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Cover by Iain J. Clark

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~Editors~

**Vincent Docherty, Ann Gry, Allison Hartman Adams,  
Chris Garcia, and James Bacon**

# Introduction – Ann Gry

I have a vague recollection of maybe meeting Vincent in person somewhere at Worldcons. But in reality, we met when James Bacon started talking about this bothersome *Journey Planet* issue. James said they'd been working on it for almost a year and needed someone to come on board to conduct the rest of the interviews and push this through. Here we are, several months of weekend interviews and a lot of work with transcripts later – aiming somewhere between the full recollection of details, anecdotes, and events of the past: wearing kids' Batman costumes and LOTR'ing, two-times Worldcon chair, Hugo awards involvement, and organisation of superb musical concerts during Worldcons, all peppered with personal stuff, as well as singular insights into what it's been like to be ardently involved in the fan community over the decades. What a ride!

Those interviews felt for me like a privilege, like walking into a forest full of wonders and treasures every time we spoke. Inspirational, surprising, awkward, fun – the experience that you are about to get from reading this issue is like going to a convention, with the whole scope of related emotions. It's also like attending the cons that happened ages ago, and reliving them through the eyes of a great man, passionate, caring, and earnestly optimistic. Vincent swayed me completely with his honesty and openness – a fantastic journey into an ingenious mind.

I'm grateful to have had an opportunity to talk to Vincent and help record his fannish experiences throughout his life, to feel a part of the Worldcon history through his eyes, and I am happy to share this with you, our reader!



# Introduction – Vincent

Welcome to *Journey Planet 74*, which started life, as such things often do, as an idea in a conversation I had with James Bacon. We'd been talking about how long I'd been active in fandom (45 years in mid-2023, when this issue is published) and he proposed that the *JP* team dedicate an issue entirely to my 'fannish career', with more details about my personal history and interests, what makes me tick, how I've developed and changed over the years and what I've worked on and contributed. James thought this would be of interest to many people.

James initially suggested titling this issue *I, Vincent*, which I suppose has a certain SFnal resonance, but it's important to understand that, though I'm perfectly happy and comfortable leading from the front, and being 'on-stage', I don't desire it for itself: what's important to me is to make the best contribution possible to our shared love of the genre, and to do so in a way that everyone, whether organiser or participant, gets the most from the experience. And to have fun, of course. I get as much or more from helping and inspiring others to lead and to organise than in doing so myself. (One of my favourite quotes is by Benjamin Zander: 'The conductors of orchestras don't make a sound. They depend, for their power, on their ability to make other people powerful'.) I've gotten positive feedback, and even a couple of awards and honours along the way, which is very nice, but those aren't why I do the things I do. If I had to choose a different title, it would be more in line with the journey I've taken and the things I've done, perhaps something like *Taking the High Road*, which still alludes to the personal journey, along with a hint of Scottish origin and of trying to do things right. As you'll read in the articles here, it's definitely been a journey, with many ups and downs and hopefully some learning along the way. Still, even that title doesn't feel right, (a bit judgmental, perhaps), so we'll just stay with *Journey Planet 74*, which, given all my travels, is a perfectly fine title.

This issue also builds on [Journey Planet 38](#) from 2018, which celebrated the 40th anniversary of SF conventions in Glasgow, co-edited by James and Chris, Mark Meenan and myself, with much input from others. We positioned that edition as an introduction, and it's worth reading to provide some background to this issue. We've gone into much more detail about Glasgow Fandom and conventions here, at least those I was involved with, including anecdotes from others involved at the time. With the 45th anniversary now upon us, and with the 2024 Worldcon coming to Glasgow, perhaps we'll do some further issues to focus on the many people who have contributed along the way.

I've taken some inspiration from fans who have written very thorough autobiographies, in particular the late British fan, Peter Weston, who wrote the Hugo-nominated [With Stars In My Eyes: My Adventures In British Fandom](#). Peter was an excellent writer, organiser and SF fan who made great and lasting contributions. I'm not nearly as accomplished a writer (unlike many in fandom, I have no strong desire to write for its own sake) nor am I particularly social, so I can't relate so many fascinating conversations and anecdotes, though I have mentioned a few. This isn't therefore a full autobiography; it is more of a stroll through my fannish experience and associated interests, and I fully acknowledge the help needed to complete this edition of *Journey Planet* with the help of Ann and James who had to drag the words out of me at times.

The biographical content of this issue starts chronologically, from my earliest conventions in the first decade following the first SF Con in Glasgow, Faircon '78, then the bidding and running of the first Glasgow Worldcon Intersection in 1995, followed by the second, Interaction in 2005, and then the various cons and other fannish activities I've done since. That structure is applied retrospectively since I had no idea at the time how it would turn out. I certainly never planned to (co)chair two Worldcons! This is followed by some specific Q&A topics and personal matters which might be of interest, and articles, anecdotes and photos kindly supplied by various friends and other fans. I've interspersed additional photos and other materials along the way, and where possible tried to link significant experiences from my SF & con-running to my life events. Much of the material was obtained from a series of interviews with me conducted by James and Ann, which were transcribed and updated. I hope my recollections are accurate and reasonably complete and of course, I'm delighted and humbled by the pieces contributed by various friends and fellow fans.

I'd like to thank James and Chris for their support in creating this JP. I'd particularly like to thank Ann Gry for the immense amount of work she's done in gathering information, transcribing interviews with me and pulling the whole thing together, and to Allison Hartman Adams for her proofreading and copy editing. Many thanks to Iain Clark for the wonderful cover artwork, which I'll say more about later in the section on art.

# How and Why Science Fiction?

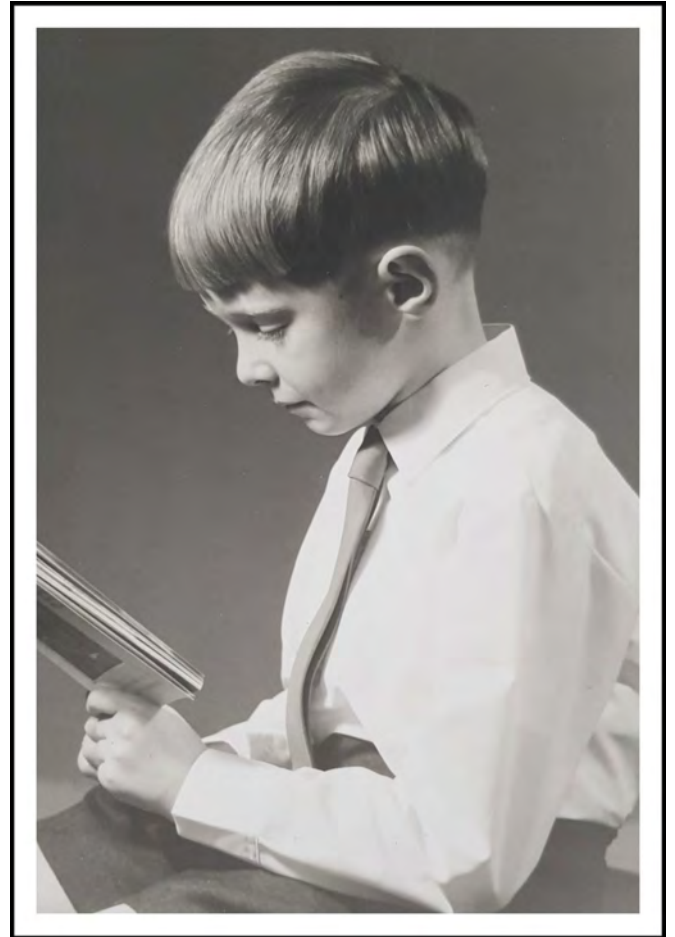
We'll start with the initial interview that James did with me, focussing on my early interests in the genre. These stories touch on important experiences in my upbringing, some of which might resonate or even trigger difficult memories for readers.

I want to do something in this genre, which has been such an important thing for me. I'm not a writer, I'm not creative in that sense, though I am in other ways. So how can I contribute? Well, I can contribute by organising things, because I'm quite good at that. There's satisfaction in seeing lots of people enjoy themselves and also being part of that, but there's also the satisfaction of doing it.

## How did you start or come by Science Fiction?

I'm reliably informed that I was always interested in Science Fiction, since even before I can remember. This interest started with TV, and I'm told that when I was a young child I was very interested in Batman. I even had a little Batman costume which I wore proudly and loudly, though I haven't found any photographic evidence, thankfully! The Adam West TV series was first broadcast in the UK in early 1966 when I was four, and I remember the iconic Batman logo and the theme music. (I can remember myself quite young. I have flashes of memory, even from infancy, which I know many people don't, but I have a couple of those.)

I was also a big fan of the various Gerry Anderson series in the early to mid-1960s, especially *Thunderbirds*, (with its rousing theme, amazing machines and hilariously movable buildings), *Joe 90* and *Captain Scarlet*. Apparently, I wrote a last-minute letter to Santa asking for a Captain Scarlet uniform just before Christmas, which resulted in my father having to find one in the back alleys of the then-notorious Barras Market in Glasgow. I also enjoyed the later Anderson series and was delighted when we were able to invite him to be a Guest of Honour at the 1995 Worldcon in Glasgow. I've enjoyed the recent animated series of *Captain Scarlet* and *Thunderbirds*, which are really well made.



Of course, I watched *Doctor Who*, which started in 1963, initially in black & white. I recall being terrified of the original Cybermen (yes, I did hide behind the couch!), who first appeared in the now partly missing serial *The Tenth Planet*, also from 1966. This seems to have been an important year in my development! I was particularly fond of the Jon Pertwee and Tom Baker incarnations, and watched most of the episodes until I went to university in 1979. I lost interest a bit until the relaunch series in 2005, which I've followed ever since. I recall going to a book signing session with Tom Baker at a bookstore in Glasgow and being surprised at how tall he was in real life. I had a similar experience in 2014 at the Loncon 3 Hugo Ceremony reception, where I welcomed a then-bearded and very tall David Tennant when he arrived just outside on the harbourside. I was wearing a full highland dress for the event and I was amused when he complimented me in his native Scottish accent, which is much stronger than mine nowadays.

I was also a big fan of space and astronomy, and my interest in the night sky and beyond has always been very closely linked to my love of SF and connected fiction. That's probably why I'm still particularly interested in hard SF, with its element of exploration, the unknown, and the 'what if'. My excitement for the subject remains five decades later. I remember being allowed to stay up to watch the first moon landing live in July 1969, and I've tried to keep up with developments in astronomy and spaceflight ever since. The first UK showing of *Star Trek* was also in 1969 and I was a huge fan – still am. *2001 A Space Odyssey* had been released the previous year. I remember my father taking me to see a relatively late-

night show in the early '70s, which was a special experience, though I'm sure I didn't fully understand it at the time. I watched whatever TV movies came up on the then very limited terrestrial channels. I discovered the Friday night horror selections, which quite often overlap with science fiction and were really good at that time. I don't expect people will imagine me as a Hammer Horror fan, but they were fabulous and so enjoyable.

My parents were both teachers, and they encouraged me to learn to read as soon as I was able, which I think was at about age four. I became a voracious reader, and I recall spending a lot of time at our local library in Cardonald, in southwest Glasgow, which is still there today. I've always been able to read pretty fast and I worked my way through a wide variety of books, mostly science and science fiction, though I was limited to what was available there. I remember reading some pretty strange stuff, some that would probably be considered quite advanced for someone of that age: Stapledon's *Last and First Man* and *Starmaker*, which I fully read when I was eight, a lot of famous UK writers of the time, and various SFnal adventure series such as *Tom Swift*.

When I was about 13, in the mid-70s, and as soon as I had a little bit of money, I went and purchased my own first SF books. I recall buying Asimov's *Foundation* and McCaffrey's *Dragonflight* at one of the city centre bookshops, both because of their reputation (they had the Hugo branding) and also because I just liked the cover art, signalling a life-long interest in the portrayal of SF in artistic form. I also asked for books as gifts, and quite often asked for box sets. An example was Moorcock's *Eternal Champion* books of which he had several dozen. They were all really small and a very affordable 30p each, or something like that. I just engorged myself as much as I could, enjoying the wondrous. Such formative years! I graduated to the New Wave writers and became familiar with Harlan Ellison's work (this was one of the reasons that I pushed for him to be invited to Albacon a decade later). Basically I just devoured everything I could find.

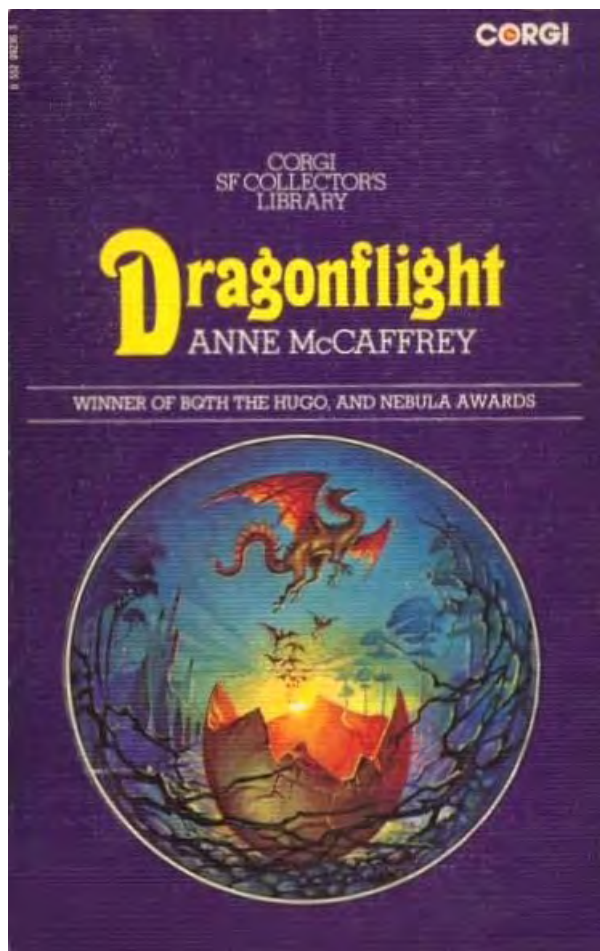
Music was also present and this was a powerful link for me. The early to mid-70s were rich in sounds, and there was a great flowering of electronic music. I remember reading these books while listening to John-Michel Jarre, Mike Oldfield, or any number of similar artists from the time on the record player with a headset. I'd already been exposed to classical music from a much earlier age. I'd been involved in singing at school and for the church choir, but here I was combining passions: music and literature and art. This was really the kick off point for me in creating a link to musical and art elements later.

I also discovered *The Lord of the Rings* when I was 14, and I enjoyed this quickly. In fact, I remember a couple of family holidays in West Germany, which were my first overseas trip. My father had been there in the 1950s on his national service, and he had some friends who lived near Monchengladbach, where we stayed. I had very bad hay fever at the time, and this was in a rural area, so I was knocked out of it. But I had the famous single edition paperback copy of *The Lord of the Rings* and I just read and re-read it continuously while I was there, loving it, delving back into it.

The family friend who we were staying with was quite interested in a variety of different types of music. That would have been the time of the electronic bands in Germany, including Kraftwerk. He had a pretty eclectic interest in music, so that clicked as well. Again, new music and books filled me with joy and pleasure.

We did a Grand Tour down the Rhine to southern Germany and Switzerland, which was very impressive as well. The combination of those factors I remember very clearly. The sheer spectacle of the German and Swiss mountainous countryside, the history and reading *The Lord of the Rings* while enjoying a very Wagnerian landscape and clear night skies left a lasting impression upon me. This is something I think we all can recognise in our own ways: finding the exciting and new at a youthful time and falling in love with it.

All I did was read. This was my main hobby when I wasn't doing my homework. In the context of school, I was not one of the popular kids and not really into the trauma of sports, so reading was an escape away from the normalities that were of no interest to me. School was not always a good experience



for a slight, quiet, introverted clever boy. Even as early as nursery school, I have vague memories of struggling with bullying and socialising with other kids.

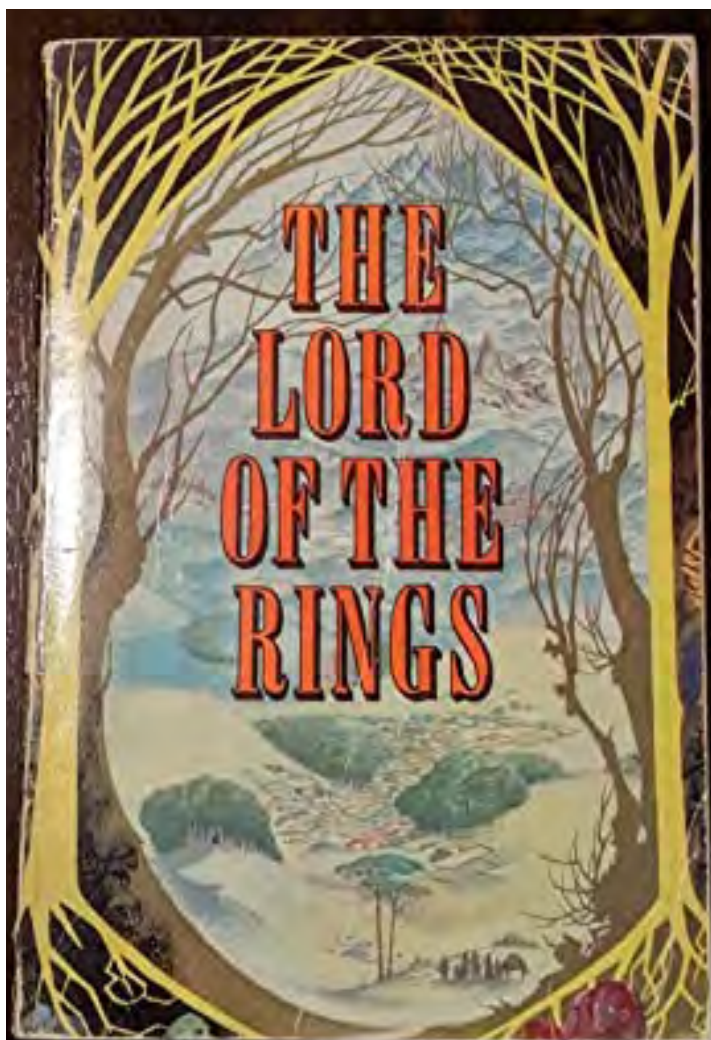
I attended Lourdes Primary School, a local school named after the town in the south of France, with the famous saint. There was a group of bullies at the school who made my life miserable. It was the classic case of the quiet individual becoming the target. Additionally, I didn't get along well with organised sports and teams, which didn't help the situation.

Eventually, the teachers noticed what was going on, and there was an intervention. Although it helped a bit, I still struggled to socialise. However, academically, I was doing well. I learned to read quickly and picked up the basics of arithmetic and other subjects pretty fast. My teacher mother may have helped me academically, but she also was a supply teacher in the same school, which made things awkward.

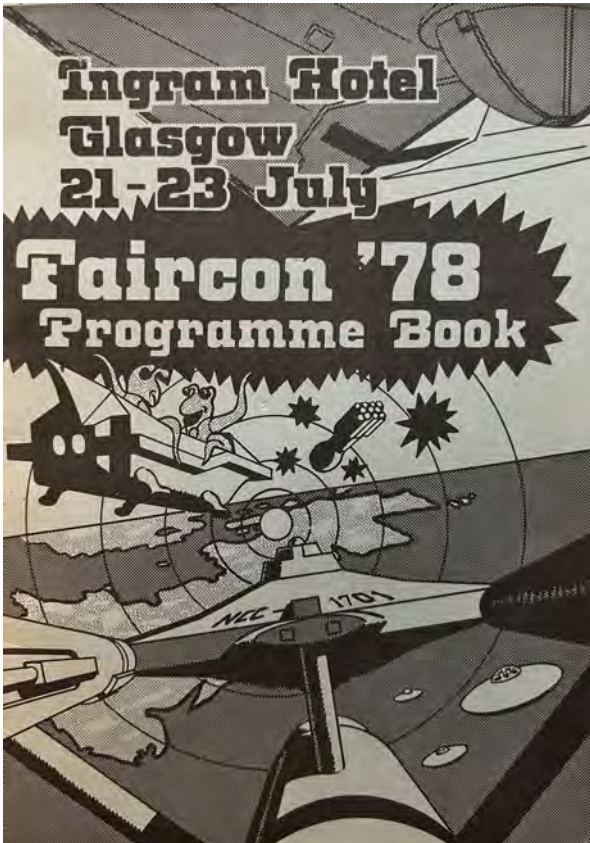
Additionally, my introverted nature made it hard for me to pick up on social cues and interact with other kids. For instance, on the last day of the year, someone delivered a box of chocolates to me in class. I was very confused, but I started eating them until someone told me that they were probably for the teacher, from my mother.

At around 8 or 9 years old, my parents moved me to a private all-boys school called Saint Aloysius because I was showing some academic ability and they were well-connected. Academically it was a little bit harder, which in some ways was good. Socially, however, it was even more challenging because it was part of the private school network and quite competitive. The hierarchy around sports didn't help with the bullying. The key thing was the combination of bullying and my own anxiety around sporting activities. Lots of the boys excelled at sports and were very aggressive, which made my life very difficult. While I had a small group of friends – the stereotypical introverted geeky kids – I became very isolated. I continued to not be good at sports, and I remained very skinny and not very fit. I also didn't learn to swim, something I regret even now, though I did try again later with poor results.

By the time I got to my mid-teens, the school realised that sports just wasn't working out for me and found ways to accommodate me. After sending me to weekly classes where I would do sports, they eventually gave up and said, 'Okay, a bunch of you just go use a golf course for a few hours.' I'd also gotten quite tall – taller than average in Glasgow at least, which helped. My father had taught me how to play golf when I was about 5 or 6, so I've got quite a good swing, which makes for a good party trick, but I don't really care for it. Ironically I found later that I was quite good at some sporting activity, and I've become keen on fitness, though in many respects too late to overcome the early challenges. Still, at least I had my SF interests to keep me sane.



## Entering Fandom and First Con 1978-1987



### How did you hear about an SF convention?

The first convention I went to was in Glasgow – Faircon '78. It was my introduction to the fandom, so quite an important personal anniversary. I was 16 when I attended it, with bright eyes and with a 'what's going on here' curiosity, but also a strong sense of familiarity in meeting like-minded fans. I've heard many fans describe their first encounter with fandom in similar terms.

It's funny how I found out about it. There was a politician friend of the family, deceased now, who was visiting. He was aware of my interest in science fiction and he had spotted Faircon in one of the local newspapers, I think, in that Friday's *Evening Times*. He pointed out a small news article about the upcoming convention, including a photograph of the Glasgow fan Bob Shaw in a costume, advertising Faircon '78.

I've never heard of science fiction conventions. Before Faircon '78, the only thing I had ever done was that bookstore signing session with Tom Baker. I saw that one of the guests was writer James White. I was very excited by this. On Saturday morning, my father dropped me off at the small Ingram Hotel. It is still there, I think, a Mercure now. I walked in, paid at the door, and immediately felt a sense of being in a good place with the people who were there because they were all focussed on and

interested in science fiction. I met some of the organisers and many good people, and I attended the summer convention the following year as well.

You can read more about the Faircons and Albacons in [Journey Planet 38](#).

To be honest, I have only the vaguest of memories of the programme. What I do remember is attending James White's session and going up to him at the end of it, probably very shy. He was very welcoming. I also remember walking around, just soaking it in, because, of course, I'd never heard of these events. I started to understand the fannish language that was used widely, including why the convention was called Faircon – named after the Glasgow traditional summer 'Fair' fortnight holiday. It's hard to forget meeting James White, apart from anything else – how tall and how friendly he was – how friendly it *all* was. Faircon '79 in July of the next year was similarly enormous fun. I got to meet the writer Bob Shaw and new fan friends.

In July 1978, I was offered to go to university, but my parents thought I, at 16, was too young. So I went to Langside College for a year to do some A Levels and Highers and to get used to that larger and more social academic environment before going to university. In October 1979 I went to Strathclyde University. I had been to Faircon '79 that July, and the connections to fandom continued. Strathclyde University had a science fiction society, the 'Strathclyde Space and Science Fiction Society' or S4 for short, which I ended up running. I think it's still active. I also started attending the 'Friends of Kilgore Trout' fan group which was then meeting in the Wintersgills pub on Great Western Road. The full history of FOKT is



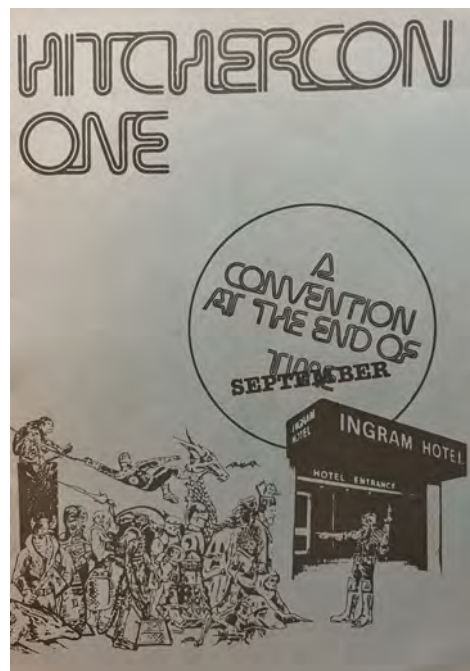
given in [JP 38](#).

Glasgow University also had an SF society, IO. As Henry Balen reminded me, “Alison McInnes, John Irvine, Mike Dyer and I started IO in the summer of 1980 after I, Alan and Gunner attended Eastercon (Albacon). Then I went to FOKT, and dragged Roy (Oscar), Alan and Gunnar along. We had all gone to the same high school.”

There were further conventions ahead. The first Eastercon (the annual British National SF convention) to be held outside England (after 30 years!) was coming to Glasgow in 1980. That was the first Albacon, named both after the old word for Scotland, ‘Alba’, and also as was held in the then Albany Hotel. I really enjoyed the wide range of programming, events and fans. It also sparked an interest in how conventions are run, so I volunteered for it, in a small way initially.

A pattern developed: if there was an Eastercon in Glasgow, then instead of a July summer con, the Glasgow fans ran a smaller event in September. (This happened three times in a row, in 1980, 1983 and 1986, with Leeds and Brighton Eastercons between, both times. The later summer Albacons also evolved to be almost as big as the Eastercon.) The September 1980 con was called Hitchercon, named after *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, which had come out as a radio show in 1978 and was a big hit. I remember it was one of the few radio shows that I'd listened to. Douglas Adams came along as the guest and he brought some early material for the BBC TV adaptation which came out a few months later in early 1981. The whole convention was a lot of fun.

Faircon '81 was the last held in the Ingram Hotel, and despite the warm relationship with the hotel and its supportive manager, the convention outgrew it, so in 1982, Faircon moved to the Central Hotel, which hosted the rest of the first series of Glasgow conventions up to 1988, and a few thereafter. The Central was a great venue for the conventions. Its century-old Victorian architecture and enormous halls, bedrooms, stairs and hallways provided the flexibility and ambience needed for the cons. It was also very competitively priced, given that it needed a lot of renovation work at the time. The Albacons at the Central grew spectacularly, and were able to attract great guests from around the world, as well as having some pretty wild programming.



## Some Name-Dropping

I'll take the opportunity here to make sure I mention the people who I met, many of them still friends. This will hopefully offset my tendency to list off a series of events and facts. Many were and are well known in fandom. I'm sure I'll miss some names, even as I check the programme books from the early conventions. Some of the dates might be imprecise as several people attended the local fan groups before they ran the conventions.

The first two Glasgow cons were run by fans who also attended FOKT: Bob Shaw (Glasgow fan), Bruce Saville, Ed Buckley, Jim Campbell, Kevin Clark, Bob Jewett, Jimmy Robertson, Jim Allan, Sandy Brown, Ivan Griggs, John Mooney, Willie Nisbet, Howard Singerman, Dave Somerville, John Welsh, Ian Neilson, Hal Rollason, Gerry Gillin, George Emery, Steve Miller. Not initially listed as committee but also involved were Chris O'Kane, Duncan Lunan, Elsie Donald, Andy Nimmo. In 1980 they were joined by Bob Jewett, Neil Craig, Dave Ellis, Mike Molloy, John Dean, and then at Hitchercon (by the first women listed!) Joan Patterson and Lillian Edwards, and Robert Aitchison and Henry Balen.

Ian Sorensen and Christina Lake came on board in 1981, followed thereafter by the 'next generation', including myself, Mark Meenan, Oscar (Roy) Dalgleish, Madeleine Campbell-Jewett, Kevin Henwood, John Wilkes, Alex Benzie, Eamonn Patton, Naveed Khan, Jackie Robinson, Norman Kent, Frances Jane Nelson, Joyce Craig, Michelle ('Cuddles') Drayton-Harrod, Iain Dickson, Bruce MacDonald, Jean Thompson, Alan Gordon, Mark Turner, Jacqueline Robertson, John Campbell, Colin Speirs, Nick Rosser.

Sometime along the way some fans from further afield also became actively involved. Certainly that included Anne Page and Martin Hoare, and others.

I'm jumping ahead a bit, but I should mention the later Glasgow local cons and the people involved. These included the second series of Albacons running from 1991 until 2004, along with Hypotheticon, Convivial, Prefab Trout, and a couple of Unicons. I think Malcolm Reid, Alastair Reid, Munchkin, Mad



Elf and others were involved, in addition to a few people continuing from the first series, such as Cuddles.

The current Glasgow cons since 2007 are the Satellites, with number 8 taking place in May 2023, close to the 45th anniversary of Faircon '78, and hopefully where we will publish this edition of *Journey Planet*. The Satellites are run by Christine Davidson, Michael Davidson, Morag O'Neill, Mad Elf and Mark Meenan.

Many writers, artists and other professionals were also regulars, whether as guests or just because they enjoyed the cons. Bob Shaw (the writer), James White, John Brunner, Chris Boyce, John Jarrold, Jim Barker, Anne McCaffrey. We also had many long-term fans such as Ken and Joyce Slater, and as the Glasgow cons became more popular, fans from outside the UK, in particular the Netherlands and Nordic countries.

## Fanzines

A brief aside about my involvement with fanzines, which began by hearing about them at the conventions. Fanzines have been a key part of SF fandom since its beginning (arguably even earlier, in amateur press associations and similar), and remain so. Back in the day, fanzines were distributed in person, at FOKT, the regular fan meeting, or at conventions, or, in some cases, by mail, including David Langford's *Ansible*. Everything would have been printed by mimeograph in those days. The first PCs came out in the eighties, and we started transitioning from the old traditional print to photocopiers and printers.

Ian Sorensen became heavily involved with the Glasgow conventions in the early 1980s, and he was also a prolific fanzine editor, as well as being an excellent musician and 'purveyor of fine events'. He created the fanzines *Conrunner*, *Bob* and many others. I wrote a few articles for those, mainly about conventions. Roy Oscar Dalgleish, was also doing his personal fanzine, called *Dragonbreath*. There was a personal connection, so I wrote a couple of small items for them. We spoke about publishing a zine together, but in the end it didn't happen.

I still read fanzines, although mostly online now, including *Ansible*, *Banana Wings*, *The Drink Tank*, *Perryscope* and others. I dabbled a bit and while I never started my own fanzine, as I'm not a very strong writer, I still contribute, mostly to *Journey Planet*, which brought me my only Hugo nomination to date as part of 'Team Journey Planet' in 2018



## 1983 Invention

All of that led to the point of deciding to run our own little convention. A group of us who had volunteered at the '80 & '81 cons, coalesced into a committee. An opportunity arose when the 1983 Eastercon had been selected in 1982 (quite a lively bidding session as I recall), and it was to be back in Glasgow. It was called Albacon II (we used the Albacon name for both the local cons and Eastercons, which caused both amusement and confusion) and it was a big, energetic convention, making full use of the Central Hotel. This left a potential open slot in September 1983, similar to what had happened in 1980 with Hitchercon.

We called the con Invention and I ended up chairing it. In five years I progressed from my first convention to chairing one. I was 19 when we started planning for Invention. I was finishing my first degree earlier that same year, so I was very busy. Invention was the first con I ran – I felt a lot of terror along the way!

The committee was a combination

INTRO(mk 4)  
by the  
Chairman

Welcome to the Con



of people at the University groups and FOKT: myself and Oscar Dalgleish, also known as Roy Dalgleish, with whom – few knew it at the time – I was actually going out; Madeleine Campbell and Bob Jewett – Bob chaired a lot of those early conventions, and they're actually married now; Kevin Henwood, who is still a friend; Alex Benzie – another who's still a friend, now a writer who lives in Barcelona; Bruce Saville, a long-term Glasgow Fan; Eamonn Patton, another friend who's still around and occasionally helps out at conventions; Jackie Robinson – I don't think is still involved in conventions that much; Norman Kent, who I haven't heard from in many years; Francis Jean Nelson was also involved in that group in Glasgow at the time.

We were quite creative and made heavy use of the great artwork provided by upcoming local artist Tom Campbell. For instance, for Progress Report 3, I suggested that we make a visual pun on 3D, and you can see the result here. [Invention PR 3D cover] That cover is by Mike Molloy, who is also a talented artist. You get very creative with the artwork, which became a theme in later conventions as well.

Chris Boyce, an SF writer based in Glasgow, was the first Guest of Honour we invited. A group of us went to see the film *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan* in July 1982, and then from there literally went directly to Chris' house to ask him to be the Guest of Honour. We later also invited the writer Bob Shaw, and the Scottish artist and cartoonist Jim Barker as guests.

Then the daily organising started. Every time you do something for the first time, you do what everybody did before. So we basically just copied everybody before us. The convention had about 130 attendees and we used the same hotel as the Albacons, the Central Hotel in Glasgow. We did the usual mix of things, borrowing from the by-then familiar summer conventions programming. It went well, in the usual anarchic and chaotic way of those cons. Hard to recall the details when you're running it, though I remember the guests being really good. We were able to include one of Bob Shaw's 'Serious Scientific Talks', and I also persuaded the then Lord Provost of Glasgow, a friend of my late father, to open the convention.

There was much resting afterwards, followed inevitably by hubris and high ambition.

## The Film Thing

Invention & the other early Glasgow cons had lots of films. This was way pre-internet, pre-DVD, and pre-video, so if you wanted to have a film, you literally had to hire the film. There were people who knew how to arrange that, particularly Chris O'Kane. Of course, the conventions being what they were, there were a lot of people who couldn't afford a hotel room, so they would just crash somewhere. Our dedicated film room often furnished an excuse: if you have an overnight film program, people would sleep there overnight. I recall at one of the Glasgow cons the hotel manager quietly going round making sure people were warm!

This was a rich period in terms of science fiction and fantasy films. I remember going to the premiere of *E.T.* in Edinburgh in '82. I was also the film reviewer for the university student paper, so I got to go and see a lot of films for free. It was a very exciting time. Obviously, *Star Wars* came out in 1977, followed by its sequels and many other classic genre films, such as *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Alien*, *Star Trek The Motion Picture & Wrath of Khan*, *Superman*, *Blade Runner*, *Indiana Jones*, *Excalibur*, *Flash Gordon*, *Time Bandits*, *The Dark Crystal*, and *Brainstorm*. All of that was just in that six-year period between 1977 and 1983. I had a lot going on at the same time: I was going to two conventions a year, being part of the society and encountering broader fandom, as well as maintaining personal relationships and university studies.

I've maintained my interest in films ever since and remain a regular viewer. We now live in a golden age of SF literature, film, TV and games. It's hard to keep up.





# Albacons

## The Big Albacons 1984-88

Inevitably, and following similar such blow-ups all the way back to the start of organised fandom, there were issues within Glasgow fandom. Albacon '84 summer convention ran alongside Faircon '84, which was organised by Glasgow fan Bob Shaw. Bob and business partner Neil Craig had fallen out over a dispute about their bookstore, resulting in two shops being open in the city, FutureShock in Woodlands Road and Photon Books in the city centre. Most fans were happy to drop into both, but the dispute spilled over into the conventions. Bob set up a Faircon that year in competition with the Albacon, but hardly anybody joined, and Faircon '84 was cancelled. The *Ansibles* from that period document the back and forth in more detail, for those interested.

Albacon '84 was building up to be a big event, not least because of the expected Guest of Honour, Harlan Ellison. Sadly, Harlan had to cancel a couple of weeks pre-con. However he asked his friend, writer Norman Spinrad, instead. Norman was an excellent guest and the convention was lively and enjoyable.

At that stage, the growing scale and complexity of the conventions were beginning to strain the committee, and we worked on how to do things better. This included sharing best practices and war stories from other conventions, such as in Ian Sorensen's fanzine *Conrunner*.



I was asked to chair Albacon '85 and, I have to confess, I probably made every mistake possible. However, the convention itself benefited from having Harlan Ellison and Anne McCaffrey as Guests of Honour. They were fabulous and many fans still recall it as a wonderful con. Harlan also met UK fan Susan Toth at the convention and subsequently married her. They remained together till the end of their lives.

The 1986 Glasgow Albacon III was the Eastercon. We were all involved in running. While we did actually learn what works and what doesn't, we still made many mistakes. However, the guests were amazing: Joe Haldeman, accompanied by Gay of course, Clive Barker, John Jarrold and Pete Lyon. I've stayed in touch with Joe and Gay, and John, at conventions and other fannish events ever since. I was also heavily involved in running Albacon III. As we had a lot of people who were from the smaller cons and societies, in a fun spirit, we decided to deem this a collective effort rather than have a single chair. So while I have never formally chaired an Eastercon, I was involved at a senior level, listed as membership secretary and treasurer. Mike Molloy was listed as the coordinator, so I would say he was the lead, in addition to being an excellent artist.



Following previous practice, there was a small convention XIIcon (the XII as it was the 12th SF con in Glasgow to date) in September 1986, with Guest of Honour Harry Harrison. At this point, I had finished doing university research and had a bit of a break. During a summer family holiday with relatives in Florida, I had the opportunity to visit the NASA Kennedy Space Centre. The experience was a bit sombre following the space shuttle crash earlier in the year. I also visited Joe and Gay Haldeman at their home, and enjoyed going to see the film *Aliens* with Joe. Sadly, I missed the Worldcon in Atlanta, which was at the same time.

