK fanzine), no non-UK fans have so far featured; this may change following the inclusion of Irish fanzines from 2003 onwards, as well as the increasing number of international collaborations.

1981: *Tappen*, edited by Malcolm Edwards (best fanzine); Chris Atkinson (best fanzine writer); Pete Lyon (best fanzine artist).

1982: *Epsilon*, Rob Hansen; Chris Atkinson; Rob Hansen.

1983: *A Cool Head*, Dave Bridges; Dave Bridges; Margaret Wel-bank. This was the first occasion one fan received two Novas in the same year; sadly, Dave has since emigrated to Texas.

1984: *Xyster*, Dave Wood; Anne Hammill; D West.

1985: *Prevert*, John Jarrold; Abi Frost; Ros Calverly.

1986: *Pink Bedsocks*, Owen Whiteoak; Owen Whiteoak; Atom.

- 1987: *Lip*, Hazel Ashworth; D West; D West.
 1988: *Lip*, Hazel Ashworth; Michael Ashley; D West.
 1989: *VSOP*, Jan Orys; Simon Polley; Dave Mooring.
 1990: *FTT**, Joseph Nicholas, Judith Hanna; Dave Langford; Dave Mooring. [*A polite acronym for *Fuck The Tories*.]
 1991: *Saliromania*, Michael Ashley; Michael Ashley; D West.
 1992: *Bob?*, Ian Sorensen; Michael Ashley, Dave Mooring.
 1993: *Lagoon*, Simon Ounsley; Simon Ounsley; Dave Mooring.
 1994: *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk*, Greg Pickersgill; Greg Pickersgill; D West.
 1995: *Attitude*, Michael Abbott, John Dallman and Pam Wells; Simon Ounsley; D West. Intriguingly, *Attitude* was intended both as a fanzine and a thematic progress report for the 1996 convention.
 1996: *Waxen Wings & Banana Skins*, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Alison Freebairn; D West. This year's "best fanzine" was a partnership of two initially separate titles; by the following Nova ballot, they had merged to become *Banana Wings*.
 1997: *Banana Wings*, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Mark Plummer; Sue Mason.
 1998: *Banana Wings*, Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; Maureen Kincaid Speller; D West.
 1999: *Barmaid*, Yvonne Rowse; Yvonne Rowse; Sue Mason.
 2000: *Plokta*, Alison Scott, Steve Davies and Mike Scott; Yvonne Rowse; Sue Mason.
 2001: *Head*, Doug Bell and Christina Lake; Alison Freebairn; Dave Hicks.
 2002: *Plokta*, Alison Scott, Steve Davies and Mike Scott; Claire Brialey; Dave Hicks.
 2003: See above.

2004: Entirely up to you. Ballot forms are available throughout the hotel. So long as you can satisfy a few minor criteria, everyone can vote. The more who do, the better the accolade; anyone who can't be bothered, but complains at the outcome, is an idiot.

Nova Awards: The Rules

The Nova Awards for achievement in the field of British science fiction fanzines were created in 1973 by the late Gillon Field, and decided somewhat undemocratically by a panel of leading fans. When the ballot was opened up to the Novacon membership as a whole, new rules were drawn up in March 1978 by Dave Langford, and later revised by him in September 1983. Martin Tudor further revised them in February 1987, before being extensively revised last November by the current administrator following Novacon 32.

The Nova Awards celebrate fanzines, fanzine writing and fanzine artwork produced by science fiction fans resident in the UK or Ireland, providing a friendly pat on the back to those whose efforts gave the greatest pleasure to Novacon members during the previous year. They have no vast cosmic significance. Should any difficulties arise in interpreting the rules governing the Nova Awards (henceforth referred to as the Novas), those concerned are urged to follow the course most in keeping with this spirit.

1. The Novas shall be announced at Novacon, the convention organised annually by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group.
2. The categories shall be "Best Fanzine", "Best Fan Writer" and "Best Fan Artist".
3. A trophy shall be supplied in each category by the Novacon committee, for presentation at the awards ceremony on Sunday afternoon.
4. The trophies shall be presented by Novacon's guest(s) of honour (or, if unavailable, by the Novacon committee chair), on behalf of the convention membership.
5. In the event of a tie, the joint recipients shall be asked to share the trophy unless the Novacon committee is willing and able to fund a duplicate trophy.
6. As the Novas are awarded by popular vote, there is no mechanism for eligible editors, writers or artists to withdraw their work or themselves from consideration. A winner determined not to be honoured can always refuse to accept his or her award.

