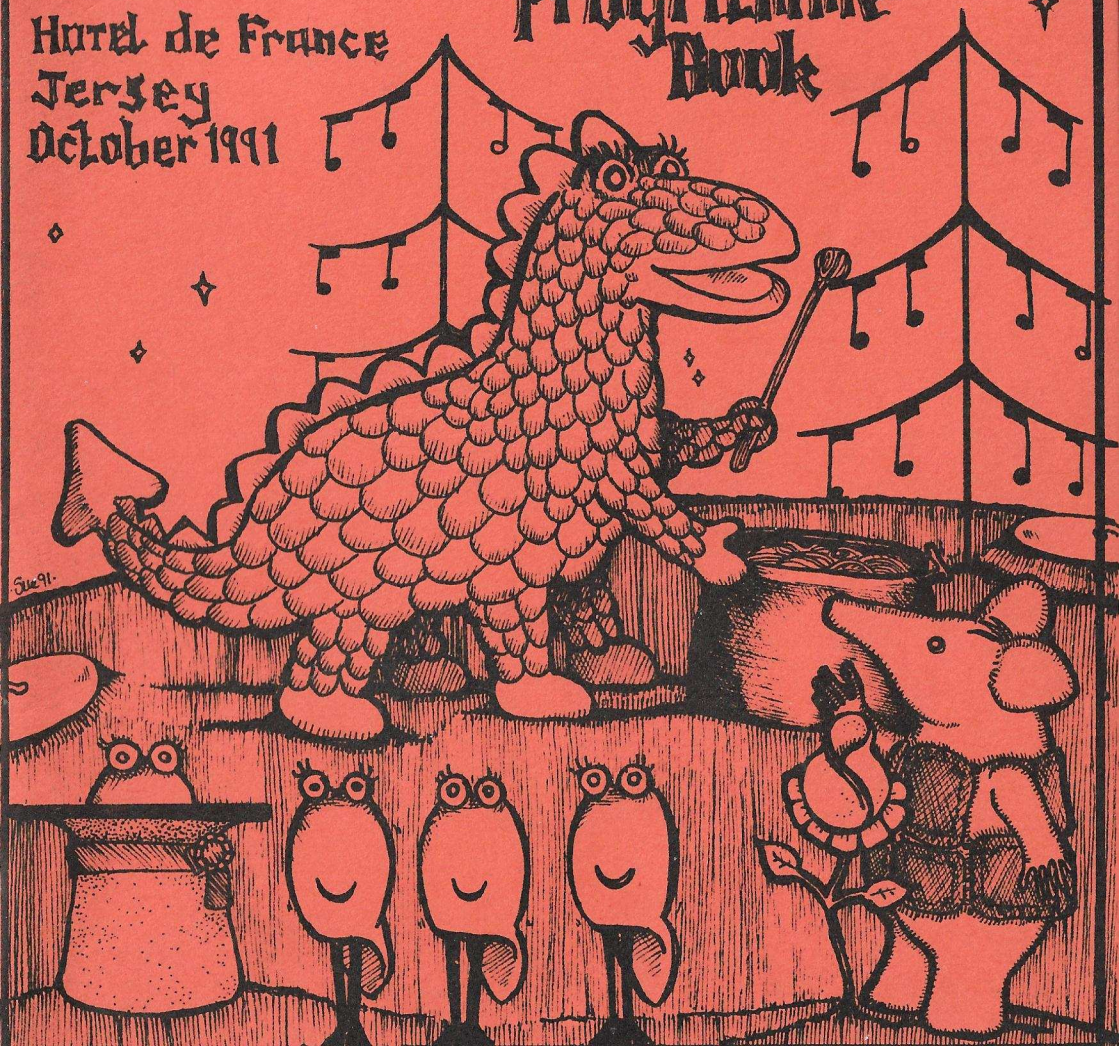


# Soupcon

## Programme Book

Hotel de France  
Jersey  
October 1991





# Contents

|                                            |                                                             |    |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction.....                          | <i>Steve Bull</i> .....                                     | 2  |
| Struthiocamelus Britannicus.....           | <i>Ian Watson</i> .....                                     | 3  |
| The Rereading File.....                    | <i>Steve Bull</i> .....                                     | 6  |
| Selected Bibliography.....                 |                                                             | 7  |
| Programme.....                             |                                                             | 8  |
| Programme Notes.....                       |                                                             | 9  |
| Alternative Programme.....                 |                                                             | 12 |
| Alternative Programme Notes.....           |                                                             | 13 |
| Mess of Pottage                            |                                                             |    |
| The Secret Science Fiction of Food.....    | <i>Martin Easterbrook</i> .....                             | 15 |
| Of Past Conventions on Jersey.....         | <i>Peter Wareham</i> .....                                  | 17 |
| Nothing in Melville Compares.....          | <i>John Richards</i> .....                                  | 18 |
| Singing for Your Supper.....               | <i>Rhodri James</i> .....                                   | 19 |
| Culinary Thrombosis.....                   | <i>Brian Ameringen</i> .....                                | 21 |
| QCD.....                                   | <i>Sean Ellis, Keith Oborn, Tim Illingworth et al</i> ..... | 24 |
| Soup of the Day                            |                                                             |    |
| Bacon and Sweetcorn Chowder.....           | <i>Brian Ameringen</i> .....                                | 28 |
| Rice Soup with Chicken.....                | <i>Steve Bull and Ruth Le Sueur</i> .....                   | 29 |
| The Committee in Someone Else's Words..... |                                                             | 30 |
| Membership list.....                       |                                                             | 31 |



# Introduction

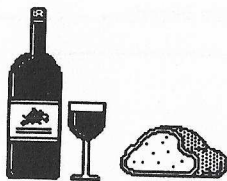
Welcome to Soupçon, the holiday convention in Jersey.

It is now two and a half years since we first came out to Jersey for Contrivance and many people liked it so much that they wanted to come back again. Several of the current committee were also on the Contrivance committee and didn't get much of a chance to see Jersey so we wanted to return as well but the problem was finding the time. All the free weekends were rapidly filling up with conventions and committee meetings and other ephemera so we thought that the best solution to our problem was to run a small convention on Jersey to give us a good excuse to get out of doing other things elsewhere.

Soupçon is that convention. Conceived as a holiday convention with ample time set aside for sight-seeing as well as a nice relaxed programme with minimal organisation, we hope even the most ardent panic-loving conrunner will be able to relax and take in the island. For this reason we are not starting the programme until the afternoon and we hope that both the bar and the programme room will act as a focus for fans to get together and talk. We've tried to encourage this with a number of comment slots and discussion circles on the programme to get people together to talk, drink, argue and generally have a good time.

Also by popular demand we have the banquet. The chef got a standing ovation at Contrivance. This time he's promised to do better.

Enjoy yourself.



## Credits

This programme book was produced by Steve Bull and Ruth Le Sueur. We would like to thank Ian Watson, Peter Wareham, Rhodri James, John Richards, Sean Ellis and all the other contributors. Cover artwork is by Sue Mason, internal artwork by Steve Bull.

This programme book was produced on an Apple Macintosh courtesy of AEA Technology. The copyright remains with the original contributors; all unattributed material © Soupçon 1991.

# Struthiocamelus Britannicus

by

Ian Watson

Just recently, we had our house refloored by Britain's first ostrich farmer. So I'd been hoping to confide some appropriate recipes, along the grand old lines of "Take one ostrich..." Alas, I can't seem to get hold of any. Recipes, that's to say. Not ostriches.

Hang on. What is an ostrich farmer doing reflooring our house in this little Northamptonshire village? (Apart from earning the money to fly in four more married ostriches from Bophutswana?)

Well, Frank Ayres is a builder, and he runs a little farm too. Recently he decided to diversify. Being aware that ostriches have been ranched in Southern Africa for a century, he decided to aim for a herd of three hundred in a Northamptonshire meadow as new neighbours for the perhaps puzzled cows and sheep. The ostriches oughtn't to be too puzzled. Apparently an ostrich's brain is smaller than a chicken's; and with that tiny data processor they have to run a body the size of a lesser inhabitant of Jurassic Park.

Though actually, when we visited the first nucleus of breeding pairs, they seemed consumed with curiosity. Their vacuum-hose necks snaked up and down as they jostled for a view, from ankle level or from high overhead. And they did enjoy running around in the snow last winter – for these are free range ostriches.

They're being raised for gourmet meat and quality leather.

