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Progress Report 1

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Guest of Honour

43

Jo Walton



Those very clever people in charge of Novacon 43 have put Julia and me in charge of publications, which means I have the luxury of presenting **Progress Report 1**, wherein I can reassure you all that none of us have been buried under leisure centre car parks, none of us have been recycled into supermarket ready meals, and none of us have chosen to resign through weakness and old age (although, goodness knows, some of us feel like it from time to time). You can, therefore, proceed with confidence to join Novacon 43 if you haven't done so already. If you got this PR in the post from us and you're not already on our membership list for the forthcoming year, you'll find a membership form in your envelope; if it's there, I urge you to fill it in and send it off to Steve (see "contact details" on page 2) accompanied by a suitable payment. If you found this PR in the bar, or some eager person thrust it into your hand, a membership form is available from the website at <http://www.novacon.org.uk/membershipform.pdf>

It's very pleasing to welcome Jo Walton as our guest of honour. As well as the occasional novel (nine so far) and poetry collection (two), she has an excellent collection of bloggery on Tor.com. She introduces herself later in this PR.

You may already be aware that the eligibility period for the Nova awards is changing this year; we'd encourage you to get your fanzines out promptly, take advantage of the extra time you get before the convention to read the eligible fanzines, and get your Nova award votes in to the administrator.

For members, this PR includes the hotel booking form. Be sure to fill it in and send it back to us, so that we can keep your accommodation in order.

Finally, keep your eyes peeled for further news from the Novacon team – on Twitter and Facebook, on the website, and in due time in PR2

Douglas Spencer

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to contributors Yvonne Rowse, Jo Walton, Tony Berry and Steve Green. Cover photo by Ada Palmer.

Chairman's Welcome

It had been suggested in the past that I might like to chair a Novacon to which I replied forcefully, 'NO', or words to that effect. I like running programme. I have no interest in anything else. And then Tony Berry baited the trap. If you chair then you choose the guest. You can still run programme.

At the time the trap was sprung, as I recall (hazily), late in the day at a committee meeting at Tony's house in September, I noted that in order to accept I would have to be able to choose someone fabulous, for example Jo Walton, but as she lives in Canada we wouldn't be able to afford it. 'So; no!' Eve pondered for a surprisingly short while and then said, 'actually, we probably could.'

This year, despite some changes in the committee, we manage to maintain some continuity and still have Eve Harvey as treasurer, Steve Lawson managing membership and Tony Berry dealing with hotel, dealers and beer. Richard and Helena are continuing to drag us into the modern world with Twitter and Facebook and John Harvey is maintaining the website. New this year I have Theresa Derwin working with me on programme and Julia Daly and Doug Spencer are joining us to produce our paper publications. Cat Coast continues as secretary, taking minutes and reminding us what we each promised to do. Thank goodness.

Novacon is the convention that I regard as home. Most of my SF friends will be there, it's the right size for me to recognise most people, it's not too far away and it is fairly consistent. I like that it is a single stream programme (with a bit of off piste) so that conversations in the bar have a common starting point, I like that people actually go to the programme, I like the morning science talks that drag people out of bed, and I like the silly programme items. All this, and Jo Walton too.

There are a number of people who have had a huge influence on my reading over the years; Julian Headlong, for example, Rog Peyton, Claire'n'Mark, the person who purchased for the Holt Park library in the 70's. In recent years they have been largely superseded by Jo Walton. Jo has 39 pages of reviews on the Tor.com website and it is one of my most frequently visited places. Looking at what I have read recently Jo is directly responsible for Janet Kagan's *HELLSPARK*, Robin McKinley's *DEERSKIN*, Nina Kiriki Hoffman's *PERMEABLE BORDERS* (and another three of her novels), *A WOMAN OF THE IRON PEOPLE* by Eleanor Arnason and *THE STILL SMALL VOICE OF TRUMPETS* by Lloyd Biggle Jr. I'm currently reading *AGYAR* by Stephen Brust and am going upstairs shortly to find Heinlein's *CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY*. I've got a lot to thank her for. And then there is *AMONG OTHERS*...

I think this Novacon will be wonderful. Come along. Join in the fun.

