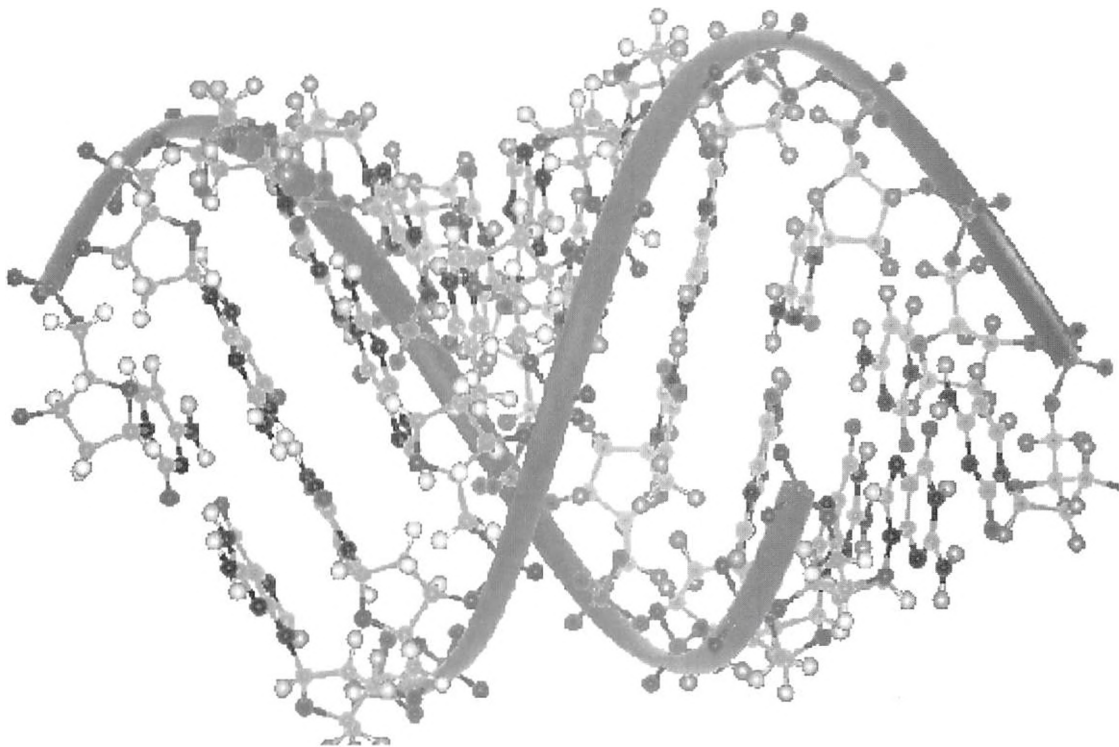


SEACON 03

Progress Report 3

November 2002

54th UK Easter Science Fiction Convention



NOW!!
with added
TIPTREE (see p7)



54th UK Easter SF Convention
18th to 21st April 2003
The Hanover International
Hinckley, Leicestershire

GUESTS

(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

CHRIS BAKER (FANGORN)

CHRISTOPHER EVANS

MARY GENTLE

TOASTMASTER

JOHN JARROLD

THE COMMITTEE

Paul Oldroyd Co-ordinator & Programme
Chris Donaldson Memberships
Noel Collyer Operations
Julian Headlong Science programme and interesting minutes supremo

Yvonne Rowse Programme and doyenne of fun
Tony Berry Hotel Liaison
Eve Harvey Publications & Finances
John Harvey Publications & Communications

OTHER CONSCRIPTS

Claire Briailey & Mark Plummer Fanthology
Tim Broadribb Tech Manager.
Tanya Brown Website
John Dallman Publications
Vincent Docherty Finances
Dave Hicks The Return of Elmer T Hack

Membership Rates (until PR4)

Full attending	£45	US\$68	Euro 75
Supporting	£22	US\$35	Euro 37
Child rates (ages at time of convention)			
Infant (up to 5)	Nil		
Child (5-11)	£7	US\$11	Euro 12
Junior (12-15)	£25	US\$38	Euro 42

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E-mail: memberships@seacon03.org.uk
info@seacon03.org.uk
programme@seacon03.org.uk

Website: www.seacon03.org.uk

eGroup: This is for members of the convention only; if you want to join contact john@seacon03.org.uk and please quote your membership number

THE CO-ORDINATOR SPEAKS

Maybe it's something to do with now being of an age where evenings down the pub invariably include a discussion of the latest medical ailments, but on June 22nd this year I fell off my shockwave surfboard. On the front page of the Guardian, slap in the middle of a news article on Al-Qaida terrorist hackers (an interesting concept in itself) were the words "*the Pentagon has now transferred responsibility for its cyber-defences to space command*". Now whilst I realise that the Pentagon's space command is unlikely to have Steve Zodiac working for it, and the cyber defences will be nothing like those envisaged by William Gibson, it was still a stunning sentence to come across in "real life". Then Chris (being Chris) pointed out that space command's cyber-defences were all very well, but what future shocked her recently was when I said that I needed to change the light-bulb in the pepper-mill! I feel a programme item generating itself here