7. In the event that Novacon should not be held in any given year, the Birmingham Science Fiction Group shall be requested to underwrite a ballot in early October of the preceding Novacon's membership, using established criteria and deadlines. Winners shall be notified by e-mail and post, with the full results publicised through fanzines and electronic notice boards. If the Birmingham Science Fiction Group is willing and able to fund trophies, these shall be presented at the next Eastercon or similarly major event.
8. Should Novacon be cancelled for a second year in succession, the Nova Award Administrator (henceforth referred to as the Administrator) shall meet with the committee of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group to decide as a matter of urgency whether to discontinue the Novas or allow another convention to take over Novacon's role.
9. For the purposes of the Novas, a fanzine shall be defined as an amateur publication concerned with science fiction and / or fantasy, fans of science fiction and / or fantasy, and / or related subjects, copies of which may be obtained in exchange for other such publications or in response to letters of comment. In the event that eligibility is unclear, the decision of the Administrator shall be final.
10. The "Best Fanzine" category shall be open to any fanzine published in the UK or Ireland, provided at least one issue has been published between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year. In cases where a fanzine has two or more editors, at least one must be resident in the UK or Ireland.
11. Electronic fanzines ("e-zines") shall be eligible in the "Best Fanzine" category, provided each issue is a distinct entity and a printed copy is available if preferred. A file copy must also be lodged with the Administrator, whose decision on eligibility shall be final.
12. The "Best Fan Writer" category shall be open to anyone resident in the UK or Ireland who has contributed a piece of writing to an eligible fanzine published between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year.
13. The "Best Fan Artist" category shall be open to anyone

resident in the UK or Ireland who has contributed a piece of artwork to an eligible fanzine published between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year.

14. Voting shall be open to any member of that year's Novacon, provided he or she has received at least six different fanzines published in the UK or Ireland between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year (separate issues of an individual fanzine or various organs of a group / society shall not be considered as different fanzines for the purposes of this total). Voters are not required to be resident in the UK or Ireland.
15. Ballot forms shall be circulated with the final Novacon progress report each year, to facilitate voting by post or e-mail prior to Novacon. The deadline for postal and electronic votes shall be 23:59 GMT on the Saturday prior to Novacon; the deadline for voting in person shall be 23:59 GMT on the Saturday of Novacon.
16. Only one ballot form shall be accepted from each member, and votes for themselves or their own fanzines will be disallowed (should a duplicate form be received, it should be clearly marked "Invalid" and exempt from the count).
17. Valid ballots should include the voter's name, address and Novacon membership number, plus the titles of six different fanzines published in the UK or Ireland between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year (separate issues of an individual fanzine or various organs of a group / society shall not be considered as different fanzines for the purposes of this total).
18. Ballots sent by post or handed in at the convention should be signed. Those sent electronically should emanate from the voter's known e-mail address.
19. Production of ballot forms, organisation of the count and general promotion of the Novas shall be the responsibility of the Administrator, appointed by the preceding year's Novacon committee. The Administrator should have a good basic knowledge of British fanzines but, to prevent dispute, it is preferable he or she should not edit a fanzine likely to qualify.
20. The Administrator shall in turn nominate two Novacon

members to assist with the count on the Sunday of the convention; again, they should have a wide knowledge of fanzines but preferably not edit a fanzine likely to qualify. During the count, they shall also assist the Administrator with issues of eligibility and ballot validity. The decision of this group shall be final.