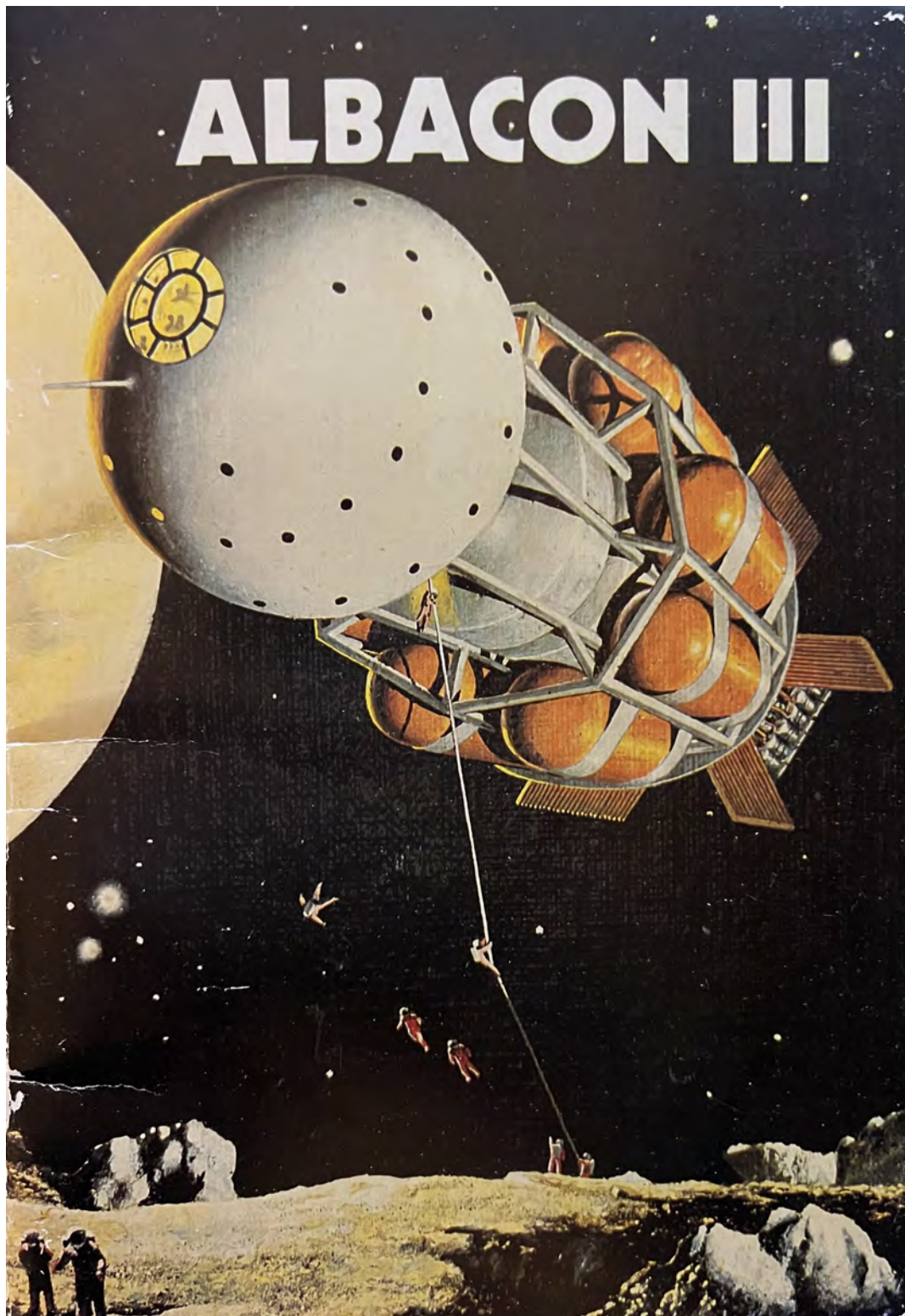
The final original Albacons took place in the summers of 1987 & 1988. I attended those and worked on elements of them. They continued the model of having great guests, as well as a strong, lively programme and fan activities.

As I think back over the first series of Faircons and Albacons, I'm struck by how influential and enjoyable they were. There are a number of reports and anecdotes in *Journey Planet* 38, so I won't repeat



them all here, but I will highlight the common features: great Guests, madcap energy in the programme (particularly strong in science and space), film and gaming/computer rooms, the annual Vogon Poetry, custard pie fights, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (with costumes), the fan movies, and other social activities. Of course, the learn-as-you-go approach to con organising always leads to a few problems – including the ‘great lift disaster’ and an old tarpaulin covered in real custard (aged over several days). I’m happy to speak off the record about those last two! Overall the first decade of Glasgow cons and local fan clubs fostered a great community of SF fans who continue to actively contribute to SF activities to this date.

1987 was a transitional year for me, and in retrospect quite pivotal. I finished university, began working, and also started my Worldcon ‘career’. Shell offered me a position, which started in October in London. That was also the year of the Worldcon in Brighton, Conspiracy ‘87.



# Conspiracy 1987

## Pre-Conspiracy 1987

Some context first. *Conspiracy* was the second Worldcon to be held in Brighton, and the fourth in the UK. The first Brighton Worldcon was Seacon '79, chaired by Peter Weston, about which much has been written, particularly in Peter's autobiography *With Stars In My Eyes* (NESFA Press). It was also featured in the BBC Science Fiction documentary series 'Time Out OF Mind', and the Seacon '79 episode is available on YouTube. I had heard about Seacon '79 because it was held only a month after Faircon '79. But as I was a teenager and had no money, I was never able to go.

Seacon '84 turned out to be possibly the largest ever Eastercon, with something like 1800 members. There were many reasons for this. One, it was close to London and, secondly, it was very cheap. The convention committee had arranged a deal with British Rail: from anywhere in the UK you could get an astonishingly cheap ticket to the convention. It was also the 8th Eurocon, the first held in the UK, and attracted many overseas fans. This Eastercon was an enormous, almost Worldcon-like event.

This, of course, stretched the capability of the organisers. It was what might be called a 'three-ring circus' type of convention, combining the literary, art and fan programming with wider elements such as film/tv and gaming. It was still volunteer-run, of course, and lots of fun things happened, but it also was a bit out of control. As a result, some fans reacted badly to the convention.

A month later, the first Mexican (Tynecon II) took place, which was very much set up with a focus on the literary. I did attend, but I didn't really enjoy it. I had more affinity for the open and welcome approach of other cons. Much of the energy was spent denigrating other fans, which felt a bit like bullying at times. Still, Mexican had an excellent programme. I understand Mexican 2 was Iain Banks' first SF convention, and he subsequently encouraged Ken MacLeod to attend SF cons, the rest being history, as they say.

That was a period of tension amongst fans in the UK, in particular between long-term fans and the newer generation, who were much more focused creating a welcoming atmosphere for all members. There is a lot of material to be mined about this time, and Rob Hansen has done some superb work on documenting it.

## Conspiracy 1987



Around this same time, debate was happening about bringing the Worldcon back to the UK. Worldcons, from their inception in New York in 1939 up to 1970 had a straightforward site selection process, held at the Worldcon one year prior. From 1971 until 1986 this was then done two years in advance, and from 1987 to 2007, three years in advance. Since 2008 we reverted back to two years in advance. Worldcon organisers needed to think early to be successful. Peter Weston announced the desire to host a British Worldcon in 1970 and made the trip to the USA to start that work at Discon II in 1974. This indicates the level of planning required,

regardless of the selection date.

With two-year-ahead selection, the vote for 1987 was at Aussiecon II in Melbourne in 1985. The Brighton Worldcon was called Conspiracy '87. Paul Oldroyd was the coordinator (later recognised as the chair) and Glasgow fan Ian Sorensen was part of the central committee. Ian acted as one of the recruiters, encouraging people from Scotland to help run it.

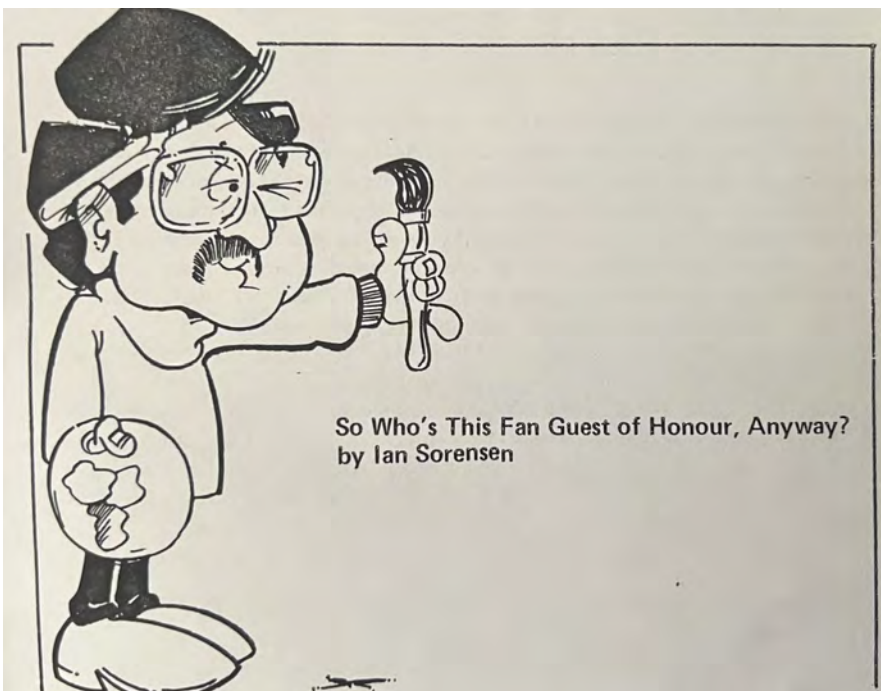
## Vince Docherty – No Buts by Ian Sorensen

The first rule of improv is to take what the other player says and go with it. This takes the form of saying 'Yes, and...' instead of 'No, but...' So when introduced as, say, the personal astrologer to Prof. Brian Cox you respond 'Yes, and I can confirm he's not a Virgo, much more of a Ram and has often made me see stars.' Instead of 'No, don't be stupid. He doesn't believe the arrangements of planets affect our daily lives. You are confusing astronomy and astrology.'

So what's this got to do with Vince Docherty? He is more wryly humorous than he is a joker, reserved rather than showy and presents a quietly determined, serious demeanour. After 40 years of observing Vince, I have concluded that the secret of his obvious success is that he has a 'Yes, and..' approach to organising conventions. His track record of conrunning leading up to chairing two Worldcons attests to his ability to get the job done, and as far as I can determine, he's done it by avoiding the trap of 'No, but..' that sets the speaker in opposition to whatever idea has been floated and implies they have a superior understanding of the situation. This does not make for a happy committee and slows down the process of organising the event.

Vince worked on the Hugo Awards team at the 1987 Worldcon in Brighton. We shared a room at that convention and I remember two things about it: he dried his toes with a hair drier, and he was clearly annoyed by the poor overall organisation of the convention (for which I was on the steering committee), vowing that when he ran a Worldcon it would be properly organised. Now, I don't know if his toes still require the hot air treatment, but 30 years on we can see that he definitely followed through with his plans to get better organisation set up for UK Worldcons.

The 1995 Worldcon in Glasgow was proof of his ability to gather a range of talents to work for a common goal. The experience of most conrunners in the UK had been joining with a group of friends and putting on a convention more or less the same as the conventions they had attended in the past. Vince took a step away from that and adopted some of the structures and practices of American Worldcons and melded them with his professional experience of working for a multinational corporation. The result was a truly global organisation that benefited from much autonomy within departments doing the work while Vince concerned himself with effective chairing of meetings and trying to ensure the juggernaut stayed on course. The staff of that convention had the usual grouses about things they thought could have been done better, but overall I didn't hear much dissent about the way it was all managed. (While peripherally involved as editor of the Pocket Programme for 1995 I wasn't party to any committee or sub-committee meeting to observe Vince in action. However, as editor of the fanzine *Conrunner*, I always got a lot of feedback from conrunners about how things went under the surface of conventions. Unusually for such a large event, the Chair didn't get blamed much for things that went wrong – and garnered some admiration for keeping on top of the situations that developed. This did not make for good 'tales from the convention bar' articles for my fanzine, but you can't have everything.)



I was late to fandom, going to my first con in 1980 and, 3 weeks later, being asked to join the committee of the next one – Faircon '81. I first met Vince through these early 80s conventions in Glasgow. He was one of the student types that helped out at Faircons and Albacons and, in 1983, tried their hand at running their own cons in September after the 83 and 86 Eastercons. So in my mind, Vince has always been a gopher who made good. Turns out he started going to cons four years before me and had a better idea of what needed doing at one than I did at the time.

Yes, and I suppose that's still true...

Ian's comments are very kind (I don't remember the dryer thing, though I do recall he said I didn't snore!) and he and the main committee worked very hard to run the best convention they could. There was anticipation and excitement among many fans who planned to attend. Sadly, Conspiracy is infamous for a number of things that didn't work, despite excellent guests, programming and exhibits.

As with many others, I think I was doing far too much, as a registration manager and running the Hugo Award Ceremony. It sounded reasonable in principle, since reg tends to be busy at the start of the con and the Hugos are at the end. However, I found myself involved in some interesting controversies. This was walking in at the deep end, a real trial by fire.

I was one of several registration managers. It was hard going, and I'm sure I made some doubtful decisions, though with the best intentions. This is where I first met Theresa Renner. Hers is one of those firm friendships that has lasted, and I am pleased she contributed to this zine. Larry van der Putte from the Netherlands also worked on registration and I believe I made his and TR's lives a bit miserable, as you can read in TR's article later.

Conspiracy was fun, though I can only offer my perspective on it and to be clear I was a very junior, relatively inexperienced, part of it. It had an amazing programme, and many people had a really good time. The Masquerade was very good. The hardback souvenir book, *Frontier Crossings*, with wraparound cover by artist Guest of Honour Jim Burns, (the original of which I now own), was marvellous. There was also a fireworks display on the beach.

However, there were significant problems with the main hotel. The hotel manager didn't get on well with fans at all, resulting in the creation of a 'Hotel Manager Wall' of hotel manager jokes. There were also some serious misjudgements and unwise public commentary by some of the convention team, which caused offence. (See the [https://fancyclopedia.org/Conspiracy\\_'87](https://fancyclopedia.org/Conspiracy_'87) entry for more details.)

## The 1987 Hugo Ceremony and Writers of the Future

There was another issue to which I was a bit closer.

I was asked to run the Hugo Ceremony. I was honoured to do so, though to be honest, I had to come up with much of the detail myself. Overall guidance was provided about the expected main shape of the event; the main speakers and support were provided for staging and audio-visual, along with the details of the finalists, acceptors and, just before the con, the winners. However I wasn't aware of some of the wider issues, and didn't anticipate when something really bad was about to happen. For a much fuller account of this, you can read *Conspiracy Theories*, written by many of those involved: <https://taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Conspiracy>

My understanding is that Algis Budrys persuaded the committee that he had to go on stage at the beginning of the Hugo Awards and talk about the sponsor of the awards, The Writers of the Future. This went badly, not only in what was said but how it was received. The Hugo Awards have been shy of sponsorship ever since, but it really caused revulsion amongst fans who had become tired of all the mentions of L. Ron Hubbard and the continuous PR machine that seemed to deploy.

Dave Langford who was a nominee captures the sentiment very well:

*Why was famous SF person Algis Budrys standing up there, droning on about how wonderful it was that that fine fellow Ramsey Campbell had signed up for the next wave of expansion of L. RON HUBBARD'S bloody Writers of the Future? Was he never going to stop? Why had the committee let him up there at all?*

*(A good question; clearly the convention committee had to some extent lost control. It was later asserted that Mr Budrys did promise beforehand not to drag in the name of L. RON HUBBARD, nor that of New Era, nor to go on for more than a few sentences. But I believe he has a different version of events.) It having thus been established that this was L. RON HUBBARD's Hugo Ceremony, the presentations went on much as usual: except that Algis Budrys's words of hype had been the last straw for many fans who already felt – with what justice I do not know, since I have no intention of reading it – that the Hugos' credibility had been damaged by the debated presence of Hubbard's Black Genesis on the novel shortlist. When Gene Wolfe read out the name of that nominee, large sections of the audience booed. ('Shame on you,' said Wolfe; with, some observers insisted, a twinkle in his eye.)*

*From a name that fans merely made bitchy jokes about, Author Services Inc had now promoted L. RON HUBBARD to the point where he was openly booed at the Worldcon's major event. There's publicity for you. <https://ansible.uk/writing/hubbard.html>*

I only was tangentially involved in policy when I was running the ceremony, very much a worker, rather than a senior manager. The ceremony was to be held on Sunday evening. I was called into a meeting with the committee on Saturday with Budrys present, and asked to include him at the start of the ceremony. Budrys said he would just go on at the beginning of the ceremony to say something around the sponsor, the Writers of the Future. All I could say was 'Okay, fine.' What else was I to say? The decision was made.

On the day, apart from the early remarks by Budrys, the ceremony ran reasonably well. Most presenters and winners or acceptors spoke well, and we had a basic set of slides and music, supported by a small team backstage. As I look back, I think about how small the team I had was, certainly as compared to recent Hugo Ceremonies. As I wasn't working I'd had time during the summer to assemble the slide materials (it was all done by post those days). I didn't know how big it potentially could be. I literally was running it from the tech desk on the balcony with one other person. For all of the stuff that goes on behind the scenes I had to rely just on volunteers and what they were doing. I knew very little about the Hugo Awards and expectations about the ceremony. I had to rely on the people running the Hugo Administration for a lot of the vital details, and some things got missed. Even the winner envelopes, for example. The day before the awards ceremony, I came to the committee and asked where the envelopes were, which were supposed to have been done for me). I was told 'I thought you were doing those'.

One thing that became clear to me was that private funds and sponsorship needed to be handled very carefully, especially around the Hugos. This has been a problem several times since, most recently in 2021. That was just one example of things I didn't know that I didn't know. I learned a lot from it.



# Conspiracy '87



The attendees, for the most part, had a really good time. It was a very good program and had an excellent art show, dealers' room, masquerade, and some really amazing guests. The convention had a split site, between the Metropole and the convention centre. It was in Brighton in summer, so if all else failed, you could just walk outside – go to the beach, go to a restaurant.

The people running Conspiracy were doing it in good faith. They were doing it based on the best of intentions, based on what they thought was the right approach. When characterising the two or three big problems for this convention, the sponsorship is always mentioned, as well as the problems with the hotel.

I would see the third one – which is the root cause – was the choices that were made on how it was organised. This is perhaps the most useful and important element that went on to inform my con planning. Paul and the team did their best, and sowed seeds of ideas, solutions, and structure, triggering a lot of thoughts for me. I could see a lot of aspects that I wanted to address and understand a little of what I did not know. TR had some actual strong feedback at the time, really reflecting on what had occurred.

From my perspective, I observed a lot about the things that did not work out well. It was clear that the committee was too small; they had approached it as if it was an Eastercon. It burned them out. Several relationships broke down once the convention was over. It was clear that you couldn't run a convention that size with such a small team.

For example, John Steward was the treasurer. Mark Meenan had also volunteered to support finance. They disappeared into an office, under the escalators, at the beginning of the convention and they didn't surface till the end when they all walked out with plastic bags full of money to take to the bank.

Conspiracy didn't have a divisional and area head structure that most modern Worldcons have found necessary in order to have a good span of control and delegation of work. They just had their steering committee; everyone else was staff, filling all the roles. If you look at the committee list in the souvenir book (which is on fanac.org), you'll see that structure, but it's the same small group of people on the 'steering group'. It was just too small, despite the best of intentions.

It is very typical, when you have a finished thing, to say 'We did this!' And then consider 'What could we have done better?' I have made this argument a number of times to later Worldcon chairs: we need enough people, we need to see what works, and we need to foster the desire to develop and do better. Truly, if there was one element I took from Conspiracy, that's what it was.

This was a large part of the context for 1995: the importance of having the right structure and numbers, and ensuring everyone takes personal breaks, has backups, staff meetings, etc. Of course, it is more complex than that. There's always a backstory to these things, but Conspiracy did act as a catalyst for the next generation of convention organisers. Many of us learned a lot from Conspiracy: the importance of it, the difficulties around what occurred. It triggered immediate thoughts on what would turn out to be, in the Worldcon context, the 1995 Glasgow Worldcon bid.

## London and bidding for Glasgow 1995

Conspiracy happened two months before I left Glasgow and moved to London to start working. This was timely, as I then got access to the much larger fan group in London. In the five years I was there, we put together ideas and thoughts for a possible next UK Worldcon.

However, the burnout post-Conspiracy in UK fandom was striking. When it came to help with 1990 Worldcon in The Hague, and later bid for 1995, there was nearly a generation of fans missing. We had to

find a way to rebuild everything from scratch.

Ian Sorensen organised a post-Conspiracy event, 'Clonespiracy', in January 1988, in Leicester, which was intended to let off some steam. As Ian wrote: 'it is both a recreation of and a reaction to Conspiracy '87'. I enjoyed it, especially the quiz where when asked 'Who worked the hardest at Conspiracy?' I answered correctly 'Me!'.

There was a lot of personal stuff happening for me parallel to fan activities while in London between 1987 and 1993. But I was still attending Glasgow conventions. After Albacon '88, and then they went on hiatus, and many older fans retired. A new wave of fans, including Cuddles came in around 1991, but it went quiet for a few years. Eastercons were also still happening, such as Follycon in Liverpool and Contrivance in Jersey.



# Glasgow 1995

It's clear at this point that the inspiration for the Glasgow Worldcon in '95 was the Worldcon in Brighton in '87. The very first people involved in '95 were me and Mark Meenan. A month or two before '87, we visited the Scottish Exhibition Centre, which had only just been built. We went partly just for fun, but also because we thought it might be a good venue for a future Worldcon. Mark details our first meeting with the head of that facility further in *Journey Planet* 38.

And then '87 happened. The organisational issues and the burnout persisted in the community's memory. In fact, many fans remained burned out. They 'gafiated', an old word invented by fans, an acronym for 'Getting Away From It All'.

In September 1989, there was a small convention about convention organising in the UK called Conscription. It was run by a couple of people, including friend and organiser from Glasgow, Henry Balen. He writes about it in an article below. It was a bit like Smofcon. Naturally, it focused on what went wrong with '87 and what could be done better. There was discussion about the future, and this acted to put me in a position of contemplation: if I want to do this, I am going to have to help make it happen.

## Vincent – Some Memories by Henry Balen

When I received the request to write my recollections of Vincent for *Journey Planet* I realised that my memories may not always be reliable: some times I recall better than others. I have known Vincent for over four decades and what follows are a set of irregular and perhaps inaccurate recollections – there are more buried somewhere in my neurons and perhaps will be recalled another time.

### **September 1980 – First Contact, Hitchercon**

Last century, in the autumn of 1980, a *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* convention was held at the Ingram hotel in Glasgow. Late one night at a crowded room party I met Vincent and Alex Benzie. We spent the next couple of hours in conversation – which mostly consisted of bad jokes.

### **Early 80s – The University Years**

While Vincent was a student at Strathclyde University, one of his fannish distractions was involvement with the Uni's SF society (S3). As one of the organisers of Glasgow Uni's SF society (IO) I arranged a pooling of resources with S3 and a local bookshop (Photon books which later became Futureshock). This enabled us to pay to bring in authors and arrange various group activities.

Vincent's fannish activities expanded more with con-running after finishing his first degree – being more sensible than myself and expending his energies in studying (or so some think). Vincent got involved with Eastercon and other conventions while completing his post-grad. Perhaps a Ph.D requires less effort than an undergraduate degree...or Vincent made a breakthrough in his chemistry research and found some elixir that separated his fannish self from his diligent studious daily exterior. However the only practical chemistry that I saw Vincent bring out of the lab was some distilled alcohol at a party which was promptly set alight.



### **1989 – Conscription**

Following the '87 Worldcon, British con-running fans were in post-worldcon-organising shell shock and convinced that there would never be another Worldcon in the UK. In the belief that we can learn from what happened in '89, I roped in Laura Wheatly, Gary Stratmann and Hugh Mascetti to organise a conrunning convention. Thus a convention called Conscription was born, to be held in a small hotel in a burb of Birmingham bringing all the 'best and brightest' of the UK con-running community together, plus Vincent.

Early one morning a courier arrived at my flat in London with a bro-mide for a full page advert, a letter requesting to present their convention centre to the members of the con, and asking about Worldcon. I had sent a mailing out to various convention centres, organisers and bureaus to get advertising for our programme book, describing the various types of conven-

tions and attendance numbers. So on the Saturday afternoon in a dark room in England's black country Vincent, Mark Meenan and others concluded that perhaps another UK Worldcon was conceivable. From that auspicious (?) start came the Glasgow in 1995 bid.

### The 90s

I moved across the pond to be with Renée in the US after Eastercon in 1990 and took a step back from the Glasgow bid. Vincent and Mark pushed ahead with the bid, culminating in the memorable vote at the Orlando Worldcon in '92. I recall a bunch of us sitting in one of the hotel rooms after winning thinking, 'Oh shit, now we have to organise this'. Vincent co-chaired Intersection with Tim Illingworth, and later Martin Easterbrook, putting the managerial skills he learned at Shell to more constructive use.

Even though, since the '90s, we have been living on separate continents, we catch up with each other at restaurants at least once per year (excepting during the pandemic) usually during Worldcon. Renée, Vincent and I find some time away from the con and go to a restaurant with good food and wine.



### 2001 – Millennium Philcon

2001 was the time Vincent and Renée decided to hold an anniversary party – for Vincent's 40th birthday and to celebrate Renée's large number of Worldcon attendances... (numbers not to be mentioned without a suitable bribe).

The party was themed 'Alien Glam Rock' with appropriate music, decorations and bubble machine. You can see Vincent dressed accordingly with a wig of hair stolen from other fans (donations to the wig in lieu for supporting for the next UK Worldcon).



## A Century of Vincent

No one would have believed, in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that US conrunners were being closely watched ... well perhaps not. Vincent has been instrumental in bringing Worldcon to the UK and encouraging the Dublin Worldcon. I think it is safe to say that we have seen Worldcon become more international over the past 30+ years and that Vincent has been a major player in making that come about. Also his desire to innovate (the introduction of an orchestra to conventions) is a welcome change to the sometimes staid traditions that we fans build.

I am proud to call Vincent a friend for the past four decades and look forward to seeing what the future will hold.



## Back to Vincent...

I remember some of the early meetings in 1989. We were getting people together in London to look at sites. We needed to really look at what was possible. Glasgow was obviously a contender, but so were Brighton, Birmingham, and maybe Manchester. We knew we had to do an awful lot of bidding in the US to really win it. There was a lot of that in the early days, and Tim Illingworth was particularly active. Then we recruited TR, who was very effective in covering all this. We started to formally come together, using the Hague as a natural launch.

Since 1995, the UK and Ireland have not had any serious opposition when bidding. We follow the Peter Weston approach of the early announcement and strong presence. He told the UK fans in 1970 that he was going to run a Worldcon by the end of the decade. In 1974 he confirmed with Chicago fans, who were the strongest potential bidder, that we weren't going against them. The press and newsletters became a particularly important aspect of his approach.

To kick off the bid, I first started to pull together a group of people who were interested in running it, including Tim Illingworth, obviously, Mark Meenan and Henry Balen, and Theresa Renner (TR) in the US. KIM Campbell, Martin Easterbrook, and Kathy Westhead were responsible for the team and programme. John Stewart and Karen Kelly joined the bid team later, as did Jacky Andrew, Steve Davies, Roger Perkins, Hugh Mascetti, James Steel, Chris O'Shea, Bernie Peek, Richard Rampant. Margaret Austin, was my deputy and right hand for many years. Oliver Gruter-Andrew did a similar role for Martin.

Fiona Anderson was also a deputy. Division Heads were Helen Steele, Heidi Lyshol, Tina Hewett, Claire Brialey, Paul Dormer, Gytha North, Mark Meenan, Kees van Toorn, Patty Wells, Malcolm Reid, Kurt C. Siegel, Eddie Cochrane, John Richards, and advisors Ben Yalow, Mark Olson, Joe Siclari and Kees van Toorn. Many others, hundreds, helped in various capacities.

Fans in the UK who were very attuned to the political realities of running such a big event, including Paul Oldroyd and John Farey, provided vital guidance and told me, 'You cannot do this unless you get the people part right.' They were right. We should have done better with the gender balance of the guests, but the committee gender balance was something we worked hard on.

## The bid

Around 1989, we began planning to bring Worldcon back to the UK. We looked at a number of possible sites beyond London, including Glasgow and eventually decided to bid for '95. At that time Worldcons had a three-year bidding period, therefore, the bid would be in '92. So if you imagine we had '89, '90, '91 and '92. In the meantime, the Dutch fans had won the bid for Worldcon in the Hague in 1990, which was only the second time the Worldcon had been held outside of the US, UK, Canada, or Australia. Before then, it had been in Heidelberg, Germany, in 1970, but that was really small.

We knew that if Worldcon '90 didn't work, the backlash would also hit the Glasgow bid. But we faced two major problems. One, so many UK fans were burned out by '87 that it was a struggle to get people for '95. There was a natural resistance from those fans who didn't want to be sucked into it again, and there was a lingering tension between fanzine-oriented fans and fans who came from more of a convention-organising point of view. The second issue was winning the Worldcon bid. The majority of the voters were Americans, which meant we had to – this was pre-internet – physically go to the USA and run a lot of parties to show that we were capable and interested in running a Worldcon. TR, Theresa Renner, was the key person in the USA for us – our 'super agent' for North America. She set up a network of people to lift literally 10 or 20 big party packs (boxes the size of a bathtub). She was the treasurer for several years and we could not have done it without her.

The Bid Committee had to spend much time and, of course, money going to as many of these events as possible. Tim Illingworth, who now lives in the US, did an enormous amount of work to get that set up, and then the rest of us began to just build it up. I was the initial Bid Chair, but we figured out there was too much to be done, so we appointed Tim as Co-Chair to share the responsibility.

And of course, we were up against the Atlanta bid. They built on their very successful 1986 Worldcon and were both enthusiastic and well supported. It ended up being very competitive bid, certainly the most competitive in numerical terms for a couple of decades after.

As Dave Langford noted in *Ansible* 51 in October 1991, 'Yes ... we have another British Worldcon bid which actually seems to be doing well. <https://news.ansible.uk/a51.html>

Dave noted at Boskone in 1992, 'I glean that Worldcon '95 bidding is neck-and-neck. Atlanta's facilities are thought superior but large US fan blocs distrust the committee for Historical Reasons ... while Glasgow has the virtue of not being chaired by Malcolm Edwards.

In this period between '90 to '92, I undertook a lot of travel to promote the bid in various conventions in North America. We needed to separate or unwind it from what had occurred in Brighton, while showing the experience we'd gained in the Netherlands. Of course, many of us had been involved with Conspiracy, which made our desire for success and credibility even more important.

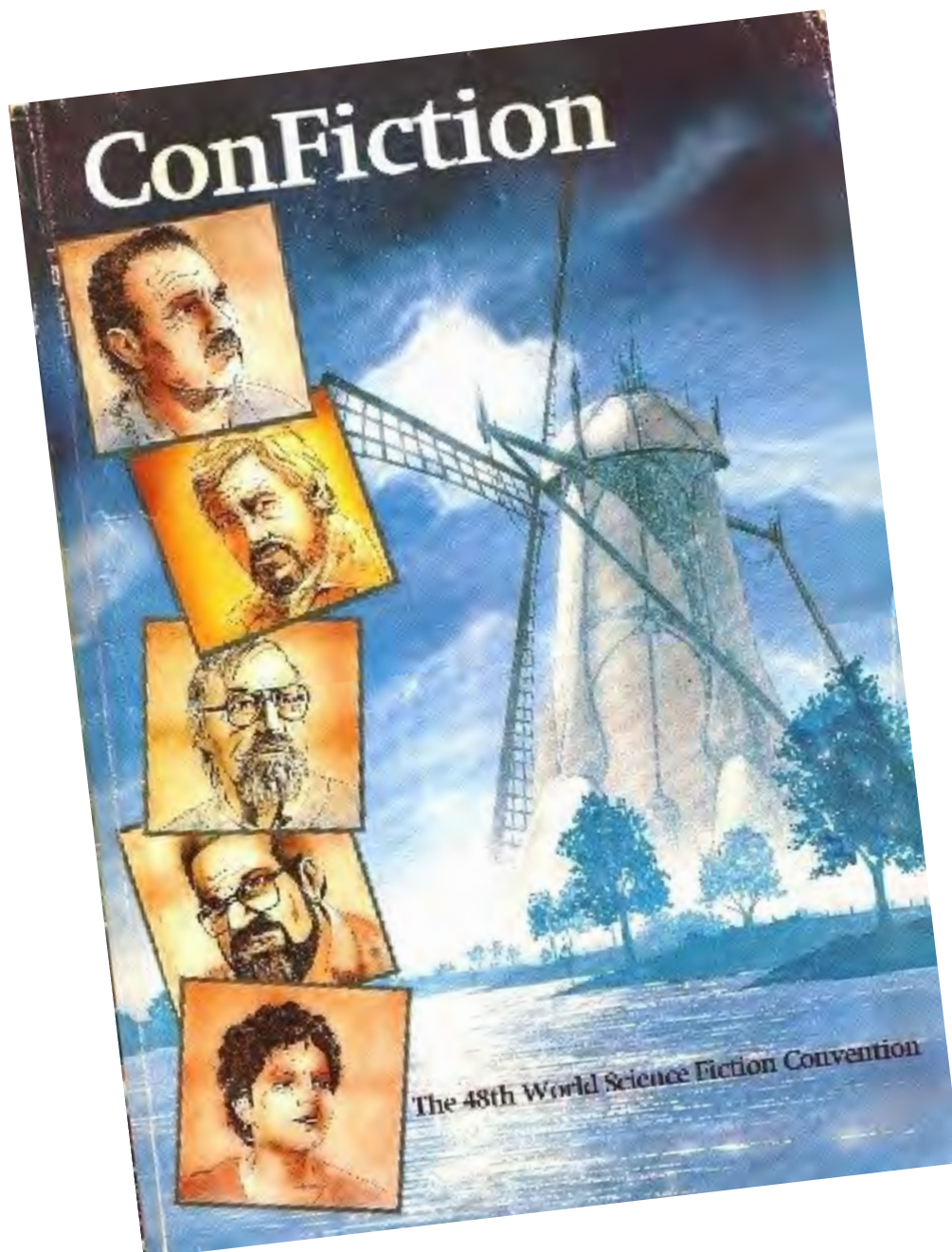
It was an 'interesting' time internationally, with the fall of the Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain. We therefore saw a wonderful influx of fans from Eastern Europe, some of whom came to Brighton, many more to The Hague. There was a very strong representation subsequently interested in coming to Glasgow '95.

I did not go to Nolacon II in New Orleans in 1988, but that also had some interesting issues, from which we could learn. Henry didn't attend that one but Renee, his wife, did. The committee fell apart, apparently. It just crumbled away so everybody just went and partied in the lively and vibrant French Quarter every night.

Noreascon 3 in Boston in 1989 was reportedly a very solid event, but I wasn't able to attend.

I then attended ConFiction in The Hague in 1990 – a return to Worldcons – and I have been to all of them since. ConFiction took place in a district between the city centre and the beach, near a number of

international organisations (now called The World Forum, located close to where I currently live). The on-site hotel capacity was limited, but the proximity to the beach meant there were ample small hotels and B&B's, which many of us took advantage of. The convention itself had great guests and a good programme and exhibits, and benefited from the flood of Eastern European fans. The mix of nationalities overall was very broad, which contributed to the international feeling. The con ran well, ably led by Kees van Toorn, and I'm very happy to read his kind words here.



## Vincent Docherty by Kees van Toorn

Vincent Docherty... to be quite honest, I do not quite remember how I met him, but all of a sudden, he just appeared in my life and it seemed like he had always been there. I must have met him before or during the time we organised the 48th World Science Fiction Convention in the Hague, but oddly enough he did not play an active role at the Dutch Worldcon other than being an attending member. Perhaps it was in the Hague the Worldcon organising virus got a hold of him as there were plenty of people from UK Fandom to help us make ConFiction a success back in 1990. Soon after that Vincent started working seriously on his fannish career which resulted in him being the vice chair of the 53rd world sf convention in Glasgow in 1995. After that he (and the world) were lost. In 2005 he did it again and organised another Worldcon in Glasgow, and both times I enjoyed working with him on those conventions.

Vincent is a person in the background who is able to keep his ear to the ground, listen to the vine to help people in general find their role in Fandom. He does not manipulate anybody, but he can be very persuasive when the need for the right person is high, and given his knowledge in the field and the number of people he knows; he is usually the person who connects the fans and makes them find the job waiting for them without them knowing this. I think that is my favourite memory of Vincent – his relaxed attitude and willingness to help people, whether it is in Fandom or life in general. And yes, as far as I know Vincent does have a life outside Fandom as well. He is active on all sorts of levels and in all layers of society.

I have always enjoyed working with Vincent – we do not meet or see each other often but when it is necessary an email or phone call is all that is needed to hook up again. Neither of us can work miracles, but Vincent has helped many convention organisers find the right means to make their convention a success without gaining any personal profit or status. He is modest, but can be very stubborn when it comes to principles. Above all, I would say he is an honest guy with the best intentions to serve Fandom – and oddly enough, as a Scotsman he does not drink whisky (as far as I know) but leaves that to his friends, one of whom I am proud to be.



## And more from Vincent...

At some stage, we decided we'd look at all the facilities. We decided it was going to be Glasgow, with some question marks. The facility was not perfect by any means. But we thought we would give it a go. We got a very good deal from the city, and we spent that time building up to MagiCon '92 in Orlando, Florida – the 50th Anniversary of Worldcon – where the vote was going to take place.

The other issue that we had was bidding against Atlanta. If you look at the map, Atlanta is not that far from Orlando. So we had to push very hard and went all out. We brought all of the energy we'd had for Glasgow and pushed the Scottish angle really strongly. A number of people in the committee, including myself, are from Scotland, but a number of Glasgow fans were a bit annoyed about what they called the 'tartan tat' element. I thought it was fun. Tartan, whisky, all of that good stuff. In those days it was mostly having a sales table, running parties – of which we had many – and doing other kinds of organised events. We brought lots of tourist board materials and had lots of fan artists making fun little cartoons. This was the first Worldcon bid from Scotland rather than from England, the previous ones being in London and Brighton.



So by the time we got to Orlando, we were positioned pretty well. But we didn't know if we would win because Atlanta had been bidding very strongly. Our whole machine was run by Theresa Renner, TR, in North America. We went to all the different conventions, and we ran all these crazy events, particularly in the US, where, of course, the whole Scottish angle is very popular. Typically, we would go to a convention and run a strongly Glasgow-themed party with lots of whisky. But some people could get a little bit over-excited, so we tried to ration it a bit. I and others would wear Highland dress. Some people from Scotland, like us, had their own, but we rented for those without. Those were some wild events. I'm not a big party person myself, but you know, when you're younger, you have the energy to do it.

When the Worldcon is outside North America, a NASFIC, the North American Science Fiction Convention, can be run. In 1990 it was in San Diego, held the weekend after the Worldcon in the Hague. A large group of us travelled from The Hague to ConDiego. Sadly it wasn't to be an example of strong con-running. The souvenir book was full of typos, they misspelt the names of the hotel and the Guests of Honour. Even the con name was misspelt as 'Con Digeo'. I remember spending most of that convention just sitting in a very cold exhibition hall, with all the other fan tables, trying to promote the Glasgow bid.