The fine detail of the programme itself is still being finalised - as soon as we think we've subdued the tiger, a new idea pops up. My current favourite is "How Vampires Work, or 'I am Spike's Liver'", a serious scientific talk by Julian Headlong. Julian promises to tell all, including the definitive explanation of how male members of the undead manage hanky-panky when they lack a working circulatory system. One

thing that is now finalised, however, is that on Friday evening we will be hosting the James Tiptree Jr. Award and associated programming. This is a great honour since it's the first time that the award will have been presented at a UK convention, and we are looking forward to welcoming the event and its organisers to Seacon. More details about the Tiptree Award can be found on page 7.

There will be a comprehensive article in the next PR looking at programme highlights, but in the meantime we are still very interested in hearing what you would like to see on the programme, or ideas that you would like to take forward yourself. We can't promise to accommodate everyone, but please let us know what you would like to see or do by sending an email to programme@seacon03.org.uk or write to the main convention address.

Included in this mailing you will find the hotel booking form and volunteer forms. Hotel rooms will generally be let on a first come first served basis, so book early. As always, the Eastercon will be run by volunteers and we will need a considerable amount of you to assist us on the day. Thanks in advance to all of you who I know will be volunteering as gophers, stewards, and tech crew.

Paul Oldroyd

A FANTHOLOGY FOR EASTERCON

You might ask why Seacon want to produce a fanthology featuring Eastercon guests. You might ask why we're telling you about it now rather than just trying to foist it on you at the convention. You might ask why you should be interested in a fanthology. You might even ask what on earth is a fanthology, so let's start there because otherwise you'll just skip on to the next article - which I suppose you might be doing already because you think you *do* know what a fanthology is and you think you don't like them...

<We're losing them. They're going to flip through the rest of the pr to look for funny articles.>

Right. OK. A fanthology is an anthology of writing by fans. Specifically, what we're editing for Seacon will be a fanthology focusing on the Eastercon guests. Not just the fan guests of honour, but other guests of honour who - even if the Eastercon which invited them as a guest was honouring their professional writing or their artwork or their scientific career - have in their time produced some excellent fan writing.

Now, you might go on to ask what's fan writing and...

<Watch out: some of them have read the word 'fan' too many times in the last paragraph and think it doesn't include them. They're about to go and see if there are any more cartoons.>

...and we could tell you to read the fanthology at

Easter and find out. In fact that's a really good idea and you should definitely plan on doing that. But for the purposes of this fanthology, fan writing is any good quality thought-provoking and/or entertaining writing that's about being part of the sf community. And in this case it needs to have been written by someone who's been a guest of honour at one of the British national sf conventions, popularly known as Eastercons although in fact the first one which was held at Easter was in Kettering in 1955.

<Now you've done it. Next stop the membership list.>

But that's not important right now, although if anyone would like to support Kettering in '57...

<ahem>

...they've come to the wrong place because *this* is about the Eastercon fanthology. Yes. That would be it. So we're intending to produce a publication featuring the best fan writing from Eastercon guests of honour - including some information about who and what they are, when they were guests at an Eastercon, and where you can find more of their work - which will be available to you next Easter.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or special requests, please contact us at 14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 6JE, UK by the end of 2002.

Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

ALL ABOUT MARY

A prerequisite of becoming an author is to have a series of jobs that will look intriguing on book jackets. Mary Gentle has been a cinema projectionist, a warehouse clerk, a valuation officer for the Inland Revenue, a pornographer, a mature student, and the Fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse... No, really. Wait and see. Can you guess which one?

She began writing her first novel, *A Hawk in Silver* (1977), at the age of 15. Two adolescent girls discover a hidden realm in which powerful Faerie tribes are engaged in mortal battle. An accomplished young-adult fantasy, *A Hawk in Silver* stands alone thematically: it doesn't seem to foreshadow Mary Gentle's later works.

Gentle's second novel, *Golden Witchbreed* (1983) is, despite its fantastical name, solidly science-fictional. This novel and its sequel, *Ancient Light* (1987), feature Lynne de Lisle Christie, an envoy from Earth who comes to Orthe on a mission of trade and diplomacy. Orthe is an elaborately-detailed world inhabited by humanoids who constantly surprise with their non-humanity. Lynne Christie is an interestingly flawed protagonist, and the corporation-run Earth from which she originates is shown in sharp contrast to the half-civilised, honour-bound society of Orthe. Marion Zimmer Bradley compared the duology to Ursula Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*: personally, I am reminded of the planetary romances of Jack Vance and Philip José Farmer.

Golden Witchbreed was initially rejected by publishers, and Gentle (who'd left school at sixteen) took this as a signal to become a mature student. She acquired her first degree, in Combined Studies (Literature, Politics and Geography), in 1984. She also wrote and published a number of short stories, some of which were anthologised in *Scholars and Soldiers* (1989). Herein may be found the first two tales of Scholar-Soldier Valentine – the White Crow – and Lord Architect Balthazar Casaubon, who feature in three subsequent novels. 'Beggars in Satin' and 'The Knot Garden' are the first indications of Gentle's fascination with hermetic magic and other forgotten modes of scientific – or pseudo-scientific – thought.