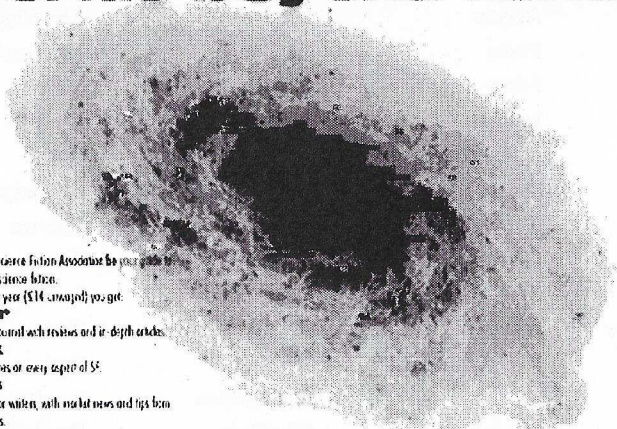
21. First-, second- and third-place votes shall be available in each category. First-place votes shall be allocated three points, second-place votes two points and third-place votes one point.
22. In the event of a tie on points, the Nova in that category shall be awarded to the nominee with most first-place votes. In the event of a tie on first-place votes, the award shall be made to the nominee with most second-place votes. Only in the case of identical voting patterns shall a formal tie be announced.
23. The identity and choices of individual voters, as well as any discussions during the count, shall remain confidential. A complete breakdown of nominees and points received shall be released within one month of the announcement of the winners.
24. The Nova Awards ballot form shall comprise a short introduction to the aims of the award and appropriate footnotes on definitions and eligibility, plus space for the voter to identify themselves and indicate their receipt of at least six different fanzines published in the UK or Ireland between 1 October of the preceding year and 30 September of the current year (separate issues of an individual fanzine or various organs of a group / society shall not be considered as different fanzines for the purposes of this total).
25. Further, the ballot form shall list the three categories, "Best Fanzine", "Best Fan Writer" and "Best Fan Artist"; in each case, space will be allotted for first-, second- and third-place votes.
26. Finally, if he or she wishes, the Administrator shall include a shortlist of known eligible fanzines, making clear this is intended as an *aide memoire* and is in no sense definitive.
27. Once the winners in all three categories have been decided, the ballot forms and any related notes shall be placed into an envelope and sealed, to be retained by the Administrator for

one calendar month in the event the results are challenged. If no such query is raised during this period, the envelope and its contents shall be destroyed. Should the results be called into question, the envelope - still sealed - shall be handed over to the chair of the relevant Novacon committee for further investigation.

28. The rules shall be posted on the Novacon website and hardcopies made available for a reasonable fee (covering printing and postage) upon request from the Administrator.
29. Any amendments to the above rules shall be made by the current Administrator in conjunction with the committee of that year's Novacon.

SG: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the previous Nova Award administrators for their input during the recent updating of the rules for the electronic age.

worlds beyond number



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85	Rae	Streets	125	Fran	Dowd
86	Mathilda	Streets	126	Flick	
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88	Jane	Cooper	128	June	Strachan
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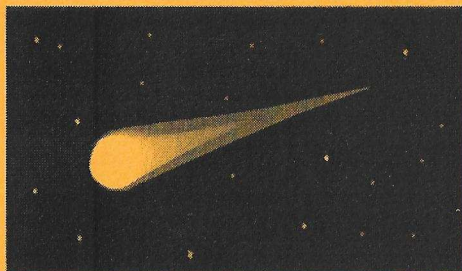
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Uncredited material by Dave Hicks, Martin Tudor and Steve Green. Printed by the Print Unit, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield, S1 1WB. via Steve and Alice Lawson.

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THE BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP was founded in 1971 to enable local and not so local fans to get together to discuss science fiction and related topics.

We meet on the second Friday of every month, 7:45pm at the Britannia Hotel. Just 5 Minutes from New Street Station and handy for all bus routes. We usually start the evening with a guest speaker, often a professional in the field such as Brian Aldiss, Terry Pratchett or Peter F. Hamilton.

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Ian Watson

ISBN: 1904853129

RRP: £12.99

When a young British couple, who make jigsaw puzzles, are hired by an ageing Norwegian to take nude photos of themselves in a sculpture park in Oslo, they are drawn into a web of occult Nazi horror. Even more horrifying will be the fate of the whole world some years later if alien visitors achieve their secret aims.

However, the aftermath of events in that Oslo park will provide Anna Sharman with a key to unlock those aims.

Anna is a rebel within Britain's intelligence service at a time when most of the world appeases the aliens because of the gifts they bring — and if she must lose her own body in order to discover the truth, she will do so.

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"...an absorbing novel by one of science fiction's most skilled writers..."

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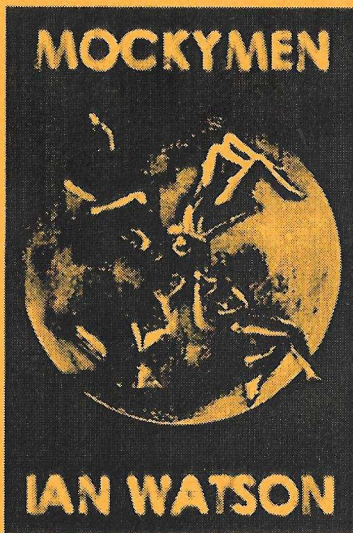
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