Lexicon

■ It's about books!

Read Me Later

A souvenir of Lexicon
Exeter College, Oxford 18-20 August 2000

Lexicon:

♦ noun the vocabulary of a person, language, or branch of knowledge: *the size of the English lexicon.*

■ a dictionary, especially of Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, or Arabic: *a Greek–Latin lexicon.*

ORIGIN early 17th century modern Latin, from Greek *lexikon (biblion)* '(book) of words', from *lexis* 'word', from *legein* 'speak'.

New Oxford English Dictionary

The word lexicon designates a wordbook, but it also has a special abstract meaning among linguists, referring to the body of separable structural units of which the language is made up. In this sense, a preliterate culture has a lexicon long before its units are written in a dictionary. Scholars sometimes use "lexis" to designate this lexical element of language.

The compilation of a dictionary is lexicography; lexicology is a branch of linguistics in which, with the utmost scientific rigour, the theories that lexicographers use in the solution of their problems are developed.

Encyclopaedia Britannica

1791 Boswell, Life of Johnson He thought it right in a lexicon of our language to collect many words which had fallen into disuse.
1823 Byron, Don Juan Fifty thousand heroes, name by name Would form a lengthy lexicon of glory.
1973 Times 31 July He said the term—deep six—meaning throw in the river—had not been 'part of my lexicon'.
1826 Sydney Smith The boy who is lexicon-struck in early youth looks upon all books afterwards with horror.
1848 Clough Bothie Leaving vocabular ghosts undisturbed in their lexicon limbo.

IT'S ABOUT BOOKS!

Welcome to Lexicon

The improbable speaking chair

Welcome to Lexicon—or equally likely, welcome to the train journey home afterwards where fannish surveys assure us most people first open the souvenir booklet, programme book or as we've decided to call it, the Read Me Later. If you're looking for the programme itself, you'll find that in our Read Me Now (in the Read Me Inside section). Here you'll find our thoughts about Unicons, more information about our guest, Philip Pullman, and some details about the bid for the 2001 Unicon in York. If you haven't been to a Unicon before, this is the 'academic' or student science fiction convention. Only one member of our committee is a student at the moment, though between us we've spent a large proportion of our lives in academic institutions. For me, being involved with the Unicon has been rather poignant; the first time since I went down from Oxford that I've spent much time inside colleges and a firm reminder of what a fine place a university is to spend time, especially one with such a splendid library as the Bodleian. For one reason and another I never managed to join the Oxford University Science Fiction Society, although I do remember choosing piles of sf to bring back to college with me to read every term.

The flavour of university life brings me neatly to our guest, Philip Pullman. Not only does he live in Oxford, but he attended Exeter College himself (a piece of serendipity we weren't aware of when we booked the site). Perhaps that's why he captures the atmosphere of Oxford so well in his books (the modern labs as well as the more traditional colleges).

We also tried to make a little more of the academic side of the convention, talking about how science fiction is taught and inviting Dr Andy Butler to teach a tutorial on *Northern Lights*. Perhaps it's because we're already living in what most people have always considered to be "the future" (what did you plan to be doing in the year 2000?). Perhaps it's the acceleration of scientific and technical developments (most of them hailed by the popular press with the line "it used to be science fiction but now…"). Perhaps it's because Hollywood has discovered that sci-fi blockbusters go down well at the box office (shame they lose the science along with the plot so often). Whyever it is, it's good to see that at least in some universities, science fiction has a much better standing than in the days when we studied *1984* and *Brave New World* only to be told flat out that they weren't science fiction.

It's a truism that the best science fiction has been claimed by the literary establishment as mainstream, infuriating many fans who feel the whole tradition of enquiry, imagination and extrapolation deserves recognition. It's always amused me that the same thing happens with the field of that sf staple, artificial intelligence, where any development that's good enough to actually be used it immediately annexed by mainstream computing. If it works, it can't be artificial intelligence! In fact voice recognition and adaptive interfaces that learn from what you do may not be quite good enough for business, but they made Furbys a hit with kids.

