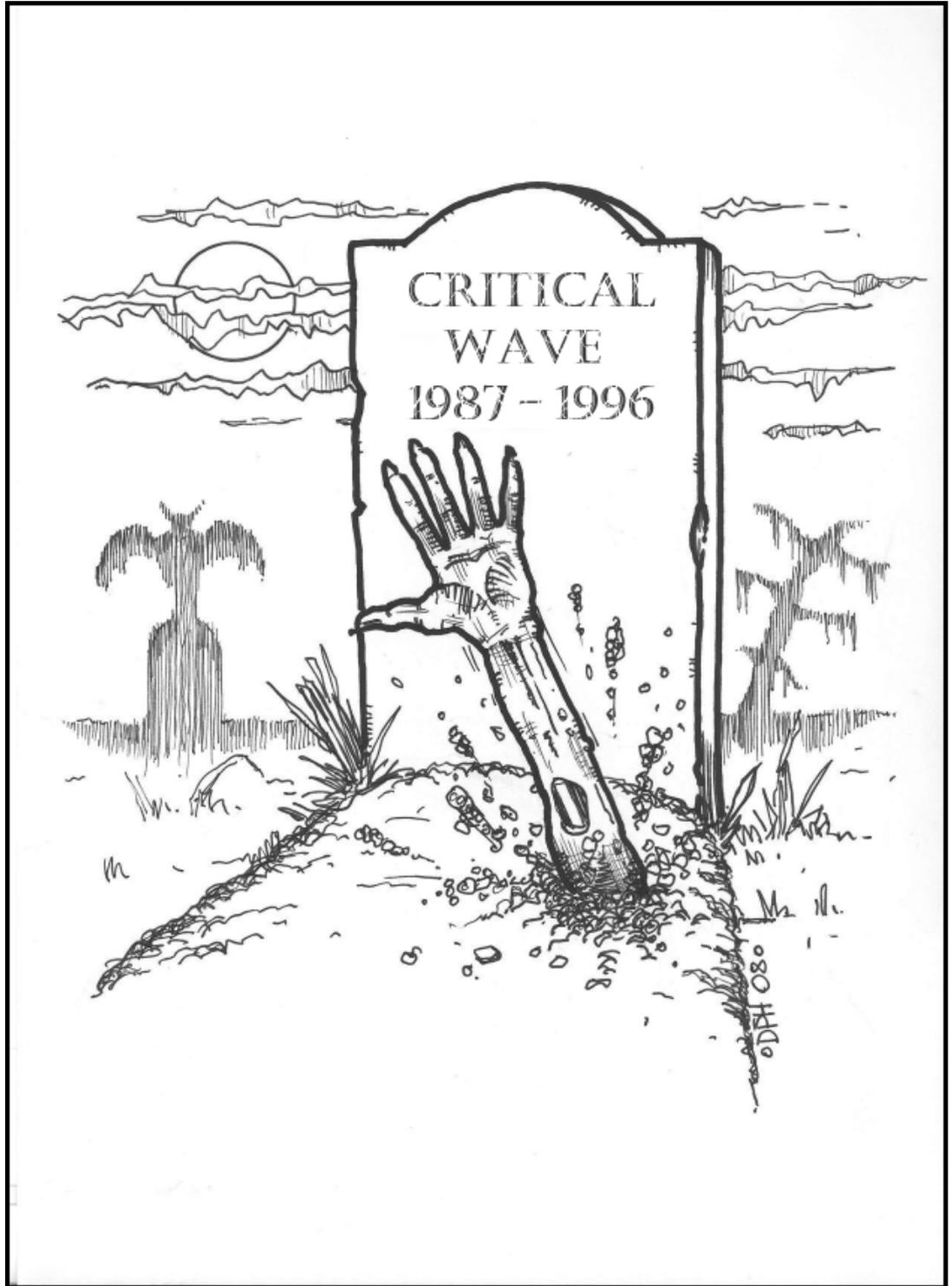


**CRITICAL WAVE**

***BACK FROM THE GRAVE!***



**European worldcon bid team targets 2014**  
**TransAtlantic Fan Fund: 2009 race launched**  
**Eye Witness: Fantasycon, Newcon, Zombiecon**



## Newsround

### 2014 likely target for latest European worldcon bid

A team of British sf fans is actively investigating the viability of a ninth European worldcon. Five potential sites are under consideration, three in the UK and two in Holland.

Although rumours of another bid surfaced shortly after Glasgow hosted its second worldcon in 2005, discussions moved up a gear at ConRunner in late June. The majority of those present favoured 2014, with limited support for 2015; locations are currently decided three years in advance.