There has been some local outcry at this from animal liberationists. On the other hand, a delightful vicar spoke out in favour on 'Thought for the Day' on Radio Four. "In these troubled times," he discoursed, "it is encouraging to hear of an example of initiative from Northamptonshire, where a local farmer is raising ostriches to provide meat and feathers for his neighbours..."

Ah yes, I can just see it.

Villager (tramping through snow): "Ar, Farmer Ayres, it been hard what with the plague and the building society reposessions..."

Farmer: "Why, take this drumstick for your lads and this bag of feathers for your duvet."

Villager: "God bless you. How much be that, then?"

Farmer: "Just three bob, Bob."



Actually, the business of ostrich acquisition is a bit more like a Frederick Forsyth novel. For years the South African government jealously guarded its ostrich expertise and breeding stock. Farmer Ayres's recent tree-top level flight into Namibia in search of fertile eggs brought him face to face with the Mafiosi of the ostrich ranching world, from whom he was relieved to escape alive. Yet the ostrich security cordon is leaky through the bantustans; hence the despatch of the fully fledged Big Birds from Bophutswana.

Why, when for years the Pretoria government were trying to find loopholes in sanctions, did they repress the presumably lucrative market in export of fertile ostrich eggs and expertise? Subconsciously, could the ostrich be the very emblem of the Afrikaaner apartheid soul?

Dear me, I'm sounding just like a certain vicar on the radio...! Fellow parishioners of the science fiction diocese, let us instead contemplate the future face of Britain as transfigured by internationalist gourmet-led growth. (For obviously export-led growth doesn't work.)

Ostriches will mainly supplant beef cattle from the fields, for there is simply more meat upon an ostrich than upon a cow. Rich, low cholesterol meat. Will fox hunting seem quite so much like a rampage by the Teutonic Knights if the huntsmen ride ostriches instead of horses? And what of the first ostrich Grand National?

We must adjust to change; we must envision alternative futures - that's what sf is all about.

Naturally, there'll be alligators in the greenhouse Thames. Ballard has already said so. But he didn't mention the alligator steak barbecues. Only Alsatian barbecues; that was in *High Rise*. A visionary text, prefiguring the actual solution to the problem of pitbull terriers which so sorely perplexes the present government.

Whereof sf speaks, thereof will come to pass. (Wittgenstein said that, somewhere in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.) But actually, what with ostriches and alligators and terrier roasts, I've been adopting a singularly carnivorous viewpoint...

Which reminds me (in the way that vicars are reminded of apt points) of the launch of *Omni* magazine back in late '78 or early '79, when Ben and Barbara Bova hosted a banquet in the Penthouse Club in London for assorted UK science-fictioners. "If you write for *Omni* magazine," declared Barbara Bova while we chewed our steaks, served by high-thighed waitresses, "you'll be able to eat like this all the time! Because I know that you in Britain are reduced to eating dog..." After that brandy-laced banquet I recall raincoat-clad Brian Stableford flapping away down a windy street like a shade in Hades, unaccountably towards a bin-crowded alleyway. I now realize he was probably doing early fieldwork towards *The*

Werewolves of London. All of us science-fictioneers who were present that evening received a free lifetime membership card to the Penthouse Club; and I wonder how many of us have been back there since... Chris Priest, in search of an infinite supper? Or perhaps Brian Stableford himself, since he's partial to gambling...

I mentioned Barbara Bova's interesting piece of observation to Ursula le Guin in a letter, to which she responded that she recalled an excellent saddle of corgi in Porthmadoc in '75, and how superior this was to the much dryer kosher dog she mostly got while living in Golders Green - though there one could at least be sure of the breed, whereas in Camden Town (where I presume John Clute must have fed her) what they sold as Alsatian was almost always Retriever.

I mention these important insights into what John Clute dared to serve Ursula for dinner, and where Brian Stableford first set out on the trail of werewolves, for biobibliographical completists. However, the point I was heading towards when I digressed is that this is all grossly carnivore.

We're forgetting all about genetic engineering - which John Varley certainly does not... with all his bacon-and-egg trees and whatever else.

The main advantage of vegetables is that they stay in one place. What's more, you can crowd them together. Crowding chickens together in battery cages isn't very pleasant. But who worries much about crowding tomatoes? So really I'd like you to consider the respective merits of meadows full of roaming ostriches - with those lethal-weapon feet of theirs which can gouge out a farmer's guts - and pitbull terrier roasts, and alligators in the Thames - versus John Varley's neo-vegetarian perspective of bushes from which we can pluck sausages.

Instead of a meadow of fractious ostriches, envisage an orchard full of ostrich-trees. Leathery bark, a great big bulbous meaty trunk-body, and feathery leaves. All growing placidly crammed together without a thought in the world. Or even quarter of a thought.

I really must get on the phone to Farmer Ayres and tell him my vision. He should be delighted.

Or should I just pay the bill instead?



## The Rereading File

### Steve Bull takes another look at Ian Watson

I must admit that when I found that Ian Watson was to be our Guest I could not remember the last time that I read one of his books. They were all there on the shelf (or at least on the library shelf in the case of some of the more recent). They were mostly well thumbed and obviously had been read before, but I wasn't sure when. So I started again and I must admit it was well worth the effort.

Ian Watson is a writer of plot and ideas whose works often probe the interface between perception and reality. His writing is dense and cerebral, filled with exotic locations and alien concepts which are detailed with considerable imagination and which force the reader to think. His characters are dragged along by the plot, often at breakneck speed, to the final transcendental confrontation in which much is resolved but some questions are left unanswered. This makes for a very interesting set of novels which are brim-full of good ideas.

One the face of it, his first novel, *The Embedding*, is about governmental and corporate power and the first contact with alien visitors. However, the three intertwining plots are mainly concerned with the ability of language to frame reality. It firmly established him as a fine speculative writer who links intellectual and scientific arguments with a desire for spiritual and physical transcendence which is a common thread in his later work. In *The Jonah Kit*, whales are the source of escape to another continuum whereas in *The Martian Inca* the key is a viral activator found in the soil of Mars. In the novel *Alien Embassy* there is a distinct impression that man is something to be surpassed. This novel has the most fluent style of the earlier books and deals with out-of-body experiences in a very convincing manner.

Though not overtly fantasy novels, these early works do evoke an aura of fantasy. *The Gardens of Delight*, though, is much more a fantasy novel with an SF rationale; in this novel space travellers arrive on a planet which is a living reproduction of the Heironymus Bosch triptych. The humour in this novel is very apparent and this is also the case in the near future thriller *Death-hunter*, and the more recent fantasy novel *Queen Magic*, *King Magic* which is loosely based on the game of chess.

Ian Watson has been accused of poor characterisation by some critics but this is largely because many characters are only sketched in as tools for the plot. The early novels are more about ideas than characters but in the recent trilogy, *The Book of the River*, *The Book of the Stars*, and *The Book of Being*, he has created a character, Yaleen, who is suitably human and shows a range of complexities as the trilogy develops. These books show some similarities to Philip Jose Farmer's *Riverworld* series but treat

their subject matter in a much more satisfying manner. They are perhaps the most successful of his novels, combining both good ideas and characterisation.

In his short fiction Ian Watson has often written allegorical or overtly political tales, such as his hatchet job on a well-known ex-Prime Minister in *Mistress of Cold*. These stories tend to use conventional SF images to make a very contemporary point. In recent years his short story output has been prolific.

Ian Watson is a thought-provoking author of ideas. He should not be ignored.