We did run a party there. Famously, TR was very well organised with her big boxes of party supplies for a convention, including Glasgow bidding materials. We delivered it to the hotel for shipping to post it back to TR, but it never arrived. The hotel went bankrupt or had been taken over, and so we just wrote it off as lost. She had about 8 or 10 of them. A year or so later, this box reappeared at TR's place! It must have just been stuck at the back of a cupboard somewhere in the hotel, and it just eventually turned up. It was just really strange and funny.

The other thing I remember about ConDiego was that we were in the centre of San Diego, near the beautiful harbour, with the Coronado military base in the middle of it. It's very striking, and we were in a hotel overlooking the harbour and the Pacific. I remember TR's room had a balcony view. We were having dinner one night, preparing for the party, and she ordered lobster. I'd never eaten lobster before. So she had to teach me how to eat it. It can be a real mess when you need to break everything up. Trivial, but just a little memory: dismantling a lobster with this great view of the sun going down over this amazing harbour, the Pacific beyond.

## Vincent Docherty by Theresa TR Renner

'Who the hell is this guy and why is he doing this to us?' was running through my mind as we re-stuffed the programme participants' goodies into bags at Registration after having stuffed and unstuffed them once already. My shift supervisor was Larry van der Putte and we both were rolling our eyes at this young guy who just came into the Registration area and tasked us with re-doing the work we had just undone. Which we had originally done at his request. I think Larry and I agreed that if he came back one more time and asked us to unstuff, we'd tell him to do it himself! Luckily for that young man, that was the last change we had to make to the registration packets.

I asked myself that question about 'why is he doing this to us' quite a few times over the decades that followed...

It was 1987 and we were in Brighton, England, getting ready for the Worldcon to start. Some friends and I had spent a bit over a week touring England and timed our arrival in Brighton for a couple days before the convention so we could settle in and volunteer. It was my first overseas Worldcon and I really didn't know all that many of the British and European fans, so I was looking forward to it.

And meet them I did! There were fans from Glasgow with whom I fell in and ended up having an amazing time with them. We stayed in touch and in 1990, we were in the Hague for ConFiction as Glasgow was gearing up bidding to host the Worldcon in 1995. One of those Glaswegian fans said to me something along the lines of hey, we need some help with the North America part of this bid. Would you be interested? I allowed as how I could possibly be willing to help. He went off, then returned a while later and said it's looking good, but they'd like to talk with you, would you mind? No, of course not, I said, so arrangements were made. I met with one of the co-chairs, one Vincent J. Docherty. We went for a walk and I think we had a meal together while he quizzed me about my convention experience. He was oh, so young, but by the end of our meeting, he decided I would do, having been a division head at Magicon in 1992 and working on pretty much every Worldcon I'd managed to attend up to that point. And that was how I became the North American agent for Glasgow in '95.

I'll be honest, it was not until we were well into our fannish relationship that I put two and two together and remembered that really young pain in the butt guy in Brighton who kept having us do things with the programme participant packets. Yes, indeed, it was that very same Vincent J. Docherty!

From that point, I was toast – Vince is ruthless in recruiting people to do things for him. He really doesn't take no for an answer, sometimes. Being the North American Agent turned into being the Vice Chair of the convention, thanks to Mr. Docherty. My house served as the progress report mailing centre – it was cheaper to do all the mailings from the U.S. thanks to a special service offered by the U.S. Postal Service. Someone would email me an electronic version and I would take it to a printer to be printed, then I would cook madly for hours to provide fuel for the dozen or so people sitting around in my tiny living room preparing the mailing. I was married at the time and my poor husband had not known me when I was not working on that convention, as we'd met after I'd agreed to be the North American agent.

In fact, Vince and another friend from Glasgow were visiting us in Maryland when we were house hunting for a house to buy, so we took them along with us. The very first house we visited had ancient huge trees in the backyard. I barely even looked at the house. We looked at two others that day, but my heart was set on those trees. Later, when I told Vince that we were making an offer on that one (which we actually had to do during the Worldcon at which our vote was happening down in Orlando, Florida), he said he knew when he got out of the car that it was the house we were going to buy.

Magicon in Orlando was our all-out push for the bid with all the twee tartan I could find, including renting kilts from a theatre costume rental place in Baltimore to take down to Orlando. It turned out that those costume kilts don't have real sporrans with them. That's the bag that is worn on the front of the kilt. It seems that whoever designed these costumes decided to take the easy way out and created wooden replicas that looked fine. Needless to say, the males wearing those kilts had pained expressions, but only my husband would tell me why! Vince suffered not at all, of course, being that one person who actually takes his own kilt with him to conventions and other formal events.

As history shows, Glasgow won that convention and threw a terrific party in Glasgow in 1995. We worked really hard leading up to and during the convention and put on a great convention, I think.

After that very successful convention, Vince and the others left me to sort out the final shipments from Glasgow of things that needed to come out of the convention centre and make their way to other locations in the UK, which included extra program books sent to someone's garage near London that would eventually be mailed out to those who couldn't attend and even an arc welder left in the art show. Leave it to the American to sort out transportation in a foreign country!

Working on the 1995 bid offered several opportunities to go to Glasgow prior to the convention, giving me a chance to meet more fans there, as well as reconnect with those I'd met in Brighton. I met Vince's mother and stayed with her at least once, maybe twice. She is the person who taught me about bacon sandwiches (OMG!!!). I even produced a trip report with lots of pictures that I used at bid tables in the lead up to the vote, thanks to Vince and his co-chair allowing the convention to subsidise my travel.

I was able to turn the tables on Vince, returning the favour of too much work on behalf of Fandom. For BucConeer, the Worldcon in 1998, I was running at-con registration and recruited Vince and a number of other really capable people to help me with it. Good thing! There are two really important sayings. One is that prior planning prevents piss-poor performance and the other is that no plan survives contact with the enemy.

I'd accepted at-con registration when I failed to get a job offer following a drawn-out application and process with the U.S. Department of State. I'd been trying for a few years and was ready to give it all up because they'd turned me down for the third time. So I said yes to the inimitable Peggy Rae Pavlat (another person who was truly excellent in recruiting people, though she was much more sneaky about it) that I would take on Registration at the convention. I figured I wasn't going anywhere anytime soon.

Oops.

Because after they said 'Thanks, but no thanks', the Department of State had a change of heart (not really – they got a boatload of funding to hire more people, but I like to think of it as a change of heart) a couple months later and made me a job offer. I jumped at it! I was still working on BucConeer and as my first assignment was given to me and I went through training for it, I was able to arrange my travel to Siberia for that first assignment to commence after the convention. Great, everything was finally working out!

Until it didn't. I was told it was critical that I get to post sooner (don't ever believe anyone if they tell you something like that, especially if you're a new employee!!) and would I please arrive in July, rather than the late August date I'd originally organised everything around so that I could be at BucConeer. Silly me, I actually believed them and rearranged everything to comply! Who knew you could find the very last pair of winter boots from the previous season in the local Sears store and they'd happen to be in your rather large size?? Clearly, it was meant to be...

Essentially, I had to dump all of Registration on Vince and the others at the last minute (I think it was in May that I found out about the early departure). The marker for the many 40 hour weeks I'd put in on what we ended up calling Interthingie 1 eventually (after Glasgow won a second time for 2005) got traded in when Vince took over Reg. The good news is that we were fairly confident it would be fine. After all, he was a former Worldcon chair, right?

Indeed, it did work out. I heard later about it – the badges were liked (hooray – Michael Whelan did the artwork!), but the automated registration system for registering and printing badges did not work and Vince decided to take it offline entirely (my bad for that decision).

Vince, working for Shell Oil at the time, was himself living and working overseas and had regaled me with stories about his life in Muscat, Oman, in the Middle East. There I was in Siberia freezing my butt off, pretty much at the other end of the weather and climate spectrum.

It came time to figure out my next assignment, which involves looking through a list of upcoming vacancies (based on the departure dates of the incumbents), then you list your preferences. I had my list all sorted out and was quite pleased with it. There were some interesting places on it, I thought, with some interesting jobs. Less than a week before I had to cable my list in (this was in the days before email!), I received a new copy of the list of available positions and spotted one in Muscat, Oman! Vince had transferred to another location, but his stories, photos and gifts had been so neat, I instantly re-ordered my list and put Muscat at the top. I didn't even care what the job was – I just wanted to go to the same place that Vince had liked so much he extended his assignment. I knew nothing, really, about Oman, but the very fact that he had enjoyed it so much was all I needed.

That turned out to be one of the best decisions I ever made. The job itself turned out to be one of those really good foundation jobs for my career and my experiences in Oman were terrific. It's the only place I've returned to since leaving, not once, but twice. The country is beautiful and unspoiled and the people were lovely. I was there on 9/11, but felt perfectly safe because the Omanis are like that.

I really have to thank Vince for that very special assignment. If he hadn't shared his experiences with me there, I likely would never have gone.

Over the years, I've met non-fan friends of Vince's. One was a colleague of his from work and his partner, both of whom are lovely people. When they decided to get married, they invited me, which was a real treat! They were getting married in the Netherlands, so I figured if I was going all that way from the

U.S., I could keep going and go back to Oman for a visit and do some of the tourist things I hadn't done while living there. I had a great time doing that, then came back to the Netherlands for the wedding. I will say that life had been treating Vince well. Perhaps too well! He had the same kilt as he'd used not that long before in Orlando. But he did not have the same body at that time. We'd taken our clothes to the wedding location and I had changed already when he asked me to help him. It seems there was a wee problem with the waist of his kilt, shall we say? So we got some safety pins and I pinned that kilt on him! He was in the ceremony, which was beautiful, complete with a male choir singing in a lovely venue. That was another opportunity I would never have had if it hadn't been for Vince. But I still have to laugh about pinning him into his kilt!

I look back on the decades I've known him and can say that Vince is a fan to the core and an incredibly generous person. He shared his hotel room when I had no money (a practice he continues to this day with young impoverished fans) and offered me a place to stay when visiting the Hague. Shoot, he even offered a place to stay at his mother's house in Glasgow! He brings everyone lovely chocolate bars when he makes it to a U.S. convention (duty-free is so handy when you spend that much time in airports!). He has served as advisor to other Worldcon chairs and helped many conventions with budgeting and other technical issues. He supports young fans and tries to bring new and interesting people into fandom. He's an avid supporter of the arts, especially artists, buying so much science fiction and fantasy artwork that I think he needs a larger house so he can hang it all!

Vince reinvents himself regularly, but whatever he's doing, it's interesting. He likes to try different things and not just do the same thing over and over again. For example, he brought a full symphony orchestra to Loncon, the 2014 Worldcon in London. The concert hall was packed – the orchestra thrilled everyone by playing space-themed music and even included a theremin soloist, an instrument few had ever seen played, but which is recognizable as the electronic instrument used for the Dr. Who theme music.

The old question of 'Why is he doing this to us?' has gradually morphed into 'What is he up to now?' because you can't predict exactly what he's going to do, but I assure you that whatever it is, it will be quite interesting to go along and see how it turns out.

Throughout the years, he's always been a steadfast friend to those who are fortunate enough to have him as a friend; I count myself among them.



## The vote for 1995

Chicon V '91 in Chicago was my first American Worldcon. It was very big and, for the most part, very well organised, though they did print our bid advert as its negative, which made the tartan very weird!

Then the 50th Worldcon arrived, MagiCon in Orlando in 1992, where our bid was sharply in focus. It was held in the Orange County convention centre and the Peabody hotel across the road. MagiCon had a fine selection of Guests of Honour and to celebrate being the 50th Worldcon, the Hugo Award rockets were gold coloured. Joe Siclari was the chair, and it was really a great fun convention.

It was the first weekend in September in Orlando, Florida, so you can imagine it was like a sauna. We had dozens of the Glasgow fans all wearing kilts moving back and forth between the buildings. Can you imagine in that hot, sweltering weather having to go outside in heavy kilts? To make matters worse, the rented kilts had cheap sporrans, with a wood backing – try to imagine the resulting discomfort when the wearer is walking quickly.



One of the most memorable aspects for me from MagiCon was the gigantic exhibition hall. It was packed with lots of different things in, including the art show and the dealer's room; the fan areas, and the catering. The convention had what turned out to be a legendary Crazy Golf course, where they asked different groups to create their own holes. For the Glasgow course, we just basically got all of the empty whisky bottles from the parties each day to use as the obstacles.

MagiCon was a very well-organised Worldcon, and in many ways we were encouraged to build on the ideas and thoughts and – most im-

portantly – structure and people. I was busy, so these dominated my time: I was on the Board, and we did the Glasgow bid promotion. We approached the bid in a very committed and professional way, and the feedback was really good. Fans felt that Glasgow would be a fun convention. It seemed to be ready. The city had a great reputation, and this all worked.

Our bid beat Atlanta, but it was a close run. Until relatively recently it was by far the largest voting, with 2603 votes. I think it's only been exceeded recently with Winnipeg and Chengdu, but at the time, this was a considerable amount.

Mike Glycer reported on the Voting in his Worldcon Wayback Machine Sunday at MagiCon (1992) Day Four: <https://file770.com/worldcon-wayback-machine-sunday-at-magicon-1992-day-four/>

*GLASGOW'S SEVEN PERCENT SOLUTION. Glasgow will host Intersection, the 1995 Worldcon, having outpolled Atlanta by seven percent out of a record-setting 2,544 valid ballots. Intersection's Guest of Honour will be Samuel R. Delany, and its Guest of Honour will be Gerry Anderson. Think about it. The committee intends to wait a year before announcing its fan guest. The venue for the con will be the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre and the adjacent Moat House International Hotel, from August 24-28, 1995.*

*1995 SITE SELECTION VOTE*

*GLASGOW: 1,325*

*ATLANTA: 1,166*

*I-95 in '95: 12*

*NEW YORK: 1*

*NO PREFERENCE: 32*

*NONE OF THE ABOVE: 2*

*INVALID: 58*

*TOTAL: 2,602*

This was a close run thing. 159 votes was not a lot, but we had a lot of support. Even Martin Hoare wore a kilt, which Tim Illingworth had dispensed.

The year before MagiCon, voting was prolonged when the administration of the counting session was messed up. The count literally took all night. But we learned from it – well – they learned from that. For the Glasgow vs Atlanta vote, the MagiCon team did the preparation right, so the counting only took two or three hours. To be honest, many people were surprised with the results, but when we looked at the details, we won on each day of the convention.

# Intersection

The 53rd World Science Fiction Convention

## Winning the bid, moving to Oman

And so we had a Worldcon.

We had three years to plan it and to build up the Committee. Over that time, some people would come in and some would come out, and we needed to figure out how to organise everything. Then another 'interesting' issue came up: after being in London for about five years, my company, Shell, said, 'Okay, your next job is going to be in the Middle East', starting January '93.

We're talking about the very early days of the Internet and email, before the easy comms we take for granted now. I could maybe stay connected, but couldn't actually run it as co-chair, so I agreed to resign. The Committee also felt that it was a big task for one person to retain command of the organisation. A number of the Committee members proposed that Martin Easterbrook, based not far from London, replace me as new co-chair. And that's what happened. In February '93, I stepped down and Martin moved in to work alongside Tim as co-chair. I retained a connection as a bit of an emeritus, but otherwise, because of my job, I wasn't able to have an active role.

But two things then happened. We figured out that I could get access to email in Oman. It was expensive, but I could do it. I hate to think how much I had spent on that over the five years I was there. I was also being paid pretty well and had quite generous vacation days, so I was able to visit the UK and attend Worldcons. The other was that within a few months, Tim resigned. Martin then called me to ask 'Do you want to come back as a co-chair?' We knew it might be awkward, but we would make it work. A minor regret was that, as a result of not being co-chair for a few months, I wasn't invited to contribute to Mike Resnick's *Alternate Worldcons* anthologies, though I did manage to include the key elements of such a story in the introduction of the Interaction Souvenir book.

For the rest of the planning period, instead of selling the bid, we had to sell the convention. Our efforts in the US – TR's party packs and many other fun things – had to continue. So all the stuff we were doing in the US needed to continue. But as I was physically in the Middle East, Martin had to take on the bulk of building up the organisation in the UK. Unfortunately, we kept hitting the issue of fan burnout and concern over how much time it was going to take to run this. So we had to learn how to make a concerted attempt to care for the people better through organisation. When we got to the convention itself, which went pretty well for the most part, there were a couple of specific things that didn't work out. Some people, not all, did feel a bit burned by it. I took away an even stronger desire to find ways to do this better.

## Did you travel back home much?

Fortunately, my work contract's generous leave time allowed me to travel and come back to be a co-chair. During that period, I was able to join the rest of the Committee doing all of the various planning activities. I could get back to the UK regularly and could go to the US or other countries as needed. So that actually worked out pretty well. Once Tim resigned as co-chair, and it became clear that I could be in contact by email, it actually felt okay. Don't get me wrong, it was awkward. I wasn't there most of the time, and there's no substitute for being there.

There was a very large group around London, Glasgow and the rest of the UK who were actively running this. Martin had to take on the bulk of the people-management part. I was a bit disconnected from that. There were several times when I came back in and we had quite difficult conversations. Sometimes on my side, sometimes on the other side, and occasionally the frustration would blow up. But it was perfectly natural, as you'd expect, just because of how awkward the situation was. We learned not to under-



estimate how much institutional knowledge we had lost from '87. We had to rebuild that.

We were in very close contact with daily emails. But this, the internet being what it was, wasn't cheap. So I had to try and be efficient with it. We started doing things like building regular 'staff weekends', asking the bulk of the committee to get together, mostly in London (many of them were in Glasgow). I made sure to get to these for the most part, as they allowed us to retain the personal connections within the committee.

## Some Anecdotes from Oman

I spent five years working and living in Oman, and for the most part enjoyed them. Oman is a special place, with a culture very distinct from the rest of the Middle East. Its long running ruler, Sultan Qaboos, had modernised the country and encouraged equality as much as possible, particularly for women. (It's possible he had personal reasons driving this, which I'll leave you to research yourselves.)

It's a privilege to have been able to work there for so long, and I fully recognise the complex and difficult history of UK involvement in Oman, as well as long running issues about international companies, exploitation, resource usage, and links to colonialism. They're outside the scope of this fanzine but I wanted to at least acknowledge them.

There isn't space to cover all my experiences in Oman, though I touch on them in a couple of places in the fanzine. TR also mentions in her article about being inspired to work in Oman. I joined the company sports facility which was nearby and became a regular at the various fitness sessions. Following the 1995 Worldcon when I had more time, I took a training course to be able to teach fitness classes.

I'll just mention a couple of fannish-related anecdotes from my time there.

I was able to travel quite a bit from Oman which meant leaving my small apartment there for significant blocks of time. I began to notice, on returning, that some items would be missing. Nothing significant, though they tended to be made of organic materials, such as a set of leather juggling balls. At one point I discovered that the tassels on the sporran of my highland dress were damaged, which was strange. The mystery was solved after I discovered that there was a rat getting into the apartment. This was sorted out by the apartment maintenance team, who also discovered where it had a nest behind the cooker. In that nest were the remains of various items including the juggling balls. So yes, 'a rat ate my sporran!'

There were very active social engagements, both among the company staff residents there and with Omani people. This included dinner events, and at one point I was invited to a 'murder dinner' which had a *Star Trek* theme. We were asked to come in costume. This was easy to arrange as there were large numbers of capable tailoring shops nearby. I was to be Worf, so I had the Next Generation uniform made, and bought some modelling clay to use for the klingon forehead ridges. It was quite an impressive outfit when I finished, though I hope no photos exist! I made my way to the party, and walked into the house, where I could hear festive noises already. It was indeed a dinner party, but the wrong one! Much embarrassed, and to the amusement of the party goers, I discovered the correct party was across the road, and I went there quickly. It was a fun night and it turned out I was the murderer, so I had to practise my (Klingon) poker face.

The company had a monthly newspaper, with a mix of business and social articles. I mentioned to them about my involvement with running Worldcon and they very kindly wrote an article about it, which I've included here.

PDO employee organises world's largest sci-fi meet

# Hometown venue for Vincent's show

**TALES** of vampires, aliens, space travel and dragons may not appeal to all of us, but they do to PDO's Vincent Docherty.

And he's not alone. For Vincent is one of the main organisers of the World Science Fiction Convention being held in his hometown Glasgow, Scotland, in August which will be attended by over 5,000 people from around the world.

The Glasgow convention, the largest of its kind anywhere in the world, will be the 53rd annual event and this year's happening will have visitors from over 20 countries including Japan, Eastern Europe and the United States as well as some of the genre's leading authors such as Arthur C. Clarke.

Vincent, a science fiction fan for as long as he can remember, has been hard at work organising the event since 1987, the last time it was held in Britain.

The first five of those years were spent simply preparing the bid to host the convention in Glasgow.

He beat Sydney, Australia, and the American city of Atlanta to host the event in an Olympic-style round of bidding.

"At the end of each convention, the members, or delegates, assess the bids to host the convention in three years time and then take a vote on where it should be.

"It's usually held in the US where most of the authors and fans are, this is only the fourth time in its history it's been held in Britain, so I'm delighted and proud that the members chose Glasgow as the venue.

"I was doubly pleased to have won the right to host the event during the convention in Orlando as it means our bid must have been extremely strong."

A convention of this size, Vincent says, takes more organising than you would imagine.

"I had to get support from the local authorities in Glasgow, check that there were enough hotel rooms available for all the visitors, lay on entertainment and spe-



PHOTO COURTESY VINCENT DOCHERTY

**FAMOUS FACE:** Vincent (left) with science fiction legend Arthur C. Clarke

cial guests....the list goes on," Vincent, Computing department's Drilling Systems focal point, said.

The first world convention took place in 1938 and has been held every year since except during the Second

World War

"It started as an informal get-together of fans and authors but has gradually grown into an enormous event.

The five-day conference will be made up of 15 parallel streams of programmes.

Talks, seminars and presentations with titles such as "The Monster Show? Why is Horror so Successful Today?" and "Re-inventing...Mars. The Revival of Mars Books" jockey for the attentions of the 5,000 attendees while a myriad of alternative entertainment, art shows and informal talks are also laid on.

On top of these attractions, Vincent has organised what have become known as Extravaganzas.

There will be the hotly-contested Hugo Awards which are the Oscars for Science Fiction writing as well as the Masquerade fancy dress party where prizes are awarded for the best costume.

On the serious side, the convention is particularly popular among publishers looking

● Turn to Page 4

## Vince Docherty: Enigma or Mystery by Martin Easterbrook

Almost immediately when you sit down to write about Vince you'll realise that there's a problem. Vince is part of the Duct tape that holds fandom together except that he doesn't have a dark side and a light side. Let me explain in the form of an invented short story introduction for a character most of us will be familiar with.

*'Hari Sheldon approached his desk with some trepidation. Things were going well with his formalisation of the mathematics of Psychohistory. Even using his new progress on a quick test to examine the immediate future of departmental politics had actually worked without showing any problems, except one of course. The test indicated that the rest of the staff were distinctly losing patience with him ignoring the ever growing pile of other tasks on his desk while lost in esoteric equations. Indeed the maths indicated several unpleasant conversations at the upcoming departmental cocktail party unless he completed some of them.*

*Taking the topmost sheet from the pile he readied himself to begin but then halted in complete incomprehension of the task it described:*

*Write an analysis of the life and works of Isaac Asimov*

*Who on Trantor, he wondered, might this person be.'*

Writing about Vince presents exactly the same problem. If anything it resembles a fish trying to write about water. Vince's fan activity exists not in the run of a fanzine or in pieces of artwork or in any external thing that is easy to point to. His contribution lies in the way that SF fandom actually works and in the way that people from many different countries, and many different fandoms, come together to make it work. Central to that contribution is the surprising fact that it does work despite being done by a crazy mixture of people (or should that be a mixture of crazy people) doing jobs that they've never done before and often never imagined themselves doing.

At this point I'm tempted to pivot to spreadsheet jokes, as one of the main things Vince is known for is being a Worldcon treasurer but that's not where Vince's involvement in Fandom begins. It begins because he really, really wants to do it. In his head he can look at an empty hall, or an empty convention centre, and imagine wonderful things happening there. In convention running we sometimes refer to this as 'The Vision Thing'. Vince will always deny that he has this but he's wrong. He does however have a rare form of the skill that I would call 'The Egoless Vision Thing'. He can look at that empty conference centre together with the group of people running the convention and he'll have a vision that they will somehow come together and produce an event that the attending fans will enjoy and where convention runners will be proud of both that event and the part they played in making it work. There are excellent convention runners who can have a detailed vision of what they want to see and who can inspire teams to come together to implement their vision. Vince sees the success of the task and the success of the team as two sides of the same coin. Both have to succeed together; the team has to work together on the vision as well as on bringing it to life.

This brings us to the tools of the trade. Vince is not just a super conrunner coping with the draught problems inherent in flying around in a kilt. He's also a mild mannered executive in a multi national company who periodically emerges from his shell to take part in our rather bizarre world. Likewise he's also a Scotsman so however quiet and unassuming he tries to be he does bring some amount of chaos with him. He's the catalyst, always keeping his cool while enabling those around him to produce a solution.



In the interest of maintaining our quota of Scots jokes I should relate his unexpected effect on the bidding team for what was to become Intersection. Having chosen Glasgow as the site Vince and the rest of the participating Scots were keen that the bid should have a Scottish character. Thus most of the male members of the bid found themselves in Kilts. All the bid team were also issued with vibrating



paggers to ensure we could be found to answer any questions about our areas of the convention. So far so good, except that kilts don't have pockets, so the paggers had to be kept in the sporrans. This led to several occasions where a summons to the complete bid team led to a bunch of people with a collection of very strange expressions.

The first of the tools Vince brings to conrunning is the flipchart (well sometimes it's whisky if he needs to persuade someone to volunteer). I suspect many fans who regard flip charts and presentation tools with the same enthusiasm we would use to greet a venomous snake. Who amongst us has not sat through a work meeting scanning a PowerPoint presentation with glazed eyes while desperately trying not to say 'No sign of intelligent life here Captain!'

Unfortunately an event that requires several years of preparation and then a team of about 300 people for 4 days does take a few charts and illustrations to understand. Luckily Vince is used to these things and is able to demonstrate to people that 'The chart works for you, you do not work for the chart'. Soon people started to regard their presentations and charts as part of their fan activity. The 'business' part of a plan has to work, but for any kind of fan event, and even the planning meetings are fan events where you get to interact with other fans, it has to also be fun, otherwise there is no point in it as a hobby activity.

In the words of D West (now there's a name nobody would expect to see in this article) 'All Fanac is Performance'. That's true even when you are presenting what your part of the convention is going to be like. It's true when flip charts and PowerPoint are things that terrify you, and when speaking in public terrifies you most of all. It's not going to be fun, and therefore you are unlikely to do it at all, unless you feel it is done in a safe environment where everybody is on your side. Vince creates that environment.

The best example I remember is TR's talk on how the US side of the organisation worked. No organogram, no flow charts, no corporate speak. Instead, the flip chart illustration was a drawing of her desk. One by one she worked through every drawer describing what was in it and how items of work moved from one drawer to another. At the end everyone understood the business processes she was running from end to end. Also everybody who has ever had their own version of that desk for running smaller conventions realised that TR and her US team were 'us' and not some strange and aloof fans from a culture that had mysterious ways for running these huge conventions and would look down on the rest of us.

TR now works for the US State Department and needs neither training nor encouragement to be able to do this, but most people need a 'corporate culture' or supportive social group to be happy doing this sort of thing. That's the key thing Vince puts together when he starts working with a convention committee.

The second tool of the trade is obviously the spreadsheet. If someone were to draw a cartoon of Vince it would show him carrying a laptop in his hand with an open spreadsheet on it. Of course, like many popular images, this isn't true. Actually, let's face it, it's completely true!

I suspect Vince uses a spreadsheet as a magic talisman as much as for its intended purpose. Somehow it reminds him about all the myriad bits and pieces that need to fit together for a successful large convention.

As far as the rest of the convention committee is concerned the spreadsheet is enormously important. That's partly because it controls how much money and resources they can use for their part of the convention but mainly because it is something that few people understand and the consequences of getting it wrong are utterly terrifying. I think Worldcon budgets are around the million-dollar level now. Certainly people have lost their houses running smaller conventions. If people don't have complete trust in whoever is running the budget they will start second guessing everybody else and arguing over their spending decisions. Soon everything dissolves into a nasty family argument.

Conventions need to be fun or they are pointless. They also need a lot of work, but that needs to be in a context where people are not ground down by that work (See Teresa Nielsen Hayden's definition of the 'Fannish Tense' as 'This will have been fun'). Most importantly they need to be safe. That means physically, psychologically and financially safe. There needs to be confidence that everything is under control, particularly those immensely scary spreadsheets.

Sadly I can't include a video in this article but I do have one that demonstrates the growth of 'spreadsheet fandom'. After the vote count when the UK won the 2014 Worldcon, I went along to their committee suite to congratulate them. It often seems like most of Twitter believes they would be celebrating with champagne and caviar on the convention budget, but instead the suite was in semi-darkness populated with six shadowy figures. That turned out to be six committee members pouring over spreadsheets and adjusting their departmental budgets. Those people sure do know how to party.

The final tool that Vince has is the transatlantic jet. Once again this isn't something that people appreciate unless they remember the days before this became widely available. When I started going to conventions in the UK they were run by a committee of resident fans from the host city and accompanied by a fannish Greek chorus from everywhere else lamenting in the pages of their fanzines that this group was obviously incompetent and would destroy fandom as we know it. Gradually, over the past several decades, we've expanded those groups until they stretch across continents. Paradoxically fandom finds this both easier and harder than the wider public. We are more resistant to real world propaganda, but I'm continually amazed at how two fan groups separated by oceans or by just a couple of streets can believe

such an amazing number of nonsensical and negative things about each other. Because he travels so widely, Vince is often our 'first contact' person in these situations. Do you know what happens? The groups will quietly start working together remotely and then (mostly) become the best of friends when they meet up. I swear Vince doesn't even know that he does this. I recommend his presentations at Smofcons about the concrete skills of running conventions; from spreadsheets, to negotiating, to site planning, but I'm sure he doesn't even know that he has this calming effect on the people around him.

Lastly, I have to compliment Vince on his good judgement in choosing his own staff. Since he selected my wife Margaret as his deputy his department within our convention always ran like clockwork. I think he did wonder about my knowing grin when he announced this though.

Finally a word of thanks; Margaret and I would like to thank Vince for acting as the 'Ring Bearer' at our wedding, complete with his kilt which is usually worn at Worldcon formal Events when he is MC. Fortunately he did break the habit of handing out Hugo Awards and produced the ring instead.



## My thoughts going into the 1995 Worldcon

I've included here my introduction in the Souvenir Book for Intersection, as it gives a good overview of my feelings about what had happened on the journey to the con and hopes for what it would feel like.

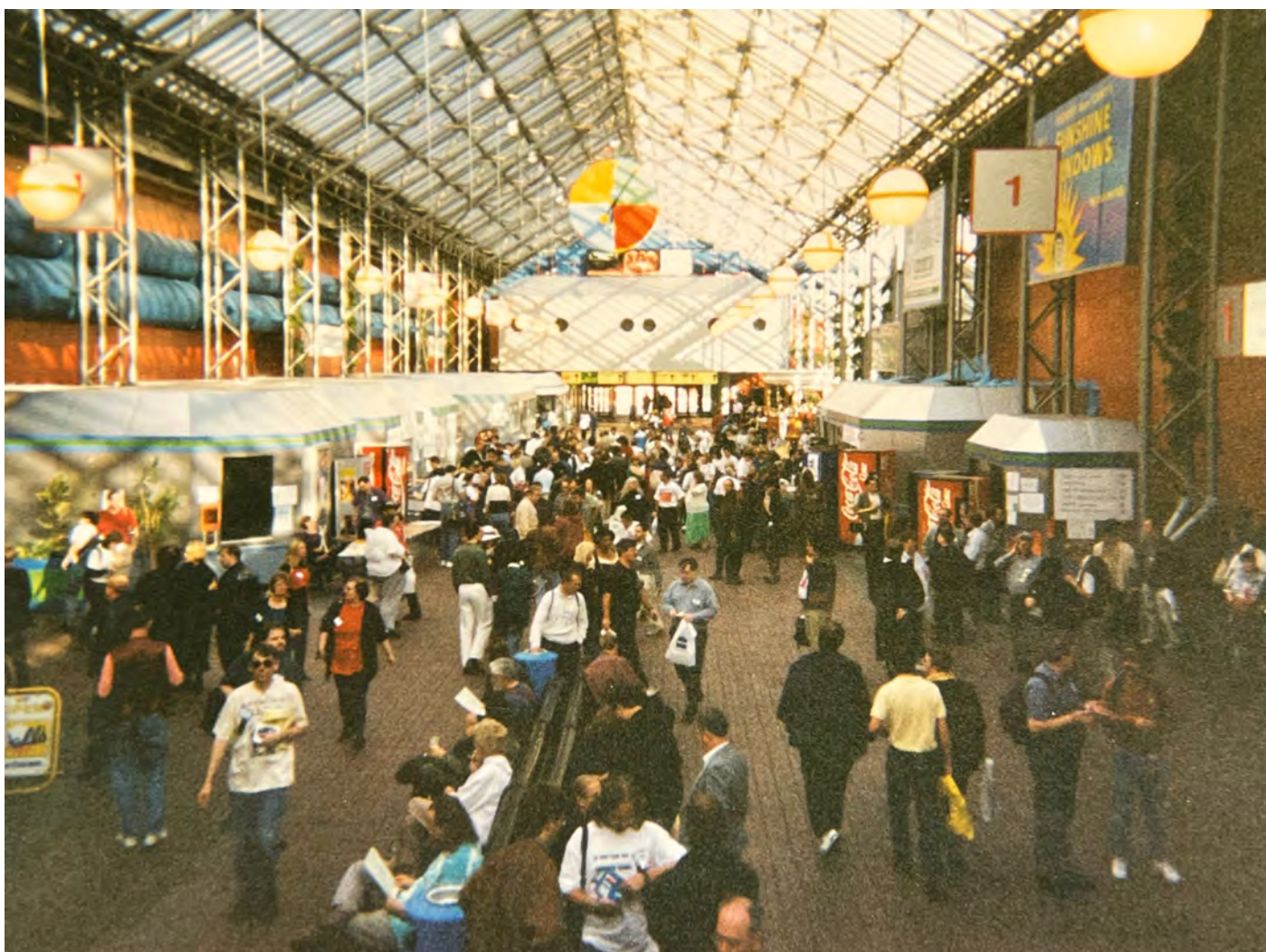
### The Lifetime of a Weekend:

It is often said that things have a life of their own.

Cars are an obvious example, since when we buy them they seem to acquire their own personalities, especially once they get past their warranty periods and the problems start! SF Conventions are similar in that once they are up and running they also seem to develop their own personalities. This is particularly true when events conspire to make us change our plans at very short notice. (Trust me it happens!)

When you compare the preparation period to the actual lifetime then a convention is quite unlike a car. A car can be built in a few days and should last for years. A convention takes years to plan and then runs through its entire life over a single weekend. In the case of Intersection the gestation period was eight years, as the very first meeting with the SECC took place just after the last British Worldcon in 1987. Since that time, bidding and preparing for Intersection has taken us to many cities and countries. We have run hundreds of parties, given out thousands of fliers, sold tons of merchandise and of course induced early morning headaches for many people by introducing them to the single malts Scotland is well known for!

For me, the experiences of bidding and preparing for Intersection will probably last as long as the many good memories I expect I will take from the con itself. I have visited places I never expected to and in some cases had never heard of, run committee meetings and parties in many cities, given speeches and presentations, written articles for many publications and made many new friends. (All this was good experience as at the 1992 Deepsouthcon while promoting Glasgow, I



presented a spoof bid for Birmingham UK against Birmingham Alabama!) Some of the other highlights included the fun and games at the other Worldcons between 1990 to 1994. We became well known for the strong Scottish flavour of our parties and the humour we injected into all our promotional activities. The pipe bands always brought the house down and the Nessie tap-danced it's way through North America culminating in its leading us out of the Closing Ceremony at Winnipeg a year ago. On the other hand, I can't describe what it was like on the last days of the bid at Orlando. The vote count was like waiting for a baby to be born, yet when we won there was no time for the release of tension, because so much had to be done. Still, things got done and I think our sense of humour is still intact, even if it has been a close run thing occasionally!

Of course the World itself is a very different place now than it was in 1987. For one thing most of us hadn't used e-mail yet! The political, economic, cultural and scientific changes of those years have been revolutionary and the rate of change seems to be increasing. Some of these issues will be reflected in the programme at Intersection and who knows what ideas will be generated or storylines sparked off.

All of the above has been part of the lifetime of Intersection and of those of us who have worked on it, but the real lifetime will take place over the weekend in August 1995. 5000 of you will immerse yourselves for 5 days or more in a feast of Science Fictional events. That's 25000 fan days or just under 70 years of our lives – a true 'Lifetime of a weekend'. This is what all our efforts and money have been for. So when the last person has arrived home (and we have to work out what to do with the rest of our lives!), the last hall has been swept clean, the last con-report written and the last bill has been paid and Intersection has finally died, it will have lived a full life and one that will have lived a full life and one that will hopefully be remembered for a long time. So have a good lifetime this weekend!

## Highlights from Intersection the 1995 Worldcon

Running a Worldcon is both a marathon and sprint. Now for the sprint. The most memorable thing about Intersection is the fact that it happened, and for the most part, it happened pretty well. We had good programming, we had great guests, a solid program, and the convention centre worked out pretty well, albeit with one significant issue.

We moved into the SECC a few days pre-con to set up. We'd learned over the years the importance of a good early start, including registering staff and other early arrivals as soon as possible, both to build a sense of teamwork and to reduce the numbers to be registered on the busy opening morning. From the very first arrivals of materials in the loading area, through the construction of the exhibits and sales spaces, the events hall and programming rooms setup and branding, to the final touches, the empty shell of the 'big red shed' as it was nicknamed at the time, came to feel like our space. They were long days, but very rewarding, after so many years of planning, and it was lovely to see so many familiar faces, and to see the teams that we'd built up in action.

I had booked a bedroom connected to a suite on a high floor of the main hotel attached to the conventions centre, and Martin and Margaret had the bedroom connected on the other side. This allowed us to share the large space which we used for committee and other meetings. After midnight, the night before the convention opened, the fire alarm sounded. We all dutifully walked down to the marshalling area in the car park to wait for the all-clear, which fortunately didn't take too long. We were all pretty tired, and the crowd of people were mostly convention attendees, including some quite famous writers and others, many in their sleeping clothes with a coat thrown on top, as it was chilly even in August. About 30 minutes after I got back to my room the alarm sounded again. I just waited and fortunately it switched off. Apparently some guests had – understandably – taken a long warm shower, and had left their bathroom door open and the steam had triggered the alarm, which shouldn't have been so sensitive. Not such an auspicious start, but I still managed to get enough sleep.

