
Wincon III

29-31 July 1994, King Alfred's College, Winchester



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Progress Report 1

Wincon III

Science Fiction—Ideas in Focus

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Wincon III will be held on 29-31 July 1994 at King Alfred's College, Winchester. Membership currently costs £17-00 attending and £10-00 supporting until 17 April 1993 (the rates will rise to £20-00 attending and £13-00 supporting until Novacon 23) and is available by post from:

Keith Cosslett, 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hampshire, PO10 7TS

or in person from any of the Wincon III committee. Cheques should be made payable to Wincon. Conversion from supporting to attending membership costs £7-00. The committee are John Richards, Phil Plumbly, Keith Cosslett, John Bark, Andy Croft, Anne-Marie Wright, Terry Hunt, Jeff Suter and Pete Wright.

LARGE PRINT VERSIONS of Wincon III publications are available on request from Keith Cosslett at the address given above.

Cover illustration by Dave Hicks.

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We're back!

Hello!

It's happening again; for the third time, a small, friendly convention with 'big convention' features right here in the heart of Southern England. Wincon III will build on our earlier successes and the renewed financial support of Southern Arts to bring you international guests, expert speakers, top quality panels and major feature films.

Make sure you don't miss out.

Chairman's Message

by John Richards

My fellow conventioners...

Four score and seven minutes ago our editors brought forth upon this instruction a deadline dedicated to the proposition that all text is created equal and whereas long pieces get edited and may have the meaning changed, short pieces get made up and then Lord help me.

Whereas it took some time for the committee of Wincon II to get back together after Wincon (Unicon IX), Wincon III came together almost automatically. Mike Cheater--our last chairman--has opted to take a well-earned sabbatical; since we have always done our best to put on a convention that we

would want to go to, Mike has decided to go to the next one (he is also getting over the double-page spread in the local newspaper that ignored the convention and instead criticized Mike's fashion sense). Anne and Pete Wright, who put in so much work in the fan room, have joined the committee in the hopes of cutting down their workload this time (Anne seems particularly keen on ensuring that someone else is made responsible for drunken Finns). Aside from that, the team remains the same although one or two of the jobs may have changed.

John Bark is doing his usual splendid job head of promotions and will, no doubt, be pressed into service as last minute panel chairman and all round useful person in the fullness of time.

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Andy Croft is head of tech before, during and after the event and is in charge of being more sensible than the rest of us (a task which is not straining him unduly). Despite his acquisition of a beard and an American lady friend, Andy denies--occasionally with violence--that he is gradually transmogrifying into Tim Illingworth.

Keith Cosslett is using his civil service training as the convention treasurer, although we are trying to persuade him not to, and his experience as editor of the South Hants Science Fiction Group's award losing fanzine *Cyberspace* in publications.

Terry Hunt is running the dealer's room (Terry used to be a book seller), working on publications (he used to be an editor) and acting as site liaison (Terry still lives closer to Winchester than the rest of us). The T-shirts were his idea.

Phil Plumbly is reprising his role as secretary with time off to act as guest liaison. We are trying to convince him that this latter task will not be made

We want you back.

easier by his colliding with guests in the convention corridors at three in the morning while covered with vomit, but this will not be easy.

Jeff Suter is back in charge of fan programming. Currently he is trying out ideas on the youth club in his village. If they are a success, he tells me, then he will do his best to lower the standards to those expected by fandom.

Anne Wright is most definitely not in charge of drunken Finns. She is, however, adding to the enthusiasm on the programming sub-committee where she will be responsible for countering the jaded 'seen it all before' attitudes of her colleagues and co-ordinating games (with Jeff) and the arts side of the programme.

Pete Wright, editor and lens-based medium operative, is co-ordinating the science side of the programme and running the publications sub-committee. He, therefore, gets to edit what I write about him.

I am too well aware of the power of editors to waste my time describing my own activities. Pete will make up what he sees fit. [OK, John, here we go...] John is a quiet boy who, around the time that Andy grew his beard, maintained the Law of Conservation of Beards by shaving his own fungus off. Meek and deferential, he is the ideal choice for Chairman and also works on the programming sub-committee. [How's that, boss?]

What won't have changed, I hope, is the mood of the convention. Wincons are intended to be irreverent, analytical, wide ranging and, most of all, fun. Taking ideas that other people have left lying around (Plagiarize, plagiarize, let no-one's work evade your eyes. Why do you think God gave you eyes? To plagiarize!) and twisting them out of all recognition. Moving across the boundaries of the media to try and identify a coherent message. Using the facilities provided by the site as best we can to spark off the discussions. Keeping alive the idea of the fan room as somewhere people can go if they want to join in. And going as far outside the boundaries of the norm as possible.

This time we want to investigate the nature of science itself. Its effect on art and literature, and art and literature's effect on it. How to distinguish between proper science, pseudo-science

and complete bollocks. What makes physics and chemistry different and where do the social sciences fit in if at all? All this plus the old favourites, too. The Writers' Workshop, the Cake Burning Competition and the 'How Long Will It Take John Richards To Forget Which Convention He's At?' sweep-stake but, hopefully, not the Disappearing Guest of Honour.