### Selected Bibliography

|                                                |      |
|------------------------------------------------|------|
| The Embedding                                  | 1973 |
| The Jonah kit                                  | 1975 |
| The Martian Inca                               | 1977 |
| Alien Embassy                                  | 1978 |
| Miracle Visitors                               | 1978 |
| God's World                                    | 1979 |
| The Very Slow Time Machine                     | 1979 |
| The Gardens of Delight                         | 1980 |
| Under Heaven's Bridge<br>(With Michael Bishop) | 1980 |
| Death-hunter                                   | 1981 |
| Sunstroke and Other Stories                    | 1982 |
| Chekhov's Journey                              | 1983 |
| Converts                                       | 1984 |
| The Book of the River                          | 1984 |
| The Book of the Stars                          | 1984 |
| The Book of Being                              | 1985 |
| Slow Birds and Other Stories                   | 1985 |
| Queen Magic, King Magic                        | 1986 |
| Evil Water and Other Stories                   | 1987 |
| Whores of Babylon                              | 1988 |
| The Fire Worm                                  | 1988 |
| The Power                                      | 1988 |
| Meat                                           | 1988 |
| Salvage Rites and Other Stories                | 1989 |
| The Flies of Memory                            | 1990 |





# Main Programme

| Time  | Friday                                                                                      | Saturday                                                         | Sunday                                                      |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2:00  |                                                                                             | Comment: First Person Singular<br><i>John Richards</i>           | Comment: Present Imperfect<br><i>Caroline Mullan</i>        |
| 2:30  |                                                                                             | The Munchausen Memorial Lectures<br><i>chair: Hugh Mascetti</i>  | Why are we here?<br><br><i>chair: Rhodri James</i>          |
| 4:00  |                                                                                             | Discussion Circles<br>Commencing at 4:00, 4:45 and 5:30          | The skiffy I'm reading now<br><br><i>chair: Paul Dormer</i> |
| 6:30  | Opening Ceremony                                                                            | Dress for Dinner                                                 | Grape Session                                               |
| 7:00  | Confessions of a Hotel Manager<br><i>Kevin Stuckey</i>                                      | Pre-Dinner Drinks<br>7:15 Starlight Bar<br><i>Jersey Tourism</i> | Handover to Helicon                                         |
| 8:00  | Noggin the Nog<br>versus<br>The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles<br><i>chair: Roger Perkins</i> | Banquet<br><br>Ian Watson speech                                 | Interval<br><br>(The committee will be founded in the bar)  |
| 9:30  | Call my Bluff<br><i>chair: Steve Bull</i>                                                   |                                                                  | Ze French Party<br>(Franglais spoken ici)                   |
| 11:00 | Filk<br><i>Mike Whitaker</i>                                                                | Challenge Quiz<br><i>chair: Steve Bull</i>                       |                                                             |

# Programme Notes

## FRIDAY

7:00 pm      Confessions of a Hotel Manager.

Kevin Stuckey, Conference and Banqueting Manager of the Hotel de France tells what a Convention looks like from his side. Don't miss this one, particularly if you are a conrunner, as there may be a few tips to pick up!

8:00 pm      Noggin the Nog vs The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

A selection of aficionados (er.. I think that's Leonardo's cousin) discuss the current state of children's television as against that of our youth. Nostalgia will be wallowed in quite shamelessly.

9:00 pm      Call my Bluff.

We haven't seen this one at cons for ages and there are a few new twists in this version. Steve Bull does his impersonation of Robert Robinson while the teams try and keep a straight face.

11:00 pm      Filk.

If there is anybody present who does not know what filksinging is, this is the place to find out. Mike Whittaker 'orchestrates' this scheduled session, though there may well be informal repeats later in the weekend.

## SATURDAY

2:00 pm      Comment: First Person Singular.

John Richards takes the stage to argue that conrunners are getting stale because they always want to do the same job.

2:30 pm      The Baron Munchausen Memorial Lectures.

The fabulous stories of Baron Munchausen are, almost by definition, legendary, and have recently been made into an entertaining film. Hugh Mascetti in the chair, invites the panel, including Ian Watson, to relate their own wonderful stories in homage to the great man.

4:00 pm      Discussion Circles.

As an experiment in different modes of programme presentation we will be running a number of discussion circles around tables in the hall. These will start at 45 minute intervals from 4:00 and continue until they run out



of steam or 6:00 intervenes.

We are not going to advertise in advance what they are about; each table will have a notice on it giving the topic, so just wander in and see if anything takes your fancy, grab a seat and join in. We expect the group around each table to change during the period of the discussion.

6:00 pm      Dress for Dinner.

This is a con, so there are no formal requirements on attire for the banquet. Nevertheless, some people will wish to change, so we have left a gap in the programme for their benefit.

7:15 pm      Pre-Dinner Drinks.

Jersey Tourism have kindly agreed to buy us all a drink before the banquet. At the time of going to press we expect this to be in the Starlight bar. We imagine this will be a popular item, so please be on time.

8:00 pm      The Banquet.

The main event of the weekend, and all but a few people are attending. There will be no pre-arranged seating plan, except for a couple of tables reserved for committee and guests, so just grab a seat – perhaps with some people you don't know very well yet?

After the food, Ian Watson will give his Guest of Honour speech, and there may be other entertainments planned...

11:00 pm      Challenge Quiz.

Steve Bull again occupies the post of Quizmaster, while teams of two from the audience challenge the champions of the moment. Have you linked up with someone to make a challenge?

## SUNDAY

2:00 pm      Comment: Present Imperfect.

Caroline Mullan will expound on a subject that is occupying her mind at the time – why is the present not the future we envisaged in the past?

2:30 pm      Why are We Here?

Under the chairmanship of Rhodri James, a mixed selection of our members ranging from our Guest of Honour to conrunners discuss why they attend conventions.

4:00 pm      The Skiffy I'm Reading Now.

Everybody says trufans don't actually read much SF. To investigate the truth of this, and to find out what the fan in the bar is actually reading now, we drew names from a hat to make up this panel. The resulting mix was interesting, and should provide a wide variety of views.

6: 30 pm      Grape Session.

Not quite the traditional business meeting. It will run directly into...

7:00 pm      ...Handover to Helicon.

Soupçon closes down (symbolically speaking), and passes the torch of Jersey Conventions on to Helicon, the 1993 Eastercon (incorporating Eurocon).

9:30 pm      Ze French Party.

Franglais spoken ici. Striped jerseys and berets are de rigueur. Vous avez un petit tippie avec le Committee, n'est-ce pas?

The chef will be worn out from his efforts at the banquet, so we will have to make do with Zen food;

Snail's legs

...

Cream of Vichyssoise

...

Fillet of Lobster

...

Aile de Cochon

avec

pommes de terre dans leurs coquilles  
assez de champignons

...

Diet Spotted Dick with low-calorie chocolate sauce

...

Ostrich Milk Cheeses

Fruit of the Loom

...

Sound Effect Coffee

Over-ate Mints

Wine: Chateau Moucheron.

Remember - Soupçon was brought to you by the letter ç.



## Alternative Programme

| Time  | Saturday (Keen)                                             | Sunday (Less keen)                                 | Monday (Not keen at all)                                 |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:30  | Quick Swim<br>to Stimulate Appetite                         | Zzzzz<br>zzzzz                                     | Zzzzz<br>zzzzz                                           |
| 8:00  | Breakfast                                                   | zzzzz                                              | zzzzz                                                    |
| 8:15  | Walk to ...                                                 | zzzzz<br>zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz                        | zzzzz<br>zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz                              |
| 9:45  | St. Aubin                                                   | Quick Breakfast<br><i>Omigosh, I've overslept!</i> | Quick Breakfast<br><i>Omigosh, I've overslept again!</i> |
| 10:00 | Walk to ...                                                 | Bar<br><br>Lunch in Hotel                          | Jersey Zoo                                               |
| 10:45 | St. Brelade's Bay and Church                                |                                                    |                                                          |
| 11:30 | La Corbière Point                                           |                                                    |                                                          |
| 12:00 | Lunch at L'Etacq                                            |                                                    |                                                          |
| 1:00  | Games on St. Ouen's Beach                                   | La Hougue Bie<br><i>Neolithic remains</i>          | Lunch at Greve de Lecq                                   |
| 3:00  | St. Peter's village,<br>car museum and<br>occupation museum | Mont Orgueil and Gorey                             |                                                          |
| 5:00  | Return to Hotel<br><i>Never again!</i>                      | Bar                                                |                                                          |
| 5:15  | Long Bath Ready for Banquet<br><i>Oh! My aching feet!</i>   |                                                    |                                                          |

## Alternative Programme Notes

### SATURDAY (For the Keen, Hearty and Super Fit)

9:45 am      St. Aubin

A whistle-stop tour of this town allows views of St. Helier across the bay (weather permitting). However, if you plan to spend any time here you'll be bored rigid.

10:45 am      St. Brelade's Bay and Church

After a quick look at these don't miss Jersey Lavender. Just follow your nose.

11:30 am      La Corbière Point

A rocky outcrop with a lighthouse – at low tide you can walk right up to its door but the tide will be in so rush on to...

12:00 noon    L'Etacq

Where the craftsmen will try and sell you pottery, woodcrafts and giant cabbages. Not to be missed by the serious tourist. For the serious puzzler there is a sliding-block car park here!

1:00            St. Ouen's Beach

It'll be cold so you'll need to play a few games to keep warm. We recommend French Cricket played with seagulls or spot the Martello Tower. Alternatively, if this doesn't appeal, visit the Battle of the Flowers Museum near L'Etacq and see the .22 calibre carnations.