The opening ceremony was on Thursday. Glasgow City Council had sponsored the convention as they did later in 2005, and also next year, in 2024. So someone from the city came along. Martin and I, who were co-chairing, had agreed that I would do most of the public-facing things, so I went up on stage to welcome everyone. I do remember it was my first time on a really massive stage like that, with thousands of people, and the first thing – if you've ever experienced this – when you go up there the full lighting rig flares in your face and you can't see anything, it feels like you're staring into space. It's just a blaze of light above and darkness below. You might have a sense that there's a big group of thousands of people out there, and you're on stage, and you're going, 'Ohhh.'

Fortunately, I managed to get through that, invited somebody from the City to welcome everyone,

and then we introduced the guests of honour. The City had paid for a civic reception, which the City, of course, thinks is 100 people dressed up in business suits and dresses and stuff. What we had said was: it's a drink for everyone. So we got them to pay for many tables of wine and orange juice, which got people out of the opening hall. It had a Scottish theme. We had bagpipes and even somebody dressed up as Nessy, the Loch Ness monster. And then the program started again. It really was great fun.

There was even a documentary called *Beam me up Scotty*, which is available on YouTube. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aF89tGSBM5g>) It caused a bit of upset at the time because it did include some stereotypes about fandom. But looking at it again, it does contain some useful record of what went on.

Another thing I remember is we had all kinds of exhibits, the art show, the dealer's room, social space and more in a single hall of 10,000 square metres. It was so big, we had to fill it up with all kinds of stuff. It even had bouncy castles for kids in it. But during the day, it acted as the hub of the convention. I was impressed how well it worked. In fact, we'll likely be bringing back that concept in 2024.

We had also succeeded in bidding to be the 1995 Eurocon, in addition to being the Worldcon, and we had European-focussed themes and activities woven through the entire convention.

Some things didn't work. The SECC in 1995 didn't have a separate block of dedicated programme rooms. We only had the attached hotel and a small number of rooms, so in some of the big halls we literally built some program rooms. But they didn't have ceilings, because of fire safety (sprinklers) so you could hear everything from the other rooms. It was one of those things which initially looked like a good idea but in the end proved not to be. For some small panels it wasn't a big issue, but bigger, noisier panels were seriously spilling over. That caused a lot of problems to the point that we actually made a joke about it for the next time around in 2005, when we did have program rooms...but I'll come back to that.

There was only one on-site hotel, so most people had to stay in the city centre. There was no one hotel in Glasgow that was big enough to host our evening parties, so contracted two: the Central Hotel, which had the smaller parties and a bit of programming, and the Crest, which had been the Albany in 1980. People had to travel around quite a lot. It was August in Glasgow, so the weather was pretty decent for the most part. The Convention Centre is not that far from the city centre, and the public transport in Glasgow was, and is, very cheap. People had a good spirit about that, but it did mean there was a lot of back and forth. To some extent it was the same in 2005, except we had three onsite hotels and used the Hilton in town for parties. For 2024 we've now got at least eight on-site hotels, so it's going to be much less of an issue.

I watched the Masquerade. I'm not hugely into costuming, (some early photographs notwithstanding!) but I do remember it went okay, with some decent entries. There was a bit of a problem, as I recall, with people using flash photography, where it stopped for a minute to deal with that.

Sunday evening's Hugo Ceremony was well run by our 'Toast Mr & Mrs' Diane and Peter, and I was delighted with it. I had a chance to meet a number of the award finalists backstage at the pre-reception to wish them well, while having to practise my poker face as I already knew who the winners were. It was lovely to see Joe and Gay Haldeman there – Joe won that night for a short story – as well as to meet some new faces, such as David Gerrold – who also won for his novelette *The Martian Child* – and his son Sean, who was the inspiration for the story. After the ceremony we had a fireworks show outside over the river, which got a lot of appreciation and was a fine ending to the last full day of the convention. Slightly embarrassingly, the hall where we arranged the post-Hugo ceremony party for the finalists did have a view of the river, but had blinds covering the upper parts of the windows, so all they could see was the reflection of the fireworks on the water. Oops.

By the last day spirits were positive and happy, though understandably tired. Although sad to do our final official act, Martin and I were very happy to thank the volunteers and the guests and everyone else, officially close the convention and hand over to our successors running the 1996 Worldcon in LA. We thanked all the volunteers later at a party for them and then found our way to the former Worldcon Chairs 'Old Pharts' party to be given our 'Past Worldcon Chair' ribbons to much applause and a large sense of relief.

## Guests of Honour

Selecting Worldcon Guests of Honour is one of the benefits of being on a Worldcon committee. The list of such names contains most of those who have made significant professional and fan contributions to the genre and fandom. The process then was simple: the committee came up with a bunch of ideas, we then

had a couple of meetings and eventually we had a list of names and we went out and invited them.

One of the guests of honour was distinguished writer Samuel R. Delany. His main Guest of Honour event was a great success. This was only the second time that someone who wasn't white had been guest of honour, which I can hardly say is a great achievement for a Worldcon, given it took so long. He was also one of the earliest openly gay/LGBTQ+ persons working in the genre.

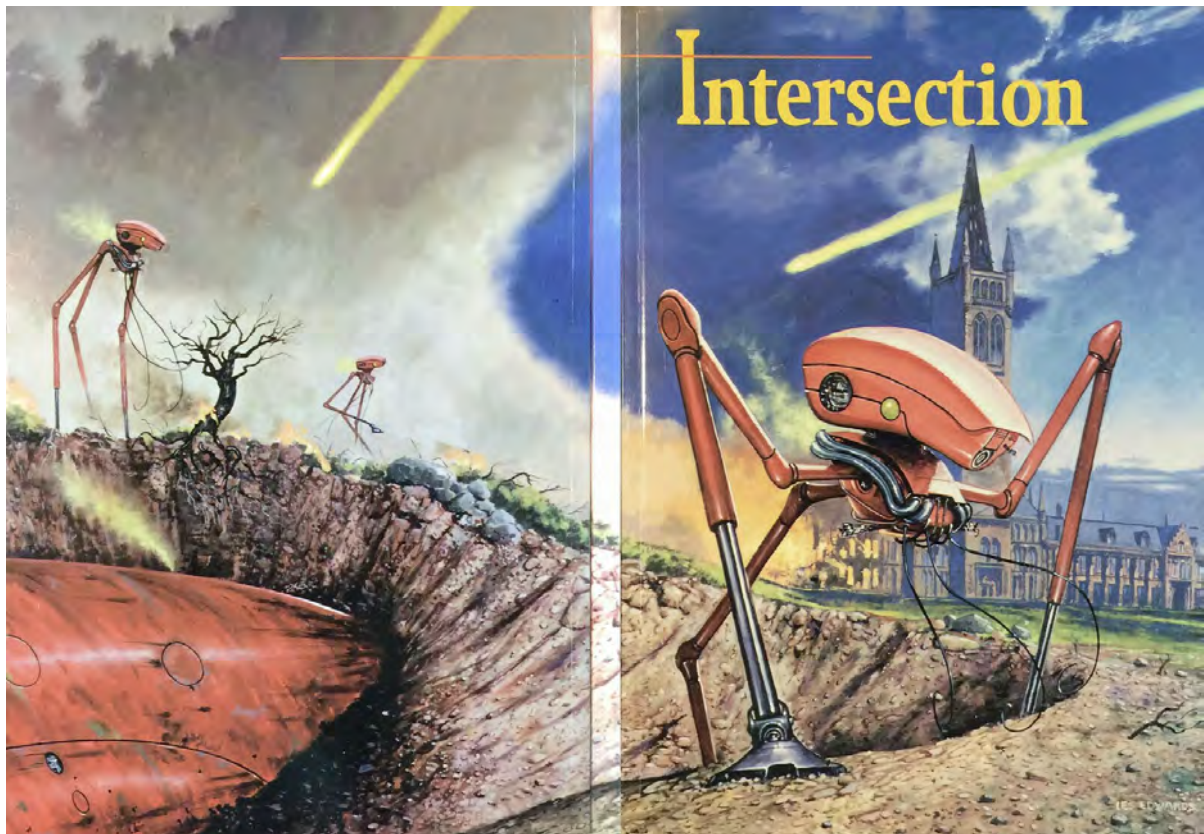
One of the other guests was Gerry Anderson, who'd done a lot of puppet shows like *Thunderbirds* and *Captain Scarlet* in the early 60s. He was very popular in the UK, and I think was a fun and popular choice for a guest.

The fan guest Vinç Clarke, was a distinguished and well respected UK fanwriter/editor active since 1948, who had also organised several conventions and helped found the BSFA. Long overdue as a Worldcon Guest of Honour.

The artist guest was Les Edwards, whom I had not really met before. But he's an excellent artist and speaker. I got to know him and his wife Val quite well. In fact we remained in contact and I was able to buy the original painting he gave us for the Souvenir Book cover.

Many Worldcons have had a designated 'Master of Ceremonies' or 'Toastmaster', who hosts and presents the Hugo Ceremony and sometimes other main events. (That designation is old fashioned and has largely been replaced now.) In 1995 we asked writers Diane Duane and Peter Morwood, a couple living in Ireland, who were also familiar faces at the local Glasgow conventions, to do this role. They designated themselves the 'Toast Mr & Mrs' which was delightful, and they did a wonderful job.





## John Brunner

On the Friday of the Convention, a quite famous science fiction writer, John Brunner, who was attending, died.

He had attended some sessions on Thursday, the first day of the Convention, which some people remarked on afterwards. On Friday in his hotel room he had a severe heart attack. He was taken to hospital still alive, but he died within a few hours.

We got that news quite quickly and of course it caused great sadness at the convention. We found ways to help his wife Li Yi Tan. Several fans rallied to support her at the time and after the con. Many of the other writers who were his peers and friends volunteered to help us with supporting the wider community at-con about the loss. In particular, Robert Silverberg gave a moving and dignified eulogy at the start of the Hugo Ceremony, which ended with the entire convention rising for a standing ovation for Brunner.

In the end, although it was a shocking event, we did as well as we could. Of course fandom being what it is, comments were made such as 'If you're a science fiction writer and you're going to die, die at a convention', which I suppose one could try to take in a positive, or whimsical way.

## The aftermath

Overall, the feedback we received was that Intersection had been successful. We had also, to a large extent, rebuilt the knowledge of how to run a Worldcon in the UK. We'd built a lot of respect, particularly with the fans outside of the UK. We also saw a flourishing of fan activity and cons across Europe, stimulated by Intersection.

We'd learned about the people part of it as well. We made lots of mistakes in '95. Absolutely, we'd be the first to say so, and a number of people were very keen that we didn't make them again. But I'll come back to that.

After '95, there was immediate energy to 'Let's do it again!'. But also many people in the UK were saying, 'No, don't do that now, let it go to sleep for a while'. An awkward balance of forces. It was quieter in the couple of years following, '96-'97. We all did our different things. We had a little follow up event, just a fun event, and that went reasonably well. But there was a general consensus to leave it for a while.

# Glasgow 2005

## The Bid for 2005

Within a couple of years, there was beginning to be a bit of a groundswell to maybe start exploring... a building up of enthusiasm amongst a number of people in the UK to start at least tentatively looking at this again. In November 1997, Dave Langford reported that

‘Certain fans, chaired by “Convenor” KIM Campbell, sense our need for a 2005 UK Worldcon bid and plan to ‘campaign quietly for the next few years, so as not to submerge the local fandom with Worldcon fever too soon.’”

There was still a general sense of ‘Is this a bit too soon?’ And, also, to be honest, ‘Would these individuals actually be able to hold together an actual committee?’. There was also a ‘Not another bloody British Worldcon’ sentiment from fans who had worked very hard on 1995. A real mix of views.

In March 1998, I moved from Oman to the Netherlands (I’ve been living in The Hague since 2002). There was some pressure on me to say whether I’d be interested in doing this again. There also appeared to be a risk that multiple groups might launch bids, as indicated by Dave’s post above. There was a need to bring these groups together, and that’s effectively what I ended up doing. I had to encourage everybody who was interested to work under one umbrella. We also had to form an exploratory committee, to learn whether we wanted to do this. If we do this, where will we go in terms of facilities? Who will be on the bid, for what year will we bid?

We did that relatively quickly and realised that to run a Worldcon you needed to have fans from all across the UK. What we didn’t want was two separate groups. So in the end, it was very much about solving a potential political issue before it became too difficult. We therefore created a structure which included a co-chairing arrangement, which KIM and I took. For the bid we were Co-Convenors. Later on KIM took the role formally called ‘Convenor’, which included general oversight similar to a Board Chair, and I managed operational activities.



Others heavily involved in the bid included Andrew A. Adams, Colin Harris, Jenny Quin, Mike Rennie (Sparks), Joyce Scrivner, Bjorn Tore Sund, Ben Yalow, David Cooper, Mark Meenan, Steve and Alice Lawson, Steve & Sue Francis, Nadja Tegen, Pat McMurray, Jonathan 'JonJo' Jones, Neil Simpson, Stuart Capewell.

By the time of the convention, the Committee/Board comprised Colin and me, Ben Yalow, Mark Meenan, Ian Stockdale, Steve Cooper, David Stewart, Tim Illingworth, Alice Lawson, Ewan Chrystal, Paul Treadaway, Pat McMurray, Tim Illingworth, Mike (Sparks) Rennie, supported by Deb Geisler, TR, Jim Mann, Cheryl Morgan, Paul Dormer, John Harold & Robbie Bourget, supported by dozens of area heads and hundreds of staff.

Of course, the second time around was easier in many senses. Having just done it, we knew what we needed to do and what we needed to avoid. We set out to do better in terms of focussing on the people, and for the most part that succeeded.

We established groups who looked at various sites. We concluded that Glasgow was the best site again, as many of the problems that we had in '95 were solved for '05. Yet again, we got a very good deal from the city, and additional facilities had been built. There was a proper Concert Hall onsite, the 'Armadillo', which would be great for the big events; there were additional hotels on site, which helped; and the Convention Centre built proper meeting rooms this time. So one of the slogans we ended up with for fun was 'Once more, with ceiling!', punning on the term used in shows and music, and in the 2001 musical *Buffy* episode. Just as a little bit of a self deprecating joke. It was fun and actually landed very well.

We had also listened to the criticism about 'tartan tat', and responded in two ways. First we created visual branding and house style for the bid using the Arts & Crafts of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the later Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles, which are very prominent in Glasgow. We also linked the visuals to Scottish history and achievement. We did retain a limited amount of traditional elements such as parties including a bit of whisky.

Second, we pitched it as a European Worldcon in Glasgow, both broadening the scope and recognising the significant interest from across Europe we had seen in 1995, which was expected to increase. We also planned to apply to be the Eurocon, as we had in 1995.

We decided that we would go for 2005, creating a 10-year period since the last UK Worldcon (as compared to the eight year gaps between 1979, '87 and '95). Site selection voting would take place in San Jose, California, in 2002. So again, the whole machine started.

At this stage, the Internet had become much more significant. A lot of fannish activity was beginning to shift over there. But parties were still important, we still had to have the regional agents. But on the one hand, we knew how to do it better and more efficiently, and because we had won so strongly in '95, in the end nobody bid against us. This is one of the first cases of what's become more common now: if a very strong bid establishes itself, it's rare now for other bids to come against it. If a year is perceived to be weak, the other bids will come. So if you look at the last 10 or 20 years, what you'll see is lots of single bid years, or a whole bunch of bids coming together, maybe none of them particularly strong. That's become a bit of a characteristic. Nobody bid against us in 2005, against London for 2014, nor against Dublin in 2019. Despite the lower voting numbers (somewhere between 1,000 and 1,500), because there was no opposition, people were still enthusiastic about it. They very much wanted to come back, especially since we had said a lot of the problems we had last time were fixed.

## KIM and chairing

During this time, KIM's health deteriorated due to terminal cancer, and she died in November 2003. As her health declined, her ability to actively participate had declined as well, and then eventually, it just killed her, far too young at 47. But she was a very well regarded and beloved figure. I only have positive memories of her and appreciate what she did. Here is a lovely picture of KIM with the rest of the committee at the 2001 Smofcon in York, which she chaired.

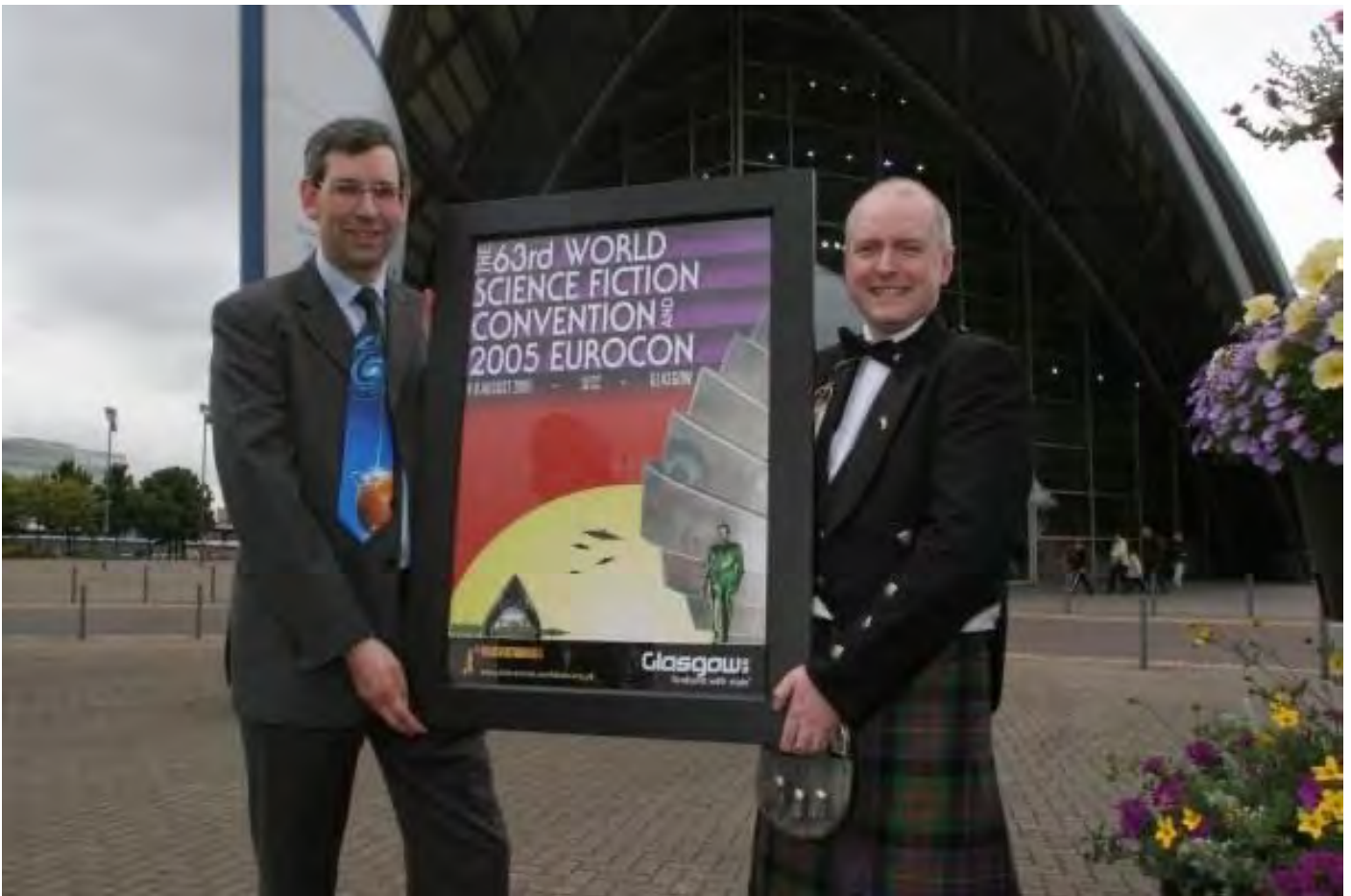


## Colin Harris

Colin Harris is a UK fan, who had found fandom in 1981 and had a very strong convention running background, including Mexicons. He had a similar background to me – science followed by work in corporate organisations. It was funny that for many years I was in Shell and he was working in BP in similar roles. So we were able to bring the language and jargon from the corporate world that he and I could speak very easily. We ended up having very, long conversations on the phone several times a week, which worked out really well.

Colin became a deputy chair because of his energy, ability, focus and results-orientation. This was my second time doing all this, and I was interested in encouraging and coaching, developing and mentoring people. About a year into the convention I proposed we make Colin a co-chair with me. He was doing it in practice anyway. We then had two years to run the convention together. Colin's contributions were significant to 2005 in many respects, particularly on the broader themes, finance, facilities, programming and content. We also introduced the visual idea called Spaceport Glasgow, which, again, gave a theme and branding to the convention.

That pairing worked really well, and Colin and I have continued to work together on a whole number of other things since 2005 as well. I'm humbled and very appreciative of his contribution to this fanzine and look forward to the opportunity to do so in return!



## 20 Years On – Vincent Docherty by Colin Harris

Coming to this as the deadline approaches (as usual!), I find myself in the fortunate position of being able to read some other contributions while writing my own. And striking to see many of my own thoughts already expressed more eloquently than I could do myself. Vincent's persuasiveness and his willingness to help (Kees), his 'yes, and' rather than 'no, but' approach (Ian), the 'egoless Vision Thing' (Martin), his generosity, reinvention and steadfast friendship (TR). He is all of these and more and I am grateful, like so many others, for his advice, support and friendship for the last 20+ years.

Vince and I have followed somewhat parallel conrunning paths. Despite our similar ages, however, he has always been ahead of me – to my great benefit. His first con was in 1978, whereas mine was in

1984. By 1995 he was chairing Intersection where I was a first-time Area Head. As a Worldcon Chair in 2005, I had the rare privilege to be mentored by a repeat offender (only Vince and Perry Middlemiss have had the honour – or perhaps the temerity – to chair twice). And the learning has continued since then, as I have aspired to follow his example of 'what next?'

Working with Vincent is always easy and invariably a chance to reflect and find better ways of doing things. My own strengths are much more in process and task management rather than in people skills (don't laugh, it's true!), and so it's been a genuine (and humbling) gift to see how Vincent gets the best from people, whether as leader or advisor. Of course he has strong opinions and vision, but he is that rare leader who takes as much, if not more, satisfaction from facilitating others' success as from his own. His mentoring and influencing will be as much of a legacy to fandom as more visible contributions.

My abiding memory of co-chairing Interaction with Vince was that we were able to bring our professional expertise to bear without subjecting the team to it. This is essential but also part of the strange dichotomy which affects modern Worldcons. It is impossible to run an organisation and event of this size without using serious project management techniques; yet for most of the all-volunteer team, this is a hobby and it's a complete turn-off for it to feel like being at work.

There are various ways to tackle this. Martin describes some of them in his own tribute; and I also recall Martin's own contribution from the last all-staff before Intersection in 1995: 'You don't have to wear suits, you just have to role-play people wearing suits'. I've quoted that line many times since.

My recollection of 2005 is that Vince and I very much saw the practical issues (time, space, money, organisation, tasks ...) the same way; and in our private chats we would use the language and techniques of our work lives, while with the team we would be more relaxed (Vince is of course much better at this than I am). I tended to look like the 'bad cop' but in truth we were very much in agreement on what should happen. And for the most part, that's continued to be the case as our paths have crossed on con committees and projects ever since.



They do of course say that 'still waters run deep' and Vince is no exception. As Shana notes, he can seem very much like the swan, gliding smoothly along, even if one suspects there is a lot of paddling going on somewhere underneath. In my own experience, part of the truth is that he is just a very skilled and thoughtful leader, with fantastic instincts and sound judgement, so perhaps he does need to paddle a little less furiously than the rest of us. But that is to under-estimate his commitment to the principles that he believes in. It's easy to see people's passion when they wear their hearts on their sleeves; it's important not to under-estimate Vince's depth of feeling just because of the reserved exterior.

I know that one of his fundamental beliefs is that fandom should be a safe space in the broadest sense. That means for everyone and in every respect, and I am not referring here to the minimum expectations we set out in our Codes of Conduct. Safe space here means a place where members, staff and participants can have a positive and rewarding experience and bring the best of their authentic selves to their fannish lives. It also means looking after the staff by creating an environment where they can succeed AND enjoy the process, rather than one where the members' enjoyment somehow has to come at the expense of suffering for the team. (Maybe this belief was informed by the trauma of the 1987 Worldcon where much of British fandom came away believing that we could only host a Worldcon through just such a satanic bargain; but I rather suspect it goes much deeper into Vince's personal DNA).

This is of course serious stuff, and I confess that Vincent and I share a satisfaction in good management that others often find hard to understand. ('You mean you LIKE looking at budgets and spreadsheets????') Partly because it is having these sound foundations that allows the cool stuff to happen – indeed, it's essential for a volunteer organisation with limited bandwidth. Doing the boring stuff well is exactly what frees up people's time and energy to be creative.



Of course, Vince does have a (rather dry) sense of humour. We both enjoyed playing with the height difference as Co-Chairs. I seem to remember bringing the (small) WSFS gavel on stage at one point, before Vince appeared with the giant one...and we repeated our double act (with Kevin Standlee as willing stooge) as we handed over to LACon IV at their opening ceremony.

So much for the conrunning, although that is of course the part of Vincent that most people are most familiar with. There is of course much more (and not just his ability to effortlessly pull off a full dress kilt – it took me a while to realise quite how heavy those things are). He's not only a passionate music lover (as so many of us know, having benefited from the orchestral concerts he has arranged for Eastercons and Worldcons), but has a fine voice of his own. He's a huge and deeply knowledgeable Tolkien fan. And like myself, he is an art fan and collector. I'm sure that starts with his father (also Vincent) who studied at the Glasgow School of Art before becoming a school art teacher himself. It's been a pleasure to tour art shows with him at many conventions and to discuss the art on display.

And as anyone who's been lucky enough to visit his home will know, it's a fantastic collection ranging from Richard Powers to Jim Burns and Donato Giancola to Chris Foss.

I suppose one irony of being Vince's friend and colleague in conrunning is that it can feel like ships passing in the night, especially when we're both working senior roles at a Worldcon. So I'm grateful that we've actually been able to work together directly when things are a little quieter, especially at Smofcon where we've run workshops for future Chairs, and (just last December) shared a fireside chat panel on how to help committees hold space to innovate. After 20 years, I'm still learning from him.



*Loncon 3 – The Art and Science of Scale and Atmosphere (Vincent as moderator with Chris Foss, Alastair Reynolds, Les Edwards and John Harris).*

*Photo by Colin Harris*

## Improvement since 1995

One of the many improvements in '05 was that the facility was much better, with the dedicated Loch suite of programme rooms (with ceilings!), the new Armadillo events hall and an additional two onsite hotels. I cannot underestimate the value of that.

Next was a very strong focus on getting the content right – the combination of the programming, the guests, the visuals, the integrated feel. Some people call it 'the vision thing'. That was a collective responsibility of the whole committee, driven by me and Colin, which also built on what we had learned from '95.

We also wanted to learn from '95, as well as '87: do not burn people out. So we tried lots of different things to provide support and balance, such as making sure people had deputies or partners, examining people's availability, and running a series of five staff weekends, which we ran like small conventions (they were called Construction 1-5). In later years, when running workshops about conrunning and leadership, I've touched on this. You can run a really good convention by focusing on having great content, taking care of everyone (particularly volunteers) and making sure the basics all run effectively (reg, comms, services, etc.).

It's actually hard to think about anything that went seriously wrong with 2005. It was a very positive experience for almost everyone.

In 2005, our Guests of Honour were Christopher Priest, Robert Sheckley, and Jane Yolen, three very strong writers, and two fans, Greg Pickersgill, who was a long term and influential UK fan, and Lars-Olov Strandberg from Sweden, well known for his fan and con photography and quiet friendly presence. I'd already known Christopher Priest for many years, and he's still very active now and living in Scotland. Greg is an interesting character, larger than life, very much from a fanzine and fan point of view. He was always a bit of a firebrand, a bit of a controversial figure even, because he was quite strongly opinionated. But actually, he had a really good experience, and we got on very well. Robert Sheckley didn't make it in person to the convention. While we kept him as the Guest of Honour, he came down with a severe illness a few months before and couldn't travel. He died a few months afterwards. He was represented at the con by his wife, Gail, and through her, we were able to honour him, which was lovely and much appreciated by the con members. Jane Yolen was just amazing, with her dynamic and open approach with fans. She also lives some of each year in Scotland.



The Spaceport Glasgow branding inspired many fans. The main image by Jim Burns was the cover for the hardback souvenir book; much of the layout of the convention exhibits area was in the form of a spaceport; and the Opening and Closing ceremonies riffed on the theme of Boarding and Disembarking, including the in-flight magazine of the WSFS Armadillo, *Ion Trails*, with cover image by Frank Wu.



The guests and programming were really strong, and all the major events worked well (and on time, thanks to Kevin Standlee's Events division), particularly the Hugo Awards Ceremony which was memorably and hilariously run by MC's Kim Newman and Paul McAuley, as the 'Prix Victor Hugo'. It was so good that it was actually nominated for the Hugo for Best Dramatic Presentation in 2006! Kim has graciously allowed us to reproduce it here.

Obviously, there were a few things here and there that we might have done differently, but many regular Worldcon attendees of that period usually remember Interaction as having been a good Worldcon. It followed the 2004 Worldcon in Boston, Noreascon IV, chaired by Deb Geisler, which had also gone very well. Most things clicked.

Of course, I would say that.

# The 2005 Hugo Award Ceremony script

## PREAMBLE

**Paul:** Good evening, ladies and gentlemen...

**Kim:** *Bon soir, mesdames et messieurs...*

**Paul:**... and welcome to the 63rd annual Hugo Awards for Superior Achievement in the field of Science Fiction and Fantasy.

**Kim:**...*et bienvenue a le soixante-troisieme Prix Hugo pour achèvement plus-plus-grande dans le champ de Fiction-Scientifique et Fantastique.*



**Paul:** As you know, the Hugo Awards are named for the father of modern science fiction – that tireless self-promoter, prolific journalist, pioneering inventor of television and the steam-driven automatic pencil, and editor of the world's first real F-S magazine: Victor Hugo.

**Kim:** Born in 1802, Victor Marie Hugo is little-remembered for his comparatively rare excursions into fiction, though connoisseurs rate highly his 1862 dystopian vision, *Les Misérables*, in which everyone lives unhappily under the jackboot of the tyrannical Frère Énorme ...

**Paul:** ... and, of course, for younger readers, there's the enchanting tale of a gypsy girl, her pet goat and a flying alien from another dimension, *The Jet-Pack of Notre Dame*.

**Kim:** But Hugo's real achievement was his founding, in 1879, of the quarterly periodical *Histoires Étonnantes*, whose first number modestly bore the legend '*le journal meilleur de fiction-scientifique dans le monde entire*' and featured the crude, vigorous adventure writings of Jules Verne, Alexandre Dumas, and Eugene Sue, plus poetry on an F-S theme by Arthur Rimbaud and a cover painting of a brass rocketship, an angry octopus from Saturn and a swooning mademoiselle with a fishbowl on her head by the teenage prodigy, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec.



**Paul:** As an editor, Victor Hugo shaped f-s as a literary movement, often making suggestions that made massive improvements to now-classic works. For instance, he persuaded Marcel Proust to alter the title of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdue* to *Mind-Quest of the Tempunauts*, and to issue his mammoth work in ten separate volumes, inventing the decalogy form which dominates the field to this day...

**Kim:**...and his was the guiding hand behind Jules Verne's famous Three Laws of Automata: a homunculus, automaton or other artificial being shall not serve a human red wine with fish, must always alert a human to shortfallings in the quality of his cuisine with a mechanical cry of 'sacré bleu', and shall not (through inaction) allow a human to be seen in public with mismatching gaiters and cravatte.

**Paul:** Less happily, Hugo entered into an ill-advised association with the Scots hack Arthur C. Doyle, who tired of cranking out scientific detective yarns which regularly scored as 'least favourite story' in *Étonnantes* readers' polls, and decided to make money by founding his own religion, the Kirk of Spiritology, based on communing via an electrical device with fairies and spirits of the aether. Two years later, Doyle went to the guillotine after more than twenty of the kirk's disciples were fatally electrocuted while using his device.

**Kim:** At the age of 113, Victor Hugo was a living demonstration of the efficacy of the monkey-gland transplants he promoted through the back-page advertisements of *Étonnantes*. In the middle of writing an editorial boasting that he would live to see in the new millennium, Hugo succumbed to apoplexy when the Secret Service smashed down the doors of the offices of the magazine. The Secret Service had mounted the raid because Hugo had just published a story by the obscure English writer Herbert Wells which un-



cannily predicted the workings of the then-secret Grand Bombe Atomique, the weapon which allowed France to prevail in the Great War of August 1914 to later that afternoon in August 1914.

**Paul:** Ironically, it was Victor Hugo who ensured that the entire F-S world, a fertile training ground for rocket scientists, would always be centred on France. The only remaining super-power, her atomic empire stretches from Grand Quebec and the Duchy of Louisiana, and through the Emirates d'Afrique Nord to the chain of Ariane Orbital Satellites whose friendly Rayons de Mort enforce the Pax Francais upon a grateful globe.

**Kim:** Of course, there is another F-S – or should we say sci-fi – tradition, practised in the Republic de Mexico y California, the Confederate Union and the Thirteen United States of Amerkka. But what our Chicano, Dixieland, and Yankee cousins still fail to understand is that a genre characterised by dry, experimental, inaccessible literary elitists like Philip Roth, Newt Gingrich and Gore Vidal can never hope to match the vitality, commercial success and pulp vigour that is M. Hugo's legacy to the field.

**Paul:** And so, before the solemn business of handing out awards to the worthy disciples, followers and fanatics of fiction scientifique, we ask you all to raise your glasses...

**Kim:**...of the correct wine, if you don't want to be exterminated by the etiquette automata ...

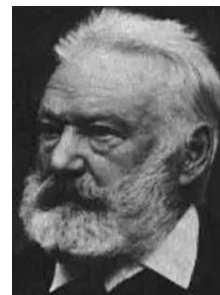
**Paul:**...in this toast

**Paul & Kim:** *Vive l'Empereur Hugo!*

## AFTER THE AWARDS

**Paul:** So Kim, do you think the shade of Victor Hugo has been placated by this year's awards?

**Kim:** *Mais oui.* Let's hope he's just as happy next year, when the ceremony will be held in a sleepy little town by the Pacific, inhabited only by Jesuits, bandidos and a few wild Indians.



**Paul & Kim:** So here's to next year, in *El Pubelo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de los Angeles!*

**Paul:** Before we take our leave, we're sure you'd like to join us in thanking Mike and Debby Moir and their army of technicians and stage runners for all their hard work in making this ceremony run as smoothly as it possibly could.

**Kim:** A special shoutout to Microsoft Paris, who supplied the security automata.

**Paul:** While the winners of awards go backstage to have their photographs taken, we hope that everyone will enjoy the rest of the evening by celebrating *fiction scientifique* in general and the legacy of M. Hugo in particular. Thank you, and goodnight.

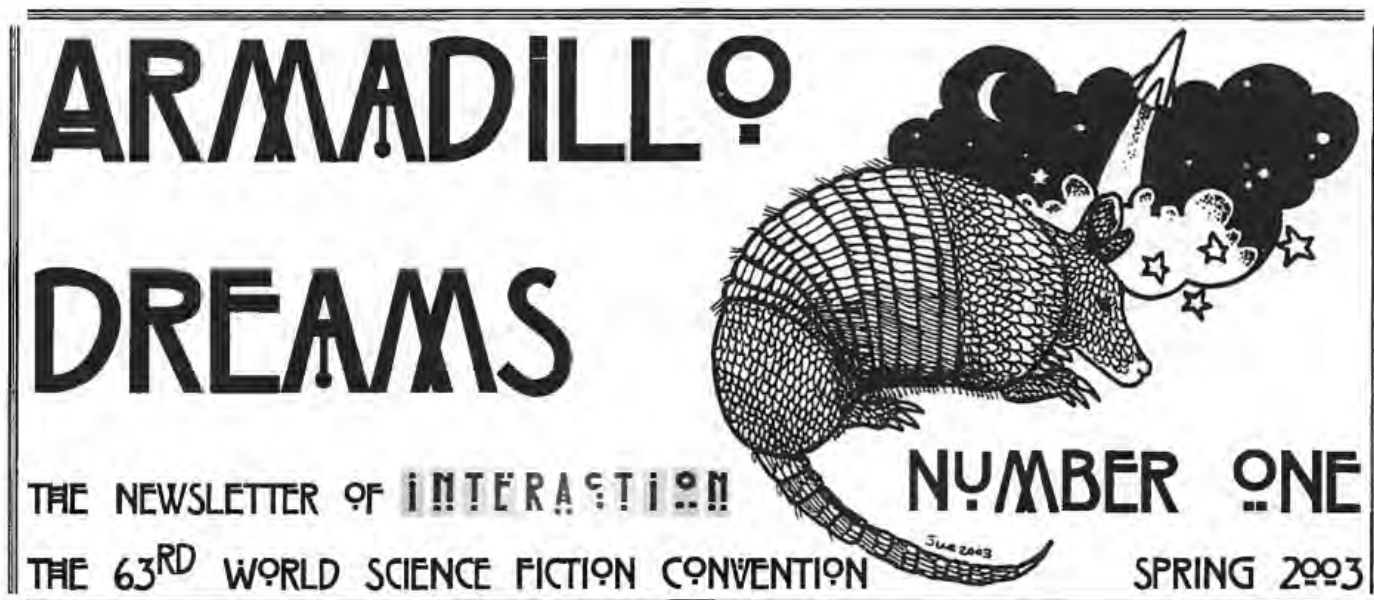
**Kim:** *Merci, et bon soir.*

**Kim & Paul:** Good night!

**Kim Newman & Paul McAuley**

Interaction, the 63rd World Science Fiction Convention - 7th August, 2005

[Link to script for the 'Prix Victor Hugo'.](#)



## UK2005 – A brief History by Vincent Docherty

*First published in Armadillo Dreams, the Newsletter of Interaction, Number One, spring 2003, p. 6.*

It's difficult to pinpoint a precise start to the UK2005 bid, in part because it evolved from two parallel strands. On the one hand I can recall discussing the potential of the upgraded Glasgow site even at the end of Intersection back in 1995, but that was only intended to highlight the opportunities afforded by the much superior facilities. In parallel, KIM Campbell and others were actively raising the idea of the next UK Worldcon.

KIM recalls: 'Looking at the Highlights, I remember Tim Illingworth, Pat McMurray and Arwel Parry coming to York in the autumn of 1996. The one thing that came up from this meeting was that we wanted to give everyone a chance to 'have a go' at things that might be beyond him or her.'

Sometime during 1996, the two strands came together into a proto-bid group. It might seem from the above that the reason why we wanted to run another Worldcon was because of the availability of the site, or because we wanted to increase the number of active conrunners. While you do need to have a viable site, and I'm all in favour of increasing the number of people active in all aspects of fandom, the main reason for wanting to have another Worldcon in the UK was, for me, simply that it increases the richness of the SF experience for fans, it stimulates other fannish activities in Europe and that it is a good way for me to give something back to fandom at large.