The team's co-ordinator, Steve Cooper, told *Critical Wave* that one site, the NCSF Congress in Rotterdam, had already been eliminated, as it was felt to be too small. The remaining venues are Liverpool's new £146m Arena & Conference Centre, the World Forum Den Haag, the ExCel in London's Docklands, the RAI Amsterdam Congress Centre and the Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre in Glasgow. Visits to the first four have already taken place, with the SECC tour scheduled for late November in order that a full report can be made to the main group before the end of the year.

Cooper added: "The aim of this process is that, by Easter 2009, the group should be able to reduce the options to two (or possibly three) sites that are viable both financially and logistically. At LX, the 2009 Eastercon, a panel item has been arranged to allow for an in-person discussion. Eventually, assuming we find a viable site and decide to bid for 2014, we hope to launch the bid at Odyssey, the 2010 Eastercon."

In the meantime, anyone interested in working with the bid team can join its Google group at [groups.google.com/group/EU1415](http://groups.google.com/group/EU1415).

### 2009 TAFF race to Canada gets go-ahead

Despite initial concerns that the TransAtlantic Fan Fund might have to cancel its 2009 race due to the lack of a second candidate (as last occurred in 1997), UK fans Steve Green and Tom Womack have stepped forward as contenders for the westward voyage to Anticipation, the Montreal world science fiction convention.

Ballot forms were due to be distributed at Novacon 38; copies will also be available to download from the fund's website, [taff.org.uk](http://taff.org.uk), which includes a history of previous races and an archive of past newsletters and trip reports. The winner will be announced in mid-April.



## Final week for 2008 GUFF race

Voting closes on 24 November for this year's GUFF contest, in which Australasian sf fans Sue Ann Barber & Trevor Clark (on a joint ticket), Norah Ding and Alisa Krasnostein are competing to attend the 2009 Eastercon, LX. At under two years old, Ms Ding is almost certainly the youngest person ever to stand in a fan race (she would be accompanied by her mother Kylie).

Ballot forms, candidates' platforms and a short history of the fund are available at [www.users.on.net/~juliettewoods/guff2008.html](http://www.users.on.net/~juliettewoods/guff2008.html).

### **Editorial: *There and Back Again...***

It's hard to believe it's twenty-one years since Martin Tudor and I met in a Birmingham pub to rough out plans for a bimonthly science fiction newszine, or that we finally called a halt to the project (forty-seven issues later) a full twelve years ago.

Much has changed in that decade-plus. The proliferation of e-mail and other online resources has made redundant much of the thinking behind the original *Critical Wave*. In a world where news of the death of a relatively well-known author can hit your in-box within seconds of its announcement, what point is there in producing a paper fanzine which can't deliver the same information to subscribers for days, if not weeks?

That said, there remain many areas where traditional fannish journalism has largely vanished; convention reports and fanzine reviews are just two which sprang to mind soon as Martin and I discussed launching an online version of *Wave* via eFanzines.



There are obvious advantages to the electronic format, not least the financial aspect (returning readers will recall the massive debts incurred the first time out). Nor are we constrained any longer by the limitations of mimeography or the infamous *Wave* photocopier; nowadays, it's simplicity itself to insert a colour photograph (such as the one above, taken by Richard Standage moments after the relaunch was finally agreed).

Strangely, one thing hasn't changed. Our very first lead story back in 1988 was news of a UK worldcon bid for 1995. The lead this issue concerns a potential European bid for 2014. *Plus ça change...*

**Steve Green**

## Eye Witness



**Above:** The 2008 British Fantasy Award winners show off their statuettes. Standing, from left: Steve Jones (collecting the British Fantasy Society's Karl Edward Wagner Award on behalf of Ray Harryhausen, as well as his own "best anthology" BFA for *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror 18*); Jo Fletcher (collecting the Sydney J Bounds Best Newcomer Award on behalf of Scott Lynch); Pete Crowther ("best small press", PS Publishing); Ramsey Campbell (the August Derleth Fantasy Award for "best novel", *The Grin of the Dark*); Christopher Teague (collecting the "best non-fiction" BFA, won by Peter Tennant's reviews at the website *Whispers of Wickedness*); Joel Lane ("best short fiction" for "My Stone Desire", first published in *Black Static #1*). Kneeling, from left: Chris Fowler ("best collection", *Old Devil Moon*); Conrad Williams ("best novella" for "The Scalding Rooms"); Vincent Chong ("best artist"). [Photograph by Peter Coleborn]

### Fantasycon 2008

Brittania Hotel, Nottingham, 19-21 September 2008

Report by Joel Lane

These conventions used to be numbered, until they stopped doing so in deference to the feelings of older British Fantasy Society members. If you were at the first Fantasycon, your hair or beard is probably white. It's the BFS's annual gathering, a ritual event at which the Druids of Doom assemble

to drink wine, buy books, award carven statuettes and argue bitterly over whether supernatural horror is an integral part of the fantasy genre.