And children, and children's books, bring us back to Philip Pullman, who is charming, friendly and a captivating writer. If you've not read ay of his books yet, we hope Lexicon has tempted you to start. I'd like to thank Philip Pullman, and everyone else who has helped us over the last year—and you for coming along. See you at the next Unicon.

Mary Branscombe

Philip Pullman

Philip Pullman was born in Norwich in 19 October 1946. The early part of his life was spent travelling all over the world, because his father and then his stepfather were both in the Royal Air Force. He spent part of his childhood in Australia, where he first met the wonders of comics, and grew to love Superman and Batman in particular.

From the age of 11, he lived in north Wales, having moved back to Britain. It was a time when children were allowed to roam anywhere, to play in the streets, to wander over hills, and he took full advantage of it. His English teacher, Miss Enid Jones, was a big influence on him, and he still sends her copies of his books.

After he left school he went to Exeter College, Oxford, to read English. He did a number of odd jobs for a while, and then moved back to Oxford to become a teacher. After teaching at various middle schools for twelve years, he moved to Westminster College, Oxford to be a part-time lecturer. He taught courses on the Victorian novel and on the folk tale, and also a course examining how words and pictures fit together. Eventually he left teaching in order to write full-time.

His first published novel was for adults, but he began writing for children when he was a teacher. Some of his novels were based on plays he wrote for his school pupils, such as *The Ruby In The Smoke* (the first of the Sally Lockhart books).

His Dark Materials trilogy is a powerful, epic tale, set in a world parallel to ours and very similar in some ways - though very different in others. It features the brave and curious young Lyra and her dæmon Pantalaimon, and the story deals among other things with the concepts of religion: with guilt and innocence, with death and with the origin of the soul. This is the source of some of its attraction for the many thousands of readers who have responded to it all over the world, because so much literature for adults now avoids such large subjects.

Philip still lives in Oxford, and he writes in a shed at the bottom of his garden. The shed contains two comfortable chairs (one for writing in, one for sitting at the computer in), several hundred books, a six-foot-long stuffed rat which took a part in his play *Sherlock Holmes and the Limehouse Horror*, a guitar, a saxophone, and the aforementioned computer. The computer is decorated with a ritual mask from the East Indies and dozens of brightly coloured artificial flowers attached to it by Blu-Tack.

Blu-Tack plays a big part in Philip Pullman's writing process. With it he sticks to the wall pictures, notes, posters, reminders, postcards, book jackets, anything that will stay there.

Another product of technology that he can't do without is Post-it Notes, the smallest yellow ones in particular. It seems they are very useful for planning the shape of a story: you can write a brief sentence summarising a scene on one of them, and then you can get a very big piece of paper and fill it up with sixty or more different scenes, and move them around to get them in the best order.

Philip Pullman believes firmly in the virtues of healthy exercise and a moderate diet—for other people. It makes them feel virtuous, and makes them feel good if not happy. The most exercise he normally takes is unscrewing the top of the whisky bottle. If he liked the taste of tobacco, he would smoke vigorously. He is fond of sport, and plays it by watching television. He is a big fan of *Neighbours*, but that is the only soap he watches, as it gives him quite enough to think about.

"Stories are the most important thing in the world.

Without stories, we wouldn't be human beings at all."

Philip Pullman

He is married to Jude. Their son Jamie is a viola player, and their younger son Tom goes to school in Oxford.

As far as he can tell, Philip Pullman is moderately harmless and useful. He would like to carry on doing what he's doing now, and there seems no reason why he shouldn't but if it suddenly became against the law to write stories, he would break the law without a second's hesitation.