I have to mention at this stage an amusing coincidence that becomes apparent when looking at the history of European Worldcons. The two London Worldcons of 1957 and 1965 were followed by Heidelberg in 1970. The two Brighton Worldcons of 1979 and 1987 were followed by The Hague in 1990. Therefore, the two Glasgow Worldcons of 1995 and 2005 will presumably be followed in 2010 by another continental European city. This permits lots of fun speculation such as the possibility (assuming the Japan 2007 bid wins) of a Europe v. Australia 2010 Worldcon race, with site selection in Japan! *[Edit by Vincent: In fact that was a poor prediction as the 2010 Worldcon was in Australia, though there were three Worldcons in Europe in the following decade.]*

Looking back over the UK2005 bid, I think there were three broad periods:

In the early period, covering 1995-1997, we weren't officially bidding but were focussed on sounding-out opinions on the idea in general, as well as quietly looking at possibilities for site and year. We used an email discussion bounce to help with this and had a simple website.

In 1998-2000 we were officially bidding, but with several options as to location and year. We adopted the Art Nouveau / Charles Rennie Mackintosh style for our parties, publications and merchandise, to offer a different image from the Scottishness of the 1995 bid.

From our official launch at plokta.con in May 2000, we were bidding the new facilities in Glasgow in 2005, using the motto 'Once More With Ceiling'. We continued the style and

themes from before, but introduced selected Scottish elements, especially the popular 'bugs' which inspired Teddy Harvia to create the cartoon character 'McSpot' in our publications. We also built a new, much more comprehensive website.

At the start of the bid, I think the most active areas were the website and email discussion bounce. Neyir Cenk Gökçe put together our first Web site, even in the midst of his move from Turkey to Canada. The email discussion bounce was very lively in the early years of the bid, and covered subjects including the level of appetite for another UK Worldcon (which varied from strongly against to strongly for), as well as the various options for year and location.

Apart from the meeting mentioned by KIM above, and Internext, I don't recall that we did much in 1996 other than discuss the general idea of the bid with fans at Eastercon and Novacon. The Worldcon that year was in Anaheim (LA Con III) and although we held an Intersection Thank You party, the only other thing I remember is being eaten by Audrey III (from Little Shop of Horrors) as I walked off-stage (in my kilt) after passing the gavel to the 1996 Worldcon Chair Mike Glyer – there's gratitude for you! You can still see pictures of that at fanac.org and note the tartan in Audrey's mouth!

During 1997 we got a bit more organised, with more people coming onto the nascent bid committee. At the Worldcon in San Antonio, apart from enjoying the pleasures of the Riverwalk and the Alamo, many of the bid team got actively involved by working at-con. This visibility was to continue at later Worldcons. We also held our first official bid party, 'We are not bidding, honestly!', in a suite borrowed from the Conucopia team. Another feature which was to be repeated later was the strong support by the Norwegian fans, especially Johannes Berg and Bjorn Tore Sund (who went on to lead our agents network) with their great enjoyment of the 'World as their neighbour' parties at Worldcons and at Eastercons, aided by generous quantities of aquavit.

By 1998 we were officially bidding, but with a number of options for a site and a range of possible dates between 2003-2006. However it was by now becoming clear that the strongest support in the UK was for a longer break after Intersection than the eight year gap between Intersection and Conspiracy. In the UK we set up our main office, with the team of Alice and Steve Lawson and David Cooper handling our membership and financial admin, building on their strong experience from 1995.

The Baltimore Worldcon that year was to prove significant in several ways. Its early date (the first weekend in August) was such a success, especially in attracting younger fans, that we were later to adopt the same approach. We formalised and extended our network of agents, including John Mansfield in Canada, and set up a permanent US office and bank account.

The style of our bid parties was established and we adopted a different approach from 1995, which had been heavily dependent on the more clichéd symbols of Scotland, although they were a lot of fun, and in any case we had not yet decided on Glasgow as a site. We went for tea – in large quantities – and a more elegant presentation, with Art Nouveau as a visual theme and formal attire for the bid staff, despite the heat in the bid parties. We had strong positive feedback and took many presupports.

The discussion around our choice of site was also becoming more intense. At that stage we still had five possible locations – Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff, Glasgow and Harrogate, with the informal feedback from fans at the Worldcon strongly supportive of Glasgow. At Novacon that year, we held a Balloon Debate, just to see which of our favoured venues would be popular. Regrettably, Cardiff was the first out of the balloon, as the number of hotel beds available was just too small to be viable, although it will no doubt return as a possibility for future UK Worldcons. In addition we gained Jonathan Jones (Jonjo) as a significant member of the bid, and he and Ben Yalow have become the leadership of our site (facilities) team. Harrogate was also dropped, leaving Birmingham, Brighton and Glasgow as possibilities.

The bid continued to evolve during 1999 along with our thinking about potential sites and we formalised the Bid committee, creating a dedicated email bounce for the subscribing committee. As KIM was recovering from cancer for most of the year, I became bid Co-Convenor as well as head of Finance and began handling many of the operational aspects. The Worldcon was held in Melbourne, Australia and we had many staff working there.

The previous weekend we had also held a successful bid party at Conucopia, the NASFiC in Anaheim. The year 2000 was even more eventful as we made our final decision on both venue and year. Some of the bid committee members (notably Andrew Adams, KIM and Sparks) were involved in running the UK Eastercon, 2Kon in Glasgow. From there we organised a visit to the Glasgow SECC site for about 50 interested fans, using the low level train services, which were now working following their submergence for most of 1995! We were able to highlight the many improvements and additions to the SECC since 1995, especially the suite of small and medium sized function rooms, now with ceilings, a point we emphasised heavily later. In addition, the SECC had followed our request to add water fountains.

At a committee meeting later that year we reviewed the options for site and year. The Birmingham ICC, although ideal as a Worldcon facility with attached hotels, was unable to offer us a viable financial package. We also learned that the Brighton centre was to be rebuilt 'some time after 2002' and was there-

fore too risky an option, despite its proximity to the largest population centres in the UK.

We strongly supported the choice of Glasgow as our site, since the city was very keen to have us back, the facilities had been much improved since 1995, Intersection had been a success there and Scotland continued to be an attractive destination for fans outside the UK.

The picture around other bidders had also become clearer and 2005 emerged as our target year, with the site selection to be held in 2002 in San Jose. We also settled on the first weekend in August rather than the traditional English bank holiday for the timing of the con, as it is more likely to be school-friendly for most people and coincided with the local Scottish bank holiday.

We were therefore able to announce our choice of site at <plokta.con> in May in England and thereafter planned for a large push at the Worldcon in Chicago. The Glasgow Tourist Board were also mobilised at that stage and were able to supply us with a lot of very nice promotional material, including little fuzzy bugs, which were customised later with our 'Once more with Ceiling' motto.

Our first Bid PR came out at Chicon, produced by Andrew Adams. We ran one major party at Chicon, using a suite sublet from Minneapolis, with the able support of Geri Sullivan. We also extended our US Agents network, by asking Mark Olson to be an agent in the North East, John Lorentz for the North West, Christian McGuire in the South West, Guy Lillian in the 'South' and Sue and Steve Francis for the Middle bit. In time Steve and Sue also became our US coordinators, controlling the US mailbox and bank account. The fannish year ended with Smofcon in Cocoa Beach, Florida, where we presented the bid to the assembled SMOFS and also explored the space coast.

By good fortune we were able to see a night launch of the space shuttle Atlantis – a first for me and many others! It should be borne in mind that from the time we announced the site and date in 2000 we were operating in full bidding mode with some representation at all the major cons in the US, UK, Canada, Australia and continental Europe. In particular, wherever possible, we tried to ensure that we had a 'funny accent' at the cons where large numbers of voters attended.

The advice from Steve and Sue, and our other US Board members Ben and Joyce was invaluable there, as we did have to make choices. Still we managed to cover most of these events, even if it meant some red eyes and jetlag for some of the committee!

This was the first in a regular series of Open Meetings for all interested in the bid, with a site visit for those who wanted it. We have held these every six months or so, and plan to continue with them during the life of the con. Our next meeting was in Newcastle, where the Committee got together.

There we discussed an Official Constitution, forming a Board with an oversight function and a Bid Committee. We also looked at what we wanted to do if we won the bid and therefore became an operational Committee in September the following year. Worldcon that year was in Philadelphia and we had two successful parties, with one evening being a UK night and the second being a Norwegian Friendly Party run by Johannes and friends.

In addition, we were able to present our filing papers to Conjose ahead of schedule, to ensure we would be on the site selection ballot.

At the end of the year, KIM was delighted to act as the host for Smofcon in York. The temptations of the historic city were strong of course but we did manage to get some work done, including appointing me as Operational Bid Chair, for my sins, despite strong competition from Sparks and Neil Simpson.

Entering 2002, our minds were very much focused on the final stretch to the vote at Conjose. We had a lot to do, starting with the choice of a name. The name 'Interaction' had in fact already been proposed by Colin Harris way back at Wincon V in 1999 and was soon ratified by the Board. Similarly, although several artists were inspired by our art nouveau motifs, Gizmo's logo designs soon emerged as a clear favourite with staff and supporters, and have been appearing on website, publications and merchandise ever since. We had also introduced a project-based approach to conworking, based on the feedback from 1995.

Many fans prefer to have a defined piece of work, with fixed goals and end points rather than an open-ended responsibility.

One such project was the selection of the Guests of Honour and Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer carried out the work with great efficiency and creativity. Once we received their report the Board was able to discuss and agree a shortlist of Guests and we were delighted when all five GoHs accepted our invitation. In parallel a number of other pieces of work were ongoing, including finalising the subvention agreement with the city, preparing the incorporation, tax and credit card facilities of the convention and tendering and agreeing the accommodation partner for the con.

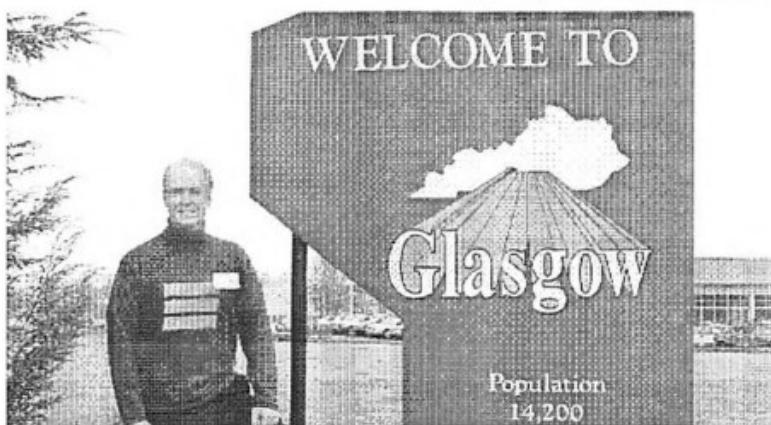
The 2002 UK Eastercon was in Jersey and proved to be a nice sunny weekend. Thanks to the co-operation of Jim Briggs who was head of Conjose's site selection team, the ballots were available at Eastercon. Pat McMurray was the first to complete a ballot, narrowly beating me to it. We worked hard to engage with fans from the UK there and at a subsequent Open Meeting in London, where we introduced some more fun elements of the bid, including balloons with our logo.

The summer was dominated by our preparations for the site selection itself, since at Conjose we were faced with having to handle multiple parallel activities. I suspect that handling the needs of the administering convention is the hardest thing that bidders have to do apart from run the Worldcon itself. We had to run a bid desk, a con desk (if we won), supply staff for the site selection desk and run four parties, as well as attend various presentations and the WSFS Business Meeting. In fact our parties proved to be among the best attended of the con, as we were located opposite the con suite and we had a wonderful array of single malt scotches, ably distributed by our staff who included Molly from the Glasgow Tourist Board and Robin from our convention centre. These parties took a lot of energy and by the end of Conjose we were very tired, although happy with our success. Despite being effectively unopposed, we had bid as if we were. Andrew and Pat attended the count on our behalf and were able to informally announce the results later on Saturday night.



Vincent checks out the 15 05 opposition

Overnight Larry van der Putte, Jan van't Ent and Steve Francis laboured to get our database ready to handle the expected flood of upgrades. They were heroes of the hour since that proved to be very important. On Sunday morning we all gathered at the WSFS Business Meeting for the official announcement and I was delighted to be able to announce the details of the con underneath our shiny new con banner.



We told you Glasgow would be easy for Americans to get to...

a concept we tried successfully for 1995. We have sent out our PRO, a Burns Night Card and of course this Newsletter. I also recently had the fun of being GoH at Concave in Kentucky and since the nearest big town is also called Glasgow, we couldn't resist taking the above photo.

The UK2005 bid was different from Glasgow in 1995 in several ways, the largest of which was I think the absence of a strong opposing bid. Blars' 15 in 05 bid was always fun and enthusiastic, but didn't have the visibility of Atlanta in 1995 – which would surely have won in any other year. (All credit to Blars though as he ran a great and highly creative bid!) The other major difference was that UK2005 was always identified as a European bid, albeit one that would result in a UK-based Worldcon. UK2005 was never intended to lead to a direct sequel to the 1995 Worldcon in Glasgow, although one of our stated goals was to learn from 1995 (and from 1987 and 1990 of course). There are many similarities with 1995, and in fact I have heard fans describing Interaction as Intersection 2, but from the point of view of the bid team, the return to Glasgow is the result of a long careful process of selection, rather than a deliberate plan for a sequel.

It has been both great fun and a lot of hard work for everyone involved in the bid, but having succeeded we look forward to running the convention itself. We expect to have fans from dozens of countries and who knows, perhaps this will be a platform for a future continental European Worldcon in the near future! There is much that is uncertain in the World but we will certainly try as hard as we can to ensure that the 2005 Worldcon is a fun and memorable event for you all to participate in.

## Post Glasgow 1995 & 2005

My first convention was in 1978. Through the 80s, I was involved with the Glasgow local conventions, then built up to and ran '95. After '95 I was in that position to say 'I have now done my thing.'

So in '96-'97 while I was still in the Middle East, I took time just to relax and recover. There were still some activities I wanted to do, but I never particularly wanted to chair a Worldcon again. (Honestly, even now I would do it in an emergency. But I do not particularly want to have the badge of the only person who's chaired three Worldcons. Twice is bad enough!) I was thinking whether I should now 'retire' and just do other things. I dabbled a bit here and there, including getting a fitness teacher qualification, as I helped to run the company sports club, But once we established the 2005 bid, I was reinvested in con-running.



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Being resident in the Netherlands I got more involved with Dutch fandom, regularly attending Larry van der Putte's parties, chairing the 2000 Beneluxcon in Maastricht, visiting some of the large local popular culture events such as Elfia, and supporting the Harland awards, the Dutch SF short fiction prize.

Following 2005, I began to branch out and get involved in other things. I got involved in helping and working with other conventions, often as an advisor to the chair, which included navigating some very thorny personnel issues, which I'll speak about later.

From 2008, I became very heavily involved with Hugo awards administration, including several stints as the Administrator or on the Hugo Subcommittee. I've proposed several updates to the rules and categories, and I've also worked on the Hugo Ceremony in various capacities, including as presenter.

I've run a couple of Smofcons, the annual convention organising events. I chaired the one in Amsterdam in 2011, and then James and I co-chaired one in Lisbon in 2021. I spend a lot of time coaching and mentoring fans on leadership and their development, which I cover in more detail later.

A few years after 1995, I started to be invited to conventions as a speaker or Guest of Honour: twice in 1999 for Hogmanaycon (sadly cancelled) and jUnicon / Baltcon; twice in 2003 for Concave 23; and finally for the 2nd Int'l Week of Science & SF (Timisoara). In 2011 I was invited to be Fan Guest of Honour at Illustrious, the British National 'Eastercon', which was an amazing experience, but I discovered it's possible to do too much, given that I'd had a long business trip to Canada, the USA, Dubai and Oman just before. I also served as the Hugo Administrator and had a number of other personal stresses at the time. The day I returned home after the convention, I discovered I had shingles at age 49. Not recommended.

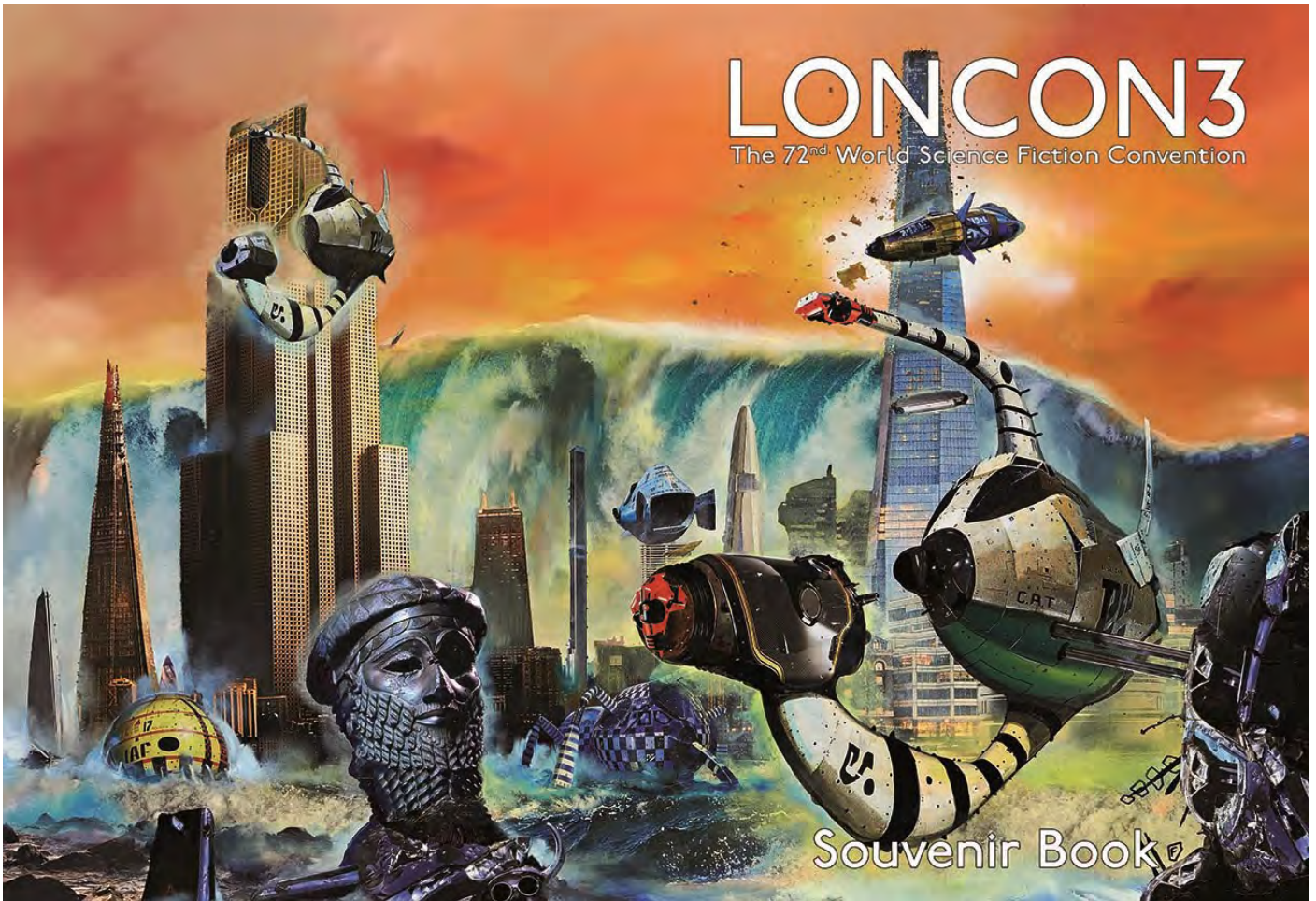
I've become much more active and am now a very experienced facilitator and moderator. At Worldcons, Smofcons, British conventions (Eastercon in particular), and Boskone in Boston (at which I tend to be a regular) I'm asked quite often to be a panel moderator.

My art collection has continued to grow, and I became very active in bringing large scale musical events to conventions. More on those later.

Overall I've kept myself quite busy with various genre activities since 2005, though I mainly read a lot and watch a lot of film and TV and occasionally dabble in video games.

I would highlight one thing. At the 2009 Eastercon LX, James asked me to run the Music programme, including a large symphonic concert. This proved to be the start of something very big. I thought 'How far can we go with that? Could we actually get an orchestra in?' And we did, and the finance leader of that convention, John Dowd, probably lost all his hair and needed therapy afterwards. But the concert and the music program were really successful. Find the full story in the Music section.

## Loncon 2014



UK Worldcons tended to come roughly once a decade. So the first two Worldcons were way back in 1957 and 1965: Loncon I and Loncon II, both in London. There were two in Brighton in 1978 and 1987 and two in Glasgow in 1995 and 2005. Because 2005 is seen as quite successful, people started getting interested in 'What would the next one be?'

A group comprising James Bacon; Alice Lawson – who is originally a fan from Glasgow but lived in Sheffield for a long time, and who ran many conventions in the UK, is still very much involved in Novacon, was the Company Secretary in 1995 and 2005 for Glasgow Worldcons, and also ran Membership Services in 2005; Steve Cooper, a fan from England, who was also involved with Worldcons, (he, funnily enough, just retired and moved to Glasgow a year ago and is obviously involved in '24 as well); and Mike Scott, an English fan and conrunner, and a member of the PLOKTA Cabal. (Plokta is a Hugo winning UK fanzine, <https://www.plokta.com/>).

Initially, I heard that James and Alice were talking, and then in 2008 Mike and Steve were talking about bidding, but separately, not aware of the other group. James was Co-Chairing an Eastercon at this time. It was clear that these fans needed to come together, and so I encouraged this. The alternative would be disastrous.

The four of them ended up having a bid coalesced around them. It was interesting, as there were two co-chairs and two deputy chairs. The bid was building quietly and had not been announced. They went to the 2009 Worldcon Anticipation in Montreal and hosted a 'UK and Ireland' party, which everyone looked at knowingly, and then the bid launched at the following Eastercon.

The bid team, with me advising, looked at potential locations in the UK, Glasgow, London, Brighton, Manchester, Leeds and in the Netherlands, including the Hague site, which had been used in 1990, and which, if I stick my head out the window and look left, I can see a short distance away from my current home. They considered dates and then kicked off the bidding process. At the 2010 Eastercon at Heathrow the bid announced it was going for London in 2014, with the vote taking place in 2012.

There was a serious meeting in 2011 where the four of them met privately, with a note taker and

independent reasoner if required. James was beginning to have his eye on Dublin, and so the news was that he was not going to be chair, but Head of Programme for London; Mike took facilities, and Alice and Steve ended up co-chairing. I remained an advisor all the way through.

Inspired by James' success with the symphony orchestra at 2009 Eastercon LX I began to wonder if we could do the same at a Worldcon. We knew it would be very difficult, and it stretched the organisation and the budget – and certainly stretched the patience of the Events lead. Helen actually came back to do events again for Dublin where we ran a similar symphonic concert again. I say more about the symphony concerts in 'The LX Music Programme' in the Music section, though I'll cover a few points here.

We worked with people who really knew what they were doing, particularly Adam Robinson, who was a professional musician connected to many other professional musicians. We ended up with 85 musicians from the top orchestras in London, including the London Symphony Orchestra.

We held the concert in the 4000-seat main events hall. I think we had about 2000 in the audience, which is an enormous growth, and they were very appreciative. But it was a heck of a lot of work, and quite stressful to organise. Nobody had ever done something like this at that scale. Many people had never experienced an orchestra live, which has a very different feeling from recorded music. Because the hall is so big, you actually feel the reverberation of the music. It's quite rare.

At a typical Worldcon, the opening ceremony is on Thursday, but Friday is usually open, so we chose this night for the concert (in 2005 Ian Sorensen had run a musical event on that evening). The masquerade or the fancy dress follows on Saturday, the Hugo ceremony on Sunday, and the closing ceremony on Monday. In this case, we were also doing the retrospective ('Retro') Hugos for 1939, the 75th anniversary of the first Worldcon, which we combined with the Opening Ceremony on Thursday evening. I'll come back to that, because there were some interesting things that happened there.

In the souvenir book for Loncon 2014, my name appears 13 times which is scary: chairs advisor, orchestral concert & programme lead, mentoring and coaching. I was also involved with the Hugos at Loncon 3. I'd worked with the Hugo Awards quite intensely for a period after Glasgow 2005 (and up until relatively recently), updating the rules, being a Hugo administrator and leading the Hugo subcommittee at least 10 times during that period. Helping to guide the design of the Hugo base is a lot of fun.

Loncon 3 was one of the biggest Worldcons ever in both numbers attending and in scope and ambition. London had hosted the Olympics two years before, which had been hugely successful. There was great optimism in the world. From a science fiction point of view it was a very successful convention. In addition to the symphony concert, we had innovations such as the Fan Village, great guests, programming and exhibits, art show and art showcase, publications, and the Retro Hugo ceremony. At the Hugo ceremony, a couple of the *Doctor Who* actors turned up (this was the moment when David Tennant complimented me on my highland dress!). George R.R. Martin brought along some people involved in the *Game of Thrones* series which was already running. It was a great event.

A few things didn't go well, as always in such a major event. There were missteps over the choice of Hugo MC, and we were beginning to see the issue of interference with the Hugo nomination process, which became a lot worse in the following years. Some aspects of the at-con organisation struggled with the large numbers of attendees, both in registration and crowding in busy programme areas.

Nevertheless, the journey of improvement from 1987 had continued and I hope that the committee and staff came away feeling that they had succeeded.



## Vincent Docherty by Steve Cooper

I seem to have known Vince forever, or at least my whole con-running life. I'd been conscious of Vince for years before I met him. He'd co-chaired one of the early Worldcons that I attended in 1995, and was co-chairing the bid for the 2005 Worldcon where I was but a humble volunteer doing the books in the Publications & Promotions division. But we'd never come into direct contact until I received an email from him asking if I would be at plokta.con Release 2.0 in June 2002. I replied I was planning to be there, and he came back 'See you there', with no hint of what was to come.

What was to come was one of Vince's infamous recruitment ambushes, and where I first experienced the eyebrow (anyone who knows Vince, will know what I talking about), yes Vince is our very own Roger Moore / James Bond V3.0, and if you're talking to Vince and you see the single eyebrow raise, you should begin to worry. What happened was that the head of Publication & Promotions had resigned, and they needed somebody to take over, who had a good overview of the division, so I came to plokta.con as a humble volunteer and left as a pro-tem division head, signing my life away for the next 3 years. But it was fun, I made lots of long-lasting friends and I'll always be grateful to Vince for giving me the push then and throughout my con-running career.

And that has largely been my ongoing relationship with Vince, he's always been there to give me a push, the encouragement and most importantly the support I've needed, from encouraging me to go ahead and organise my first ConRunner in Wolverhampton in 2008 to chairing Loncon 3 in 2014. Vince has always been there, and takes his responsibility seriously and will be there to support you, if he talks you into something. He might even take you out to dinner, as he did Alice Lawson and I in the middle of Loncon. Trusting your committee and taking a break is important.

## Vincent Docherty By Alice Lawson

### **How do you know Vincent, and what's he like?**

We met after a cinema visit to watch *Little Shop of Horrors*. Turns out we have a lot of friends in common, even more now. He is a lot of fun once you get to know him. He makes people feel good about themselves and that is a nice trait. He is also a glutton for punishment being involved in so many big conventions.

### **What's your favourite memory of Vincent?**

In full kilt regalia at a wedding where we were both in the wedding party. The rest of the party were in T-Shirts.

### **Can you describe how you felt Vincent helped you?**

Vince gave me the confidence to co-chair Worldcon. I did not think I could do it but he did. He was also a good sounding board. He has the ability to make people think about their decisions without pushing his own agenda.

### **What did you enjoy about working with Vincent?**

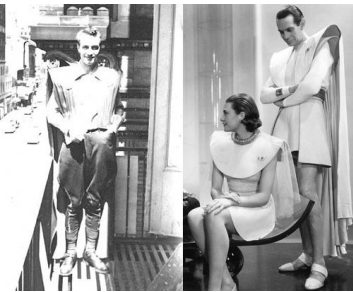
He rarely gives direction. Instead, he makes people ask themselves the question to get to the right place.

### **How would you describe him?**

Vince is the kingmaker. In the shadows and ever present.



## Retro Hugo and the Big Heart Award



The Retro Hugo Awards presentation followed Loncon 3's opening ceremony. It was styled in honour of the period 75 years earlier. I had to present a couple of the awards, and was dressed up in my full Highland dress, just sitting innocently at the front of the hall, with Helen Montgomery, the Events Head. I had tentative plans to have a costume made for me to wear at the Retro Hugo ceremony. My hope was to wear a copy of the costume Forrest J. Ackerman wore at the 1939 Worldcon, which was inspired by the 1936 SF film *Things to Come*. That would have been fun, though in the end I didn't have time. Perhaps at a future Worldcon.

The awards were the day before the concert, so my mind was on two things: making sure I was listening for my cue for when I was to present an award, but mostly on all the things I needed to do for the following day for the concert.

Then came the presentation of the Big Heart Award, which is an annual award given usually at the Worldcon to someone who has done a lot for the community. I'm not really listening. I'm beginning to hear familiar stories being told, then all of a sudden, to my horror, I realise, 'Oh, \$%^&!, they're talking about me!' The presenter, Sue Francis, is coming to the end of the speech, and I have literally seconds to think about what on earth I'm going to say. Helen, sitting next to me, obviously knew in advance, but the organisers had kept it a secret. I'm sure I muttered some dark comments to her. Not serious, of course, but I think she just laughed.

When Sue announced my name, I had no more time and I had to walk on stage. The funny thing is, the musician I mentioned, Adam Robinson, was performing a musical item on stage after this part, and was sitting right in front of me as I'm walking up. We made eye contact and I'm sure he's wondering what was going on. I got to the podium, Sue handed me the award plaque and I knew I had to say *something*. I honestly can't remember what I said. I'm sure it was thank-yous and something about contributing. I'm told I didn't embarrass myself, so that's the important thing.

I walked offstage with the Big Heart Award, which was exciting, but had to carry on with the ceremony. As soon as I walked all the way back to sit next to Helen, I had to get up to present one of the Retro Hugo awards. So there we go: the excitement at Loncon 3.

A digression about public speaking. The biggest crowds I've spoken to have been at Worldcons. The two Glasgow Worldcons both had about 4,500 attendees and I spoke at the opening, closing, Hugo ceremonies, and the symphony concert, each of which could have 2,000 or more. These are big crowds. But I'm actually quite comfortable with it. Funnily enough, for someone who's an introvert, I'm not shy and I have no problem with public speaking. I'm often running or facilitating big events in my day job. I was a

very introverted child, and I wouldn't have expected to be comfortable with it as an adult. But it turns out that I am. Just one of those things. But I usually need to decompress afterwards – that's the introvert thing.



## Dublin 2019 & Beyond

James Bacon had always – or for a long time – wanted to bring the Worldcon to Dublin. He knew that he would have to chair it. I think that was one of the reasons he was happy not to chair London. I think, politically it would have been fine for him to chair both – but physically it would have been really hard, particularly with only a five year gap.

I can appreciate that he had his eye on the prize of bringing Worldcon to his country. James has many fine features, and is the first to admit to a few irritating ones as well. But he is very good at learning and he wanted to learn more by working closely with the chairs of London and serving as the head of programming. You learn a lot by doing that.

He had quietly started to let it be known that he was contemplating Dublin to a few select people, including me, early on. The Convention Centre Dublin opened in 2010. Similar to me in 1987, I think he had toured the centre for the fun of it. In 2012 he announced his intentions to the whole Octocon in Dublin and swore everyone to secrecy. In 2012 he also informed the Loncon III committee once we won our bid. In 2013, the Dublin bid was officially announced in Texas as a 'surprise'. It launched, taking pre-supports in London in 2014, five years prior to the convention. The selection year was Helsinki in 2017, which itself had bid and lost and then bid again.

James tapped me on the shoulder to be an advisor (I definitely wanted to do the orchestra again). I'd been to Ireland before and had explored Donegal, from where my ancestors came in the late 19th century. Incidentally, Docherty is the Scottish spelling of the Irish name Doherty, or O'Doherty. I also visited Dublin, which was developing at an astonishing rate and was different on each visit. The CCD is a wonderful convention centre, bright and airy, and well connected. We thought it would be big enough, as we were expecting a Worldcon similar in size to the two Glasgow Worldcons (roughly 4,500 attendees).

I advised all the way through the bidding and planning period. While I arranged to do the concert again (with Adam and Gary), I had learned if I wanted to be truly involved in an event, I needed to play a more active role. I therefore proposed to be the WSFS division head for Dublin, which looks after Site Selection, the Hugo Awards Administration and the WSFS Business Meeting. James agreed to give me the role. In practice, WSFS is a smaller division, and the three pieces are for the most part self-running, but as a Division Head I had an active role on the committee with the status and involvement that goes with it.

The committee and staff met several times in Dublin. James was in his element and deployed his own, inimitable management style. For the most part, he is very good at this.

Including the orchestra resulted in a well-balanced programme inspired by the work of Mary Talbot, an academic who wrote a number of widely-acclaimed comic stories. Her husband Bryan Talbot is a comics writer and illustrator, a Guest of Honour at Loncon 3, with a well-established decades-long career. Gary's original work, based on Mary's story, was operatic and included dancers and singers. We planned to run it during the concert, so that the whole orchestra could accompany it.



## Dublin 2019 Size

The original planning for Dublin had assumed that it would be the same size as the Glasgow Worldcons, with roughly 4,500 fans onsite. Loncon 3 had been really big, with about 7,000 attending and another 3,500 supporting. Then the attack on the Hugo Awards by the Sad Puppies in Spokane in 2015 caused a lot of people to join as supporting members in order to help the process. Spokane ended up with 5,000 attendees, with another 6,700 supporting, for a total of 11,700, an astounding number.

That huge uptick in numbers progressed for a few years. Helsinki in 2017 was likewise bigger than expected. Almost 8,000 fans showed up, which surprised the organisers. Several function rooms reached capacity and had to be closed to additional people, including the Opening Ceremony (I was one of those who couldn't get in). Fortunately, they were in a big convention centre, so overnight, the organisers went to the convention centre management and asked to expand. They knew they had the extra money and they were able to fix it quickly after the membership bump on the first day.

The Convention Center Dublin can't be made bigger. It's just a box. On the day, the originally expected 4,500 people turned out to be 6,500. This is great from a financial point of view, but we had to secure overflow sites: The Point, Gibson Hotel, a cinema, and an unused shopping mall. These worked reasonably well. It was about a kilometre away (two tram stops). They served as the location for the art show, some of the programme and the WSFS business meetings. However it was a bit far, and it felt a bit disconnected.

A couple of weeks before the event, the convention centre management panicked, claiming they had to institute a number of control measures. (This despite the CCD regularly hosting Dublin Comic Con.) These included purchasing separate tickets for anyone who wanted to come to the concert hall. This immediately caused lots of problems, particularly with registration. It slowed everything down, and caused some people to opt out of the big events because it was a hassle getting these tickets.

For the Friday night concert, we had 1,500 people or so in a 2,000-seat auditorium. The programme included Gary's piece which involved a character and some acting to complement the operatic singing and dancing. Gary initially asked me, but I thought the character fitted James much better, and he agreed to do it. He did it very well. The concert was a big success (there is a recording if anyone would like a copy), though it wasn't quite as revolutionary as the Loncon 3 one had been. We'll see how it goes when we come to Glasgow in 2024.



I cheekily adapted one of Iain J. Clark's promotional images for the concert, as you can see from his photo and commentary:

*Another personal highlight (and cause of giggling) was walking into the Philharmonic concert and seeing my Kraken image on the big screen with the addition of musical notes (Vincent Docherty's idea, I later learned!) This was the first piece I ever did for the convention, back in 2014 when my friend Emma England asked me to contribute some art (and thank heaven she did). In all that time I never once imagined that the Kraken was playing the Samuel Beckett*

*bridge like a harp. And yet it clearly is. So funny. [From Iain J. Clark's blog about Dublin 2019. <https://iainjclarkart.com/2019/08/23/an-irish-worldcon/>]*

The CCD remained busy over the whole convention. There were some bottlenecks in the corridors around programming and the nighttime parties, which settled down a bit over the weekend. Fortunately programming and events were strong. People had fun, despite the space issues. It's pretty central in Dublin, so you could easily go out. It's August, so it rained, but the weather was comfortable. I sat backstage at the Hugo Ceremony and took this picture of the stand used to display the Hugo Trophies, which is based on

the Samuel Beckett (Harp) Bridge near the CCD. I've included a few other photos from around the convention.





Recently, I've been advising the people bidding to bring the Worldcon back to Dublin in 2029. If they succeed, there are certain considerations about the facilities that will need to be addressed. The convention centre is a beautiful one, but it is just a bit too small for Worldcons. They will have some challenges but there is no shortage of ideas for that.

By 2019 I'd been attending and running Worldcons for over 30 years, but Dublin had a special feel to it, as some of the best ones do. To the extent I was involved, advising, on the committee, a division head, and running the concert again, I enjoyed it.

That was the last Worldcon before the pandemic hit.

## CoNZealand 2020 and the following Worldcons



What happened was terrible. 2020 was going to be the first New Zealand Worldcon, but the pandemic restrictions required that it be held virtually. This was very sad for the organisers. It really hit them hard.

The original idea for a NZ Worldcon came about at the end of the 2004 Boston Worldcon. A group of us, including TR, James Bacon and Ben Yalow were sitting in the bar of the Boston Marriott, across from the Hynes Convention Center, with Norman Cates (who worked with Peter Jackson in WETA on *The Lord of the Rings* movies and who ended up being the co-chair of New Zealand in 2020). We suggested that NZ would be a great place for a Worldcon. I had been to Auckland before and seen potential in the convention centre there. Norman Cates had won GUFF that year, 2004 and James had won TAFF and so they were mischievous and brilliant. We all gave Norman twenties and said 'You start a bid'. After Aussiecon 4, it became the New Zealand 2020 bid.

I've lived almost half of my life outside of the UK and encouraging international cross-fertilisation is very much something I enjoy. I'd supported the NZ bid and convention as best I could and really looked forward to it. It took New Zealand fandom 10 years to build up to holding a Worldcon, but the pandemic hit them hard. Financially, they were okay, and were able to convert to a virtual Worldcon, but I don't know if they would run it again.

The pandemic caused Discon III in Washington, DC, to be postponed and then reimagined as a hybrid convention in December. They, too, faced many challenges: the original hotel closed, they had very strict COVID controls, and attendance rates were lower than expected, as many people couldn't make it. Additionally, the original chairs resigned and Mary Robinette Kowal stepped in to chair the convention 6 months pre-con. Despite all this, I was able to attend in person and enjoyed the con and especially some lovely dinners with friends.