3:00            St. Peter's Village

Plenty of museums to keep you occupied (arf, arf – visit the occupation museum in a WWII bunker). See if you can get round without spotting any signs of Bergerac.

### SUNDAY (For the less keen, hungover and overstuffed)

1:00            La Hougue Bie

A place to commune with nature, fans and other neolithic remains (ah, that Banquet...). The mound over the tomb is topped by two medieval chapels. If you haven't had enough of occupation museums there is another one here.

3:00

### Mont Orgueil Castle and Gorey

A real castle with too many real steps. Fans will appreciate how stoutly it defended the island from numerous French attacks. At 300ft above the harbour of Gorey it gives fantastic views of the town. The colour of the sea as viewed from the highest tower on the castle puts postcard photographers to shame – you'd never think it was the English Channel.

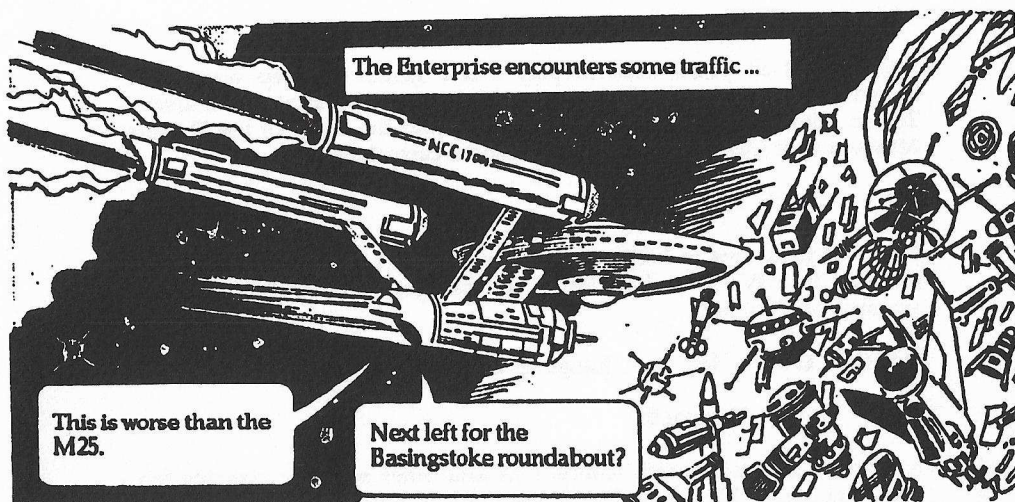
**MONDAY** (For the less than keen who want to prove that they left the hotel)

10:00 am Jersey Zoo

You've heard about the duck? Now's your chance to see it and swap a few well chosen words with the gorillas. Be sure you don't get mistaken for a red-striped lemur or they may lock you up in the breeding pens.

12:00 noon Greve de Lecq

Jersey's hidden beach with a less than hidden hill. Yet another museum for the enthusiastic. A place to get lost...





# Mess of Pottage: Tales of Fans, Food and Fun

The Secret Science Fiction of Food

Martin Easterbrook

The Science Fiction of food is a neglected topic. True there have been a few notable exceptions like *Soylent Green*, *To Serve Man* and Anne McCaffrey's *Science Fiction Cookbook* but in general food is a very unexplored area.

We can only wonder at some of the stories that might have been. *Tales of Known Plaice*, *Pastries in Flight* or even Terry Pratchett's immortal *The Light Flan Tasted*. Even in the world of Filk singing the pleasures of drinking have often been celebrated but the enjoyment of food is more rarely mentioned. Perhaps Leslie Fish (a name to conjure with) could have given us *Black Pudding and Alcohol* or we might even have hoped for an epic series of filksongs in the *Before The Prawns* saga...

With the enquiring mind, and rumbling stomach, of the true SF fan we must ask ourselves why food is not a more popular topic? I would suggest that the answer is to be found in the writings of James White, and in particular in the canteen of Sector General Hospital. To deal with their increasingly bizarre selection of patients the doctors resort to loading the complete experiences of their alien colleagues into their minds from 'brain tapes'. The unfortunate side effect of this is that, after a few tapes, they are unable to find anything to eat in the canteen that doesn't remind them of a relative.

This is likely to be a very genuine problem for any Galactic civilisation. Vegetarianism is no solution. Indeed because of its implicit belief that no chlorophyll based lifeform can achieve sentience, let alone civilisation, it is likely to be regarded as an extreme form of racialism.

Humanity itself has always harboured a fear that the secret desire of aliens is to eat us (cf V). Whenever the slimy/scaly/tentacled monster is creeping up behind the heroine it is never entirely clear whether he intends to throw her onto the bed or into the frying pan. (Fanzine editor Leroy Kettle was probably more accurate when he referred to aliens coming here to "eat our women and sleep with our food".) Again it is strange that the feminist writers of the 70's never produced an equivalent set of monsters with a desire to eat men. Perhaps the anatomical possibilities were too horrifying even for them (a dish not so much to make your mouth water as to make your eyes water!).

After prolonged exposure to the idea humanity might consider itself

ready to deal with other races with a 'taste' for getting to know us better - "This treaty is vital to our planet my dear. You must use your charms on their ambassador. Try dabbing some of this garlic behind your ear!"

Even so there may still be surprises in store for us. If we do ever encounter a race of vampires we may discover that from their point of view our literature abounds with books about food. I strongly suggest that any contact team which discovers that Dracula is being reviewed on the alien equivalent of The Food Programme engage warp drive immediately.

Perhaps to be on the safe side when we send out a group of colonists in cold sleep we ought to label them with a 'use by' date that will be long since expired before any aliens intercept their ship. Solutions for dealing with some aliens may be rather easier. It appears that the Kzin have a great affection for 'monkey meat' and take great pleasure in hunting it. Despite this I'm sure that anyone who takes the trouble to label themselves 'Whiskas' will only have to suffer the slight indignity of seeing them turn up their noses at the last minute and walk away in disgust.

Nevertheless this is still going to be a great problem for the future. I suggest that the only group with the skill to handle it are those who first detected it, Sector General. Chief psychologist O'Mara should immediately be transferred to a new establishment 'Burger General' with the mission of getting all species to eat together peaceably in the hope that franchises can be set up all over the Galaxy. Of course his first problem is going to be getting the best chefs in the interstellar community (including perhaps some of those from the Hotel de France) to work in any establishment with such a down market title. Perhaps, after this dealing with the aliens will be easy.

The problem of aliens with a desire to pursue the staff with a knife and fork can be solved by using organically-based non-sentient androids. The help of groups of role players can be sought to control these in such a way as to provide an interesting challenge for the diners (or in this case should they be known as 'roll players').

Other aliens will provide more subtle challenges for the establishment. There may be telepathic or empathic races that feed on raw (or perhaps just lightly heated) emotions. There will probably be no shortage of volunteers to generate the required quantities of lust. Applicants would, however, have to maintain a reasonable standard of cuisine or risk some display of displeasure by the telepathic guests ("Right now dear or we'll have a headache") and be prepared to lay on a quick snack for passing tourists at any time of the day or night.

Those telepaths that exist on a less wholesome diet, consisting of fear, terror, loathing etc., might appear to be more of a problem but this can easily be dealt with by arranging a regular programme of discussion meetings between conrunners and fanzine editors.



Only the form of the menu remains an intractable problem. The only system providing the required flexibility in describing such a large range of foods is the original four letter code used by Sector General to describe intelligent species. The psychological impact of this would be bad enough but it appears that the most common code used by various species to describe a well dressed and tasteful snack is FANS. Thus we are able to guarantee that the finest foods in all the galaxy will be available at SOUPÇON but perhaps not in the way you might have expected.

**Disclaimer** – We also promise that this article will be the last tasteless thing that you find at the convention (sez who? – Ed.).

## Of Conventions on Jersey

Peter Wareham

"I wonder if you would write a humourous article about Jersey after Contrivance. We would like to contrast the hectic conrunning with the lazy tourism at the same convention." Letter from Steve Bull, 15th August 1991.

Okay, so what DID I do on Jersey after Contrivance? Let's see...

On Tuesday morning, Gwen and I spent several hours helping to count the convention receipts. This was quite fun, especially when we had to borrow a luggage trolley from the hotel to move a briefcase full of money. It needed to be taken from where it was being counted back to the hotel safe for storage. Even though much of the cash was in the form of notes (at least six different varieties of pound notes, including an English one which, though not legal tender for several years was accepted without hesitation on Jersey), it was too heavy for us to trust the strength of the briefcase's handle. However, fun or not, this hardly counts as 'lazy tourism'.