Introduction to Jo Walton, by herself

In 1997, the day after I moved from Lancaster to Swansea, I left all my furniture and books in a huge unsorted mess in the middle of my new living room and went to a Unicon in New College Cambridge. The guest of honour was Steven Brust, then as now one of my favourite writers. The first panel I went to, he introduced himself last. First was somebody who had sold a couple of short stories and told us how we could get hold of them, then there was somebody who had self published a book and held it up and waved it around and then a fan who explained that he was on the panel because of this and that. Then it came to Steve, who had probably ten books out then, who had come all the way from Minneapolis, who was the guest of honour, and he looked up at the audience from under his hat and said "I'm Steve. I'm a drummer." I've always admired this style of introduction excessively, though it doesn't work for me. I mean I'm not a drummer. I do have a hat, though.

So, hi, I'm Jo, I write science fiction and fantasy but mostly fantasy because science fiction is hard. It's hard because you have to work all the details out yourself. Fantasy lets you cheat by copying details from real history. I have this problem with writing, where I need everything to be solid, not just what I'm writing but everything for miles out around it in all directions. I always know massively icebergly more than gets onto the page. And I know quite a bit of history and if I don't I can easily research it, but when it comes to the future I have to stop and work everything out and make everything up. Also, most of what I know about the future comes from reading science fiction rather than science, and science is less easy to research on your own because it tends to be a logical structure building on earlier knowledge in the way history – actually, in the way history also is, but for history I have the earlier knowledge. I can't write SF from reading SF without writing derivative crap, and so figuring it all out slows me down to a crawl and then the story gets bogged down. I'm a binge writer, I like to plunge right into it and write lots every day, which tends to be followed by long periods of being stuck and not writing anything. I wrote my novel *FARTHING* in seventeen days. I write all my novels in seventeen days but they tend to be seventeen days spread out across a year.

In 1987 I had myself fitted with a brain/computer interface in a very cyberpunk way – I encountered the CP/M+ word processor Protext, from Arnor, for the Amstrad CPC. We had extra memory for ours, so we had 128k. The extra 64K was fitted into the back of the keyboard and it kept wobbling out so we secured it with an elastic band. Nevertheless, Protext was so awesome that I used it all the time and learned all the key commands so well that if you ask me what they are my fingers move on their own. Fingers moving on their own is the whole thing – when I'm writing I know my fingers

are moving the same way that when I'm breathing I know my lungs are moving, but it's all happening below conscious control. I still write in Protext – but not for CP/M, don't be silly. I upgraded to DOS in 1992 and never looked back. Or forward for that matter. I therefore collect old 386 and 486 laptops so I can keep writing, because Protext uses its own compression system – it had to run in 64k! – and doesn't work on DOS emulators or modern computers or even entire 386 emulators running on modern computers.

I've published nine novels. They are, in order, *THE KING'S PEACE* (2000), *THE KING'S NAME* (2001), *THE PRIZE IN THE GAME* (2002), *TOOTH AND CLAW* (2003, won the World Fantasy Award 2004), *FARTHING* (2006), *HA'PENNY* (2007, won the Prometheus Award 2008), *HALF A CROWN* (2008), *LIFELODE* (2009, won the Mythopoeic Award 2010), *AMONG OTHERS* (2011, won the Hugo and Nebula and British Fantasy Award and Copper Cylinder Award 2012). I've also published two poetry collections, which should be three by Novacon. I write poetry. Some of it is SF and fantasy poetry and some of it is poetry about the weather. All my books are different from each other because I get bored repeating myself, but they generally have something to do with history. The first three are set in a fantasy version of 6th century Britain and Ireland, *TOOTH AND CLAW* is a sentimental Victorian novel where all the characters are dragons and eat each other, the next three are alternate history mysteries about fascism, *LIFELODE* is a really weird high magic domestic fantasy and *AMONG OTHERS* is a semi-autobiographical fantasy about the joy of reading. No, really.

I've been reading SF – and fantasy, but mostly SF – since I was a teenager, and I've been in fandom since 1988 when my first con was Follycon. I grew up in South Wales and Shropshire, I went to university in Lancaster, I worked in London for two years, I went back to Lancaster and married and had a son, I got divorced and moved back to South Wales, then I got married again and moved to Montreal. Moving to Canada was a long term plan, and one which I urge on any fans who want a better standard of living, easy access to US books and cons, and a more hopeful political climate.