We have a committee, we have a site, we have enough items for at least two programmes already and we keep on coming up with more (rumours that the Programme Sub-committee meetings are merely excuses to have drunken

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Sunday afternoons up at Jeff's house, coming up with outrageous suggestions and watching weird videos are denied vehemently). What we want now is members! Members make convention committees feel needed--we all know that they're not, but we like to pretend. It gives us names to put on panels and into competitions. It enables us to con more cash out of funding authorities by making it appear that there is a genuine demand for this sort of thing. Members give us a convention.

This first Progress Report will be going out to all the members we can track down of the first two Wincons. We want you back. To get the other progress reports, all you have to do is join up. It's going to be worth it!

Who? Our Guests of Honour

Wincon III is pleased to welcome Algis Budrys and James P. Hogan as our guests. Algis Budrys has been an SF writer and editor since 1952 and is a respected teacher and critic. He now owns and edits the new SF magazine *Tomorrow* and his latest novel is called *Hard Landing* (1993). James Hogan's fifteen volumes of hard SF from *Inherit the Stars* (1977) to *The Multiplex Man* (1992) skilfully combine convincing characters and complex plots with intriguing, soundly scientific speculation.

About Winchester

by Terry Hunt

If it ain't broke, don't fix it! On this sound principle we are again returning to King Alfred's College in Winchester for Wincon III.

Why?

Well, for one thing, Winchester itself is a very convenient place to get to. Situated mid way along the Waterloo--Bournemouth main line it's about an hour away from London on frequent trains and also has regular connections to Reading and Portsmouth and a number of direct services from even further afield. If you prefer to drive, Winchester is just off the M3 and a little

way north of the M27. Once here, King Alfred's College is an easy 15 minute walk from the station, or you might want to take a taxi.

The clincher, however, is the college itself; a superb site for a convention like Wincon. As a teacher training college, it has excellent audio-visual facilities and a purpose-built theatre--which plays an increasingly prominent role in Winchester's artistic life--as well as an ample range of rooms, all tied to very acceptable and extremely reasonably priced accommodation. We intend to exploit all these facilities to the full.

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Should you manage to tear yourself away from the convention at any stage, you'll be a shortish walk from the centre of Britain's most historic cities. Made capital of the Saxon kingdom of Wessex by King Alfred himself, it became the first capital of England. The Domesday book was compiled here at William the Conqueror's command and the city bristles with historic buildings such as the cathedral, the Westgate and the castle, in whose Great Hall hangs King Arthur's Round Table--at least that's what the Tudors insisted it was. Sated by all this culture, you can satisfy the inner fan at a wide range of restaurants, pubs or other eateries to all (well, most) tastes and pockets.

Still thinking?

Well, that's nearly it for Progress Report 1. We hope that we've managed to whet your appetite enough to cause you to fork out your hard earned money and come and join in the fun. If you weren't one of the lucky ones who came to either of the previous Wincons and are still wondering whether to attend or not, why not read the following review of Wincon II and let that help you decide? Please feel free to make any suggestions (anatomically possible only, please!) for items that you particularly wish to see; our contact address is just inside the front cover. If you want to volunteer to help, please let us know, too. We look forward to seeing you at Wincon III.

Wincon III

PR Advertising Rates

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Wincon II Report

by Steve Green

Reprinted from *Critical Wave* No. 24

Remember the days when SF conventions were compact, informal affairs, offering fans both an interesting programme *and* the ambience of a weekend party? When it was possible to meet everyone you wanted to, to renew friendships and even to begin a few new ones? When conventions were actually *fun*.

Well, the South Hants Science Fiction Group certainly does, and Wincon II (sequel to its 1988 Unicon entry) was overwhelming proof that it could still be pulled off, even in the days of multi-stream programming and semi-professional conrunners.

South Hants Science Fiction Group

Meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month in the lounge bar of the Electric Arms, 192 Fratton Road, Fratton, Portsmouth.

Why not come along?

Spread over a handful of buildings at the heart of King Alfred's College, Winchester, the group managed to run three separate streams, ranging from the fairly serious (a discussion by Josef Nesvadba on the political impetus behind Czech SF) through the more esoteric (Pete Wright and Andy Croft helming an overview of narrative techniques in cinema, with on-screen examples) to the absurd (a fannish version of 'Just a Minute', the high point of which was Ann Green's rendition of 'Wombling Free'). I have to confess that I spent most of the weekend in the fan

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room, not merely because it was next to the student's bar (though that in itself was a damn good reason), but because Jeff Suter and Anne Wright, the resident despots, had contrived to wire me into most of the program, a fate which a surprisingly large percentage of the membership were to suffer over the weekend.

Considering the size of the event, the guest list--Josef Nesvadba, Bruce Sterling, Brian Stableford, Gwyneth Jones and John Brunner--was astounding. Considering the size of the team behind the scenes, its smoothness was a minor miracle. And considering the fun everyone had, the announcement on Sunday of plans for Wincon III took no one by surprise.

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