In 1999, Philip Pullman was one of the authors in the running for the Children's Laureateship. Children's authors Philip admires include Jan Mark, Alan Garner, Peter Dickinson, Anne Fine and Janni Howker. 🕮

Philip Pullman: bibliography

Galatea
Victor Gollanz, 1978

The Broken Bridge
Macmillan, 1990

The White Mercedes
Macmillan, 1992

The Firework-Maker's Daughter
Doubleday, 1995
Smarties Gold Award 1996

Clockwork
Doubleday, 1995
Smarties Silver Award 1997
Shortlisted for the Whitbread Children's Book of the Year 1997
Shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal 1997

His Dark Materials I: Northern Lights
Scholastic, 1995
Guardian Children's Fiction Award 1996,
Carnegie Medal 1996
British Book Award: Children's Book of the Year 1996

His Dark Materials II: The Subtle Knife
Scholastic, 1997
UKRA (United Kingdom Reading Award) 1998 (part of the IRA, International Reading Association)
Shortlisted for the 1997 FCBG Children's Book of the Year Awards

Mossycoat
Scholastic, 1998

I Was A Rat
Transworld, 1999

The Ruby in the Smoke
Scholastic, 1999
International Reading Association Children's Book Award 1988
Preis der Leseratten, German TV 1988
Lancashire Libraries Children's Book Award, 1988

Shadow in the North
Scholastic, 1999
Shortlisted for the Edgar Allen Poe Award by Mystery Writers of America

The Tiger in the Well
Scholastic, 1999
Shortlisted for the Guardian Children's Book Award 1992

His Dark Materials III: The Amber Spyglass
Scholastic, 2000 (forthcoming)

The Tin Princess
Scholastic, 2000 (forthcoming)

Plays

Frankenstein
(1992)

Puss in Boots
(produced 1997)

The Unicon charter

Insofar as it has been deemed necessary to perpetuate the Unicon series of science fiction conventions the following regulations are presented to distinguish these conventions from similar events:

1. They shall bear the name Unicon and have a consecutive numbering or year suffix as all or part of their title.

2. They shall be held in residential establishments of higher education, and shall use the accommodation and facilities there provided.

3. The site of the convention shall be decided at the previous Unicon in a properly conducted business session or, failing this, by the Unicon steering committee.

a) Bidding Session

i. All potential bidding committees who have made their presence known shall be invited to present their bid for a period not exceeding one half hour, except where only one bid exists in which case the time limit shall be set by the current Unicon.

ii. Voting will be carried out by any reasonable means determined by the current Unicon committee.

b) Steering Committee

i. This shall be responsible for the maintenance and amendment of this charter, the administration of excess funds should no convention win the bidding ceremony, and shall act as arbitrator should disputes concerning Unicon arise.

ii. Each past and present Unicon committee shall nominate one member of the steering committee.

iii. The acting chairperson of the steering committee shall be the member nominated by the current Unicon and his functions will include: notifying steering committee members of transferring of excess funds from his convention, notifying all potential convention bids of these regulations, and providing for each member of the steering committee and for both the treasurer and chairperson of the next Unicon an accurate statement of accounts for his convention.

iv. The voting membership of the steering committee shall be the nominees of the last seven Unicons. A quorum shall consist of four voting members, and decisions shall be taken by a majority of voting members, whether or not present at the voting meeting. Meetings of the steering committee shall be notified at least one month in advance to all members of the steering committee, whether or not they are voting members. A meeting shall be held

Unicon charter

at Unicon and a written undertaking required by clause 7 shall be the notice of this meeting.

4. The surplus funds from a Unicon shall be disposed of as follows:
   a) Where the sum does not exceed £200 the surplus shall be passed within a reasonable time to the convention that wins the bidding Ceremony.
   b) Where the sum exceeds £200, 50% or £200 (whichever is the greater) shall be passed on as in 4(a) and the remainder disposed of as the convention committee sees fit in a manner to benefit fandom, subject to the approval of the steering committee.
   c) Where no convention bid has been successfully made for the coming year the surplus funds shall be passed to the steering committee within a reasonable time.

5. The convention shall be insured:
   a) Against loss of, or damage to, its property and that for which it is legally responsible, including building, machinery, plant, fixture and fittings provided to it by the property owners or management of the venue for the purpose of the convention.
   b) Against loss resulting from cancellation, curtailment, postponement or abandonment in whole or in part of the convention, the non-appearance of a principal speaker or failure of the convention to vacate the premises at the end of its tenancy.
   c) So as to be indemnified for all sums which the committee shall be legally liable for arising from bodily injury and property damage to employees and general public arising out of an occurrence in connection with the convention.