Scholars and Soldiers also contains a new Orthe tale, and a number of standalone SF and fantasy stories. It's prefaced with an introduction by Neil Gaiman, co-author (with Terry Pratchett) of 1990's *Good Omens*. *Good Omens* features the Four Horsemen – latterly the Four Bikers – of the Apocalypse, one of whom is a red-headed woman, a cocktail-swigging foreign correspondent on holiday in a formerly idyllic (now war-ravaged) Mediterranean island resort. Some have said that this character is based on Mary Gentle: others are too nervous to speculate.

Rats and Gargoyles, published in 1990, was shortlisted for the Arthur C. Clarke Award and the

British Science Fiction Association Award. The first novel in the White Crow / Casaubon sequence, it is set in an imaginary city. 'The city called the heart of the world' is reminiscent of Renaissance Florence or Venice, but contains elements from a bewildering array of times and places, including factory production-lines, medieval cathedrals, a steam-railway and, ah yes, a manifest pantheon of Thirty-Six – deities in various mythological forms whose caprices cause miracles and catastrophes. Meanwhile, Lord Architect Casaubon is attempting to apply Hermetic principles – 'as above, so below' – to city planning, and Valentine, the White Crow, is embroiled in a working-class uprising against the intelligent, human-sized rats who rule the city. Additionally, there are five points to the compass (North, South, East, West and Aust) each separated by 90 degrees. Perhaps this is why there is no frontispiece map? *Rats and Gargoyles* is not a novel for the easily-perturbed, or for the weak of stomach: but it is a dizzying delight, witty, baroque, loaded with detail and character.

The Architecture of Desire (1991), an indirect sequel to *Rats and Gargoyles*, is a more challenging read. In an alternate England ruled by Queen Carola and the Protector Olivia, the White Crow is a physician who breaks her Hippocratic oath and commits the most typically masculine of crimes. The aftermath follows her gradual progress away from magic, and away from many of the tropes of heroic fantasy that – in one form or another – have provided structure to events thus far. Casaubon, meanwhile, has taken on an investigative role, searching for an explanation of the chaos and corruption that is preventing the new Temple being built in this alternate London. Traitors' heads hang on London Bridge, and – to put it bluntly – all is not well in the realm.

Left to his Own Devices (1994) seems to conclude the Casaubon/White Crow sequence, though it's open-ended enough for there to be some doubt about this. Casaubon and Valentine are in a near-future London attempting to fight off chaos while simultaneously dealing with Valentine's mother, Johanna Branwen. This third universe in which the pair find themselves has an unfinished feel to it, but perhaps that's simply because it's set in the near future as seen from the early 1990s: the setting is so familiar, in parts, as to be unnoticeable. Gentle nevertheless achieves a credibly technological future without descending into the often-simplistic tropes of cyberpunk, a movement at its height when this novel was published.

Between the novels in the Casaubon/White Crow sequence, Mary Gentle had published *Grunts!* (1992), a highly acclaimed military fantasy written from the point of view of the bad guys. *Grunts!* is the story of what happens when a bunch of orcs (yep,

Seacon '03 Hotel Form – Members Only

18 – 21 April, 2003, Hanover International, Hinckley

Name:.....Seacon '03 Membership No:

Address:.....

Phone No:e-mail:.....

Room: Please reserve me the following: (Please tick for the type of room you require.)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Double ¹ (£30.00 pppn): I will be sharing with :			
<input type="checkbox"/> Single Room ² (£40.00 pppn) please indicate alternative below:			
<input type="checkbox"/> If no single available please send me details of alternative Accommodation ³			
<input type="checkbox"/> Twin ¹ (£30.00 pppn): I will be sharing with:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Twin ¹ (£30.00 pppn): Please find me a sharer, I am (please tick two of the following)			
Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Smoker <input type="checkbox"/>	Non-smoker <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Triple/Family Room ⁴ (£70.00 per room per night): I will arrange my sharers.			

- 1 Please note that your sharer must also be a member of the convention. Where double/twin rooms are shared you will be responsible for your part of the bill. You will not be allocated a sharer unless that person has also SIGNED one of these forms; if you have chosen your own sharer your room will NOT be booked until both signed forms have been received.
- 2 Single rooms are in limited supply and will be allocated strictly on a first come first served basis.
- 3 It will be your responsibility to contact the alternative hotels and book directly with them.
- 4 If you book a triple/family you will be responsible for the whole bill for the room

Please tick which nights you wish to stay in the hotel:				
Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
<input type="checkbox"/> 17/04/03	<input type="checkbox"/> 18/04/03	<input type="checkbox"/> 19/04/03	<input type="checkbox"/> 20/04/03	<input type="checkbox"/> 21/04/03
Please indicate your preferences by deleting as appropriate:				
I would like a room in a no smoking area if available	Yes	No	Don't Mind	
I would like a room in a quiet area if available	Yes	No	Don't Mind	
I need a cot in my room	Yes	No		
I require vegetarian meals	Yes	No	Don't Mind	
I have the following special requirements: <i>(Please be specific, this is where you tell us about things like non-feather pillows, etc. Use the reverse of this form if needed.)</i>				

NB: A deposit of one night's stay per person (£30 per person twin/double or £40.00 per person in a single, for a triple/family room this the daily room rate £70) is required to reserve your room.