This year's Fantasycon reflected changes in genre fandom. Book dealers were outnumbered by small press publishers, and new magazines by new limited-edition collections. I didn't see a single Arkham House volume all weekend (no wonder I came away unhealed), but I bought many new books. In the pro domain, the presence of neo-pulp imprint Abaddon Books and Virgin's new literary horror line (represented by sartorially elegant editor Adam Neville) made it clear that after a decade in the outer darkness, weird fiction is back and ravaging for delight.

Friday night's events included a panel on blurring genre boundaries, scheduled against a panel on the work of William Hope Hodgson - thereby forcing the fans to decide between new and old. A Ramsey Campbell reading at midnight brought the two together.

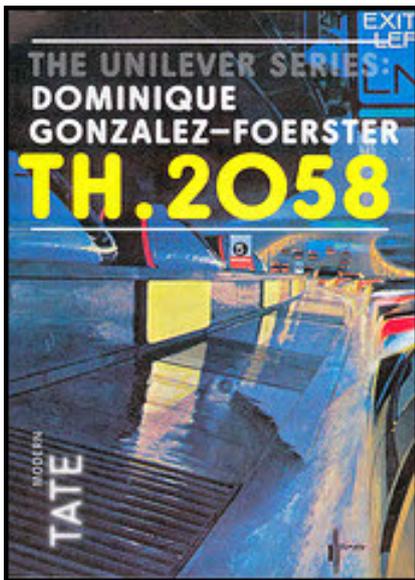
Saturday included a feisty panel on trends in horror and a cerebral panel on the art of the short story. Other panels dealt with young adult fiction, new frontiers in sf, writing for *Doctor Who*, publishing fiction and creating art. Guests of honour Christopher Golden, James Barclay and Dave McKean were interviewed. A series of author readings took place in a small room on the top floor, including a dramatic rendition by author and actor Reggie Oliver of a fine theatrical ghost story.

In a break with Fantasycon tradition, the BFS banquet and awards ceremony were moved from Sunday lunchtime to Saturday night. Highlights included Ramsey Campbell winning the "best novel" award with *The Grin of the Dark* and scarily gifted youngster Vincent Chong picking up the "best artist" award for his surreal book covers. Then there was wine, and the raffle, and more wine, and a panel on 'the forbidden', and more wine.

Don't ask me about Sunday morning. Or, in fact, any of Sunday. In mitigation, I would ask for the fact that I had somehow acquired an award for "best short story" - a statuette of a winged demon that looked better than me throughout Sunday - to be taken into consideration. Panels on the small press and the fantasy-horror crossover took place, I am told.

Fantasycon has a reputation for being a convention for professionals and diehard weird fiction fans, but these days it's more a convention for specialist publishers and aspiring writers. This weekend maintained a high level of dialogue, energy and intelligence. The lean years have scarred the weird fiction genre, and it's come back with hungry eyes and a worrying limp; Fantasycon is an essential weekend in its lonely calendar.

*[Next year's Fantasycon will return to the Britannia Hotel, Nottingham, on 18-20 September. The guests have yet to be announced, but Ian Watson will be master of ceremonies. Further details when we have them.]*



## TH.2058

Tate Modern, London, until 13 April 2009

Report and photography by Jim Linwood

The sign over the entrance to the latest installation in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall reads: "It had been raining for years now, not a day, not an hour without rain. This continual watering had a strange effect on urban sculptures. They had started to grow like giant tropical plants, and become even more monumental. To stop this growth it had been decided to store them inside, among the hundreds of bunk beds which, day and night, receive refugees from the rain."

It sounds like a passage from a Ballard story, but it isn't. It's the introduction to Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's TH.2058, which replaced Doris Salcedo's 500 feet-long fissure "Shibboleth" (nicknamed "Doris's Crack") and envisages London as a disaster area, 50 years from now. I entered with some apprehension through an entrance made of plastic strips, as I'd been told a man had gone berserk on the previous day, attacking visitors and staff and damaging an exhibit.