6. The convention committee shall undertake:
   a) To be liable for any deficit arising from their own convention.
   b) To cover any debts occurring in connection with any past Unicon which no longer holds funds, providing such debts do not exceed the value of the duns passed to them by the previous Unicon or by the steering committee.

7. The convention Committee shall agree to abide by the regulations present in this document and shall send a written letter undertaking to this effect (signed at minimum by the chairperson, secretary and treasurer, or the equivalent posts) to each member of the steering committee. Ambiguities and disputes arising from these regulations shall be settled by the steering committee in the light of common sense and with a view to the continuity of the Unicon series.

Wincon V accounts

Summary of Expenditure

Site Costs	£2137
Hire of King Alfred's	£1,862
Technicians for John Stripe Theatre	£155
Bar Extension	£50
Misc	£70
Guest Expenses	£1108
Accommodation	£452
Travel (Note 1)	£116
Meals	£444
Misc	£96
Publications	£280
PRs (x3)	£155
Programme Book	£85
Pocket Guide	£40
Programme Expenses	£668
Green room / Gopher Reward	£202
Materials	£21
Misc Tech Hire	£445
Advertising	£212
Fliers	£140
Posters	£22
Misc	£50
Mailings	£97
Postage	£75
Labels	£22
Convention Expenses	£483
Insurance	£156
Minibus Hire	£267
Taxis	£20
Misc	£40
Administration	£403
Envelopes	£23
Postage	£213
Stationery	£124
Misc	£43
Total Expenditure	£5,388

Summary of Income

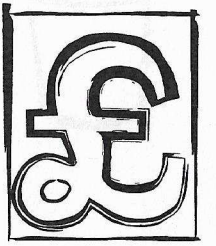
Memberships	£4,647
Attending	£4,468
Other	£179
Sales	£300
Advertising	£150
Dealers Tables	£150
Handovers	£1,346
from Convocation	£250
from Wincon III/Intervention	£1,096
Total Income	£6,293
Gross Surplus	£905

Summary of surplus distribution

Handover to Lexicon	£465
Various Fannish Good Causes	£375
Total Donations	£840
Net Surplus	£65

Notes

1) Guest Travel excludes £1200 for air tickets purchased but not used, this was fully reimbursed by our insurers
2) Values rounded for convenience. 🕮

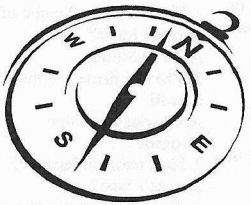


Previous Unicons

Year	Name	Place	Guests of Honour
1980	*Unicon 80*	Keele	Harry Harrison
1981	*Unicon 2*	Keele	John Sladek
1982	*Unicon 3*	Keele	Richard Cowper
1983	*Unicon 4*	Essex	Ian Watson
1984	*Oxcon*	St Catherine's College, Oxford	Brian Aldiss
1985	*Camcon*	New Hall, Cambridge	John Christopher
1986	*Consept*	Guildford	Tanith Lee
1987	*Connote8*	New Hall, Cambridge	Geraldine Harris, Diana Wynne Jones
1988	*Wincon*	King Alfred's College, Winchester	Patrick Tilley, Geoff Ryman Michael de Larrabeiti
1989	*uNIcon*	Queen's, Belfast	Harry Harrison, Terry Pratchett James White Will Simpson, Ian McDonald Iain Thomas
1990	*Uniconze*	New Hall, Cambridge	Barrington J. Bayley Lionel Fanthorpe Dave Langford, Bill Sanderson, Ian Watson
1991	*Mabinogicon*	UCNW, Bangor	Anne McCaffrey, Gael Baudino Stephen Gregory
1992	*Scone*	Glasgow	Iain Banks
1993	*Lunicon*	Leeds	Roger Zelazny Colin Greenland, Michael Scott Rohan Jack Cohen
1994	*BAcon*	New Hall, Cambridge	Geoff Ryman Simon Ings
1997	*Convocation*	New Hall, Cambridge	Steven Brust James Wallis Andrew Rilstone
1999	*Wincon V*	King Alfred's College, Winchester	John Whitbourn Warren Ellis Michael Sheard Richard Le Parmentier Diana Wynne Jones

IT'S ABOUT BOOKS!