On Tuesday afternoon, we went to the zoo, taking a cheque with us. This was the money which we had raised for the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, the convention charity. We took the opportunity to look around, of course, and show the cheque to the vast number of fans who were also there, before we handed it over to the Trust. The fans enjoyed looking at the animals, and the animals (particularly the gorillas) enjoyed looking at the fans. I suppose this might be considered tourism, but really it was convention business.

And on Wednesday, Gwen and I went to the airport, sent one postcard and flew back to England. We had decided some time earlier that, much though we would have liked to stay on the island, after the convention we



would be thoroughly exhausted, and a hotel full of fans would not be the best place to rest. Arriving on the mainland, we drove down to the south coast, booked into a randomly chosen small hotel in Chichester, and spent most of the next two days asleep.

Sorry, Steve, this doesn't much resemble what you asked for. Perhaps you should ask me again after Soupçon: not being on a committee, Gwen and I should, by then, have some idea what 'lazy tourism' on Jersey is really like. This was, incidentally, exactly the sort of thing that the postcard which we sent from the airport was intended to ensure. It was addressed to Tim Illingworth, and contained a pre-emptive resignation from anything which he might be thinking of organising. Seems to have worked so far, too: neither of us are involved in Soupçon or Helicon, except as members.

And, if you're interested, we can recommend quite a nice hotel in Chichester.

## Nothing in Melville Compares

John Richards

It was on the Sunday evening of the first Helicon committee meeting in Jersey. Much of our party had already flown off leaving, as rear guard, Chris Cooper, Tim Illingworth, Martin Hoare and myself. We had spent a rather pleasant evening in the bar but as evening drew on, the idea of food dragged us out into a Portuguese restaurant in St Helier.

Little did we know that we were about to witness the struggle of life itself acted out in a fish tank.

By the time we got to the main course we had been joined by another group of four men who, like ourselves, had apparently spent the earlier part of the evening ensconced in a bar. We ignored them as best we could but the volume, if not the subject matter, of their conversation made this rather difficult.

On a small table next to us was an aquarium in which were kept several live lobsters scurrying around in complex repeating patterns, separated from each other by walls of pebbles which they occasionally pushed up like aquatic bulldozers. One of the waiters who had been attending to our fellow diners detached himself from the group and wandered over to the tank. He indicated the lobster nearest to us. There was a strange sort of gargling noise from the table which both the waiter and I took to be an affirmation. Grimly the waiter rolled up his sleeve and took the lid off the tank.

Nothing in Melville compares with the grimness of the battle between

a lobster and a Portuguese waiter. It seemed an uneven fight. The lobster had limited freedom of movement and its pincers had been secured with rubber bands. However, as we watched we became aware that although its chances of getting out alive were distinctly limited, the lobster still could achieve a victory of sorts.

The waiter was having difficulty getting his hand down into the tank far enough to catch the scuttling crustacean. He stood sideways on to the tank, on the tips of his toes, trying to locate the lobster by touch. What he did not seem to be aware of was that his elbow was nudging the now upturned lid which seemed about to slide down into the tank. This would have not been too serious except for the fact that attached to this lid was an electric light bulb that normally hung above the surface of the water illuminating the tank's occupants. Each time the lobster moved away the waiter moved his arm and the lid's position became even more precarious.

With gathering excitement we began to make bets.

Life, however, is really not all that good at imitating art. The waiter's hand finally closed and the lobster was hoisted out of the tank and into the kitchen. Slightly disappointed, we returned to our meals and the other lobsters in the tank, remembering some urgent appointment in New Zealand, started frantic attempts at tunnelling.

We never saw the lobster again but I would like to think that in some way it did achieve a sort of victory. As we stood up to leave, the waiter returned from the kitchen with a covered plate. He moved over to the table where our fellow diners were seated and removed the cover with a flourish. We were just going through the door when we heard a startled cry. "F\*\*\*ing Hell, I never ordered that!"

## Singing for your Supper

Rhodri James

Musicians have a long and honourable tradition of singing for their supper. Everyone of course knows about the Celtic bards passing on truth and merriment in the chieftain's hut, except for the people who get irritated about what 'everyone knows'. Me, I've had quite enough of the Celtic of late, so I'm not even going to mention them after this paragraph.

See.

Thinking a little harder, we come upon the minstrels of the Dark Ages and later, providing entertainment for their lords to ensure a roof over



their heads and food and wine in their bellies. Life for an unemployed minstrel was not a happy prospect, wandering from village to village hoping that someone was going to feed you until you found a vacancy. The lengths some people went to in order to avoid this were enormous. For example consider Blondel, King Richard's court minstrel. When it became obvious that his tenure with Prince John was somewhat insecure, what did this mad melodist do but start bumbling about the continent looking for where his luncheon voucher, er, lord and master was being held captive.

Down through the ages, we see the aristocracy begin to take an interest in music-making. It's the in thing, don'tcha know? Still it was not exactly a lucrative business, even if being a whizz with the harpsichord got you lots of audiences with the Queen (in private, of course). Henry the Eighth only got away with writing music because he kept the day job.

Meanwhile back in the real world, the musicians were beginning to feel a little put out by this lordly trespassing on their prerogatives. After all, if the nobility started singing and playing, they wouldn't want to pay the professionals to do it any more. However, all was not lost. The church, people noticed, had all these terribly tedious bits of liturgy that could be brightened up no end by setting them to music. The monasteries had been doing it for centuries, after all. And if they have all this music, they're going to need someone to sing it and play the organ... do we smell money here, lads? Indeed it was so, and Bach for example had a tidy little earner with the church until they noticed what he and his wife were doing during the sermons (why did you think he had so many children?).

In these modern times of recession and unemployment, musicians are still only doing it for the fringe benefits. To make a living at it, an orchestra would have to charge the earth for what their patrons perceive as a couple of hours work. And you wonder why they get miffed if there's no party after the concert? That string quartet that you booked to play quietly in the background at your terribly posh evening do, they're there for the free food. The church choir will tell you that they do it all for God and Art – between mouthfuls of vol-au-vents. The disc jockey's drunk again. Even the filkers have their eyes on your sandwich...

It is ironic and somehow fitting that filking, the musical expression of fandom, is the one form of musicianship in which you can pretty much guarantee getting no fringe benefits unless you are a big name recording star. That is the way that fandom works, though; it's not the winning but the playing that matters, and the pleasure is in the style. Filkers, like most fans, really are not singing for their supper, because there's nothing to be gained from it. We're doing it for fun, just like we go to conventions or write fanzines for fun. Or, dare one say it, even read books for fun.

Is filk the better for this? Is it art? Who knows, and who cares as long as there is enjoyment to be had from it. Some of it is fine musical art, good



stuff for amateurs, because that's what the people making it want. Some of it is rowdy, tone-deaf chorusing, because that too is what the people making it want. There's a whole spectrum of music in between that is used, abused and occasionally put out of its misery, often with the same perpetrators involved in the highest of the high and the lowest of the low. Filk is, and that's all we really care about.

## Culinary Thrombosis

Brian Ameringen

When I left home to go to University I could make a cup of tea or coffee, and cook a mushroom omelette (my favourite!). After two terms of 'digs' and meals in the Students' Union, I went to work in Wallingford, as part of my 'sandwich' course. There I rented a room which had cooking facilities available, and, one evening for a friend, I cooked a Vesta Paella. The meal was pleasant, we had a good evening, and I resolved to try to cook a Paella for myself using fresh, instead of dried ingredients. Following the instructions (and contents list) on the Vesta packet (and adapting with a little difficulty) I produced a Paella with the usual peppers, chicken, prawns, sweetcorn etc... and it tasted fine. So gradually I started experimenting...

Very gradual it was too. Back at University I was still happy with a cold collation from Rackhams' or Lewis's food halls (and the salami and cooked meats were cheap then, too), supplemented by the occasional hot meal from one of the canteens. But, as a special treat, and as my speciality, I cooked Paella – everyone else cooked Spaghetti Bolognese, but I never did (and indeed never have!).

When I moved into official University accommodation, a shared kitchen became available all the time, and so I took the opportunity to experiment further with food. It was much more satisfying to invite a friend back for a meal than to go out (more intimate, and cheaper too!). Although I extended my repertoire to chicken, turkey and seafood (separately now, not together) I had, and indeed still have to some extent, a great aversion to red, bloody meat.