Cheques payable to "Seacon 03" MUST be enclosed and sent to:

Chris Donaldson, Guernsey Farm, Haydon End Lane, Haydon Wick, Swindon, SN25 1JF

as soon as possible, e-mail enquiries to memberships@seacon03.org.uk or tel. 01793 723 417

I wish to book accommodation as detailed above. I accept that I am wholly responsible for my hotel bill, or that I am jointly responsible with my sharer if I am occupying a twin/double room.

I enclose amount:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cash	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque

SIGNED:	Date:
---------	-------

THIS FORM MUST BE SIGNED

OFFICE USE ONLY	PASSED TO HANOVER
CHEQUE RECEIVED	CASH RECEIVED

Section 1: Preliminary Information

Name of the person...

Date of birth...

Address of the person...

Occupation of the person...

Other relevant information...

Signature and stamp of the official...

Official seal and stamp...

Additional notes and remarks...



Dealer's Room Booking Form

If you wish to book tables in the Dealers room at Seacon03 please complete this form and send it to Noel Collyer at the address below.

Tables are 6ft by 2ft 6in and cost £25 per table

Space will be allocated on a first come first served basis and your booking will be taken as provisional until we receive full payment.

Number required

Any special requirements

.....

I enclose £ in full payment. / Please invoice me. (Delete as appropriate)

Art Show Exhibition Request

If you wish to display your artwork at Seacon03 please complete the following so that we ensure that space is reserved for you.

Please provide an estimate of how much space you require.

Name: Membership No:

Business Name (if applicable) :

Address:

.....

.....

.....

Phone No:

e-Mail:

Please return this form to:

Noel Collyer, 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA

Dealer's Room Booking Form



1. Name of Dealer's Room: _____
2. Address: _____

3. Telephone: _____
4. Fax: _____

5. E-mail: _____
6. Website: _____

7. Name of Contact Person: _____
8. Position: _____

9. Date of Booking: _____
10. Time of Booking: _____

Art Show Exhibition Request

1. Name of Artist: _____
2. Address: _____

3. Telephone: _____
4. Fax: _____

5. E-mail: _____
6. Website: _____

7. Name of Contact Person: _____
8. Position: _____

9. Date of Exhibition: _____
10. Time of Exhibition: _____

11. Name of Gallery: _____
12. Address: _____

13. Telephone: _____
14. Fax: _____

15. E-mail: _____
16. Website: _____

17. Name of Contact Person: _____
18. Position: _____

19. Date of Request: _____
20. Time of Request: _____



Volunteer Request Form

Would you like to help at Seacon03? If so we want to hear from you, previous experience is not necessarily required (but of course would be appreciated), just enthusiasm and a willingness to give up some of your time to help the convention run smoothly. First timers can find gophering a great way to get to know other convention attendees.

Please tick the area you are interested in

- Tech Ops (It might be useful if you know what an XLR is.)
- Stewarding Dealers room
- First aiders (A current first aider certificate is required)
- Registration desk Artshow
- Gophering (Go for this, go for that!)
- Children's room I'd like to take advantage of a parent's co-operative children's room and of course I'll be pleased to help out.
- Other (please specify)

Name:..... Membership No:

Address:
.....
.....
.....

Phone No:

e-mail:.....

Please return this form to:

Noel Collyer
26 Northampton Road
Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA

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that rumbling is Tolkien turning in his grave) plunder a dragon's hoard and find, not your usual goblets and jewellery, but a cache of US Marine Corps equipment. They set out to overthrow all their Evil Overlord's new-fangled ideas about elections and diplomacy, and revisit a great deal of military theory in the process, often with surprising results. This book has been compared to a Tolkien novelisation of *Full Metal Jacket*, but it's much funnier than that.

Gentle was also involved with the various Midnight Rose anthologies: with Roz Kaveney, she edited *Villains!* (1992), *The Weerde: Book 1* (1992) and *The Weerde: Book 2* (1993). *Villains!* collects original fantasy stories from Britain's finest up-and-coming SF and fantasy authors, told – again – from the point of view of the villains rather than the forces of light. The *Weerde* anthologies features stories from a similar array of authors, set in a shared world where supernatural beings have evolved in parallel with humans.