Eboracon MMI



August 24-26 2001
Langworth College,
University of York

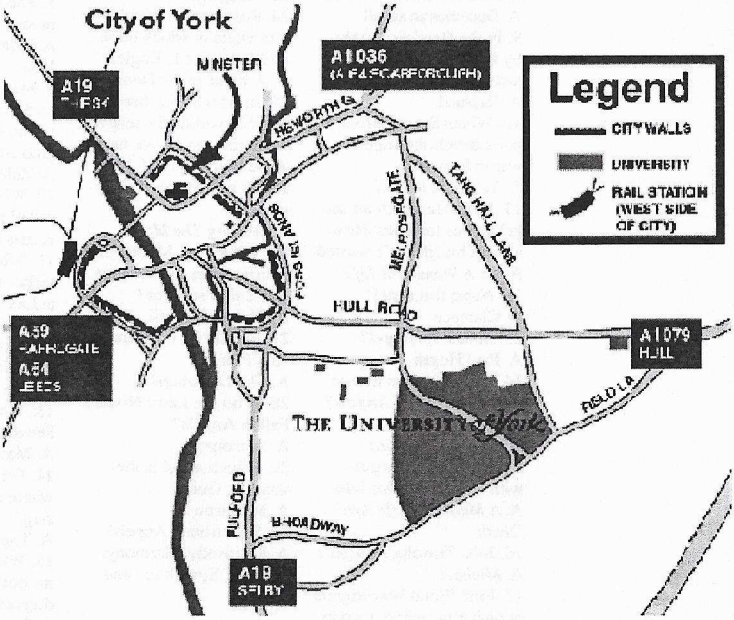
The historic city of York has never had a Science Fiction Convention, and what better time to put that right but in the first year of the new millennium?

York lies just 2 hours journey from London and 3 hours from Glasgow. The city itself has seen the coronation of Roman Emperors, invasions by the Vikings and William the Bastard and if you select York for next year's Unicon—an invasion of Fandom.

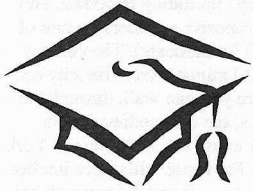
We are in close talks with the conference staff at the University and have decided to hold Eboracon in Langworth College. One of the larger colleges on campus, it has good facilities and access to the rest of the site including the on campus cinema. (We've provisionally booked this. *Metropolis* anybody? Of course we'd want to show that with a live organist.)

Room prices have been negotiated at £22pppn including breakfast, and with a proposed membership rate of £25 (£20 for students). The campus itself is 20 minutes from the city centre, where you can walk through the Shambles, the old medieval main street, or enjoy the splendour of York Minster. For those with more intellectual pursuits in mind, Langworth has its own bar and there are plenty of hostelries in York including a brewery museum with tours and tastings. (I'm sure we could organise a booking!)

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, then I'll be around the con, and of course at the bid session. Hope to see you all in York next year. *Sparks*