I have a livejournal with wordcount and poetry and, sometimes, actual content at <http://papersky.livejournal.com> and I blog about older books on Tor.com

The Programme

OK, pretty much what Dave Hicks wrote last year. There will be a programme. We have a limited idea of what it will be. But there will, dependably, be a programme.

You all know the structure by now. Opening ceremony followed by some level of silliness involving the guest followed by other stuff. Get you out of bed on Saturday and Sunday by offering you science talks. There may be something Doctor Who related for some reason. I think there is some sort of anniversary. Fiftieth I think. And Doug is a bit of a fan. (Ian suggests he is a born again Doctor Who fan which would make him a reTARDIS fan – sigh – and not true at all. He never lost his faith.) There might be a Doctor Who based entertainment at some point, with songs and jokes of matching vintage.

Other than that, whilst not working our Guest into the ground, and allowing her plenty of time to chat to all her friends and fans in the bar, I think we can promise you a very book-biased with tinges of fannish programme. I'm so looking forward to it. Squeee!

Art Show

Serena Culfeather has, once again, undertaken to organise the Art Show. If you are an artist and you wish to exhibit work, either for auction or just for show, then you should contact her soon by email: serena@ravensquill.org

Dealer's Room

The dealer's room will, once again, be found immediately adjacent to the bar. If you want to book a table (six foot, £20) then you'll need to be a member of the convention in order to do so. Contact Tony Berry, morbius@altair-4.co.uk

Parents' Co-op

Novacon doesn't operate a crèche, but if there's sufficient demand we will set aside a room for small children to play, supervised by their parents. If you're interested, please let us know as soon as possible.

Food and Drink

There will be real ale and good cider provided in the bar, and a range of snacks and meals throughout the weekend. There is a restaurant too; we encourage you to use it. See also Tony's hotel page.

The Hotel

The Park Inn hotel in Nottingham is on the Mansfield Road, one of the main routes into town, about a mile from the city centre. The layout is ideal for a convention, with the two main function rooms and bar all on the ground floor. Other rooms downstairs have lift access. There is another bar downstairs which will be open occasionally, but at other times can be used as lounge space (it's actually more comfy than the main bar!). Last year this bar had a pool table and drinks machine as well.

Staff at the hotel are friendly and efficient and facilities good, with a health club, gym and pool next door which guests can use. A much-improved range of con food is served over the bar. It is cooked to order so may take a little longer, but it's worth waiting for. We will probably have a fixed-price carvery as well as the regular menu on the Friday evening in the restaurant, when large numbers of people are wanting food, as this helps to speed up service.

IMPORTANT STUFF

The Park Inn has 170 rooms so there is plenty of space although last year we did pretty much fill it. If you want a single room it is always a good idea to book early. Rates are the same as last year: £43 pppn for a double/twin and £61 pn for a single. Children over 14 years at the time of the con pay adult rate.

The hotel has no family rooms as such, but does have a small number of interconnecting rooms (one double and one twin) which can be used for families. Contact us if you want one of these. You can also have a cot or fold-away bed put into your room for a child at no extra cost, but you will have to pay for the child's breakfast.

The hotel does not require a deposit on your room, but if you are going to arrive after 4pm on the day (that's most of you!) you will have to guarantee your room with a credit card (no charge will be taken) so that it is not sold to somebody else by the automated letting system. Please contact the hotel directly for this on 0115-935-9988.

2013 Nova Awards

First presented in 1973, the Nova Awards celebrate excellence in British fanzines (and, since 2002, fanzines from Eire). Winners are now selected in three categories – best fanzine, best writer, best artist – and voting is open to everyone in the UK or Eire who has read at least six eligible fanzines (what we like to think of as an 'informed electorate'). You do not need to be a Novacon member to take part.

Beginning this year, we're adjusting the cut-off date for eligibility to 31 August, meaning voters get at least two months before the convention to cast their ballot. Most of the titles in contention are available to read online or download, and we'll have an electronic form available on 1 September.