During this prolific period, Mary Gentle was studying again: she took her MA in War Studies at Kings in 1995. Five years later, *Ash: A Secret History* was published – in a single 1400-page volume for the UK market, and in four separate volumes for the weaker Americans. Despite falling easily, in terms of structure, into those four volumes, it's a single novel, half a million words long. To date, *Ash* has won the Sidewise Award and the British Science Fiction Association Award, and has been shortlisted for the James Tiptree, John W. Campbell Memorial, and Arthur C. Clarke Awards.

Ash is crammed with historical research, extrahistorical speculation, psychological and political insight, and the sort of minutiae that may turn the stomachs of more delicate readers. It follows the career of Ash, a female mercenary captain, through what appears to be a history that never happened. Burgundy, once top-dog statelet of Europe, is opposed by a Visigoth-ruled Carthage with Lovecraftian elements, which practices alternate

sciences in addition to all that alternate history. The story is told by Ash, via a number of original documents, and by Pierce Ratchiff, a modern historian whose incredulity grows as he uncovers more of a tale that could never have happened.

The richness and density of *Ash* is typical of Mary Gentle's work, and there are plenty of thematic resonances: by which, of course, I mean that she's exploring more of the same ideas.

Mary Gentle isn't a straightforwardly feminist writer: her female characters are strong-willed and effective, and good at what they do, but they're as likely as the men around them to make mistakes, to act irrationally, and to behave badly. If there are stereotypes flying around here, they're more along the lines of Xena and Buffy than any of the gentle, empathic women who can be found in so much SF. Gentle's warrior-women are more sensibly dressed than your usual sword'n'sorcery heroine (no leather bustiers here, except perhaps for erotic effect). They work well with others: they use their brains as well as their bodies: when warfare is refined to politics and diplomacy, they function equally effectively.

Her novels are difficult to categorise. They're not quite fantasy, despite the occult trappings: magic and miracles work, or fail, in rigorously-defined ways, the result of scientific theory and practice. They're not historical novels, though plenty of historical research goes into each counterfactual: Mary Gentle is all for hands-on research, and learning to hammer armour is as valid a research technique as studying Clausewitz. They're science-fictional, but the science is more likely to be a discredited branch of philosophy than your standard physics, sociology, astronomy. They're romantic, but the romance may be same-sex, or cross-species, or incomprehensible to outsiders. They're unpredictable, fascinating, superbly crafted. Mary Gentle seems fascinated by the details – imagined and real – of each world she writes, and she draws us in.

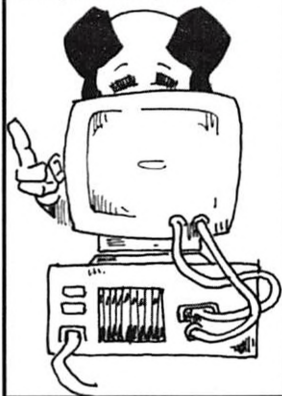
Tanya Brown

The Return of Elmer T. Hack

TECHNOLOGY HAS MOVED ON SINCE I STARTED WRITING SF...

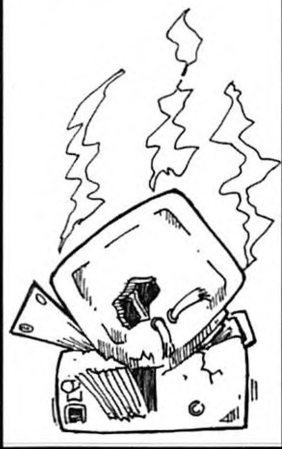


...INSTEAD OF A CLUNKY TYPEWRITER I'VE GOT AN INTERACTIVE, STATE OF THE ART COMPUTER...



It looks like you're writing a turgid, derivative pot-boiler. Would you like any help?

WHERE DID I PUT MY OLD REMINGTON...



THE DEMOLISHED WOMAN

When Rosalind Franklin needed some pure DNA for her X-Ray experiments in her lab at King's College, London, she first tried oranges, which turned out to be a mistake. All it led to was a rather messy food fight with her assistant. After some experimentation Kiwi fruit proved to be best suited to making pure DNA, because it was a soft fruit, easily pureed, because it contained protease enzymes which stripped away contaminating proteins, and because there wasn't enough left to throw at anyone.

First put a small bottle of methylated spirits into a bowl of ice. Then make a salt/detergent mixture by adding 3 grams of salt and 10 ml of washing up liquid to 100ml of water. Stir thoroughly, without frothing, to dissolve the salt. Peel and chop finely one Kiwi fruit. Put into a small bowl and add 100 ml of the salt/detergent mixture. Stir gently. This breaks up the cell walls and frees the cell contents.

Put the bowl containing the mixture into a saucepan of hot water (60°C) and leave for 15 minutes, then pour the mixture into a coffee filter, and catch the liquid that filters through in a tall glass. You will need about one fifth of a glass. Very carefully drizzle an equal volume of the ice cold methylated spirit down the inside of the glass so that it forms a purple layer on top of the green layer.