The roots of this aversion go back quite a long way, and can, I think, be attributed to two things; my sister used to smother her food in bright red (bloody) tomato ketchup (one of the few thing I still refuse to eat (except under sodium lighting!!!)); and, in Hebrew classes, when I was about 9 or 10, we had a teacher who spent what seemed like months on the subjects of the Kosher killing of animals (done in such a manner as to drain away the blood), and the times when women are unclean because of blood (the latter gave me nightmares, as it was unexplained – which allowed my imagination free reign!). In addition, my mother kept a Kosher home (of course) and so the meat never looked or smelt of blood. In fact when I worked for Sainsbury's years later, as a Saturday (shock, horror!) and

summer job, I would work on any counter but the meat one, and would hold my breath going past (or past any Butcher's shop, for that matter).

Soon after leaving University, I found a job, and rented a flatlet – which included a kitchen. I'd been given, or bought cheap/remaindered, a few cook-books, and was starting to get the hang of things. There was one period when I bought lots of different herbs and spices (quantity discount), and put so much in the food that it tasted terrible. But experience, poverty and hunger are great teachers (if you're broke, and still can't eat your meal – you go hungry!) and, usually, when I'd botched something the first time I knew what not to do subsequently. Of course if it worked out fine the first time it left me on tenterhooks... 'cause I knew it was going to go wrong sooner or later!

Finally, about 1977, I took a big step, and bought some beef from a butcher (not even from a supermarket!), and cooked it with red wine, garlic, walnuts (which seemed like a good idea at the time) and rice, for a friend. It wasn't bad... I hadn't sealed the meat or cooked it quite long enough, but it tasted OK, filled the two of us to a good-and-sufficient level, and assisted my friend in reaching a warm, appreciative frame of mind. Subsequently, having heard about 'sealing' meat, I tried what I thought was probably meant – frying quickly on all sides to seal in the juices – and it worked! So, no compunction about cooking beef now (just a twinge about handling it though!).

Another difficult stage was cooking offal; now I like eating liver, kidney and heart, but it's normally so messy and bloody (except chicken livers which you can turn straight out of a plastic tub into a frying pan, and stir). The first time I tried cooking kidneys, I grilled them until there was no blood oozing out – they tasted awful! But I persevered and will now prepare offal or red meat with no visible sign of reluctance (I just crawl inside!).

I've also learned to do the tricky, fiddly or just plain boring things... when I've got a job like shelling mounds of peas, cleaning Brussels sprouts, boning chickens or filleting fish, I put a record on (usually Brahms, Mendelssohn, Rachmaninov or Sibelius), and take my time, listening and working steadily and patiently. In fact I've come to rather enjoy the patient preparation that produces nice tasting, attractive food... which then provides egoboo when someone else enjoys it too. The fact that I'm far more patient with myself doing something fiddly than with someone else, is, of course, a tremendous advantage (a loud "hear, hear" from Caroline!!).

I like trying new, and often exotic ideas, whether they've been 'researched' from cookery books or passing restaurant menus – strange combinations, or just unusual ones, like chicken cooked in apple juice, with a sage, onion and apple stuffing; ham with a ginger wine sauce; spinach with garlic and pine-kernels; or even chicken cooked in satay



(Indonesian spicy peanut sauce)... but really, they're not all that strange.

I find it all but impossible to cook any recipe 'straight' – I try hard the first time, so I can try it the way the author intended... but usually I don't have quite all the ingredients or curiosity gets the better of me, and so I Adopt, Adapt, Improve?

Working with other cooks has been rather a strange experience for me. The thing is, my knowledge, experience and techniques are weird as far as others are concerned. For example, I've never made a classic roux sauce, Caroline was startled to find me pouring cornflour in a milk suspension into a saucepan full of hot milk, in order to thicken it – it's always worked, and it's very simple, so I've never questioned it. Similarly, when Caroline made a proper roux, with flour, I watched, and couldn't help remarking that it looked as if it was going very lumpy – it didn't, of course. Malcolm introduced me to fresh garlic. He probably didn't realise it, but up till then, I'd always used garlic granules or garlic salt, and, at a party or something, I offered to lend him a hand with the preparations. He handed me some cloves of garlic, and started peeling and slicing some himself. I watched him carefully, and copied him, and I think, until now, he's never known.

So working with other cooks has taught me quite a lot, and also made me question some of the 'standard' methods and techniques. Strangely enough, the easiest cook I ever worked with was 'Little John', a professional chef and a medievalist. The two of us assisted in the preparation of a banquet (which we later helped to demolish) and we seemed to have very similar ideas about methods and flavourings. Cooking together was quite fun in a balletic sort of way, as 'Little John' was about 22 stone with a 52" waist (his mother thought it was 56", so all his trousers were too large, and tended to fall down!) and he used to throw himself around the kitchen very quickly, which was quite hair-raising... I just got out of the way!!

The main thing about my cooking though, is that I cook for me. The seasonings, flavourings and style of food is to my taste, which, fortunately, seems to be acceptable to almost everyone. This does have a disadvantage in that the flavourings I like I tend to use very frequently: onion, garlic, chive, mushroom, cheese, tomato (with a small mental struggle), oregano, sage, basil, bay, tarragon, thyme, chilli and most important: salt and pepper!! Additionally I still have a tendency to cook light meat rather than dark, but this is partly due to the cost of beef, rather than the aversion that once existed.

I see myself as a cook, not a chef – I differentiate the two in my mind according to a TV programme I saw years ago... the basic plot is that a couple of kids have got themselves a butler (or equivalent general factotum) and they enter him in a cooking contest. The other contestants prepare various 'exotic' dishes such as a (collapsed) soufflé, and an (overspiced) curry... our 'hero' prepares an Irish Stew. The judges come



back for second helpings! That's the way I want to cook. Not too fancy, not too surprising, but something that persuades the consumer to come back for just one more helping!

Of one thing I now feel fairly sure, I'm no longer what my mother trained me to be... Culinary Thrombosis... a clot in the kitchen!

Before I sign off, I've just thought of quoting here from **Astrology in the Kitchen**, by Maria Donovan. This is Scorpio in the kitchen...

"Scorpions are inclined to be gourmets, and both male and female have a flair and aptitude for cooking. Attracted to open air markets, specialised food stores, delicatessen counters, Scorpions devote their full attention to cooking, which they treat not only as a hobby but as a science. They love experimenting with complicated recipes, derive a sensuous pleasure from handling and arranging food, from carving a joint, dissecting a chicken and filleting fish. They never go in for short cuts and like highly seasoned and complex dishes."

Well, I think she got quite a lot of that dead right, which explains, in part, my interest in astrology. If you want to know what some of the other reasons are, stop me late at night at a convention, ask me what I've got in my pocket, join me in a drink, and then I might explain.

## **QCD**

**or**

### **Can quantum theory shed any light on the behaviour and structure of our favourite confection?**

by Sean Ellis, Keith Oborn, Tim Illingworth, et al.

It is interesting to reflect that, in so many branches of physics, elegant isomorphisms appear as if from nowhere between apparently unrelated branches of the subject. It was, therefore, almost completely serendipitous that the subject of QCD, or Quantum ChocoDynamics, was recently discovered by a group of dedicated researchers including myself at the CERC (European laboratory for chocolate physics).

The bulk physical properties of chocolate are, of course, well known. Even superdense forms, such as the well-studied '5kg bar' phase, have been researched almost to a standstill. In many areas of chocolate science it

was believed that there was little new to be discovered, and any further work would simply be a process of refinement or existing theories.

However, during the course of the last decade, my colleagues and I have been involved in an investigation of chocolate physics at the smallest scales and the highest energies using CERC's latest acquisition, the LSC (Large Smartie Collider).

All chocolates can be characterised by a set of quantum numbers, such as mass, spin and more recently, colour and flavour. Some chocolates have the property that many of them can occupy the same quantum state, especially at high thermal energies. These are the "Buttons", which carry forces between the 'Firmions', which obey the exclusion principal and furthermore don't melt in your hand. These were the two constituents of chocolate as perceived in the late 1960's.

It was shown in the late 1970's, with comparatively low-energy collisions between truffles of various varieties, that most chocolate was not, in fact, indivisible, and the Smartie was postulated as a constituent particle of all chocolate. It would have a definite spin, as with most chocolates previously thought indivisible, but would have two additional quantum numbers dubbed colour and flavour. Any Firmion would be composed of a colourless (or at worst murky brown) combination of smarties bound tightly together. At the same time, three 'flavours' of chocolate were proposed: Plain, Milk and White, with white being the rarest and least stable of the three. White chocolate seemed to persist for a lot less time than the other two varieties.