The 2022 Worldcon, Chicon 8 in Chicago, was pretty much a normal Worldcon. Smaller than previous Chicons, with about 4,100 attendees in person, I believe, but con recovery post-pandemic was underway. It was enough. It had critical mass.

## Future Worldcons

The 2023 Worldcon, this year in October, will be held in Chengdu in China. It's uncertain how many fans from outside China will be able to attend, although the country has opened its borders after the pandemic, which looks somewhat better for travel. Chengdu has a population of about 18 million, so I expect there will be large local participation. When the fans from China began talking about running the Worldcon in China, I had been busy with London and Dublin, but I was keen to see how it might develop, so I just gave them a little bit of encouragement. They invited a group of fans and professionals from Europe, UK and North America to a couple of conventions in late 2019, one in Chengdu and the other in Beijing. I was able to attend; it reminded me a little of a Finncon: free entry, with thousands of attendees, but still with a core of structured programming. I participated in the programme, supported by the very friendly local organis-

ers, and with good translation facilities. I hope to attend the Worldcon if possible, and if so will represent Glasgow 2024, along with any other committee who are there.

That leaves Glasgow in 2024 as the next seated Worldcon after Chengdu. The world is changing a lot, of course. Hopefully, the pandemic is over, and World War Three doesn't start. There will be many people who want to go to a Worldcon for whom Glasgow will be the first since Dublin, so this might end up being really big. The signs are very good already. We have a very strong team, led by Esther MacCallum-Stewart, excellent guests and a much improved SEC site with many more onsite hotels. I'll be the Events Division Head and will run another orchestral concert and we are working on a project with Gary which will be announced later in 2023. I'll write more about the 2024 bid and convention after it happens, but in the meantime go join up! <https://glasgow2024.org/>



Beyond 2024 there is a healthy pipeline of active and nascent Worldcon bids out to 2031. That gives me confidence that Worldcon will be around for a while yet. I'd love to see it still running on the 100th anniversary of the first Worldcon in New York, which would be 2039. I've been quietly promoting that idea for many years, and at some point hope to see a serious bid form. (To be clear, I'd be 78, with no desire to chair again!) Ideally, 2039 would be held in New York City, though I suspect the facility costs would be prohibitive. Let's see what the future brings.



# Music

Mine wasn't a particularly musical household. Neither of my parents or my sister were particularly musical themselves. My father was an artist, my mother had a mathematical background. Both of them ended up being teachers. However, in my family, it was normal to be aware of music without necessarily being very active in it.

I enjoyed music growing up. The foundation was laid for me during primary school, when I went to church once or twice a week. The Catholic tradition has a long history of songs, carols and hymns, which established an innate appreciation for the effect music can have. Some music teachers of mine would actually play music during music classes. One striking memory was the first time I heard *The Planets* suite by Gustav Holst. Holst wrote the whole suite, but *Mars* and *Jupiter* are very powerful. This was a definite spark. My parents were supportive, so they sent me to piano lessons, but that never clicked. After six months, I was able to play the scales (badly), and I could recognize simple music notation. Despite this, I ended up singing in the choir, and discovered I was quite good. I can actually still sing.

I naturally found the music of the 60s science fiction and fantasy films – which wasn't a lot compared to now – significant. The theme for Gerry Anderson's *Thunderbirds*, composed by Barry Gray, is grand and compelling. Known well in the UK, Anderson's shows *Thunderbirds*, *Captain Scarlet*, *Joe 90*, *Stingray* were all highly entertaining and all had really good music.

*Doctor Who*'s famous electronic theme was wonderful and really started the wheels going for me in regard to hearing sounds that I liked. *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) premiered when I was seven and it's famous for its use of classical pieces. Initially, Kubrick had commissioned Alex North, who composed scores for *Spartacus* and *Dr. Strangelove*, but Kubrick preferred the classical pieces so much, he just left them in. North didn't discover that his music hadn't been used until he was actually sitting in the premiere watching the film.

## **Music collection**

All of these little sparks bubbled together beneath the surface into something I really enjoyed. When I had enough money, I started collecting soundtracks. This was in the days of LPs, which are actually making a bit of a comeback – but not for me, as I'm quite happy with Spotify. On my phone, I have my playlists that I can refer to that are a complete mix of things from different styles and different time periods. I could not claim to have a highly organised collection. I listen to what I enjoy, and it remains very important.

## **Idea for a music concert**

Even with my enjoyment of music and art, science fiction and fantasy, I felt a bit bored. I was in London for five years, then in the Middle East. I was done with Worldcon '95, and 2005 was a way off yet, so I looked for a way to challenge myself. I joined a male voice choir which was quite enjoyable for a few years. But when I moved to the Hague and got really busy with work and with the 2005 Worldcon, music was pushed to just bubbling beneath the surface again.

Perhaps this is a facet of getting older, but I began to wonder what I wanted to do. After 2005, with no chairing to do, I looked to other projects. There were the Hugo Awards, coaching and mentoring, and helping others with other bids. But it still left a gap.

It was at the 2007 Eastercon where I found the next big thing for me. I write about it in 'The LX Music Programme'.



## THE LX MUSIC PROGRAMME

By Vincent Docherty

### Overture

(Opening)

I'm probably best known in fandom for running conventions, especially large ones, though I also run small cons and enjoy being a regular fan and participant. Reading forms the largest part of my SF-related activity, and like many fans I have other interests, some of which overlap well with SF fandom, such as astronomy, science in general, movies & TV, some video games (preferably with large, explorable worlds) and, to get to the point of this article, music.

My father was an artist and he introduced me to classical music when I was very young. I was in the choir at school, which included a lot of older, religious music. I also enjoyed the musical soundtracks of TV shows and especially the movies, as it was vital to help transport me into the world and action being shown. As a geeky child and teenager my music tastes developed into more modern and experimental areas, with an emphasis on strong melody, ('the tunes' as Tanya Brown memorably put it at one of the LX panels). More recently, when I had time between Worldcons, I was a member of a Dutch male-voice choir, singing in various genres and languages, which was both great fun and a challenge, especially at public competitions and shows.

But these activities were largely separate from my fannish activities. I had little experience in folk singing and so had never been active in filk at cons. A few people know of my music interests and I had thought about doing some music-related programming at cons. For the 2005 Worldcon, Colin Harris and I explored having a full performance of 'The Lord of the Rings Symphony' by Howard Shore, but it proved to be too large and risky an endeavour for even a Worldcon, (though I might reconsider now that I have more experience). The trigger for the LX music programme was at the 2007 Eastercon in Chester. I watched the karaoke session in the main hall, which was lightly attended but with some good performances, including an excellent rendition of a Björk song by Julie Faith Rigby-Mcmurray and then a muscular rock number by James Bacon. Afterwards I mentioned to James about my interest in music. We bounced ideas around and agreed it would be fun to highlight different aspects of music related to Science Fiction and Fantasy, through participatory, practical and panel-based sessions at a convention. He proposed, and I agreed, that I orchestrate a music programme stream at LX.



### Larghetto Lontano

(Somewhat slowly from a distance)

With two years to go to the con, and with other competing fannish activities such as running Orbital's finances, I started slowly. Living in The Netherlands also meant I couldn't attend every planning meeting in person. I started by drawing out the general shape of the music programme.

My main goal was to highlight Science Fiction & Fantasy music in the widest sense, and to show they have been connected and mutually linked for as long as people have been making music and telling fantastic stories. I aimed to surprise, build interest and excitement and hoped that fans would both have fun and learn something new. It was also very important that the programme be accessible but not superficial or too basic.

I was aware that many people's experience of the subject was limited to film soundtracks, a few famous cases like Jeff Wayne's 'War of the Worlds' and the Whedon musicals, and genre-influenced albums. I was keen to also explore mythology, history, some aspects of religious practice, science and then 'modern' SF&F. The format would be a mix of panels, participation, live performance and pre-recorded TV, film and radio music. James agreed I could propose 8-10 panel topics and that there would be some budget for live events. The music stream also wasn't intended to replace, but to complement the regular Filk stream.



## SOUVENIR BOOK



### ***Allegro ma non troppo***

*(Brisk, but not too much)*

I started fleshing-out the programme early in 2008. For panel-type programming, in typical analytical style, I began by deciding the main themes I wanted to build from. The first was history: how had music and SF in the widest sense - mythology – developed and what linked them together? That triggered the idea of *'The Music of the Spheres'* and how music influenced our early understanding of the universe, structured through storytelling and later, mathematics. The other side of the same idea concerned music as an inspiration to world-building in fiction. There are many examples, but to me the richest and most obvious was *'the Music of the Ainur'* from Tolkien's legendarium, where the universe is sung into existence. Feedback from potential panellists concerned the narrow Tolkien focus of the panel, so I generalised it to *'World Building with Music'* and also decided to participate on the panel myself.

The next theme was *'music as a form of communication'*. This suggested panel ideas on music as a universal communication medium and method of contact ('Close Encounters', records on space-probes, and many SF novels) as well as the 'alien' tone scales of different human cultures and the psychological underpinning of the experience of music. It became clear pretty quickly that there was one strong panel here, rather than several, although I'm sure more specific topics could be unpicked at future cons.



The largest theme, in terms of potential panels, was an exploration of published music and SF&F together, from the point of view of both the creators as well as 'consumers'. This generated four panel topics which I thought could be the starting points for deeper discussion and potentially a lot of fun:

- *'Depictions of music in SF&F literature and dramatic features'* was about how writers of SF&F use music in their stories, portray the future of music and use music to structure their writing.
- *'Composers who write music for SF&F'* looked at early composers inspired by fantasy and mythology (Beethoven's *Pastorale*, Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, Holst's *Planets Suite*, and many others), as well as more recent composers of music for SF television and film, and their influences.
- *'SF music in popular culture'*, was an exploration of how SF&F has influenced popular culture, including rock and pop (Oldfield, Jarre, ELO, Hawkwind, Bowie and whole genres such as Heavy metal), themed albums such as Jeff Wayne's *'War of the Worlds'*, musicals like *'Rocky Horror'* and more recently, Joss Whedon's *'Once more with Feeling'* and *'Doctor Horrible's Sing-along Blog'*.
- *'Writers, artists and fans discuss their musical inspiration'* was about what music people listen to both for ideas and enjoyment (triggered by the number of writers I know who talk about their music listening) and was intended to be a more informal session.

For the more participatory events and live performances, James and I brainstormed some ideas.

- We agreed to have a major Saturday night live music event, tentatively titled *'Science Fiction, Double Feature'*, which would be an overview of popular SF&F genre musical themes, ideally performed by a live chamber orchestra.
- We also wanted to have some hands-on events where fans could learn about basic musical principles, try out different instruments and even in some cases build them – including that most sf-nal of instruments, the Theremin, which was a particular favourite of James!
- For the children's programme I thought it would be good to have a live performance of *'Peter and the Wolf'* by Prokofiev, *'The Carnival of the Animals'* by Saint-Saëns, or *'The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra'* by Britten, or at least play a recording with someone explaining what was happening. We wanted to recognise important musical dramatic presentations, such as Jeff Wayne's *'War of the Worlds'*, films such as *'Fantasia'* and its follow-up *'Fantasia 2000'*, *'Allegro Non Troppo'* and others. I also wanted to try something we had done at one of the Glasgow Albacons, where a silent movie was shown with live musical accompaniment. (I also agreed to be more merciful with the performer this time, as at Albacon we asked the pianist to play without knowing the film in advance!)
- The final goal was to build some musical elements throughout the programme to establish it as a 'red thread' through the con. That could mean events linked to the Guests and also led to the idea of including the classic musical cartoons *'What's Opera Doc'* and *'Rabbit of Seville'* at the Opening and Closing ceremonies.

So we now had the building blocks of a very solid music programme.



## SOUVENIR BOOK



### *Affrettando capriccioso*

*(Pressing onward, uncertainly)*

At the 2008 Eastercon, *Orbital*, I ran a panel about the initial music programme ideas. I was delighted by the attendance, interest and enthusiasm shown. A few people gave me their names which I later passed to the programme sub-committee as possible participants. After *Orbital*, the list of panel topics didn't change significantly and the focus shifted to participation and also how to develop and organise the large live performances.

The rest of 2008 and early 2009 focussed on turning the ideas into reality.

The panel items were relatively straightforward to organise, as the programme team could manage them like any other stream of ideas, proposing panellists from the attendee list. There were a couple of iterations of names, depending on people's preferences, and a few tweaks to the panel titles and descriptions, but the final list that went into the Read-Me was pretty close to the original set of ideas.

The main challenge for me was to settle on which of the large events could be done, and to find musicians who were willing and able to perform them, within the con's logistical and financial constraints. This proved to be the biggest and most difficult part of running LX's music stream.

By this stage we had settled on three large events with live music:

- A Friday evening silent SF film show, accompanied by live piano.
- A major Saturday night concert, which would comprise a programme of orchestral music linked to SF&F themes in any of three ways: classical works inspired by fantasy and mythology; music composed for SF&F films and TV shows; and classical works which had been 're-purposed' by SF&F film-makers.
- A fun item on the Sunday, suggested by James, which started as simply an event with lots of big bangs in the style of the great con favourite Dr. John Salthouse, (who had sadly recently died), and to which we added ideas and visuals from 'V for Vendetta', in honour of LX GoH David Lloyd, who had illustrated the graphic novel.

Bradford has a strong musical tradition: among other things it was the birthplace of the composer Delius. Bradford University has a Fellow in Music, Mark Robinson, based at the Tasmin Little Music Centre. I contacted Mark and various other local music organisations to see if they could connect me with local performers. Unfortunately communication was slow due to my generally busy schedule and largely only having email contact during the day, UK-time. It wasn't until well into 2009 that I was finally able to talk to Mark, who was extremely supportive and immediately connected me with Adam Robinson (no relation), a noted local violinist and orchestra leader, and Jonathan Brigg a local composer and pianist. Both were willing and able to help.

We also had some good fortune in having Mark Slater running the film programme, as he was keen to join forces with the music stream, including supplying the silent movies for the Friday event. James had arranged that soundtrack composer Gary Lloyd and composer and Senior Lecturer in Composition at London College of Music, Martin Keir Glover would be attending the con and could be part of the music programme. Gary happily took part in the panel type programming and Martin started working with Mark on preparing two live performances – both premières of music he composed - one of which would also be part of the Friday night film event along with Jonathan. The now combined programme of the Friday event was titled 'LX Cinema Phantasmagoria'. Jonathan would compose music for and accompany two shorter films: Georges Méliès' 1904 film '*The Impossible Voyage*', which was based on the Jules Verne play, and Edison Company's 1910 film of '*Frankenstein*' which was written and directed by J. Searle Dawley and was the first motion picture adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel. Completing the programme was the 1920 horror film '*Der Golem*', written and directed by Paul Wegener and Henrik Galeen and featuring a brand new score, composed and performed by Martin. Mark also prepared a wonderful programme booklet for the evening.

Adam arranged, via his parents who also manage orchestras, that the National Festival Orchestra would perform the concert. The NFO is based in the North of England with members drawn from all over the UK, and regularly plays to sell-out audiences at the best UK concert venues and has built a national reputation through television broadcasts, BBC Radio and is the resident orchestra for the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Buxton. Adam would organise the music and conduct on the night. The leader of the orchestra and first violin would be Nia Beven, who is a respected international performer. I was amazed and more than a little humbled by the level of talent being assembled for the event.



## SOUVENIR BOOK



Adam and I brainstormed the programme for the concert. He understood what I was trying to do and took my initial ideas and suggestions and came back with a very well thought out programme, which covered all three types of work I wanted. I was especially pleased he was able to include Beethoven's *Pastorale*, one of my favourite symphonies. He was also able to work within the constraint of minimising the total number of instruments, as each piece of music needed different sets of instruments, so that the orchestra would fit in the programme hall. I decided to title the concert 'Symphonic Fantasy'.

However, the concert was proving to be very hard to organise logistically, as the BSFA Awards were scheduled to start at 6pm, the now traditional Doctor Who Special was expected to be shown sometime at the weekend, probably on Saturday evening, but the BBC wouldn't announce the times till about a week beforehand, and we needed to provide rehearsal and setup time and space for the orchestra, plus catering and changing facilities. There was a risk the three events would end up clashing badly. Fortunately everyone, including the BBC planners (although they didn't know it), worked together to make it work – a place was arranged in one of the overflow hotels where the orchestra could rehearse during the day. At the beginning of April, the BBC announced that Doctor Who would start at 6:45pm for an hour, which allowed time for the awards beforehand and for the orchestra to start at 8pm, so we would be in good shape as long as the performers could set up, have food and get changed in time.

That left the Sunday '*Blow Things Up*' event to arrange. Unfortunately it always drew the short straw in terms of my available time, despite James' best efforts to arrange the right people and resources. I had prepared a script and some fun stuff planned but I was really worried whether I'd be able to pull it off on the day.

### ***Crescendo Maestoso al fine***

*(Growing majestically to the end)*

The last days before the con passed quickly as there was a lot to prepare. Fortunately I was able to arrive a couple of days early, to help set up, and work with the committee. I was also able to meet Adam and Jonathan pre-con, which was very useful, and to work with Mark Meenan who was responsible for the function space, staging and audio-visual tech – a particularly hard job with the many different events taking place in the same spaces during the con, and which he handled very well.

As planned, the Friday Opening Ceremony, began with '*What's Opera Doc*', one of the best cartoons ever made, and which obviously thrilled the fannish audience. The LX co-chairs then came on stage looking like Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd, which was very funny.

I then ran a short introductory session to the music stream, along with Valerie Housden, who also ran the Filk concert later in the weekend.

On Friday evening, ***Cinema Phantasmagoria*** sounded and looked great, and both Jonathan and Martin performed their compositions well, and to very appreciative audiences. I thought the music they wrote fit the films very well and I was glad we had decided to take that approach rather than the unplanned version done at Albacon. The fan-built frame for Jonathan's electric piano in the shape of a grand piano also looked good!

Organising Saturday's concert, ***Symphonic Fantasy***, on the day proved to need military levels of organisation, but worked out better than I could have hoped. I turned up to the hotel where the orchestra were rehearsing during the afternoon. The bemused hotel receptionist directed me to follow the sound of the music, and I had the unforgettable experience of being able to listen to *The Pastorale* being played for me alone as I waited outside.



The 10th British National Science Fiction Convention

# EASTERCON

## SYMPHONIC FANTASY - The Live Concert

SATURDAY 11<sup>th</sup> April at 20:00 in the Cedar Hall

On Saturday evening, the National Festival Orchestra will perform a programme of classical works inspired by fantasy and mythology, music composed for SFNF films and TV shows and classical works which have been famously used by film-makers. The concert will be compiled by Vincent Docherty, LX's music programme lead.

Programme

20:00 Opening – Welcome by James Bacon, LX Co-Chair

**The Blue Danube** by Johann Strauss II

**Luke and Leia's Theme** (The Return of the Jedi) by John Williams, arranged specially for the concert by Paul Robinson

**Danse Macabre** by Camille Saint-Saëns

**Siegfried Idyll** by Richard Wagner

**"Star Trek – Through the Years"** by Alexander Courage, Jerry Goldsmith, James Horner et al, arranged by Calvin Custer

**The Thieving Magpie** by Gioacchino Rossini

Interval

**Symphony No 6 (The Pastorale)** by Ludwig van Beethoven

1. Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arrival in the country: (Allegro ma non troppo)
2. Scene at the brook: (Andante molto mosso)
3. Happy gathering of country folk: (Allegro)
4. Thunderstorm: (Allegro)
5. Shepherds' song: (Allegretto)

22:00 Close

Please: Phones off/silent. No flash photography. No recording



## SOUVENIR BOOK



In the evening, everything fell into place – the BSFA awards (with drums and harp set up behind them!) happened on time, many fans enjoyed Doctor Who, and in the meantime we got the orchestra into the hotel, and taken to dinner, with ample time left to get ready for the concert, which also started on time.

Both James and I had dressed up for the occasion and he opened the event and I compèred, providing short introductions for each piece of music. The orchestra played very well and it was great to watch the hundreds of fans in the room enjoying the experience so much. The orchestra were positioned at ground level, so the people watching were unusually close – a point a couple of fans afterwards said had added to their enjoyment. I really enjoyed myself as well, and thought the performance was of a particularly high quality – I particularly enjoyed *Danse Macabre*, the Star Trek medley and of course the *Pastorale*. At the end we thanked Adam, Nia and the orchestra with a standing ovation, flowers and, it being an SF convention, steampunked batons for Adam.



Adam wrote to me after the con about how he and the orchestra experienced the event

*When I was approached by Vincent to organise the music for the Science Fiction Convention, I was extremely excited as to the possibilities of music from the genre. I immediately thought of all the John Williams and Howard Shore soundtracks and how we could arrange them. As we had a short time frame to organise the music, and also the fact that we had to limit the size of the National Festival Orchestra to 37 players due to the size of the hall, it became clear that many full symphonic sound tracks were just not going to be possible. We then started to think about the use of classical music in the genre and things quickly began to fall into place. The Blue Danube from Kubrick's 2001 Space Odyssey was an obvious piece to choose and I also knew of a great arrangement of the Star Trek themes. Vincent was very keen to include some Williams so I asked my father (a composer) to arrange the Luke and Leia theme from "Return of the Jedi" especially for the evening, which is a stunning ballad type piece and was a favourite of mine. Vincent had also suggested playing some of Beethoven's 6th symphony from "Fantasia". This seemed to balance the programme perfectly.*

*The next stage was to hire the music in and prepare for rehearsals. One logistical problem was the fact we couldn't rehearse in the venue before the concert as there was the screening of the live 'Dr. Who'. We resolved this by rehearsing a mile down the M602 in another hotel, to finish promptly at 6pm and dash up for a very quick set up before the concert!*

*The concert went very well and I was thrilled how well the orchestra managed to adjust to the different surroundings and acoustics. The orchestra all commented on how well they were looked after by the team at the convention, and how it was such an appreciative audience to play for...even clapping between the movements!*

*I look forward to performing again for the convention and hope everybody enjoyed the concert as much as we did!*

The fans who experienced the concert agreed as well. For instance:

*Jim Burns wrote: Just to say - a great con...but particularly enhanced by the concert which was without doubt my personal highlight! Do you reckon it could become a regular feature?*

*Paul Cornell wrote: ...the highlight of the convention for me, the National Festival Orchestra occupied the main hall, performing SF themes (a wonderful original Star Trek, complete with bongos) and related pieces (like 'The Blue Danube'). A real coup, something people will be talking about for years to come: James Bacon should be very proud.*



## SOUVENIR BOOK



That left 'Blow Things Up' on the Sunday to arrange. Over the weekend we had arranged for people to assemble a model Big Ben, which was to be demolished, plus a working Lego train set was being brought, and at the last minute we found a volunteer, Adrian, who could do some 'kitchen sink' explosions in the hall using basic ingredients. In the hour before the event we had many people working on preparing the various elements, which miraculously came together more or less on time, even despite a last-minute Lego train disaster! Everyone in the hall was provided with a paper V mask and the GUFF delegate Trevor Clark played 'V' on stage. Somehow we managed to deliver a short, but loud and spectacular homage to 'V for Vendetta', with explosions that fizzled rather than banged (he did say that V got better at it later!) and with a clever few seconds of close-up film of the Lego train going into the tunnel. We finished on a high with the 1812 overture, the demolition (by me) of Big Ben which was positioned on James Bacon's head and everyone throwing their masks in the air. It was great anarchic fun, made funnier by the little boy at the end who shouted 'is that it then...!'

All the music panels took place over the weekend as planned and feedback was very positive.

For example, Tanya Brown wrote: *Someone in the bar at Eastercon on Sunday stopped to tell me how impressed he was with the music stream -- "not the entry-level stuff I was expecting". Snap! I confess I was often out of my depth, and I loved it: loved the fact I could be at a science fiction convention learning about diageitic and non-diageitic music, the science behind the 12-tone system, and how ring modulators changed the world. Probably the highlight for me was sitting in the bar with composer Gary Lloyd after we'd been on a programme item together, listening on his iPod to music he'd written and performed with Iain M. Banks, and tying in what I was hearing with what Mr Lloyd's said in the panel. I felt more connection with the music than I feel at most live performances. The whole experience -- as participant and audience -- has really got me thinking about the ways that music's changing. It's becoming democratised: it's easier than ever to engage with, listen to, learn about, create, perform and transform music. Where is this democratisation in fiction? Does it exist, or is the real world actually ahead of the sfnal imagination for once?*

I was also pleased to see a number of musical items on the programme which had been independently created, including a hands-on session where you could 'Make your own music' by building your own instrument from junk, the 'Rock Band: Battle of the Bands' where fans formed a band and rocked-out, a 'Dr Horrible Sing Along' and of course Martin Glover's other composition 'The Throne Of The Black God - A Musical Voyage' in Mark Slater's film programme.

At the Closing Ceremony on the Monday, by way of symmetry, we showed 'Rabbit of Seville' which was also a big hit with the fans.

I felt very satisfied after LX that we'd achieved the original goal of showing that a music stream at an SF con could be strong and successful. It was hard work, especially the live events, but we learned how to do some new things which hopefully other cons can build upon, most obvious being the large concert. We also generated ideas which we couldn't do for reasons of time, practicality or budget, such as practical musical sessions in children's programme, using recorded music and video for panels and the large events, and a number of specific panel topics I'd be happy to propose to other cons.

I'd like to close by thanking again everyone: committee, volunteers, participants and performers, and others who helped -- you made the music stream a great success. I really appreciate it and I'll always remember it.

### Coda

*(Closing section appended to a movement)*

In a nice example of serendipity, shortly after LX, 'Song of Time' by Ian R. MacLeod won the 2009 Arthur C. Clarke Award. The novel concerns an aging musician in the near future. Chair of the award judges, Paul Billinger, said: *"the novel is infused throughout with the love of music and contains some of the most evocative writing on the subject for many years"*. I hope we see more examples of music in SF&F stories in future, and of course more music integrated into convention programmes.

There are many clips of the concert online, such as on YouTube, and you can find them by searching for Worldcon Philharmonic.

There was a lot of appreciation from fans. I even got 15 Hugo nominations the following year, which I wasn't expecting at all. Not enough to get on the ballot, but sufficient for the long list.

It worked. Bradford, London, and now James said, 'Let's do it again in Dublin!' And so we did. We added in new pieces, we had the opera and a stage performance, as well as a soloist, Eimear McGeown. Bettina Capri arranged and choreographed dancing. It was all brilliant.

While I have not done active music for a long time myself, I still go to concerts and have so many friends who are musicians. I have remained friends with both Gary and Adam, as often happens in conrunning, and we meet when we can. Adam now lives in Glasgow, and Gary has invited me to his home recording studio to record my speaking voice (he's interested in distinctive speaking voices). Maybe we'll do some recordings, and maybe we'll maybe do a little bit of singing. Just for fun.

At some stage, I may actually do an edition of *Journey Planet* just on the music. Meanwhile, as Division Head of events for Glasgow 2024, I have some ideas for what comes next.

Doing these big concerts has been a lot of fun and a lot of hard work. Hard work is the only way such an event could be managed, and in terms of the budget, it was a large undertaking for an Eastercon. As part of a Worldcon budget, it's eminently manageable. Conventions allow you the chance to share this love and passion with other people.

The 60th British National Science Fiction Convention  
**EASTERCON**



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### ***Interval***

**Symphony No 6 (The Pastorale)** by *Ludwig van Beethoven*

1. Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arrival in the country: (Allegro ma non troppo)
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4. Thunderstorm: (Allegro)
5. Shepherds' song: (Allegretto)

**22:00 Close**

**Please: Phones off/silent, No flash photography, No recording**



# **WORLD CON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

**FRIDAY 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014 at 20:00 in the ICC Auditorium**

**Conductor: Keith Slade**

**Soprano: Sarah Fox**

**Featured Composer: Gary Lloyd**

**Host: Vincent Docherty**

**Producer: Adam Robinson**

## **Programme**

John Williams	<i>Superman March</i>
Joseph Haydn	<i>The Representation of Chaos from The Creation</i>
Ron Grainer & Murray Gold	<i>Doctor Who: Main Title (arr. Robin McEwan)</i>
Antonín Dvořák	<i>Song to the Moon from Rusalka</i>
Martin O'Donnell & Michael Salvatori	<i>Halo: Main Theme (arr. Ralph Ford)</i>
Yoko Shimomura	<i>Kingdom Hearts (arr. Ralph Ford)</i>
Tan Dun	<i>The Eternal Vow from Crouching Tiger Concerto</i>
Gustav Holst	<i>Mars &amp; Jupiter from The Planets Suite</i>

**Interval (20 mins)**

Courage, McCarthy, Chattaway, & Goldsmith	<i>Star Trek Through the Years (Arr. Calvin Custer)</i> <i>Original Theme, DS9, Inner Light, Generations, Voyager, Motion Picture</i>
Charles Ives	<i>The Unanswered Question</i>
Igor Stravinsky	<i>Berceuse &amp; Finale from The Firebird Suite</i>
Gary Lloyd	<i>The Bridge Redux (In memoriam Iain Banks)</i>
John Williams	<i>Star Wars Suite</i>

*Main Title, Princess Leia's Theme, The Imperial March (Darth Vader's Theme), Yoda's Theme, Throne Room & End Title*

In tonight's concert, members of the *London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra*, and the *Britten Sinfonia*, will perform works related to science fiction and fantasy. These include pieces that demonstrate different forms of music of the fantastic, or have – in the past – been considered '*the sound of the future*', in addition to familiar works written to enhance the viewing experience and storytelling in films, television and games.

**Please: Phones off/silent, No flash photography, No recording**



## WORLDCON PHILHARMONIC — DUBLIN

FRIDAY 16th August 2019 at 20:00 in the CCD Auditorium

Conductor: **Keith Slade**  
 Producer and Contractor: **Adam Robinson**  
 Leader: **James Pattinson**  
 Traditional Flute Soloist: **Eimear McGeown**  
 Mezzo-Soprano Soloist: **Naomi Rogers**  
 Featured Composer: **Gary Lloyd**  
 Host: **Vincent Docherty**

### Programme

Ramin Djawadi	<b>Main Title Theme &amp; Mhysa</b> from <i>Game of Thrones</i>
Howard Shore	<b>The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King Suite</b> (Arr. Victor López)
Tracy M Bush	<b>World of Warcraft: Seasons of War</b> (Arr. Andrew Skeet)
Eimear McGeown	<b>Inis, Mushroom Tree/Kid on the Mountain</b> from her album "Inis"
Modest Mussorgsky	<b>Night on Bald Mountain</b> (Arr. Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov)
John Williams	<b>Princess Leia's Theme</b> from <i>Star Wars: Ep. IV - A New Hope</i> <b>Jedi Steps &amp; Finale</b> from <i>Star Wars: Ep. VII - The Force Awakens</i>
INTERVAL	
Gary Lloyd	<b>Dotter of Her Father's Eyes</b> <b>The Dispute Of Lucia &amp; James / Young Mary Seeks</b> <b>Attention / The Death Of Lucia</b> Libretto by Mary Talbot. Three extracts from a new opera, with dance choreographed by Bettina Carpi, based on the graphic novel by Mary Talbot & Bryan Talbot.
Claude Debussy	<b>Claire de Lune</b> (Arr. Peter Dawson)
George Frideric Handel	<b>Messiah - How beautiful are thy feet</b> (Soloist Naomi Rogers)
Traditional	<b>Danny Boy</b> (Arr. Chris Hazel)
Seán Ó Riada	<b>Mise Éire</b> ('I am Ireland') Movements 1 and 5
John Williams	<b>Flying Theme</b> from <i>ET the Extraterrestrial</i>
Alexander Courage, Dennis McCarthy, Jay Chattaway, & Jerry Goldsmith	<b>Star Trek Through the Years</b> (Arr. Calvin Custer) Original Theme, DS9, The Inner Light, Generations, Voyager, Motion Picture
John Williams	<b>Throne Room &amp; End Title</b> from <i>Star Wars: Ep. IV - A New Hope</i>

In tonight's concert, musical works will be performed with strong links to the myths, legends, people and landscape of the Island of Ireland, and other pieces of interest to the Worldcon community.

**Please: Phones off/silent, No flash photography**

## Adam, Gary and Iain

Iain Banks was a Scottish writer who was one of the Guests of Honour of Loncon and who sadly died of cancer a year before the convention, very unexpectedly. He was only 60 and quite youthful. Adam Robinson was the musician, the one who we found at the LX Eastercon. Gary Lloyd, who came in as a music guest for LX, was actually someone that James already knew. He lives near Chester in England and is a professional musician and composer.

We won the Worldcon bid in 2012. The convention was in 2014. Iain Banks announced he had cancer halfway through, and he died quite quickly. After he died, Gary suggested that we do a piece in honour of Iain at the concert, called 'The Bridge', named after where he lived in Scotland, the bridges across the Water of Leith in Edinburgh. Iain grew up with them and they are featured in his work. One of his books is actually called *The Bridge* (1986). Gary's piece for the concert was quite unusual and emotional, accompanied by Wes van de Plas' visuals.

We have a recording of it on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUE7Zxqpo4g>). It is in three short pieces with visuals that go with it.

All the other pieces performed in the concert were well known. They were either classical pieces which had a science fiction or fantasy element already, or they were from famous films or TV shows. We had a Theremin, an electronic instrument. We had one soloist, an opera singer who sang Dvořák's 'Song to the Moon'. That all went really well. When we were working with Adam on the actual programme, we had to consider this: you can play anything, but you can't play everything. Because each piece requires a certain combination of instruments and a single rehearsal and a single show. Therefore, you can't have a situation that requires 200 people in order to play all the pieces that you want. There's a process by which you come up with a programme, and this is where Adam is so helpful. He helped us determine what we could do with what we had: 'We need x number of violins and y number of oboes, and a piano and a harp, etc.

We ended up with about 20 different pieces on the program. We had to make choices to ensure the same orchestra could play them all. For the big obvious ones, like John Williams' scores *Superman* and *Star Wars*, we used a standard classical orchestra with lots of brass, because it's loud. When it came to selecting pieces from games or from the classical period, Adam knew the makeup of the orchestra and could present us with choices.

But Gary's piece 'The Bridge' was completely new. First of all, coming up with something completely original meant that the orchestra only was able to rehearse it once before its premiere at the concert. So no pressure. Secondly, it was about somebody who had died and who was a hugely popular figure, so we had to get it right. Adam and the conductor Keith worked with Gary beforehand to help with the final arrangement. The rehearsal went well, and at the concert it was performed perfectly. In particular, the last 30 seconds of the third piece goes free-format, in which the orchestra and the audience are allowed to participate. The emotion in the room was palpable. There was a standing ovation and Gary said a few words. It was a great moment.



# Conrunning and Mentoring

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## Fandom and conrunners

Think about how fandom evolved: it's a community, an affinity group, it's a hobby, it's voluntary, it's participatory, it's both anarchic and organised, and people get very invested in it.

Hierarchies form; there are people who are in and out. There are famous stories about this. Even from the very early days, in 1939 at the very first Worldcon, was what's called the Exclusion Act, which has grown into a legend. We often forget that many of the people running the 1939 Worldcon were teenagers or in their early 20s, with the behaviour patterns that go with that: enthusiasm, energy, a bit uncontrolled, strong emotions that can spill over, 'my friends versus their friends'. Many current conrunners started at a similar age.

If you look at how science fiction conventions developed organizationally, they continued for decades as a geographically connected group of friends, certainly in the US and the UK. We are now so used to being able to do things virtually, we've forgotten that for the most part, those early groups were people who are meeting regularly anyway. We shouldn't underestimate the importance of the local group.

Structurally speaking, running a small event by a group of people who are friends or acquaintances in real life, and who are physically close together, is not that complicated.

From the 30s up until the 70s, most conventions were manageable in size, even Eastercon and Worldcon. Few had more than 1,000 people and they usually just had a single track of programming, maybe a dealer's room (where the dealers came in and sorted themselves out), and maybe an art show, which was done similarly. By our modern standards, this was all very rudimentary in terms of organisation, but it worked.

The organisers were still largely the people who were either writers themselves or fans, or both. Conventions built on to that and, organizationally, were relatively simple. When they began to grow, and the nature of how people wanted to contribute changed, these cons began to hit the thing that all organisations, projects, and events eventually encounter: they get more complex. It doesn't scale in a linear fashion. You can keep running it the same way. For example, the 1979 Worldcon in Brighton was chaired by Peter Weston. It was organised, for the most part, like a British Eastercon, just a bit bigger. One person chaired a committee, and that was it. Everybody else was just helping on the day. No big teams or divisions as we think about them now. The programme and the events they had looked really good, and were well spoken of, but they were relatively simple. They had 3,114 members.

Fast forward eight years to the 1987 Worldcon, to that time when Worldcons changed expectations. In 1984 at LACon they'd had 8,300 members and it wasn't until a few years ago that we exceeded that. For 30 years that remained the biggest Worldcon ever. Funnily enough, that year in '84 was also the biggest Eastercon ever in Brighton.

## Fandom growth

Fandom has grown for a combination of reasons. There are economic factors such as the baby boomers, who are relatively affluent. The 1960s gave us *Star Trek*, which generated a large and influential fandom. The moon landings, the great optimism of the 60s and the technological expansion all added to the interest and excitement. In the late 1970s, *Star Wars* inspired a wave of genre films and TV, both further expanding fandom. Board gaming was also huge. The conventions became larger and larger, and eventually *Star Trek* fans started creating their own events, which spun off from and learnt from the existing conventions like Worldcon.

The demographics of early science fiction conventions up until then were mostly male. *Star Trek* conventions were at the other end of the scale. When the two came together, what you then had was an influx of people with different backgrounds, different genders, with experience of running these events, and a demand for them that was growing. These conventions grew to fill the demand.

## Growth of same place conventions

In the science fiction and fantasy fan domain, events that stayed in the same place grew. In some cases, they grew out of control because of the social aspects. For instance, Boskone began in 1941 and ran until Boskone V in 1945; it returned in 1965 and is still run by Boston fans. In the 1980s it grew to the point where it was so big that it was called the 'Winter Worldcon' and in 1985 and 1987 was bigger than the Worldcon itself. Boskone 1987 had 4,200 attendees.

It collapsed, basically. It grew beyond the capacity of the volunteers who ran it. They made the choice to pull it back and restructure: they moved out of Boston, they brought it back to 1,000 people and they shifted the focus on films and tv.

Eventually Boskone returned to Boston. It still runs, I still go most years. It's a very nice convention, very similar to the British Eastercon, very program-focused, has good content and a large art show, about 1,200-1,500 fans – eminently manageable and pretty stable.

The Minneapolis Convention, MiniCon, had a similar experience in the nineties. It grew and it grew and it grew to 3,000 fans and four hotels. Can you imagine? And boom, exhaustion. That was too much.

Both cities have had other conventions start up, and continue successfully, providing for fans. These are often conventions run by those same people who came to fandom in the 60s, 70s, or 80s.