After a few moments you should see a white layer beginning to form at the boundary between the purple and the green layers. This layer is made up of filaments of DNA from the Kiwi fruit. The green layer is full of DNA as well as lots of different proteins, sugars, etc. When the cold methylated spirit is poured onto the green layer, it forms a region near the boundary which dehydrates the DNA dissolved in the aqueous layer. This forces the DNA out of solution, causing the solid strands to appear between the two layers. Pull the white gooey stuff out of the boundary layer with a loop of thin wire.

You have just purified Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid, DNA, the molecular basis of the genetic code.

Now all you need is a good source of X-Rays, some photographic film and a darkroom, and you are well on your way to discovering the secret of life – the actual structure of the DNA molecule. Unless you happen to be a woman that is, in which case I'm afraid you are right out of luck, and about to have your research hijacked by a pair of wide boys from Cambridge.

In 1953 Francis Crick and James Watson came up with the key insight in the search for the structure of DNA while playing with their scientific Lego set. DNA wasn't a triple helix like Linus Pauling thought. DNA was a *double* helix. This was great. This was wonderful. This was the breakthrough of the century.

However they were only able to make this breakthrough because a certain Maurice Wilkins (who later shared the Nobel Prize with them), showed them Rosalind Franklin's research results without her knowledge. According to her research

notes she was well on the track of the double helix before Crick and Watson, but they published first, and so get the credit. *That* is the secret of life.

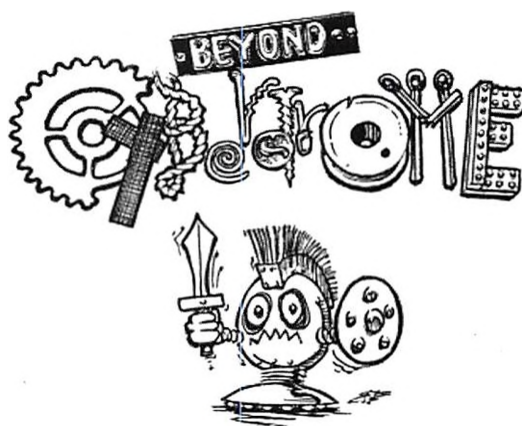
In that same year the SF community managed a much more mannered achievement, creating the Hugos, the Science Fiction Achievement Awards, at the 11th World SF Convention in Philadelphia, PA, to honour the great and the good of the SF world. Those first Hugos were an interesting bunch, the categories being somewhat different to those used today.

There was Best Professional Magazine – a tie between *Galaxy* and *Astounding*; Best Cover Artist – a tie between Emsch and Hannes Bok; Best Interior Artist – Virgil Finlay; Best Science Feature Writer – Willy Ley; Best New Author/Artist – Philip Jose Farmer; Number One Fan Personality – Forrest J Ackerman; and Best Novel – Alfred Bester's "The Demolished Man", a great work, still readable and relevant today.

However if you were a female author, artist or fan you were still right out of luck. The first woman to appear in the Hugo winners list had to wait until 1960, when Elinor Busby got a co-editor Hugo in the Best Fanzine category. The first woman to get a Hugo award for Best Novel was Anne McCaffrey – in 1968. It wasn't until after 1988 that the Hugo awards for Best Novel became statistically evenly balanced between male and female authors. And there has as yet been only one female winner of Best Professional Artist – Diane Dillon in 1971, honoured along with her husband Leo.

Perhaps the outlook of an age that refused to honour Rosalind Franklin hasn't yet been demolished. Perhaps we need a "Tiptree" award for artists too.

Julian Headlong



Beyond Cyberdrome: not so much Robot Wars or Scrapheap Challenge as The Goon Show expressed in cybernetics. Concept and presentation by "Entropy's straight man" SMS, with supporting technology and organisation by an overworked cast of dozens. Bring a robot, or build one in the workshops at the con. Enter races and battles; watch the robots collapse!

<http://www.halcserver2.co.uk/cyberdrome/home.htm>

THE TIPTREE COMES TO SEACON

About Karen Joy Fowler's head, and Mary Doria Russell's bra ...

In my own mind, I am quite clear about why I came to be dancing maniacally round a packed room, pretending to be Karen Joy Fowler, along with eleven other Karen Joy Fowlers and a dozen Pat Murphys. We were apparently fulfilling one of Pat Murphy's more arcane desires and launching the 2002 Tiptree fund-raising auction at Wiscon. Obvious, really.

The real Karen seemed to be quite cool about the fact that twelve people had masks showing her wearing Mary Doria Russell's bra on her head. The real Pat didn't seem to notice as she wasn't actually in the room when all this happened. So we did it all over again later, to surprise her. She was surprised.

You've maybe noticed that the James Tiptree Jr Award is not like other awards. To say that it is iconoclastic is to ever-so-slightly understate the case. It's noisy, playful, the trickster among the literary awards. It is an award funded by bake sales and the now legendary Tiptree auction presided over by the equally legendary Ellen Klages. But while the Tiptree is about fun – if you think the fund-raising is weird, you should see the award ceremony, with the cake, and the tiara, and the special award-winner's song (freshly composed every year), and the ... – it is also deadly serious.