The exclusion principle shows that no two Firmions may occupy the same quantum state at the same time, which accounts for the lack of evidence for the Smartie in USA. It seems that all available States have been filled with M&M's.

In order to get round the exclusion principle for Firmions, and allow Smarties to gather together into more complex forms, it was necessary to postulate that Smarties had an additional quantum number, or 'colour' as it came to be known. The three basic colours were Red, Green and Yellow, and their anti-colours Brown, Orange and Blue. All normal chocolate was made up from colourless combinations of the elementary Smarties.

This served to explain every known form of chocolate at the time, and even to predict the existence of new types before they were discovered. It was, however, only a matter of time before several types of chocolate were discovered which did not fit the neat theories of High Energy Chocolate Physics at the time. It was time for a new model, or at least an extension of the old one.

Over several years at the LSC, it became apparent that there were not three flavours of chocolate, but six. Belgian, Orange, and the as yet



undiscovered Mint completed the sixfold way, explaining all observed forms of aggregate chocolate. Measurements of the lifetime of the 5kg bar, the heaviest and shortest lived form of chocolate known to date, imply that these six basic forms constitute the entire panoply of chocolate forms in the universe.

Unfortunately, as with all things fundamentally quantum in nature, we run up against the uncertainty principle. This states that you can know how many Smarties there are in a tube, or what colours they are, but not at the same time. When they are not being observed, their colour is undecided. In fact, certain researchers believe that our observations affect the outcome of experiments in much more profound ways than this, and new particles like the Blue Smartie and the Hundred and Thousand have emerged simply because we believe in them.

Despite our success, however, we still have some mysteries left for future debate and experiment. The Hundred, a nearly massless particle postulated in the late 50's and its partner the Thousand, may be joined by an undiscovered particle, nicknamed the Million. Hundreds and Thousands are a common product of Smartie collisions at all energies, and are extraordinarily difficult to detect. If these light particles can be shown to have mass, they may explain the missing dark matter in the Universe and thus provide a clue to Galaxy formation.

Similarly, recent advances in string theory and supersymmetry suggest the existence of a chocolate space-time 'foam' at very small scales, providing a mechanism for the Aero, and the possibility of white and black 'Smartinos'. There have been several possible events showing evidence for the latter, although there is, as yet, no unequivocal proof. Our international research bodies have recently given us a grant to start construction of an even larger collider, as yet unnamed, to compete with the SSC (Superconducting Smartie Collider) in the USSR. With this tool, we hope to explore these mysteries as well as the wavelike properties of highly focused beams of Smarties.

Unlike high energy particle physics, however, there have been substantial practical benefits. The discovery of fissile chocolate was made several years ago, using enriched plain chocolate as fuel and sponge cake as a moderator. The prototype was constructed in a squash court at the Rivermead Sports Centre in Reading one Sunday afternoon, and was shown to produce over five megawatts of radiant power, as well as a rather sticky surface to the squash court.

The basic design has now been refined to the point where the Government, in reaction the protests against Sizewell B, will be building on the site a PSCMCMCR (Pressurized Sponge Cake Moderated Circulating Molten Chocolate Reactor) or 'Jaffa Cake' as it is affectionately known. This, it is hoped, will produce over five hundred megawatts of clean choclear power. Worries about decommissioning are slowing the



construction, as various pressure groups are worried about the impact of all the generated waste.

However, the problem of how to get rid of over one metric ton of reclaimed Champagne Truffles is being given a DoE approved test in October, with the approval of the Soupçon committee, and the now informed body of its membership ...

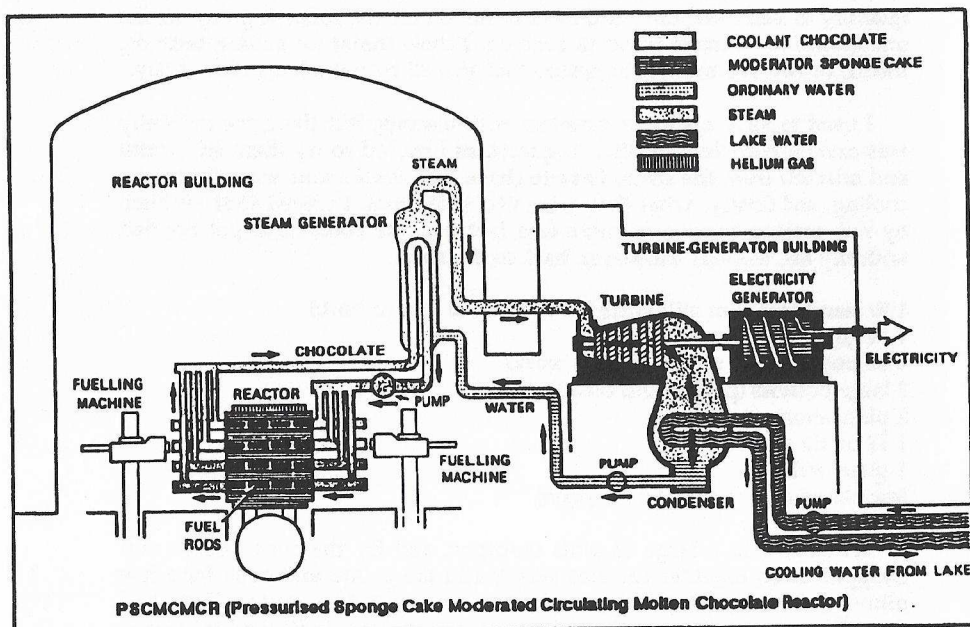


Figure 1 Schematic of the proposed PSCMCMCR (Pressurised Sponge Cake Moderated Circulating Molten Chocolate Reactor) to be built in Bournville in 1993. The design is by Thorntons, the chocolate engineers, based on a research contract from the Belgian Government.

## Soup of the Day

A convention called Soupçon could hardly go past without mentioning a few soups at least in passing. We go one stage further and suggest a few recipes.

### BACON AND SWEETCORN CHOWDER: Brian Ameringen

Whenever I make soup (which isn't often) I try to make a large enough quantity to feed everyone, and have some left for the following day, or the one after. I seem fated never to succeed. People insist on having seconds, thirds, or howevermanys, to ensure that there'll be none left the next day.

I used to have a similar problem with biscuits, but there the difficulty was making sufficient to offer to guests, as I tended to try them still warm and crumbly from the oven, have to check how the flavour was affected by cooling, and finally, what they were like when cool. I solved that problem by not cooking them any more (the fact that the cook-book got flooded with my flat, helped). However, back to the soup...

1 lb lean bacon (I'm still addicted to smoked loin of pork)  
1 large spanish onion  
4 oz butter (ready salted, it's less work)  
2 large potatoes (peeled and diced)  
2 pints strong stock  
1 12 oz tin sweetcorn  
1 quart milk  
few cloves of garlic (just a soupçon)

Melt butter in a large (8 pint) saucepan, and fry the cubed bacon and chopped onion together (or vice versa), add the potato and cook for a few minutes. Pour the stock in and simmer for about 45 minutes. Then add the milk and sweetcorn, stir and taste for seasoning (will probably need some pepper), heat through and serve - some chopped parsley adds a decorative touch!

As usual, something always goes wrong: when I tried this for the Beccon committee the potato, which is supposed to disintegrate and help the onion thicken the soup (thus making it a chowder) didn't, and I had cubes of potato bobbing around refusing to oblige. Finally, in exasperation I crushed the cubes against the side of the saucepan, cooked it a little longer than I originally intended, and an approximation to the correct result was obtained. Needless to say, they drank every last drop (sniff).





## RICE SOUP WITH CHICKEN: Steve Bull and Ruth Le Sueur

Khao Tom or Rice Soup is a well-established Asian cure-all which is often a Grandmother's solution to any minor ailments within her family. In the Jewish community a similar mystique surrounds chicken soup if fable and Maureen Lipman are to be believed, so Rice Soup with Chicken would seem a perfect therapeutic combination. It also tastes wonderful. According to a friend of ours this is a mild soup which is eaten in Thailand at any time of the day, especially if they are feeling under the weather. It is also claimed to be a hangover cure...