DragonCon in Atlanta is interesting. I know many fans and writers that go there and enjoy the science fiction elements of it. It's also a large popular culture and cosplay event. DragonCon started and then it grew, to the point they had over 85,000 attendees in 2019. It calls itself a voluntary event, but they also have a full-time paid administration. It takes over Atlanta on Labor Day weekend in September. Traditionally, this weekend was the Worldcon weekend. This caused other tensions. As DragonCon is in the same place every year, it has continuously grown, creating what is essentially a permanent organisation.

If you're just running your local convention every year, but it's relatively small, you don't need to worry about structure so much. If you're running a Worldcon, it's a new committee and location every year. If it's the other travelling conventions like World Fantasy, World Horror, and Stokercon, all of them need new teams and new venues. For Eastercon, there is a new committee every year, and they move around.

## New committee – how do you structure that?

Conrunning has developed. How can you help people create a committee and a structure that will work for an event that's a one-off, even though it's part of a series? This is where we need to be open to learning from experience.

To be honest, we're not great at learning. I ask fans 'Why is this Worldcon repeating the same mistakes we thought were solved a long time ago?' One of the things that I've been trying to do is getting fans to look at how they learn from each other. How do they get that continuity? How do they coach each other?

And then even more difficult things. Over the last 12 years or so, I have been involved behind the scenes in at least four or five cases, where, shall we say politely, a change of leadership was needed.

With small events, somebody can say, 'Oh, I would just love to run it this time, I will step into a leadership role,' and to be honest, that's okay. If it's a small event, you've got your group of friends. They know your strengths and weaknesses. You're all just learning at the same time, and hopefully, you'll learn from your mistakes.

If you're running a repeating convention in the same place every year, you tend to build structure over time. Quite often one person will end up leading it for a long time, creating an organisation around themselves. That works for them. Of course, eventually, you get the 'dictator problem'. Not just the conventions, but in the real world too. If somebody is in a role for 10 years or more, the structure becomes shaped around the individual. It seems to be a sort of natural law for human beings. If somebody is in charge for too long, they begin to create a bubble around themselves. That's when problems begin. Even if they're a benevolent dictator, they're still a dictator. The structure is just serving them and becoming a cult of the individual.

Then you've got the other cons, the travelling ones, where there is a 'usual' way of doing things.

People might step in and say: 'OK, our local group would like to run the Worldcon'. Unfortunately, they don't know what they don't know. Sometimes they'll say they want to be the chair, but not everyone is suited to do that role.

It's a combination of knowing how things work, but also being able to lead an organisation and do it right. Unfortunately, it has reached the stage where people will do it because they're ambitious, not because they have the skills. One could argue that it shouldn't be like that. It should be smaller again, or less complicated, and then it wouldn't matter so much. The reality is, I think the world has changed anyway, and the expectations are different.

For most of the 20th century, the conventions often opted for venues at the cheapest end of the market. Since the 80s many hotels have become part of chains and prices have gone up. In order to make this work, you need to understand contract management, health and safety, catering & hotel room minimum numbers. In the US it's called attrition; if you get the contractual commitments wrong, if you forecast wrong, you'll lose a lot of money. Having people with good negotiation skills is therefore vital. We have a few very strong ones, and we can see their success.

The content is more complex. The key is to remember that you're running one convention, you're not running a department store. Department stores contain different sections that are effectively run by individual companies – Dior and Chanel in the perfume section, for example. The department store provides the building, the layout, and the common sales place for these companies. It's tempting to think of conrunning the same way. People think that you can have the dealer's room or art show or program run independently from everything else. But the reality is, it doesn't work like that. You're running one convention and attendees are experiencing one convention; the team needs to be working together. When you start creating layers of management, you need to be clear what you're doing and why you're doing it.

It's not unlike big, commercial organisations. On the front lines, you have the workers, each doing one task, more or less. Then you have a team of leaders to manage those workers, generally people who do a similar task. The layer above that, the general manager, similar to department heads in big commercial organisations. Department heads have groups of team leaders, but still, essentially, in related disciplines. The layer above that in a commercial organisation is VP, executive VP, or senior VP. Worldcons have division heads.

Division Heads manage lots of department heads and team leaders. But the reality is, most of their job is actually working horizontally across the convention. They're collectively the leadership of the whole convention. Yes, they have a job title. Yes, they are running their vertical part. But as important or even more important is that they are also working across.

This lesson isn't well understood. People don't often appreciate that they can't run a con (of a certain size) like a group of friends. It's too big. You also can't run it just as a series of disconnected silos. People end up not working together, and the con becomes fragmented.

This is the key lesson I've learned in terms of structure. We see this in organisations of almost any size, like the company I work for which has 75,000 staff across the world, managing ten times that many contractors and subcontractors. It's quite a complex structure, but it still essentially operates the same way: you have your verticals, your silos, and then you have the horizontal connectors going across.

## **Growth of Worldcons and structure of organising team**

Let's take Worldcon as an example. Before 1967 Worldcon had fewer than 900 people. In 1967, NYcon 3 literally doubled the attendees to 1,500 people. 2,000 in 1972, then 3,587 by 1974 and over 4,000 in 1978.

During the 70s, the structure had to change in order to accommodate the growing number of fans. You're being asked to do a lot of different things all at the same time, and all of those pieces need to work together. The structure and organisation had to support that, because if it doesn't, it just falls over.

By 1987 the expectation of what was going to happen at Worldcon had changed. However, the organisers only had a small steering group running the frontline work (and sometimes doing it themselves). They didn't understand the need to have layers of structure underneath them, and the results speak for themselves. For many involved it was the last thing they ever did. Several marriages failed, and a lot of people in the UK fandom who had been sucked into this and earnestly helped make it work got burned out.

I came to conrunning after this point, and when I suggested that we should run another Worldcon, the first reaction was horror; they ran away.

The challenge for 1995 was to encourage people to come back. Naturally we didn't get them all, and because of that, there was a significant loss of institutional knowledge. A fatal flaw – it is key to have those who did it previously give more than input. They need to be involved, and we saw that done successfully in 1995, 2005, 2014 and 2019, and now in 2024.

In 1995, we did not have that. The leadership team including myself, Martin and our deputies, Margaret and Oliver, put a lot of effort into the organisation and people management. We rebuilt a lot of that knowledge, we learned from our mistakes, and we tried again. There was still some burnout, which is why it took another 10 years to run another one. The feedback for 2005 was good, and it felt better and easier to run. We applied what we learned to Loncon 2014 and Dublin 2019, which were still not perfect.

1995 was a pivotal moment in many ways. In the UK, the model that we have is the Eastercon, the biggest local convention. (Memorabilia fairs, comic cons, and media conventions are usually structured quite differently because they're often commercial.) The Eastercon model worked up to a certain size, after which you had to switch to the Worldcon model. Most of these took place in North America. But in the 1990's Worldcon was beginning to transition to being international more often.

This was also the point where email and the web became widely accessible. In Glasgow in 1995, Microsoft bought a booth to promote Windows '95. We were just beginning to learn how to effectively use that technology. We discovered that the committee didn't need to be all located in the same place. American conventions had 10 years of the division structure. So in '95, we created the division structure without really knowing how they worked. But we had the framework, which helped.

## Local strength & leaders

It's difficult to imagine someone trying to run something like a Worldcon from scratch. Occasionally, you'll get an email from the Tourist Board of some city somewhere or a resort saying, 'We've heard of this Worldcon. Can we invite you to come and run it here?' or 'Can we run it?' and you then have a difficult conversation.

Science fiction conventions are essentially community-based events. If you have generic organisational experience, you could probably run it, but you run the risk of losing that link to the community. People move around a lot more, so it's maybe a bit less important. Yet we have to ask ourselves, are we connecting with the local community, attracting new members, getting promotional material into local clubs, and shops and libraries? Many organisers start because a local element or interest brought them in, and they built up from there. There's an interaction between running the big conventions and running the smaller ones. We all do both.

James and I were co-chairs of the Smofcon in Lisbon in 2021. That was a very small convention and great fun. James is still involved in running Octocon and has helped them move to two new venues. He also helped with FunCon and was on the Titancon team, and he helped negotiate the 2014 Eurocon venue and now is the Co-Chair of a Belfast Eastercon. (Eastercons happened in England only until the first in Scotland in 1980, the 31st. There has never been an Eastercon in Wales, or in Northern Ireland, though it'll go there in 2025). He is connected. That's where you find people to run the bigger ones because they start with a smaller one.

All experience and skills are welcome, as is learning about the community and history as well as creating your own. Managing the expectations of fans is hard, and I think you need to have that grounding in those local long-running conventions to understand what is expected of you. When the leader of an established local convention attempts to run a Worldcon the same way they've been running the last 10 or 15 cons, they often encounter issues. The local con doesn't scale up. In several cases, it fails spectacularly.

We have seen a considerable number of people plan to be a Worldcon Chair and not see that through. We can look at the conventions that have had 'Leadership Change' between 2014 and 2022. In total, eight individuals who were Co-Chair of four Worldcons did not make it through to chair the actual convention. This is indicative in each case of something going astray. (It should be noted that in this period another Co-Chair sadly died before they saw their con occur).

The removal of a leader at a late stage creates a considerable workload and drama. It's better to get those decisions right from the start. Either way, it's never a pleasant process. The organisation is never as good as it was, even if you get a good person coming in. You're always in recovery mode, and you've lost the chance to take actions at the optimal times and in a certain sequence. You can't fix that. Project managers know that throwing more people with the same skill can't always fix the problem, and an

agile team would have the right people who complement each other. Certain things need to happen in a certain time period and you can't really compress them. They need to be in a certain order.

From a leadership point of view, you need to start building your team early. They need time to be able to learn to work with each other. Look at Peter Weston announcing in 1970 that he was going to run a Worldcon that decade, or James with his 'Home and Away' team of keen people already listed at Texas 2013. Starting early with pace works.

In the case of Worldcon, there are a few non-negotiables, like site selection and the Hugos. There are fixed dates that certain decisions need to be made, and you work back from there – even two years before the event – you soon realise that certain decisions should have already been made. It's hard to recover if you miss that moment.

When you've assembled your team, you need to assess their talents and structure accordingly. This is why it's hard to have a single manual for Worldcon. We can structure the roles and the tasks to fit the strengths of the people and to compensate for their weaknesses. This needs to happen early enough to build the structure around the team. An example is Facilitation, a Division for Dublin 2019 that James didn't want to manage. So instead he found a very strong manager in Esther MacCallum-Stewart, who he recruited in 2013 for Loncon, and who is now chair of Glasgow 2024 and has a 'Con Support' division.

Chairs also need to look in the mirror, turn off their ego, reflect on themselves, park their bias and ask, when was the last time they looked at their own weaknesses, or asked their team to tell them what they could do better. That is hard; the best chairs do it regularly.

## **Appreciating the Difference**

The science fiction conventions we have now tend to trace their origins back to when science fiction had a small number of writers, active fans, and professionals. This remained largely true until the 1950s and then gradually they began to open up. Still, the different groups and generations found ways to make things work, though there have also always been those who want to be gatekeepers.

Science fiction and fantasy, in the widest sense, are mass market. It is no longer a lonely thing to be a fan. It is lovely that many people come into the community and are active in fan activities, whether through fanzines or conventions. Fandom itself developed its own language and culture up until the 70s. When I entered fandom in 1978, it was very male-dominated. It still is to some extent, but it has changed a lot.

However, there are people who came in and who believe that fandom should adhere to that very narrow view, that very narrow definition. It saddens me that some of them are still acting like that. The world has moved on. I would not expect anyone coming in to necessarily have any particular knowledge of long-dead writers. Being a fan is about the things that you like, and for most people, that's a wide range of different things. The people who are active are from a wide range of backgrounds and origins, with a variety of cultural backgrounds.

For some, running Worldcon is a status badge. Worldcon is a hard thing; it takes a lot of time, it's at such a scale that you need to have certain skills to do it. It's not like conventions where you and a group of friends from your local club decide to run a convention and you go and run a convention.

Think about those who attend, for example. There's a group who always go to Worldcon if they can, 1,000 to 2,000 people. Many of those go back decades. Then there's always a group who don't go every time unless it's in their region. Then there are people who will just go because it's local, and they'll all bring their expectations and wishes and their local character as well. Eventually a group will say, 'Oh, it's our turn to run a Worldcon.' They don't think about who's actually best qualified to run such a big thing, and then it goes horribly wrong. Sometimes it's ego (and your friends haven't told you). Sometimes, sadly, it's run by people who may be competent on paper, but their attitudes come from the dinosaur era.

The sweet spot, where the majority of people engage with fandom now, has shifted over time for Worldcon and other volunteer-run literary-focused science fiction and fantasy conventions. If you went to the Worldcon, the Eastercon or the World Fantasy Con in 1975, it would have been very focused on literature. There would be very little to do with mass media. The fandom would be a big part of it, and by fandom, it would have meant fanzine fandom, the awards, and the heroes. Up until then, we'd have been very focused on just those things.

Initially, the Hugos had written categories, one Dramatic Presentation category, editor, art, and lots of fan categories. The Worldcon of today still has all those things, but we're up to 20 categories, with non-

fiction, editors, artists, semi-prozine, graphic story, in addition to the fan categories and new digital fan work, like blogging. Worldcon's scope has widened. It's still primarily focused on the literary element but with a stronger element of film and TV, games, etc. (We just made games as a new category last year.)

By comparison DragonCon has a strong focus on costuming and cosplay, although you do get a lot of costuming at Worldcons. Comic Con is dominated by media. But with the literary element, you still get writers going and meeting people and signing sessions and socialising. Ultimately this is about a group of fans getting together to share and enjoy the things that they enjoy.

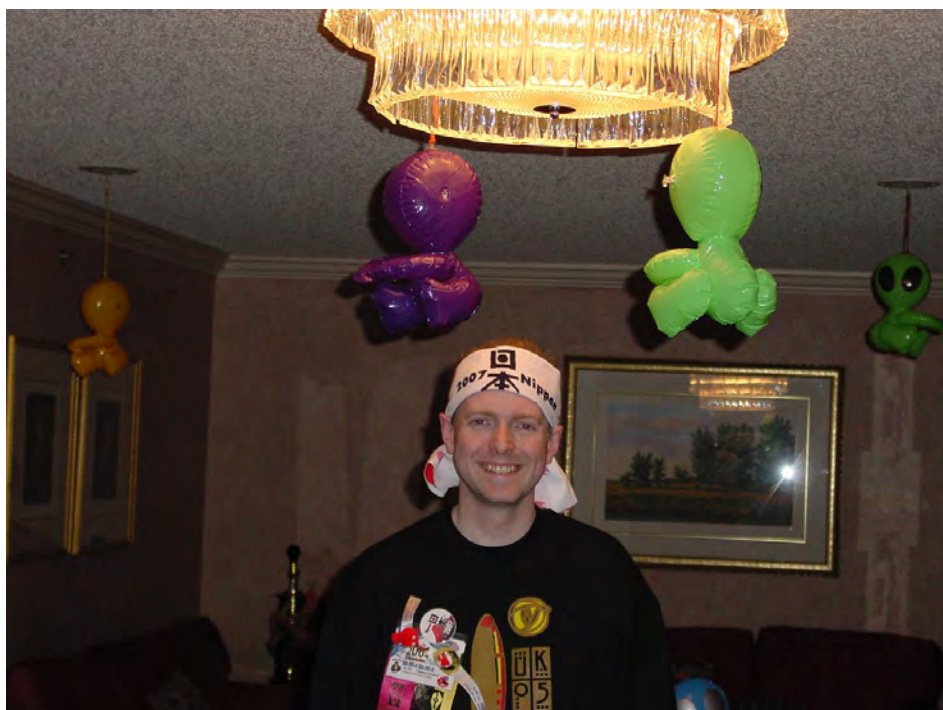
## The Future

I don't think Worldcon will morph into a comic con. I think it would be more likely to just stop because nobody wants to run it any more. Conventions which stay in one city and are allowed to grow exponentially, will eventually either hit a wall or require a significant change to the underlying all-volunteer approach, as we have seen. Worldcon moves around and that constrains its size to some degree. There's no sign that Worldcon is slowing down. We have Worldcon bids out till 2031 and there's no sign of lack of interest. So long as we have people who are still willing and able to run such a big, complicated event as a volunteer organisation, then Worldcon will go on.

As an aside, it's interesting to see how literary festivals and literary aspects at comic cons have grown. YALC at London Film and Comic Con in its own space at the Olympia is not insignificant, and may now surpass Eastercon in membership, with a full focus on YA literary works. Similarly, at MCM London literary guests are now commonplace, and this will grow.

Clearly, there are progressive generational changes. We've seen that throughout the history of the genre and the conventions. But at the moment, there is a generational shift happening. In most countries, for a typical 18 or 20-year-old, there is a lot of access to science fiction, fantasy and horror. So why would they want to come to what they might perceive as an old, stodgy, boring gatekeeping convention? That shift is painful, and I think Worldcon is still going through that.

I would hope that for the majority of people in London, Helsinki or Chicago, Worldcon is a positive experience, more welcoming and not so opinionated about who should be and who shouldn't be there. That's exactly the opposite of what we're trying to do. We want and need to welcome, recruit, involve, delegate and share.



## Vincent Docherty by Shana Worthen

Vincent always seems like a swan: certain and confident in all situations, from the sublime to the ridiculous. There must be feet metaphorically paddling away somewhere there, but they are not obvious – not in his delighted confidence when hosting an event he loves, and not in his thoughtful seriousness when helping to run a large meeting.

What brought home his supportive strength for others was a moment in a Worldcon art show. I ran into a conrunner looking for him there, a place where he is often found. They were looking for him because something had gone terribly wrong and they knew he would have the level-headedness, resourcefulness, and resilience to comfort them and to help find a way forward. He wasn't there, but we went looking. This was the moment which has long shaped my impression of who he is, a moment he wasn't even directly a part of.

Another was a workshop I went to in Brussels. He wasn't at that event either, but the facilitator's style was much like Vincent's, both people highly-trained and thought-provoking, and when I think back to that event, I am reminded of him.

I may not know him well, but he has shaped enough of the world around him that I encounter echoes of him in other places; or should I say, ripples, from the apparently smooth glide of the swan across the water.

## Vincent Docherty by Sara Felix

I am not really sure which con I worked on with Vincent first. Maybe Loncon? Until I started moving up the committee ladder I really wasn't aware of much outside my division.

But I do know I worked a lot with Vincent on Dublin 2019. Having created a Hugo base in the past I thought the amount of care the team put into creating the Hugo base for Dublin was really impressive. Heck there were special boxes and everything! In Kansas City my best idea for packaging was to use a pool noodle. Not everyone can deliver that level of polish. Every time I saw Vincent pull out the award from that box I knew we needed some sort of sound effect.

Also at Dublin I was on a panel called Designing genre award trophies that Vincent set up. His organised approach to moderating put me at ease and it was amazing to hear the amount of knowledge he had about the Hugos.

I am working with Vincent on Glasgow 2024 now. Vincent has a calm and practical approach to con running that I appreciate and really respect. When I was at Eastercon last year he began to talk about early ideas for Events which inspired me so much I wanted to quit my job as a DH and work on his team. James wouldn't let me. Hearing about his passion for bringing the orchestra to Worldcon is truly wonderful and I think it is one of the parts of worldcon that I love, seeing people bringing their interests to the attendees.

So yeah, I like Vincent. He has helped me many times in the past with his thoughts, historical information and guidance that I appreciate. I hope we can work together again in the future because he is the kind of conrunner that inspires me to want to create a better con.



## Mentoring

I was always interested in mentoring. When I became aware about what one can do and what is more likely to succeed than not, it came naturally.

To a large extent we didn't know what we were doing with the Glasgow conventions in the 80s. It was just youthful enthusiasm and energy – we learned by doing. Up to a certain level, that is a really good thing, and there's nothing wrong with that. Once I began work in a large corporate organisation where development, including mentorship and coaching, was actually a formal part of the company's approach, I realised why mentorship is important.

I'd come from a technical science background and my first roles in my professional life were more technical. But I very quickly began to see the importance of developing people's leadership and management skills. During the 1995 Worldcon, I became conscious that there are some people who are naturally talented and don't need much help. However, for most people, once you reach a certain level of organisational complexity, you need to give them a hand. But I got to thinking: how do you teach a manager to be a manager? How do you teach a leader to be a leader? How do you teach someone to be able to interact with and lead others? It was around then that the 'why' of running these conventions became clear to me: it was because I wanted to, because it's fun, and because I want to give something back.

My skill set is in organising. I'm good at it, especially after 1995 and 2005, when I had achieved these organisational successes of running Worldcons. 'The why' increasingly became to help others to achieve similar success and to avoid mistakes. Because when you get to something that's really big like this, if things go wrong, you need to avoid the damage that can be caused.

I really enjoy conventions, local ones where four or five friends do it, have a GoH and 100 or so people turn up. They cover their costs and everybody has a fun time. When fans run something similar every year, if one year something goes a little bit wrong and only 50 people turn up, you're all a bit sad. You'll maybe lose a tiny bit of money, each committee member loses €50 or something like that, the damage is not large. Even if the root cause of that wasn't external circumstances, but because somebody on the committee failed to do something, for instance.

When you get to the size of a Worldcon with a budget of more than a million pounds or euros or dollars, with reputational standing, when something goes really wrong, it's on Twitter, it's on Facebook, it's on blogs. You can get very nasty things happening. Personal reputations can be destroyed, and relationships can come to an end because of the amount of work that goes into it. That is a big part of 'the why' – trying to help people do things right, so that they don't suffer. This is rewarding for me and if I can help, if it is welcomed, it is fun.

You also need to be able to intervene because someone is suffering. There's someone who's there who's running things very badly, and you need to intervene, or someone is not taking care of themselves. They're spending all of their time on this, they're not sleeping, their life is being damaged, their relationships are being damaged... You need to be able to identify that and to intervene.

They are doing this, hopefully, because it's something that they enjoy doing. They are doing it for love and not money and that's how it should feel. Not that it should be brilliant every day, it's hard, there's a lot of hard work that needs to be done but it should never be damaging. It's just a positive thing to do, to engage and help.

The coaching and mentoring comes in several different types. An individual might just come to me and say, 'Can you give me some advice on this thing?' It's not necessarily someone saying it for a bad reason, it's just that they may have reached a point of realisation that they need a bit of help. That's one on one.

A more general invitation can be where a committee identifies that they're having a problem. They maybe don't want to tell the individual directly too much, or for political reasons. That person has a lot of power politically. That's where you could be invited in to maybe have a chat with a subgroup of people and help work through what this actually means. There have been numerous instances in the last 10 years where a change at the top was needed.

Then with skillset building, it's about running events, workshops, sessions. Teaching conrunning skills can take place. The focus is often on the mechanical, the technical or commercial or organisational elements of the event and not so much on the people. That's where, and that's why I've also tried to codify these in various workshops on leadership and leadership related topics, such as the chairs workshops at several Smofcons.

One thing though, I would never intervene myself without some sort of engagement or invitation. When I am engaged, and invited, I think, the results and fans who have benefited speak for themselves, and so that is why I really love to mentor.

## Leading and advising

Leading a con can be a challenge. It's all about making choices. How do I show up? What things do I focus on? What do I spend my time on? What do I delegate to others? What do I get other experienced people to do? Because then I know they will pick those up.

Advising is not as simple as watching others do it. There's a tendency for others to look at you as their fixer – you've got all this experience, and they expect you to go fix them. But you also need to be sensitive to the fact that somebody who's doing it for the first time will also perhaps be sensitive about their position. You certainly need to be in a place where you can reassure them that you're not there to take over, which can get sticky. The trick is to just be clear, especially early on: if you want me to help, if you want me to be an advisor, how do you want me to show up?

I have been a Chair's advisor for a number of different conventions and Worldcons. In the last 10 years, I was involved with several Worldcons where a change was needed at the top, which gets handled behind the scenes. That's difficult as well. Advising certainly stretches your abilities to work with others.

Many people grow in Worldcon experience, and some become division heads. But scaling up to the chairing job is a very different thing. In some situations, it's legitimate to say 'Well, actually, you should have taken that advice, because it would have worked'. But on the other hand, you have to allow people to make mistakes. Colin Harris, who co-chaired in 2005, has also advised a number of Worldcon chairs and has had similar experiences.

Mentoring or coaching – especially if you're mentoring someone who is in a people managing role – is not just telling them what to do. You have to give them options, things to think about, examples of what's been done before. Obviously, if someone's doing a specific job, like a newsletter, you can tell them: 'This is how you do that'. Running a Worldcon is like any kind of general management job. In advising this person, you would rarely say 'Don't do this' or 'Do that'. Instead, you ask them to think about the risks, try to find balance, and try to prevent anything from blowing up quite spectacularly and publicly.

I would also say that if you're chairing a Worldcon, you shouldn't be doing anything content-wise. You need to delegate. That's why you have division heads. Your general managers should be leading all of these things. If you get too much reported directly to you, it probably means that they're not getting enough oversight. They needed to have an active leader who wasn't one of the Co-chairs (and isn't married to one).



In almost all cases, convention organisers are working with positive intent. But there are always difficult choices and unintended consequences. Ultimately, somebody needs to make a call. Not making a decision is making a decision. It's important to learn and to get comfortable with making decisions with incomplete information. In most cases you'll probably be more right than wrong, or at least have the chance to redirect. Think about the underlying reason you're doing this - it's about sharing love of the genre. Everything else can be worked out.

# The Hugos

The Hugos have always been a signifier of quality. I grew up seeing 'Hugo Award Winner' or 'nominee' on book covers without knowing much about the background of the award. Like the Oscars, you just take 'award winner' for granted. As a teenager, when I began to buy books for myself, I used the Hugo or Nebula winner designation as a way to determine if the book was any good. For the most part, that's been my experience.

When I started running conventions, I still didn't really know much about the Hugos, or even that it was actually presented at Worldcon. The Hugos are the gift of the members of the Worldcon and not by a jury or committee. The Nebulas are the gift of the members of the Science Fiction Writers Association, so professionals. Of course, there are other awards: the Locus Awards, other juried awards, and Dragon Awards (which anyone can vote for, regardless of membership).

To vote for the Hugos, you have to be a member of the Worldcon. In a sense, it's already self-selecting. Historically, there's been a very high correlation between the lists of nominated books and writers, the Hugos, the Nebulas, and the Locus awards. There is commonality because a lot of the same people nominate. The professional writers who are members of SFWA can often be members of Worldcon as well. Traditionally, many editors and writers were heavily involved with Worldcon, and still are. We have had fabulous support from professionals.

The Hugos are still a very good signifier of either quality or appreciation for the effort somebody has made. They are a big thumbs up from a large constituency who care, and pay to make it happen. They are saying 'You're doing really well. Keep going.'

The other qualification should be for things that a large number of the attendees want to nominate. There are certain categories that we don't have, and some that are still a bit experimental. In some cases, we see the category die, or the definition of what it is changes. It remains to be seen how Game goes. We don't have a Hugo for best music, and I'd love to see the best Art or Illustrated Book category come back.

Having been the Hugo administrator and on the Hugo team, I want them to retain high integrity. I want the process by which we run them to be a good process and be reasonably representative of the views of the attendees.

There are always going to be people who are currently, shall we say, the favourites. Across the history of the Hugos, there are periods in which the same people are nominated or running every year. That's usually because of a combination of them being good and being popular with the nominating fandom.

Best Fanzine or Fan Writer largely shifted in the last decade or so to digital and online formats, rather than what fans might recognize as traditional fanzines. Some of them have gotten very upset about that, because, of course, the meaning of what that is in practice has shifted. There's no easy answer for that. I wouldn't claim that there is.

My experience running the Hugo ceremony in 1987 didn't include much exposure to the administrative process. It wasn't until '95 that I really learned how the Hugo Awards work on the administrative level. In those days, it was still largely paper. We would post the progress reports to the membership; then the Hugo ballots would be filled in by hand. These ballots were then posted to our US address or to our UK address.

Fans would take the forms, type the data into spreadsheets and do the calculations.

The number of people involved in nominating and voting was not large. We were talking about hundreds rather than thousands, so it wasn't such a big task. By the end of 1995, I knew the process well. Leading up to 2005, I learned how the business meeting worked, which is where the con rules are updated, including the rules for the Hugos. I began to dabble a little bit with process and protocol, but with a very light touch.

In the years after 2005, I started to be more actively involved. I was asked to be the Hugo administrator for the 2010 Worldcon in Melbourne, which was a big learning curve for me, as we were shifting over to online nominating, voting, and Hugo packets. I served as administrator again in 2011. Having been both administrator and on the Hugo subcommittee, I've learned not only the work that goes into it, but also how complicated it is. The Hugos are a sensitive subject for many people.

## The Sad Puppies

The Sad Puppy years, between 2013 and 2016 were challenging for the Hugos and for fandom. The Sad Puppies were a group of people, some fans and pros, many of them from outside the Worldcon community (particularly from right wing online groups), who decided to interfere with the Hugo process by block voting for their vision of what science fiction should be. Objectively, the works they voted for were outliers, many of them only becoming known because of this action. Many of the works were very poor and were not a natural selection for fans. This caused a battle, and regular fans rallied to support the Hugos.

By 2015, when the Worldcon was in Spokane and 'the Puppies' had managed to get a whole bunch of their candidates onto the ballot, fandom as a community responded. Malicious actions were taken, and police were involved. The Sad Puppies attempted to sully guests or put them at odds with law enforcement. I was particularly appalled by the way that David Gerrold, one of Spokane's GoH's, a longtime friend of mine, was treated by them, and I provided what personal support I could. There was tension and anxiety. A number of the nominations changed with withdrawals and replacements. There was a surge of thousands who signed up to be supporting members in order to vote.

On the night itself, the community was ready to be heard and to let their sentiments be known. For several categories, fans essentially said 'Nope', voiding the category by selecting 'No Award'. The cheers were loud, the audience agitated. There was some booing for Puppy nominees, although this was discouraged by the MCs.

I was stationed off stage right, ready for any eventuality. The deputy chair was to the left poised at the steps up to the stage and also ready should anyone try to access the stage. Randall Shepherd was in control and in charge and did a wonderful job. This was a big thing. The existence and reputation of the awards were being challenged.

*Journey Planet* won the Hugo Award there for Best Fanzine, with 1918 votes, a very strong showing. I met the team as they left the stage. It was a very moving moment.

The rules were changed in Spokane to make it harder for block voting after 2016, and the Puppies faded away. Perhaps the right-wing wins in the US Presidential election and with Brexit were bigger attractions – though they still had an impact that year. I note that *Journey Planet* received an 'Alfie' from George R.R. Martin who briefly tried to address the balance in his own way. Eventually, it all simmered down to just the usual frenetic energy and desire to administrate, manage and present the awards well, though it's still noisy, still challenging and still changing.



Not Pictured: Chris Garcia (who was watching at home, crying, a 4-month-old asleep on his shoulder.)

## Hugo packet

Around 2005 to 2010, the Hugo packet became a thing. Previously, when the finalists were announced, Worldcons left it up to the fans to find the nominated texts. John Scalzi, the author, with fans working with him, began to develop a scheme to ask publishers for electronic copies of the works to allow voting members of Worldcon to assess beforehand. That gradually built up over the years to the point where we now have a voting pack full of works for members to consider.

Some people actually treat that as a perk of membership: you can buy a supporting (WSFS) membership of Worldcon that allows you the chance to nominate and vote, and, if you get the voting packet, you actually get the equivalent of hundreds of dollars worth of ebooks. That's not the purpose of it. To be clear, the purpose is to help people be informed.

There is a covenant here though. Fans spend their money, multiplied by the thousands that attend, and pay for the Awards, the venue, the machinery that is required, and then give their time in the hundreds of hours to see them presented. The Hugo Awards are all voluntarily funded by the members of Worldcon. Authors recognise and respect the Hugos and know that those who love their work will be more likely to buy their book

## Hugo categories

I've been involved with the Hugos at the WSFS business meeting over the last decade and a half, including proposals to try to modernise and broaden the rules and category definitions. There are specific categories I'd like to see changes in, and was fortunate to have the opportunity at Dublin 2019, with the support of the committee, to do a special Hugo for Best Art Book. The Related Work category used to have lots of art books represented in it, and art has always been very important to the members of Worldcon. In practice, creating a one-off category will indicate if it was a viable category. There's resistance to new categories, of course, because we've already added many. People are concerned about Hugo inflation, and adding rockets is not everyone's preferred solution. Personally, I don't think there's a problem in having an Art Book category, as the Related work category has become a heat sink for so much interesting yet diverse work. That is a small thing, and I think there are issues across the whole of the Hugo Awards that do need to be clarified. For example, the definition of professional versus amateur is still very unclear.

We have many people writing fanzines in the sense of a publication available as a PDF or even print copy, similar to *Journey Planet*. Yet that category is often swamped by what's effectively blogging. Now, you could argue, are those actually different things? It is a good question. If the Hugos are to represent and to award or to encourage the stuff that we want, are we missing something there? Or are we, inadvertently, ignoring something that's important, on behalf of something else?

It's a difficult topic because it's all about definitions. Consider a new entrant, say an 18-year-old who has only ever had mobile phones and social media, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram. Does this person care about a fanzine that appears in a printed form? Does their attention lie in instant online content, where the activity is? This may be a natural progression, but it is sad for people who've been producing traditional fanzines for decades. They might feel they're no longer represented. The community exists, as one can see from Bill Burns's efanazines.com but many fans have decided to no longer come to Worldcon.

The actions of Hugo subcommittees, their decisions or involvement always need to be considered. In principle the Hugo administrator just implements the rules on technical questions of eligibility and does not decide which work is best. That's the job of the voters. The fans lead, and the administrator follows. However there are aspects not covered by the rules, such as the way that finalists and works are named and credited, the number of names allowed, number of Trophies given, invitation to the ceremony and reception etc. In some cases the flexibility that some administrators have effected has invalidated finalists or erased their achievements. We have to be better than that. The Hugos are the gift of the community, and we should be as inclusive as possible.

More positively, while the Hugo Rocket, the metal chromed rocket made by the company that Peter Weston ran, is the same every year, what is exciting is that the base is something that each Worldcon committee can choose. That's a fun thing. It can be a commission or a competition. I've been involved in that a few times and it really is terrific and enjoyable.

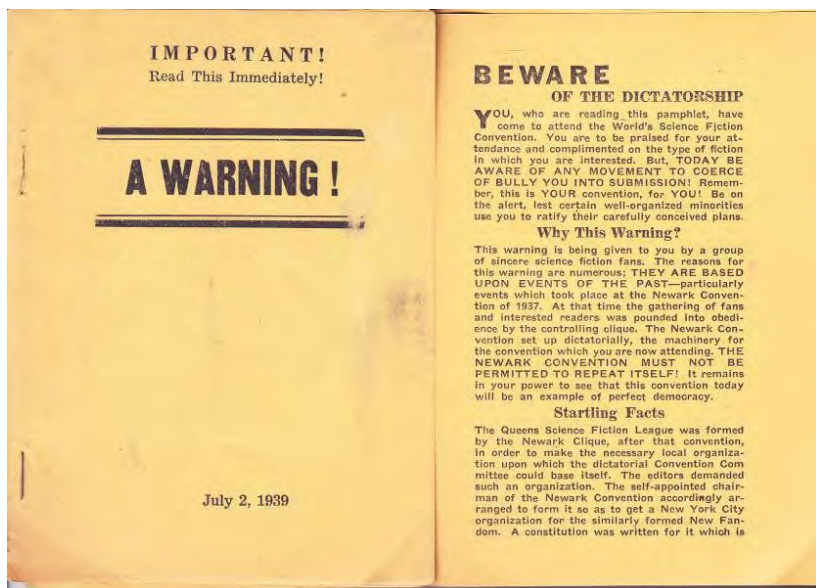
I'm sure that for Glasgow 2024 it will be fun, and as readers will have seen in [Journey Planet 71](#) co-edited by Sara Felix, the one about imagined and real Hugo Bases, the Hugo Base really captures imagi-

nation. I particularly enjoyed working with Nicholas Whyte on the design on the Dublin 2019 bases. Everyone should have a think about what base they would love to see and suggest it.

## The politics of Hugos

The Hugos are and have always been one of the leading awards in the genre. With that you immediately get politics. Self-promotion sometimes can be a problem (people saying 'Hey, vote for me, a perfectly normal human being'). Generally, that's discouraged, although is it the worst sin in the world? We can tolerate it to a certain level, so long as it's not excessive.

Politics generally boils down to what fans perceive as good or bad: content, reactions against gatekeeping, etc. Political forces such as the Puppies tried to select exactly what their followers should be voting for, which is not what we want. Worldcon members should decide what's good.



The world has changed since 1939, but even then there were political fights. In the US, a group of progressive fans clashed with a group of conservative fans. The language of the day included dangerous identifiers, such as labelling progressives as left wing communists. This blew up to such an extent that a group of fans were actually excluded from the First Worldcon. This was known as The Great Exclusion Act. Granted, the first Worldcon was run by 18-year-olds in a dance hall in New York with about 100 attendees. So a certain amount of embellishment has happened. However, even at the beginning, situations occurred where fans were not let in.

The 1960s was a time of a lot of social turmoil in North America, in Western Europe, and across the world, and fandom was not immune. Fans wrote letters for and against the Vietnam War, which appeared in the same fanzine, and a new wave of science fiction emerged from the old guard (Heinlein was part of that).

In this century, we've heard the voices of those who have traditionally been excluded. These have become much more prominent, representing many wonderful dimensions of diversity. I've been very conscious of that myself, I'm a member of at least one of those diversity groups, although maybe not such a visible one. (I think it was David Gerrold who said, 'Straight looking gay men can get a passport to the straight world'.) Quite rightly, people want all voices to be heard. I want the rules for the Awards to reflect that as well. There shouldn't be any gatekeeping in fiction, nonfiction, editing, art, fan activity, all of these things. We should try to minimise excessive self promotion, we should certainly prevent attacks from coordinated groups trying to dominate the awards.

The Worldcon, including the Hugos, is a volunteer activity which we're doing for love, not money. It's not just about preventing the negative. It's about recommendations, reviewing and the joyous experience of finding, sharing and discussing good works. This should be welcomed.

That is the core of it, and the rules and administration should just be in support of that. Integrity of that central principle is really important. The Hugos are what we, the people who choose to participate in Worldcon, want to celebrate and honour.