The award is the unholy brainchild of Pat Murphy and Karen Joy Fowler, the Founding Mothers, and it's named for James Tiptree, Jr., whose true identity as a writer was the subject of considerable speculation for many years. Many believed that Tiptree's writing, as Robert Silverberg so famously, and wrongly, put it, 'ineluctably masculine. Others were less certain, and even if Tiptree was a man, wasn't it great to know that, as Debbie Notkin put it, 'the world was a little more complex, and held a little more hope for a meeting of the sexes.' The revelation that James Tiptree was in fact Alice Sheldon led to a good deal more discussion about the roles of women in science

fiction, as characters and as writers.

By 1991, when Pat and Karen created the award, the sf world was, superficially at least, much more egalitarian but the assumptions about what constituted good sf writing weren't keeping up with the times. Thus, it was still entirely valid to criticise a book for not having strong male characters when it wouldn't have been criticised for *not having* strong female characters. As Pat put it, 'I've come to believe that to change the way that people think about women and men, we need to show people in different roles.'

The Tiptree Award participates in this by honouring works of science fiction that explore and expand gender roles. Which means that the judges (a fresh set every year, who are at liberty to define their brief however they wish) are reading a wide range of material. The jury announces no prior shortlist but once the winner is announced, it publishes a shortlist, sometimes a long list too – gathered together these lists represent a formidable collection of titles exploring gender in sf. The lists are up on the Tiptree website, www.tiptree.org. Check them out, and hunt down, beg, steal or borrow, preferably buy a copy of *The Kappa Child* by Hiromi Goto, the most recent winner.

And now the Tiptree Award is coming to the UK for the first time. The presentation of the Award will be at Seacon, and I can promise that you'll never have seen anything like it. We're working with the convention to include some Tiptree-flavoured programming, and we're keeping our fingers crossed for a bake sale too! I am not planning to masquerade as Karen Joy Fowler again, but I am sure the Motherboard has something even more fiendish up its collective sleeve. Just you wait!

If you're interested in finding out more about the Tiptree Award, or participating in fund-raising, contact me at tiptree@brisingamen.demon.co.uk.

Maureen Kincaid Speller
Tiptree Award, UK liaison

THE HANOVER INTERNATIONAL

Those of you who were at Paragon last year (2001) will agree that the Hanover Hotel is a great con venue, with its indoor shopfronts full of, er, interesting items, the traffic central Rotunda, loads of function space and its very own pub. And let's not forget Neptune. These are the unchanging bits.

As with any convention at a new hotel, there were a few practical problems at Paragon concerning food and drink, which we will try and address this time. The Snooty Fox bar is not exactly cavernous and became very crowded and smoky in the evenings. There was a room behind the bar which was the overflow, but it never really worked out. This time we plan to use the Fox as the smoking bar and create a no-smoking bar using the one in the front part of the Brasserie, where people can buy their drink and take it through to the

Conservatory or the reception area (seems a shame not to use all that space!).

The serving hatch in the Rotunda was very useful and I hope to increase the selection of things sold there and the opening hours. The main con food will again be in the Brasserie/restaurant. As there are few places to eat near to the hotel, many members will have all their meals here, and I will be looking to extend the range of stuff on offer (and speeding things up!). Watch this space. The other space you can doodle in.

Tony Berry

Look carefully and you'll find the hotel booking form with this PR (if you don't or want another copy contact us without delay). This has all the nitty gritty details such as prices so we won't repeat them here.

ALTERNATIVE HOTELS & B&Bs

Looking for alternative (maybe cheaper, maybe not) accommodation? Here are a few possibilities gleaned from www.hinckley-online.co.uk. Prices where quoted are for guidance only.

Hollycroft Hotel, 24 Hollycroft, Hinckley
01455 637356 www.hollycrofthotel.co.uk
(Single £25, Double £45, Triple £60)

The Guest House, 45 Priesthills Road, Hinckley
01455 446602
(4 rooms only - Single £22, Double £40)

Kings Hotel, 13/19 Mount Road, Hinckley
01455 637193

Victoria Guest House, 2 Spa Lane, Hinckley
01455 631227

Elstead House, 101 Derby Road, Hinckley
Tel: 01455 448759

We are planning to include the ReadMe Outside with PR4 so look here for more details of places to eat and stay outside the convention.

ADVERTISING RATES

The following rates will apply for any adverts placed with us and paid before 1 February 2003. Camera ready copy is assumed (preferably on disc). Any additional processing work, will be charged extra.

	Fan	Professional
Full page	£30	£100
Half page	£15	£50
Quarter page	£8	£30

The committee will decide at its own discretion (and the view of the judges is final!) on what is fan or professional. Colour will be quoted separately. Rates for inserts will be quoted individually depending on the size and weight.

Rates for the Programme Book and for flyers to be included in the Membership Pack can be obtained from John Harvey at the convention address or via e-mail at john@seacon03.org.uk.