For six servings you will need:-

4oz uncooked rice  
1 tablespoon oil (vegetable)  
1 tablespoon chopped garlic (or to taste)  
1 tablespoon chopped ginger  
8oz lean chicken, diced (or other meat, but chicken tastes best)  
1 tablespoon white pepper (yes, really)  
3 tablespoons fish sauce (from good Asian Greengrocers)  
1 medium onion, sliced  
Handful of chopped fresh coriander  
3 chopped spring onions

Garnish (optional)  
Sliced chillies  
Sliced red or green pepper  
Crispy fried noodles

Rinse the rice in several changes of water to remove the starch, then place in a saucepan with 4 pints of water and bring to the boil. Simmer slowly adding more water as necessary until the rice becomes like porridge. You should be left with about 3 pints of liquid (rice stock) at this stage. In another large saucepan heat the oil and then stir-fry the garlic and ginger. Once these have browned add the chicken, pepper and fish sauce. The fish sauce is very pungent so it is worth opening a window or two at this time; some people think that the smell is revolting (particularly the mixture of fish sauce and white pepper) but the same people adore the taste. As cooking progresses the smell becomes less marked. Stir-fry until the chicken is cooked, then add the onion, rice and rice stock and cook for another few minutes. Just before serving stir in the chopped coriander and spring onions and add garnishes of your choice. In our experience the soup won't last long enough to worry about reheating.

## The Committee in Someone Else's Words

When asked for a short committee biography, the jaded old lags dragged out previous versions and the enthusiastic newcomers stared blankly at an even blanker piece of paper. In the end, no-one could come up with anything new and original so we asked a local drunk to do it for us. There is a Zen prize for each true statement discovered in them.

**Tim Illingworth** – stuffs parrots for a living and likes to play darts in the evening having an interest in feathers. He is a most unwilling committee member and has perfected the art of screaming in stereo. He has eight foot long blond hair which is not his own. Tim is a minestrone allegretto.

**Roger Perkins** – is employed by the post office to hand colour first class stamps. He thinks England is far too cold and would like to emigrate to the Mojave desert. Roger can never keep track of more than one five pound note at a time. He is the thinnest member of the committee and has been known to pass for a credit card. Roger is a cream of mushroom pizzicato.

**Steve Bull** – is employed by the Government of the South Sandwich Islands to count two-toed spoonbills but hasn't made it past three yet. His work on the committee is therefore necessarily limited to cutting out pictures from glossy magazines and pasting them into a scrapbook. He can be recognised by his long flowing black beard. Steve is an alphabetti obligato.

**Ruth Le Sueur** – is a washing machine psychotherapist with a burning desire to conquer the world of electronic appliances. She has taken to committee life in much the same way that pit props have taken to ironing. She is the committee member with the shortest hair and is violently allergic to Cezanne. Ruth is a mulligatawny misterioso.

**Ben Brown** – has a perfect sense of time which fits him for his job of calibrating caesium clocks. His excellent impression of three froglets has proved invaluable for convention publications. Ben has one leg shorter than the other and walks round at an angle. He is a leek and potato sonata.

**Martin Easterbrook** – is a raven at the Tower of London and cannot leave without the Queen's permission. We are lucky to have him at the convention and even luckier that by his consummate skill he managed to fulfil his committee post as agent for the Bismarck Archipelago (Papua New Guinea). Martin is the only member of the committee with three eyes (all his own). He is a rondo farmhouse vegetable.

# Membership List

|     |                         |     |                    |
|-----|-------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| 57  | Allcock Philip          | 140 | Dobson Perdy       |
| 68  | Ameringen Brian         | 28  | Docherty Vince     |
| 104 | Anderson Fiona          | 21  | Dormer Paul        |
| 94  | Armstrong-Bridges Jill  | 18  | Easterbrook Martin |
| 93  | Armstrong-Bridges Keith | 61  | Easthope Cathryn   |
| 19  | Austin Margaret         | 98  | Edwards Sue        |
| 65  | Balen Henry             | 85  | English John       |
| 107 | Blackburn Lissa         | 66  | Epstein Amanda     |
| 37  | Booth Duncan            | 30  | Fine Colin         |
| 36  | Booth Judy              | 103 | Flatt Brian        |
| 24  | Booth Susan             | 27  | Francis Susan      |
| 49  | Braggins Alan           | 89  | Fry Karenna        |
| 15  | Brown Ben               | 34  | Funnell Gwen       |
| 90  | Brown Pat               | 112 | Griffith Denise    |
| 70  | Bull Steve              | 100 | Haines Nick        |
| 29  | Cain Steven A.          | 127 | Hancox Kay         |
| 96  | Cataroche Sheila        | 16  | Hoare Martin       |
| 51  | Cheater Mike            | 11  | Illingworth Tim    |
| 72  | Cochran David 'Eddie'   | 58  | James Rhodri       |
| 12  | Cooper Barbara          | 40  | James Wilf         |
| 13  | Cooper Chris            | 131 | Joyce Kevin R.     |
| 73  | Cooper Kate             | 44  | Kaill Mike         |
| 97  | Cox Dave                | 81  | Kenny Eileen       |
| 117 | Cox Di                  | 80  | Kenny Rory         |
| 118 | Cox John                | 86  | King Vicki         |
| 129 | Croft Andy              | 102 | Kohler Alice       |
| 62  | Cruttenden 1/2r         | 69  | Le Sueur Ruth      |
| 63  | Cruttenden Wendy        | 132 | Levrier Michelle   |
| 47  | Culpin Rafe             | 64  | Linton Steve       |
| 76  | Curzon Patrick          | 95  | Longley Bill       |
| 22  | Dallman John            | 122 | Mascetti Barbara   |
| 46  | Davies Steve            | 121 | Mascetti Hugh      |
| 125 | Dawe Martyn             | 116 | Maskens Paul       |
| 26  | Day Robert              | 67  | Mason Sue          |
| 115 | De Cesare Giulia        | 52  | Maughan Ian        |
| 83  | de Wolfe Simon          | 78  | Maughan Robert     |
| 55  | Dickson Iain            | 133 | Maund Irene        |
| 139 | Dobson Dermot           | 113 | Maund Kari         |
|     |                         | 20  | McAulay Catherine  |



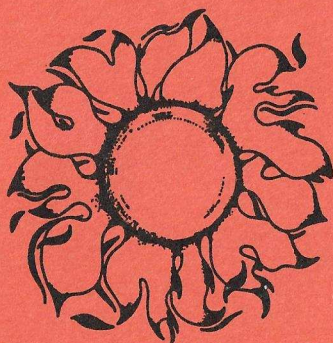
101 Meades Rob  
 91 Milford Christine  
 92 Milford Sheila  
 35 Mills Nick  
 48 Mittenshaw-Hodge  
     Neale  
 42 Morris Andy  
 111 Mortimer Steph  
 45 Mullan Caroline  
 114 Nanson Phil  
 106 Nanson Tom  
 53 North Gytha  
 39 O'Shea Chris  
 130 Oborn Krystyna  
 82 Page Anne  
 120 Paterson Joan  
 23 Peek Bernie  
 10 Perkins Roger  
 99 Plumbly Phil  
 126 Plummer Mark  
 79 Raine Jo  
 54 Rampant Richard  
 71 Ramsbottom Rae  
 50 Richards John  
 135 Roberts Margaret  
 136 Roberts Tony  
 38 Robinson Roger.  
 77 Robson Nigel  
 142 Rohan Debbie  
 141 Rohan Mike Scott  
 123 Rundle Anne  
 32 Scott Alison  
 31 Scott Mike  
 25 Sheward Jean  
 109 Sidaway Kurt  
 108 Smith Lisa  
 56 Smith Peter  
 74 Southern Chris  
 75 Southern Jenny

41 Steel James  
 14 Stewart John  
 59 Streets Marcus  
 110 Stuckey Kevin  
 60 Suslowicz Chris  
 119 TIBS  
 87 van der Putte Larry  
 17 van Toorn Kees  
 43 van Zijl Desiree  
 134 Waggott John L  
 33 Wareham Peter  
 1 Watson Ian  
 3 Watson Jessica  
 2 Watson Judy  
 88 Weller W. A.  
 105 Westhead Kathy  
 138 Westhead Mike  
 124 Whittaker Mike  
 137 White Margaret  
 84 Wickham W G  
 128 Williams Linda



# HELICON

9-12 April 1993



1993 Eastercon and  
Eurocon in Jersey,  
at the Hotel de France

Guests: George R.R. Martin  
John Brunner

Rates: £20 attending (£22 from December)  
£10 supporting (£11 from December)

HELICON, 63 Drake Road, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 1LQ