A full 'longlist' will be posted at the Novacon website in due course, but here are a few of those we already know about: Beam #5; Eric the Mole #4; Pips #9; Exhibition Hall #22, #23; Head #11.5; Concatenation (Jan 2013); Banana Wings #51; Journey Planet #14; The Little Book of 42; Quantum B*locks #10; Andromeda's Children #6; Theresa For TAFF #1, #2, #3; A Meara For Observers #13; Gross Encounters #22; Tiny TAFFzine #1, #2; Ansible #304, #305, #306, #307. You'll find links to the majority of these at eFanzines.com. If you produce an eligible fanzine (the rules are available on the Novacon website), please spread the word among your readers.

2012 results

The 2012 Nova Awards for excellence in British and Irish fanzines were presented at Novacon 42 on Sunday 11th November.

Best fanzine:

1. Banana Wings
2. Journey Planet
3. A Meara For Observers

Best fanzine writer:

1. Mark Plummer
2. Claire Brailey
3. Mike Meara

Best fanzine artist:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 1= Sue Mason | (joint first position, with the |
| D West | same voting pattern for each) |
| 3. Harry Bell | |

The editors hope to bring you stuff from Nova-winning writers in a future PR.

Novacon 43 Members as at 19th January 2013

1 Jo Walton	50 Stephen Dunn
28 ½r	47 Roger Earnshaw
100 Michael Abbott	61 Martin Easterbrook
6 Brian Aldiss	71 Janet Edwards
38 Brian Ameringen	72 John Edwards
39 Emjay Ameringen	35 Sue Edwards
103 William Armitage	2 Jaine Fenn
60 Margaret Austin	88 Flick
33 Barbara-Jane	78 Gwen Funnell
27 Chris Bell	45 Ron Gemmell
76 Alan Bellingham	58 Niall Gordon
69 Austin Benson	109 Steve Green
8 Tony Berry	119 David Haddock
9 Helena Bowles	104 Dave Hardy
29 Claire Brialey	12 Eve Harvey
94 Pat Brown	13 John Harvey
95 Vernon Brown	48 Julian Headlong
10 Cat Coast	18 Dave Hicks
82 Margaret Croad	19 Penny Hicks
20 Serena Culfeather	116 Martin Hoare
15 Julia Daly	102 Rob Jackson
89 Christine Davidson	115 Al Johnston
90 Michael Davidson	114 Steve Jones
118 Malcolm Davies	93 Sue Jones
106 Steve Davies	26 Tim Kirk
107 Giulia De Cesare	110 Dave Lally
11 Theresa Derwin	74 Dave Langford
57 Paul Dormer	17 Alice Lawson

14 Steve Lawson	59 Adrian Snowdon
113 Peter Mabey	117 Kate Solomon
4 John Meaney	68 Ian Sorensen
5 Yvonne Meaney	16 Douglas Spencer
40 Chris Morgan	98 Danesh Standage-Bowles
41 Pauline Morgan	36 Tim Stannard
37 Caroline Mullan	23 Chris Stocks
99 Anthony Naggs	111 Neil Summerfield
65 Omega	86 Calvin Ternent
73 Andrew Patton	85 George Ternent
66 Hal Payne	84 Linda Ternent
64 Harry Payne	34 Markus Thierstein
67 Jodie Payne	81 David Thomas
112 Rog Peyton	91 Alison Tomkinson
96 Catherine Pickersgill	92 Neil Tomkinson
97 Greg Pickersgill	25 Dave Tompkins
30 Mark Plummer	44 Tobes Valois
75 Colette Reap	108 Jim Walker
43 Roger Robinson	77 Peter Wareham
24 Tony Rogers	3 Dave Weddell
105 Steve Rogerson	83 Bridget Wilkinson
46 Angela Rosin	101 Anne Wilson
79 Marcus Rowland	70 Caro Wilson
49 Sally Rowse	21 John Wilson
7 Yvonne Rowse	51 Alan Woodford
63 Jamie Scott	52 Anne Woodford
87 Mike Scott	
62 Harpal Singh	
31 Martin Smart	
32 Melica Smith	

Satellite 4



the 65th British National Science Fiction Convention
18th – 21st April 2014, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow

Guests of Honour:

John Meaney Juliet E McKenna Jim Burns
Alice and Steve Lawson Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell

Special Guest:

Sir Terry Pratchett (limited appearance
subject to health)

www.satellite4.org.uk