Progress Report 4 -----
Copy deadline 1 February 2003

MEMBERSHIP LIST

Members joined between 1 March and 23rd October 2002 (all Attending except where marked (S) for Supporting)

333 Dawn Abigail	245 David Allan Finch	259 Judith Miller	378 Liz Sourbut
269 Iain Alexander	311 Brigit Fischer	307 Sue Mitchell	346 Simon Spandon
377 Chris Amies	345 Jo Fletcher	271 Cheryl Morgan	371 Douglas Spencer
202 Linnéa Anglemark	286 Lynn Fotheringham	221 Steve Mowbray	283 Michael Spiller
203 Johan Anglemark	231 TJ Furniss	216 Ronán Murphy	222 Jesper Stage
213 Andrew Armstrong	362 Jim Gallagher	252 Darren Nash	240 James Steel
250 Erik Arthur	301 Clare Goodall	253 Dave O'Neill	352 Richard James Stephenson
289 Andrew Barton	326 Roy Gray	264 Chris O'Shea	277 Billy Stirling
290 Kate Soley Barton	324 Pia Hall	272 James Odell (S)	390 Chris Stocks
340 Stephen Baxter	375 John Harold	363 Paul Paolini	315 Marcus Streets
342 Jess Bennett	256 Susie Haynes	233 Arwell Parry	316 Rae Streets
207 Austin Benson	367 G F J C Hedger	241 Andrew Patterson	317 Tilly Streets
284 Simon Bissón	219 Martin Heitlager	230 Roger Perkins	327 Anne Sudworth
260 Paul Blair	255 Kevin Henwood	223 Tommy Persson	359 Alan James Sullivan
204 Claare Boothby	351 Rick Hewett	217 Heather Petty	347 Neil Summerfield
374 Robbie Bourget	391 Anthony Hilbert	380 Andrew Porter	220 Lesley Swan
296 Jill Bradley	349 Chris Hill	366 Marc Potts	278 Jan A Søderberg
297 Phil Bradley	350 Penny Hill	292 Ceri Pritchard	372 R M Tarver (S)
285 Mary Branscombe	298 Liz Holliday	368 Lorraine Pritchard	206 Alison Taylor
287 Matt Brooker	361 Martina J A Holroyd	218 Henry Proctor	270 Graham Taylor
205 Simon Callan	379 Graham Horsman	281 Liam Proven	282 Kirsty Thunem
232 Arthur Chappell	328 Warren Hudson	382 Danielle Ray	291 Chris Tickering
376 Mike Chinn (S)	334 Malcolm J Hutchison	201 Peter Redfarn	364 Allan Toombs
386 Norman Clinton	295 Ian Jackson	280 Meike Renzler	365 Jackie Toombs
266 Rich Coad	319 Nicholas Jackson	353 Dave M Roberts	321 Julie Tottey
246 Eddie Cochrane	235 Jonathan Jones	354 Estelle Roberts	341 Chris Tregenza
331 Paul Cockburn	200 Dick Jude	335 Sarita Robinson	388 Cristina Pulido Ulvang
238 Peter Cohen	348 Richard Kennaway	336 Nick Robinson	389 Tor Christian Ulvang
279 Peter Coleman	215 Peter Kievits	337 Heather Robinson	265 Tobes Valois
274 Kate Cooper	209 Tim Kirk	338 Calvin Robinson	383 Richard van der Voort
325 Jon Courtney Grimwood	303 Alice Kohler	208 Stephen Rothman	384 Marion van der Voort
299 Dave Cox	239 Andrew Langhammer	344 Simon Russell	275 John Waggott
214 Rafe Culpin	309 Eira Latham	385 Lena Sarah	332 David Wake
339 Mike Damesick	330 Kris Laverack	343 Keith Scaife	320 Ian Watson
369 Christine Davidson	236 Sharon Lewis	267 Stacy Scott	329 Jessica Watson
370 Michael Davidson	212 Marise Lohr	387 Tom Sherlock	355 Mike Westhead
234 Martyn Dawe	244 Duncan Macgregor	224 Ina Shorroch	356 Kathy Westhead
268 Sue Dawson (S)	360 Craig Marnoch	225 Gavin Shorroch	357 Peter Westhead
257 Chantal Delessert	254 Keith Marsland	247 Ken Slater	358 Karen Westhead
322 Ben Dessau	381 Alistair Maynard	248 Anthony Smith	242 Peter Weston
249 Owen S Dunn	211 Alastair McCullough	300 Lisa Smith	243 Eileen Weston
258 Lilian Edwards	313 Scotty McLeod	227 Lucy Smithers	237 Laura Wheatly
273 Udo Emmerich	302 Rob Meades	228 Dan Smithers	306 Phil Willis
318 Iain Emsley	304 Hazel Meades	229 Nathaniel Smithers	210 Caroline Wilson
251 Andy England	305 Leo Meades	308 Jane Smithers	261 Graham Winter
312 John English	323 Lawrence Mee	310 SMS	262 Sue Winter
288 Tim Evans	293 Sara Messenger	226 Victoria Sorby	263 Ross Winter
276 David C Farmer	294 Chloe Messenger	314 Janice Sorrell	