Angels and Oxford Quiz from 2Kon



Angels

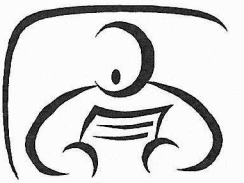
1. Where is an angel the vampire?
A. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Sunnydale)
2. The angel in *The Vintners Luck*?
A. Xas
3. Who wrote *The Calculus of Angels*?
A. J Gregory Keyes
5. What is the meaning of angelus and αγγελοσ?
A Messenger
6. Who sang about "angels in the architecture spinning in infinity?
A. Paul Simon
7. In H G Wells' *The Wonderful Visit*, what happens to the visiting angel?
A. Shot
8. Fate of Peake's *Mr Pye*?
A. Becomes an angel
9. In the *Damiano* books by R A Macavoy, which archangel falls to earth?
A. Raphael
10. Which Steven Brust book details the angels' war in heaven?
A. *To Reign In Hell*
11. Movie in which an angel proves to James Stewart that his life isn't wasted
A *It's A Wonderful Life*
13. Name that angel!
A. Clarence
13. *Almost An Angel*?
A. Paul Hogan
14. Wim Wenders movie remade as *City of Angels*?
A. *Wings of desire (Der Himmel über berlin)*
15. David Niven argues with an angel for his life
A. *A Matter Of Life And Death*
16. John Travolta's angel ?
A. *Michael*
17. First World War legend of phantom archers joining battle
A. The Angel of Mons
18. She may be an angel in Stephen King's *The Stand*
A. Mother Abigail
19. The two angels in *Sandman, Seasons of Mists*, who take over hell
A. Remiel and Duma
20. North London Angel in *Neverwhere*
A. The Angel Islington
21. *Good Omens'* part–time antiquarian book dealer and angel
A. Aziraphale
22. Timothy's daughter Angel in which Philip K. Dick novel?
A. *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*
23. In Storm Constantine's *Burying the Shadows*, what are the fallen Elohim?
A. Vampires
24. Proginoskes the cherubim visits in which book by Madeleine L'Engle?
A. *A Wind in the Door*
25. In which Elizabeth Hand Novel do Sweeney, Angelica and Oliver meet at the University of Archangels and St John the Divine?
A. *Waking The Moon*
26. What does Moorcock's Lucifer offer to exchange von Bek's soul for?
A. The Holy Grail
27. First book by Meredith Ann Pierce
A. *The Darkangel*
28. Who are Larry Niven's Fallen Angels?
A. Astronauts
29. Which angel is the voice of God
A. Metatron
30. Spectrum's Angels?
A. Rhapsody, Harmony, Melody, Symphony and Destiny

Oxford

1. What is the real name of Michael Innes?
A. J I M Stewart
2. The real name of Lewis Carroll
A. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson
3. How many in Jerome K Jerome's boat?
A. Four: three men – to say nothing of the dog
4. Connie Willis' tale of time travel from a future Oxford back to the plague
A. *Doomsday Book*
5. Light blue or dark?
A. Dark
6. Peter Wimsey's college?
A. Balliol
7. Which college has no undergraduates?
A. All Soul's
8. The Oxford University motto?
A. Dominus Illuminatio Mea
9. Max Beerbohm's Oxford heroine, for love of whom the entire undergraduate population died
A. Zuleika Dobson
10. What is the Thames called in Oxford
A. Isis and Cherwell
11. Which award–winning author from Oxford will be at Lexicon?
A. Philip Pullman
12. Name Oxford's copyright library
A. The Bodleian Library
13: Who coined The Dreaming Spires?
A. Matthew Arnold
14. On May Morning where do the choristers sing?
A. Top of Magdalen Tower
15. Which poet electrified his doorknob when an undergraduate at Oxford?
A. Shelley