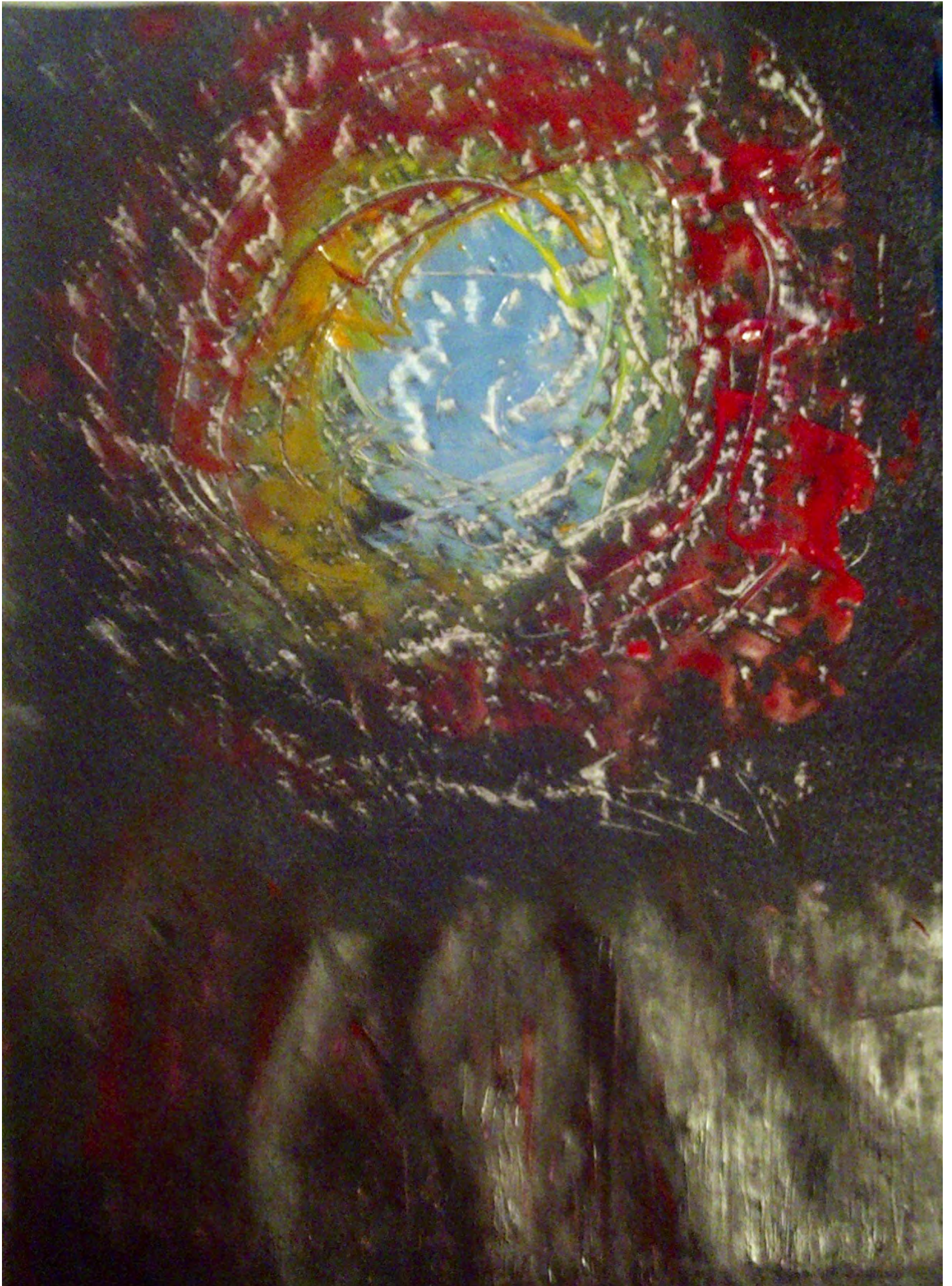
This is the attitude I'll be taking into the Glasgow 2024 Hugos ceremony as the Division Head of Events.

# Art

My father, also called Vincent, was an artist, who studied at the Glasgow School of Art, (home of the iconic Mackintosh building, designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh). He practised art as I was growing up. Although he became an art teacher for his day job, he continued to practise his art.



My Dad encouraged our interest in art and art-making. As it turns out, I don't particularly have a strong talent for creating art, but I do have a very strong appreciation for it. I can remember a couple of cases where he tried to teach a little bit about the technique. This was fun, but it never really clicked for me. I would much rather encourage others who have the deeper talent, to be able to develop that talent for real. (Having said that, I confess I do dabble a bit. At a work event we were asked to use oil paints and a palette knife to create an image in 15 minutes. The next page is what I came up with, based on the concept 'dying breath')



Growing up, I enjoyed visuals. Although I did not read comic books much, I did enjoy shorter comic strips in the newspapers. That first convention at 16 brought me into a community where visuals were valued. Around that time, many new artists came to the fore. A number of these were UK artists as well as international ones. Their work was distinctive: big, bold, colourful spaceships and landscapes, a bit surreal in some cases. Of course, the images followed the direction of some writing, as classical science fiction began to migrate over to the New Wave. Some covers were abstract or surreal and I found certain styles, interpretations, attractive. I grew up with the likes of Chris Foss and the Dillons, so by the time I got to that first convention, I was very familiar with that kind of artwork. I was quite amazed to see that these conventions hosted art shows where some of these same artists came along. You could actually buy prints, or in some cases, the originals!

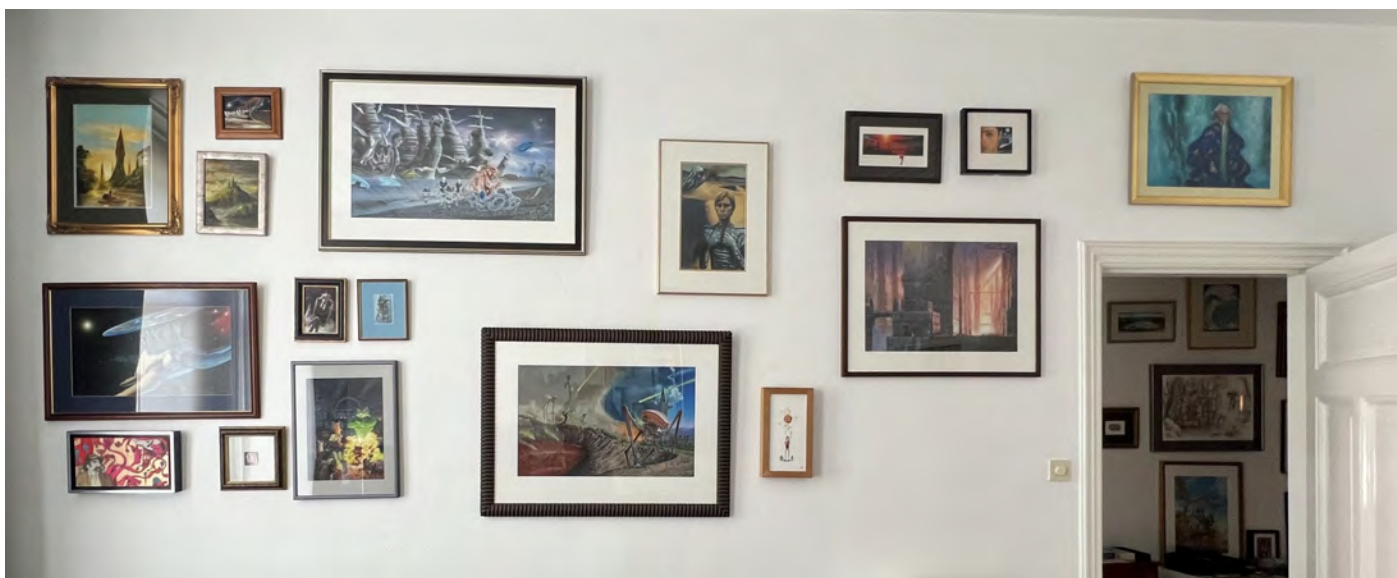
As a student on a budget, I went to art shows, and if I was lucky, I'd get a nice little print. I was able to meet a few of the artists themselves, fans themselves who had developed their talent. As I began organising conventions, these up-and-coming artists would happily contribute by creating cartoons or small illos for convention publications. This is why we have the Fan Artist Hugo category. Although it has morphed a bit in recent years, this artistic contribution of fans is really very important and we should recognise it.

As my interest grew, there were some artists whose work I particularly enjoyed, beginning with classic book cover artists from the 1960-80s. When I started working on Worldcons, I had access to art shows with top artists. I slowly began picking up original pieces. If I reflect on my purchasing over my 45 years in fandom, I would say I have purchased more original art in this century.

Jim Burns' art struck me early and still resonates strongly. His pieces ranged from quite small to quite large. In the early conventions, artists' smaller works were reasonably priced. I enjoyed displaying the art and eventually began purchasing it. Eastercon, Worldcon and Boskone in Boston all have had very good art shows, and tempting opportunities to buy art. So building a collection happened organically. I enjoy buying a piece or two every year.

What I find attractive is difficult to explain; it is a mixture of things. There are people who collect much more seriously – they have enormous collections of hundreds of pieces. I cannot imagine their house insurance costs. Edie Stern and Joe Siclari (who chaired the 1992 Worldcon and MagiCon) in the US have run extensive exhibits at Boskone. It is very easy for them to bring 50 to 100 pieces to display. I have enjoyed helping put on their special exhibits. It's very impressive.

I have sixty or seventy originals, which is quite a lot for me, but not significant in the scheme of things. Of course there are classical pieces I would like to have. These are proving very difficult, but I keep my eyes open. You never know, sometimes things will pop up.







When running conventions, you sometimes have the opportunity to work with an artist guest, and can sometimes do a deal with them. In 1995, the artist Guest of Honour was Les Edwards. He did a grand, beautiful cover for the Souvenir book, and I offered to buy it. In 2005, the theme was Spaceport Glasgow. I commissioned Jim Burns to paint a super wraparound cover, the original of which I could keep. My Co-chair at the time, Colin Harris, also a collector of art, came to a similar arrangement about the Progress Reports with Jim. At Loncon 3, the artist Guest of Honour was Chris Foss, and while it was a bit cheeky, because Chris' work usually costs a lot, we did a deal where I was able to commission and buy the cover. It was an enormous piece, but not horrendously expensive. I was very lucky.

Funny enough, along the way there has been a growth in small conventions both in the UK and in the US which focus on science fiction and fantasy art. Colin and I visited one of the first Illuxcons. The cover painting for the 1987 Brighton Worldcon by Jim Burns was for sale in the USA. As it wasn't a huge amount, I bought that one as well.

In my collection I have the covers of four Worldcon souvenir books. Dublin 2019 had a number of special artist guests. I could see that James thought my approach was one to emulate, as he purchased the original art for the Dublin 2019 Souvenir book from Iain J. Clark.


Iain is a strong artist, and I picked up a piece by him in Dublin. I am very pleased that he agreed to do the cover for this fanzine. It was originally intended to be a gift from my friends in Glasgow for my 60th birthday. I was inspired by his 'Shipbuilding Over the Clyde' and wanted something similar. As we worked on this fanzine I realised we could combine the ideas. I suggested we blend the concept of the big spaceship over the Clyde and convention centre with a cheeky riff on the trufans journey in the Enchanted Duplicator. Iain has done an excellent job and the final version (which is on the cover) is right in so many ways, even using the distant tower of Glasgow University as the tower of trufandom.

Iain is one of a number of artists, Sara Felix as well, who have been creating phenomenal work for the Glasgow 2024 bid and convention. Fangorn (Chris Baker), who makes incredible art, is the Guest of Honour. I actually have a small original by him, the cover of one of the Robert Aspin *Myth Adventures* books. In this case Esther, the chair of the convention, has the prerogative for the Souvenir Book cover art. I hope we get a Fangorn wraparound cover; his work is really excellent.

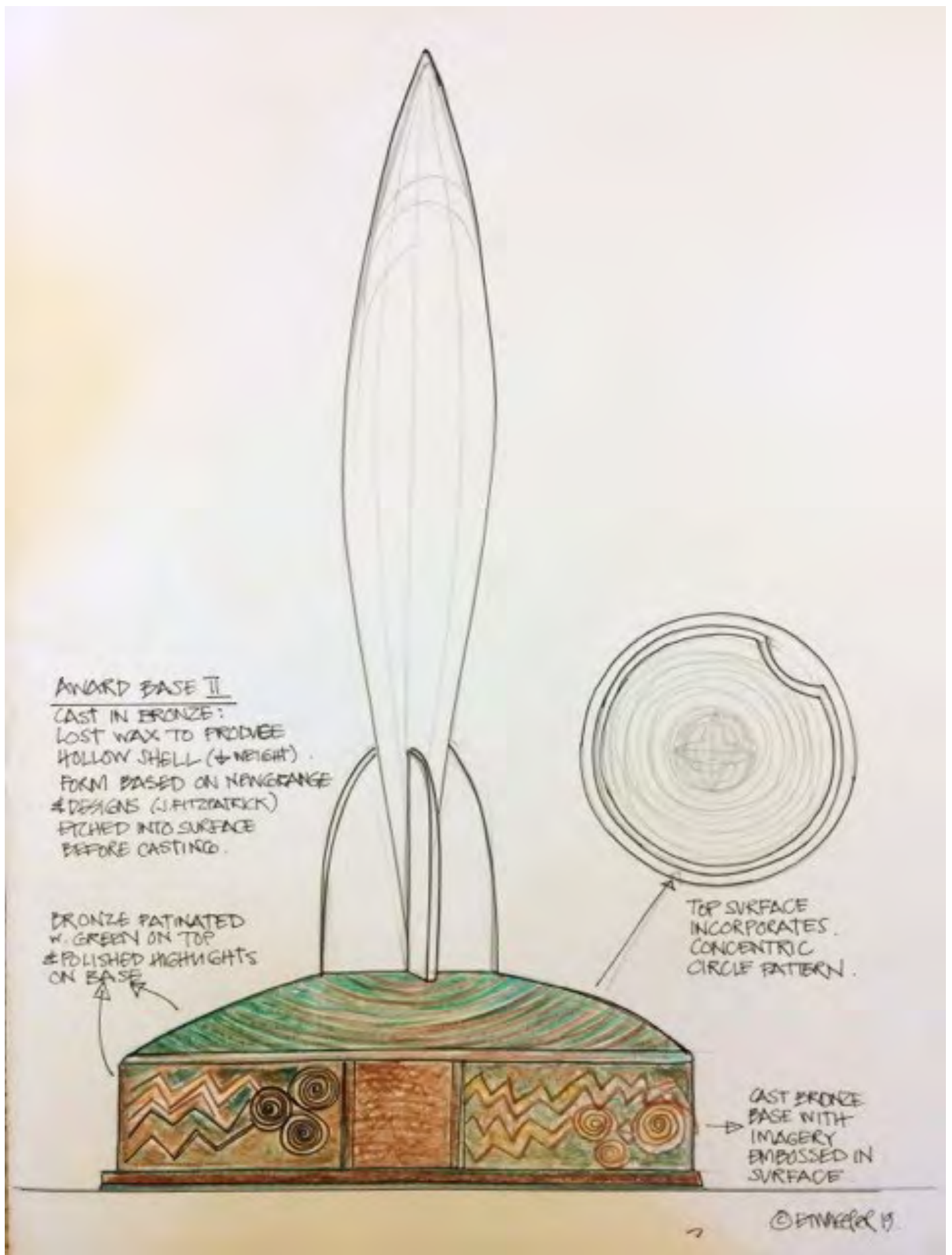


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The visual element is just as important to me as the prose. I enjoy encouraging new writers and artists, particularly at the start of their career. So I purchase pieces with this in mind. I've also been quite deeply involved with the Hugo Base process, the unique artistic aspect that each individual Worldcon can bring to the Hugo Awards. I helped with design and development, which has been a lot of fun as well.





## Advice for beginner art collectors

For those considering buying art, there is a balance to be found between listening to people who have expertise and what actually is good and interesting. Ultimately, it's about you developing your own appreciation and your own interest in it.

That's a tricky balance. Therefore, it's important to look at lots of different pieces, styles and techniques, and consider what it is that you actually appreciate. While listening to others and watching what they are doing is no harm, it is important that anyone buying art really learns for themselves. You might find that, as you wander an art show, especially if you've been collecting for a little bit, you'll find an artist you really like. However, their pieces might not click with you this time. There's a temptation to buy something because it's in front of you. I would always say: recognize the impulse and consider why you are buying the art. Is it because you like it, or might you later regret it? Remember the money that you've put into buying that one piece might actually have been better spent on a different piece you run across later. Sometimes you happen upon a rare opportunity. Some artists don't produce a lot, or there's not a lot for sale, or it may be important to you just have one piece by an artist. If I admire an artist, sometimes I'm happy simply having a piece by them, even if it's different than what I hoped. That is fine. However, generally, I would advise to not just jump at it because it is there. Consider the experience of looking at it every day, and ask yourself again why you're buying it.

# Personal Matters

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I probably had some idea that I was gay between 8 and 10. I would not have had the language for it growing up in the sixties in Scotland. It was a fairly religious community. There wasn't any education about puberty and sex. Impulses and feelings began to emerge, and I started to notice that they were all in one direction, rather than another. The actual, physical changes don't happen until later. At 14 it was pretty clear. But again, with no language for me, it was just something to keep secret.

In some ways I had the perfect camouflage as I was a very geeky introverted child, who was a bit of a loner and already a bully magnet. People generally assumed that the fact I showed no interest in girls was a continuation of that established behaviour. As I went to an all-boys school, it was easy to avoid the peer pressure of socialising and dating; perhaps it would have been harder if it had been a mixed school.

As a teenager, in the mid-1970s, I gradually worked up to comprehending the scope and implications. It was not an easy time. By the time I got to university I had a pretty good idea what was going on. But again, I'd not had any opportunity to do anything about it.



When I went to my first convention at 16, my sexuality was not mentioned to anyone. Of course I was interested in others, and I was very curious, but I was to be disappointed. I had been reading science fiction and fantasy for a long time, and so I was aware that there's been attempts in the genre to try and broaden horizons, but this was not replicated at the conventions. In the early 1980s, they were still old fashioned. However, in the mid 80s, things began to change.

By the time I went to university, I had been going to the conventions for a couple of years. Through FOKT and the university science fiction society, I began meeting other students, people a similar age who also were interested in the same things. I did have some relationships as a result, although they were only visible to those close to

me. Unsurprisingly, the first person I actually started going out with, when I was 20, was also someone who was going to the science fiction groups and conventions. Since then and for the most part I've gone out with people outside the convention community.

Conventions of the time were not particularly gay-friendly, not in an overtly hostile way, but just in a sense of not being so supportive. Conventions were not places to challenge the social conventions of the day, though many attendees thought they were. University was still in my hometown, so really it was the move to London when I was 26 that presented me with an opportunity to explore myself, broaden my horizons and investigate. But unfortunately, around the same time, the HIV epidemic started.

In 1979, Margaret Thatcher came to power as the head of a very conservative government, and of an anti-Gay one at that. Parallel to this regressive government, HIV and AIDS caused a lot of fear and hostility towards gay people. In the UK, Clause 28 was introduced, which is very similar to the law passed recently in Russia forbidding people from talking about homosexuality and barring teachers from mentioning, teaching, educating anything about homosexuality.

I got involved with protests. I played a small part, but I also volunteered on an LGBTQ+ helpline. I learned a little bit about counselling and listening and hearing from people who needed someone to be there for them – a skill easily transferable to conventions.

Much of my early involvement with the gay community coincided with my time in London, at the same time as beginning to launch the bid for the Glasgow Worldcon. I moved to the Middle East, where there were not the same legal opportunities and freedoms for gay men. Oman was very modernised as a country, very different from the rest of the Middle East. While homosexuality was not legal, there was a community present, so my time there wasn't completely horrendous. However, I focussed mostly on my day job and helping run Worldcon remotely.

Europe has certainly changed. The Netherlands was the first country to legalize same sex marriage, though I moved here a bit too late for me to do much about it. It was a good start, but for me it felt too late. If you've lived your entire life in a certain environment, certain expectations, and certain experi-

ences, the law changing doesn't mean that you can easily embrace the change yourself. Twenty five years later, history has proven me right there, because here I am by myself. It's like Frodo's quote: 'We set out to save the Shire, Sam and it has been saved – but not for me.' Still, I'm very happy for those who can take advantage of it.

I like to be active in the community where I can. When I was in London, I worked as a volunteer at London Friend, a helpline that provided a safe environment for people that are coming out. I couldn't do much actively when I was in Oman.

In the Netherlands, I was one of the founder members of the Dutch Shell LGBT Network 20 years ago. For a number of years I was quite involved in that. The network is very large and very dynamic. I was satisfied with the contribution I'd made in the first 10 years, but I had to be realistic. This was running parallel with my day job and the convention running. There's only so much time. I put considerable effort in and when it reached a certain level, I was able to participate without necessarily pushing very hard and my interest in helping the community has gained a focus. I like to help LGBTQ+ friends, directly or through charity where I can. I keep my ears open, and I watch what's going on. I try to keep up with the thinking about diversity & inclusion and I've learned a lot, particularly about listening and empathy and the complex intersection of the different ways prejudice shows up and is experienced.

The intersection between the LGBTQ+ community and fandom is striking. I've got a lot of LGBTQ+ friends who are also writers, fans and convention organisers. When we were thinking about guests for conventions I was quite keen that we looked more broadly, more diversely, not just just LGBTQ+. I was very happy that for '95 we were able to get Samuel R. Delany, for instance who's both gay and only the second non-white worldcon Guest of Honour. I was pleased to have influenced that. Since then things have improved in Worldcon GoH selection. They're still not brilliant, but they're better.

I've been in the Netherlands now for 25 years and I built up a bit of a natural network. I have friends here who are also fans of science fiction, fantasy and horror. One of them, a rising star horror writer, is by coincidence doing some signing sessions which I'm visiting as I write this. Most of these friends, though not all, are also LGBTQ+ background. In terms of actual big relationships, no one really. Well, perhaps almost one. It's just never really worked out. Staying mentally healthy is the priority. A network of friends and family always helps, and in recent years, my network has expanded.

I told my sister I was gay when I moved to London. She was quite happy about it. My father had



*Left—Connor, about 2; right—Painting of Vince age about 2 by Vincent, Sr*



died unexpectedly when I was 19, so the issue never came up. I never really had the conversation with my mother, although I think she had a pretty good idea. My sister had been going out with men, and then later had broader interests. In her late thirties, she went on a tour to Australia to discover more by herself. She met a woman in New Zealand and decided to stay in Melbourne for 20 years. My mother definitely knew about that. Obviously, because a grandchild came from that.

My sister and her partner needed a donor in order to have a child, so in one of their trips over to the Netherlands, we decided that I would provide the necessary medical donation to my sister's partner. Connor is 21 now, and the family decided to return to Scotland, a few years ago. This was timely, for my mother was beginning to age. They wanted to spend more time with her. They've been in Scotland for a few years, which is really nice as it is only a 1 hour flight from here (a lot closer than Melbourne).

I never expected it to happen. My relationship with Connor, my biological son, has been very open. He knew all the time, and therefore I went over as often as possible, and we have very similar geeky interests. My friends see a lot of me in him, although he is so tall. I've got bad news for him about his hair, though.

Connor was obsessed with dinosaurs and dragons, and to a degree has a very strong interest in palaeontology still. He is very much into gaming and has come to a number of conventions. They visited Interaction in 2005, when Connor was only 3, and he came to Dublin in 2019, which was a bit of an experiment to see how it'd go on. He wasn't there every day, but he enjoyed a couple of the sessions.

There isn't a template for this. This is a relatively new approach to things. You have to figure it out as you go along. I provide support and time and guidance to Connor where it's needed and possible. Our mutual interests, movies and games, for instance, are a very good way of having these shared experiences. I never dreamed of having my own family and children; I had long given up the expectation that that would happen.



## The Middle Way

When I reflect on how I balance my life, conventions, pride and work, I take the middle way. I often feel like I'm not as organised as I should be, despite my best efforts. Those of you reading this may be surprised, but it is true. On the other hand, I try not to beat myself up too much about it, either. That is the worst thing that you can do. It will only make things worse, because the reality is everybody only has the same number of hours in the day.

I try to challenge myself. I do a lot of coaching so I should be better at this than I am. Sometimes it works really well, and sometimes not at all. I have a certain perfectionist streak (James will attest to this), so if you ask me to do something, I will always try my best to do it. But I don't always do it quickly. Case in point, this *Journey Planet* issue. With the year I've just had, with conventions and considerable amounts of personal and work stuff, it became a real balancing act.



I've learned a few tricks along the way to make me more likely to succeed. If I can, I partner with somebody else. This not only is helpful in terms of organising and scheduling, but I'm motivated not to let the other person down. That structure is actually very helpful, so I very actively use it. It's the same, for fitness. In my youth, I had a very bad relationship with the whole fitness and sports, even though I discovered at university that there are actually some things I was quite good at. While at university, I joined the archery and rifle target shooting club and tried a little bit of fencing and karate. Now that sounds like I've done lots of violent things. It's not really my nature and I wasn't particularly good. I found I break too easily for karate. These days, I see a paid personal trainer twice a week. The combination of the commitment to myself and the commitment of money works well for me.

My email inbox tends to get cluttered. If I'm able to respond quickly, then I get things done, but otherwise the flood causes me to occasionally miss an email. This is when I rely on the structure of working with someone else to help me manage this. For example, as I'm the Events Division Head for Glasgow, I'm building a team to help with queries now that the project is getting going, if only to manage *All of the Stuff Coming in*.

Events Division is a tricky one, because much of the planning doesn't happen until the year before the convention. There's actually not that much to do at this stage. It's not like finance, the website, or promotions. If I don't build a team, things will fall through the cracks. I've got in my email queries from people going back several weeks already. If I know something's important, but I know that a fully-formed email will take some time, I often suggest a quick zoom or phone call to talk it through with the person, as that's a more time efficient way of getting things done for me.

I'm quite a different character from, say, James, who has great energy. He just gets up to things, but he doesn't worry too much. I'm sure he would be the first to say that he doesn't worry about 'perfect' – he just gets it done. If you read the *Journey Planet* issues or *The Drink Tank*, they're full of enthusiasm, and they're really good.

But you would not go to James for perfect spelling or grammar, for instance. He recognises his weakness and will lean on others for help. I like things to be as perfect as possible – including grammar and spelling. Of course, there is no one true way here. You go with the approach that you have and still it's not perfect, but I can usually get things done.



## Perfectionism

I was more of a perfectionist when I was younger. There are pros and cons. An extreme perfectionist can be very control freaky. I suppose I've had a bit of that, but I think in my older years have softened that a bit. In the real world, organisations can be messy. You need to live with the fact that perfection is something you can aspire to. If you push too hard on it, it can be counterproductive.

It helps to see things going well, and people enjoying it, and maybe even doing something that hasn't been done before. I aim for that 'wow' factor. Science fiction, as a genre, revolves around the 'sense of wonder'. Seeing that in fans is rewarding. It's inspiring to see people who are not necessarily creative writers channel their own creativity into conventions and enjoy that sense of wonder. Yes, it can be frustrating when it's not done right, but seeing that energy is very satisfying.

My desire to organise came before the ability to do it well. It's like when a psychiatrist or a psychologist says 'Tell me about your childhood', or 'Tell me about your parents' because that's where most of your behaviour patterns come from. As I've mentioned, I was that stereotypical, geeky, introverted child who had a very bad experience with bullying at school. The genre became of those things that was a beacon of light in the darkness.

Despite that, I was still optimistic when I discovered fandom at that convention in 1978. As soon as I saw the energy and enthusiasm I immediately asked how it all worked. How do I organise this stuff? What does 'good' look like? I volunteered to help, because I'd picked up by that stage that that was how you get involved. I discovered at university that there really are a lot of things I can do well, so I got very ambitious very quickly. A small group of us, the new generation, were watching the people organising these conventions and thought maybe we can do one of the small ones. So in 1981, at 19 and just three years after my first convention, I said, 'Okay, I'll chair the small local Glasgow convention'. We had a good convention, but we had a lot to learn. I was then asked to run the main Glasgow convention in 1985. It was a hugely ambitious thing, and lots of good stuff happened – both good and bad. You learn from your mistakes.



## Learning from mistakes

The consciousness about learning from mistakes didn't come until much later. I probably thought at the time that I'd done a better job than I did. It's only much later that I realised that I'd had no idea what I was doing, or rather, I was learning by doing. I now attend workshops on both management and organisational elements, as well as leadership, which is very important. That's a much-misunderstood aspect, as leadership isn't just having a desire to lead or achieve a title. It is certainly those things, but it must also combine with a set of skills, distinct (but overlapping) with management. Classically, leadership is called, 'managing the people' or, 'leading the people and managing the task', but that is only an approximation of the full picture.

Looking back, I feel the Worldcon in Glasgow in 1995 is my biggest individual contribution. When we came back and did it again in 2005, 10 years later, I had already begun to shift toward a coaching role rather than always being the one in charge. I found, despite being a very geeky or introverted child, I'm actually very good at presenting in front of an audience. I'd never be a good stand up comic; I cannot remember a single joke. But as long as I have some sort of structure (and a script), I can be really comfortable on stage. This discovery was a bit of a surprise, actually.

I say jokingly to people, 'Very few people have chaired a Worldcon twice, and for good reason!' But I promise you it's easier the second time than the first, because you've already learned a lot. It's the difference between extrapolation and interpolation. When you're learning it for the first time, it's all new. It's not identical the second time you do it, there are always new things – you're building on something you already know. By the time we got to around 2000, ready to build on these successes, I began to think that I could do the leadership thing. But I don't aspire to be the one that's always in front. For me, it's just a role that you can step into, and back out of, and I'd much rather encourage and coach other people to step up into that. In 2005 I was able to do that for Colin Harris, who's a very good organiser. He moved into the Deputy role very quickly and then was promoted to Co-Chair. Effectively, I was leading through coaching. If I think of the last 20 years, I've done more and more of that coaching others to lead rather than necessarily having to do it myself, and I'm perfectly happy doing it.

A key underpinning of coaching is to build self-awareness so that people are clear about their motives and capabilities. Hopefully their friends will also give feedback – the other element of the phrase 'Friends don't let friends run Worldcons.' Assume positive intent. Oh, and kindness. As The Doctor said, 'Never fail to be kind', to yourself and others.



## Some Final Reflections

When doing the final editing of this fanzine I looked at the overall balance of the contents, which does focus on my fannish and convention running journey and associated aspects of my life, but does miss a few things. I notice there are many people I should have mentioned along the way, both those I've worked with in various convention committees as well as those who inspired or affected me in some way. I hope I managed to appreciate you all in person at the time, and that I've been able to inspire in turn.

There also are topics I didn't touch on much or at all, either for space (it's already a very long issue), or because they deserve a more dedicated focus in another publication. These include my day job and interest in energy strategy and climate change, a deeper examination of toxicity in fandom (some of which I've experienced), other aspects of fandom I only touched on, smaller versus larger conventions ('I love big cons and I cannot lie' – in practice I like both), the link between fandom and sexual minorities, much about politics (don't get me started on Brexit!), my other hobbies particularly photography, travel, and of course my original love, astronomy and space.

There are also a few little 'nuggets' that didn't really fit, such as an overview of all the cons I've attended (over 200), my little log of story ideas (I'm not a writer so they are just ideas), and some fun things like the annual dress-up for the Hugo Ceremony, including the importance of shoes and accessories! Oh, and chocolate.

I'll close by again thanking all the contributors and the long-suffering *Journey Planet* team, whose persistence did work out in the end. We're all doing this for love not money and as a way to give back and contribute. I hope you've enjoyed coming along on the journey.



# Acknowledgements

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## On Conjuring by Allison Hartman Adams

I came to this issue late in the game, and I'll admit, a bit untutored. While I've been a member of the fan community for decades, I had no understanding of how the machine worked. I did not fully appreciate how much conrunning relies on the willingness to say, 'Yes, let's do that!' I thought cons, I don't know, just sort of *happened*. Don't judge me.

I must have crossed paths with Vincent a dozen times or more, but I have never actually met him. He's a powerhouse of a con organiser (a 'kingmaker' as Alice Lawson describes him), and he is responsible, in part, for my excellent con experiences over the years, even if he wasn't involved in organising them. Let's be clear: his title doesn't matter – his influence and legacy does.

Vincent is a conjurer of opportunity. We fannish creative types love doing our thing, whatever shape that takes. But none of it could happen without the connective tissue that takes an unruly collection of brilliant, innovative, and vibrant (and stubborn, cranky, fussy...) fans and creators and pulls us together into something resembling a community. Vincent's tireless work in this field has set a high bar. He has changed the landscape of fandom, made it a place that not only celebrates the genre, but is also specifically engineered to grow, evolve, and get better.

We have our tribe in science fiction and fantasy. Our work refuels us and helps carry us through the dark times. But what we do as individuals doesn't always matter. What we do as a tribe – together – does. This has become increasingly important in a world as fractured as our own. As you've read in these pages, it is Vincent who has given us time and space to find those connections, to be that tribe.

I read every word of this fanzine multiple times, and I thank Vincent and the *Journey Planet* team for trusting me to hack at the draft with a machete and the delete key. Vincent's stories are eye-openers. I was not conscious of the amount of work that goes into running something like Worldcon. Vincent has shown me the power of sharing a vision, leveraging the honest work of good people, and finding brilliance in unexpected places.

Vincent's wisdom is apparent to any reader: act with the best of intentions; learn from your mistakes; do again, and do better. But if you take only one thing away, let it be this: Vincent does this for us. For himself, too, of course – conrunning is one of the many creative expressions that help sustain him. But we are the beneficiaries. He conjures, inspires, mentors, and manufactures time, space, and opportunity for *us*. That's quite a thing, isn't it?

## Thoughts from The Island by Chris Garcia

Vince Docherty? In the talk of my people, he's a mensch.

I admire the hell out of the man, and when the idea for this issue rose up from a La Victoria taco meal to those many years ago, I became made of excite. Like all these issues that simmer long, it feels so good to put the issue to press. It feels even better to let Vince know what we think of him, because we really should all be doing a lot more of that for the people we admire. It's not just saying 'Thank you' but it's acknowledging a debt of dedication. Like the Internet, he's given so much and asked so little.

I'm typing this from the lanai in the Maui Sunset condos where we're staying a week. It's just before 6am, and the sky is the kind of orange and yellow that only exists on postcards.

What none of the Hawaiian postcards show, however, is that Maui is an island of chickens.

They are everywhere. Mostly small, mostly jet black or propeller brown. They're skittish, save for the one who has pecked at my toes three days in a row while I've been zining out here.

I've named him Vince. It's the least I could do to honor the man himself.

Fanzine Fandom lost another important figure. Marty Cantor, LA area fan and zinester, died. He was an early fanzine friend of mine, gave me copies of his older zines, *Holier Than Thou* and *No Award* that were some of the first in my collection. Rest well, Marty; I'll see ya when I see ya.

I'm also pleased to say that *Journey Planet* is nominated for the European Science Fiction Award! It's our fourth time being put forward, and we've won twice. The specific issue nominated, *Erró Error*, was co-edited by Pdraig O'Mealoid, James, and I, and this nom is important to me personally not only because when do awards not mean a lot to me, but because it's about art, and the one thing I've dedicated so much of my time is talkin' about art!

Vince the Chicken is back, pecking a little more aggressively. I'm gonna head in.

Thanks much for reading.

And to Vince, the dude, thanks for bein' you.

## **Titus Vincentius – Honourable Conqueror**

### **Enditorial by James Bacon**

A noble man, kind and gentle, intelligent in a quietly determined way, controlled and measured, clear and lucid when speaking, pleasant and well mannered, and good company when one wants to read. That's the Vincent I know.

Here in *Journey Planet*, we present an opportunity to readers to get to know this glorious leader of fans, who has taken us on great journeys, quietly facilitating and stewarding, steering a Worldcon to Scotland, and grounding fans in the importance of an enjoyable, fun time.

I could say I know who Vincent is, as much as any fan can, for I have worked and spent much time close to him, watching him, as I learn, considering him when he was perplexed, annoyed, or being asked too many questions.

Here in this zine, we are offered more. A sharing of past trials and tribulations, and indeed the tragedy of timing, of life for someone very intelligent and also different, and therefore at times, alone.

Vincent talks about hard matters, bullying, and love in a different time openly and honestly, while also sharing so much about our shared hobby, Conrunning.

I have felt his wrath, his anger – something I am proud of. I have also asked him, in a most direct way, to stop trying to make me think, and just give me a fucking solution, a decision. Both moments are rare enough to be singularly unique. I have loved the fruits of his labour, the extravaganza that have been live symphonies.

A father, brother, son and friend. He is very good to the community of SF fans. Winner of the Big Heart, he epitomises what the award is for: someone who gives so much of themselves and helps the community of book-loving science fictionados come together and share their interests and friendships.

This has been another epic issue; 2023 may be the year for them. We co-chaired the 2021 Smofcon in Lisboa, and that was a good time, and while there, energy and ideas coalesced, and Vincent agreed to do a series of email interviews. Meg MacDonald had said she would be happy to interview Vincent too. In December 2021, I followed up with emailed questions, but while the idea was good, the method was not. Interviewing by email did not work out.

It will be clear from this zine how Vincent operates, so when this failed, we figured out a new way, which involved very hard work, to extract a biography: voice interviews. Vincent is no writer. We started this issue in 2022, and initial interviews went OK. Marguerite Smith helped us figure out caption capturing. Ann Gry stepped in to support this and took over the interviews in November. The process has been long: questions get written, interviews occur, the words are captured, then edited, then tidied. These were collated and edited by Ann, myself checked by Vincent and then copyedited by Allison. Then read again by Vincent. It has been a serious job of work.

Rewarding though. To have this history here is valuable, there is so much in it for conrunners to learn, and also for us, the community to become aware of. So while a tremendous lot of work, it is so worth it. I do not expect this to be the final version, Vincent will want to improve and build on it, but that is not a worry today. There is more story to be told, and within what we know, there are other voices who may offer. I hope for some Letters of Comment are generated by this hard work.

We have a number of issues ahead of us, 'Imagined Instruments' with Jean, 'The Fiction of Jack the Ripper' is a focus for Chris, an issue about 'Small Things' or miniaturised things with Sarah Gulde, and of course 'The Vietnam' and 'V for Vendetta' issues need re-energising. I have become quite engaged with the railways in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, so that could be an issue yet. If something here interests you, do get in touch; contributions are very welcome.

To the contributors to this issue – our thanks. It is great to have your view of Vincent, to Allison for checking and suggesting and re-editing, my thanks, for Ann undertaking the second set of interviews, editing, helping so much my gratitude, that created the momentum that we lost, and to Vincent for sharing so much, and offering so much to us readers, in such an honest and open way, my sincerest thanks. You have honourably conquered the art of creating a Fanzine, for it is here.

Do get in touch [journeyplanet@gmail.com](mailto:journeyplanet@gmail.com)



## Letter of Comment on Issue 72—*Operation Motorman*

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11th May 2023

Dear James,

I hope this finds you well.

I am writing on behalf of the Linen Hall Library to thank you for the generous donation of *Operation Motorman* to the political collection.

It is support of this kind that helps make the Linen Hall Library the unrivalled resource that it is, and I am grateful.

Yours sincerely,

Samantha McCombe

Librarian

Linen Hall, Library, Archive and Museum

Belfast

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# Journey Planet