Lexicon members

1	C	Mary Branscombe	56	A	JFW Richards
2	C	Simon Bisson	57	A	Simon Amos
3	C	Chris O'Shea	58	A	Michael Abbott
4	G	Philip Pullman	59	A	Kari
11	A	No.6	60	A	Phil Nanson
12	A	Phil Plumbly	61	A	Huw Walters
13	A	Pat McMurray	62	A	Juliet E. McKenna
14	S	Christina Lake	63	A	Sion Arrowsmith
15	A	Sparks	64	A	Graham Taylor
16	A	Peter Cohen	65	A	Mark W. Waller
17	A	Susan Francis	66	S	Emmet
18	A	Pompino the Kreygoyne	67	A	Mike Stone
19	A	Rafe Culpin	68	A	Claire Brialey
20	S	Gerry	69	A	Mark Plummer
21	A	Keith Cosslett	70	A	Julian Headlong
22	A	Janet Wilkins	71	S	Denzil
24	A	Dave Tompkins	72	A	Anne Wilson
25	A	The Talking Dead	73	A	Iain Alexander
26	S	Rich "Terran"	74	A	Jonny 5
27	A	Minnow	75	A	Paul
28	A	Sue Edwards	76	A	Lizbeth
29	S	Paul Blackwell	77	A	Jane Bulloch
30	A	Roger Burton West	78	A	David Brain
31	A	Peter Wareham	79	A	Penny Heal
32	A	Paul Dormer	80	A	Jason Stevens
33	A	Caroline Mullan	81	A	Helen Hall
34	S	Diana Wynne Jones	82	A	Rick Hewett
35	A	Brian Ameringen	83	A	Steve Jeffery
36	S	Mike	84	A	Vikki Lee France
37	A	John Bray	85	A	Morag Kerr
38	A	Mike Damesick	86	A	Rob Miller
39	A	Steve Rothman	87	A	Sue Jones
40	A	nojay	88	A	Howard Singerman
41	C	Eddie Cochrane	89	A	Claire Singerman
42	A	Liam	90	A	Jenni Singerman
43	A	Square Bear	91	A	Alexander Singerman
44	A	Marcus L. Rowland	92	A	Eve Singerman
45	A	John Bark	93	A	Jennifer Swift
46	A	Rod O'Hanlon	94	A	Karen Sproat
47	A	Gwen Funnell	95	A	Andrew M. Butler
48	A	Ken Slater	96	A	Bridget Wilkinson
49	A	John Brown	97	A	Paul Kincaid
50	A	Alex McLintock	98	A	Maureen Kincaid Speller
51	A	Tony Rogers	99	A	Niall Hedderley
52	A	Steve Cooper	100	A	Chris Amies
53	A	Stephen	101	A	Andrew Seaman
54	A	Jo Walton	102	A	Tessa Pirnie
55	A	Sandra Bond	103	A	Cheryl Morgan



LEXICON COMMITTEE

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Lexicon members

104	A	Tony Cullen
105	A	Steve Rogerson
106	A	Amanda Baker
107	A	Gordon W. Brignall
108	A	Dave Langford
109	A	Michael Bernardi
110	A	Cherith Baldry
111	A	Mark Boyes
112	A	Mark Young
113	A	Keris
114	A	Paul Beardsley
115	A	Clare Beardsley
116	A	Austin
117	A	Caro
118	A	Tanya Brown
119	A	K.I.M. Campbell
120	A	Jane Carnall
121	A	Waistcoat Mark
122	A	Del Cotter
123	A	Adrian Cox
124	A	John Dallman
125	A	Gavin Dix-White
126	A	Lillian Edwards
127	A	Mike Figg
128	A	Jan
129	A	Rhodri James
130	A	Ben Jeapes
131	A	Cal
132	A	Gav
133	A	Roger Robinson
134	A	Mike Scott
135	A	Smitty
136	A	Charlie Stross
137	A	Neal Tringham
138	A	Tobes
139	A	Sylva Tavares
140	A	Phil Allcock
141	A	Lissa Allcock
142	A	Simon Bradshaw
143	A	Peter T. Garratt
144	A	Liz Counihan
145	A	Erik Arthur
146	A	Chris Howarth
147	A	Alison Sloss
148	A	Caroline Bott
149	A	Gwylim Hunter
150	D	Iain Emsley
151	D	Susan Sandys
152	A	Farah
153	A	Edward James
154	A	John Meaney
155	A	Yvonne Meaney
156	A	A^3
157	A	Jenny
158	A	Tom Womack
159	A	Julia Sexton
160	A	Colin Bruce

The Amber Spyglass: at last!

If you've been waiting eagerly for the third volume of *His Dark Materials* (we know some people who can't bear to start reading till all three books are out), *The Amber Spyglass* comes out on 1 November 2000. The hardback has 650 pages and it's priced £14.99: ISBN: 0590-54244-3. If you're really impatient, the US publication date is slightly earlier: the hardback is out on 10 October. We can't wait!