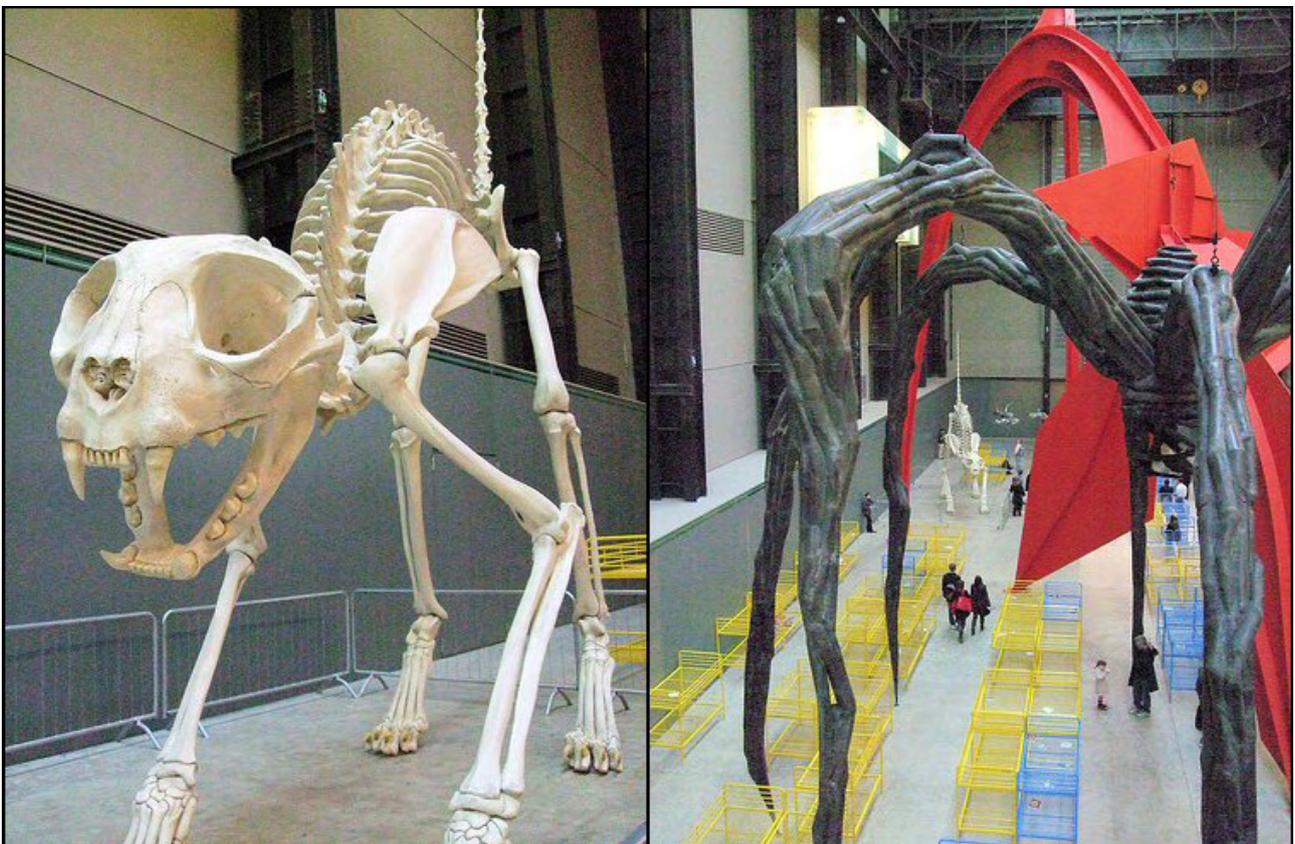
The Turbine Hall now houses 200 blue and yellow empty bunk beds waiting for the refugees. On most beds, there's at least one book with an apocalyptic theme: Wells's *War of the Worlds*, Shiel's *The Purple Cloud*, Mike Davis's *Dead Cities*, Harry Harrison's *Make Room, Make Room*, Jeff Noon's *Vurt* and, inevitably, Ballard's *The Drowned World*. Less appropriate were Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and Gibson's *Pattern Recognition*. A large LED screen at the end of the hall continuously screens *The Last Film*, containing edited extracts from such movies as *Alphaville*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (the 1978 version), *Soylent Green*, the original *Planet of the Apes*, *La Jette* and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*; when I arrived, however, it was showing Catherine Deneuve being molested by a corridor of hands in Polanski's *Repulsion*.

The urban sculptures that have become "even more monumental" (supposedly 25 per cent bigger than the originals) include Louise Bourgeois's 30ft high, egg-bearing spider, "Maman", which has had a permanent home in various parts of the Tate since 1999; a reproduction of Alexander Calder's Chicago-based 50-foot high pink steel "Flamingo"; Claes Oldenburg's enormous "Apple Core", the obligatory Henry Moore sculpture, "Sheep Piece", and Bruce Nauman's "Untitled" which are three grotesque flying creatures uncannily resembling the Martians in *Quatermass and the Pit* - except they had four legs, not three. The concept that these are mutated sculptures stored amongst the refugees is strangely disturbing.

Gonzalez-Foerster has said she was interested in using science fiction "as a tool to see the present... I've been reading science fiction since I was a child and I've always been sensitive to how most of the things we have seen now were already described". The handout explains that "museums have been closed for years because of water seepages and the high level of humidity. In the huge collective shelter that the Turbine Hall has become, a fantastical and heterogeneous montage develops, including sculpture, literature, music, cinema, sleeping figures and drops of rain." The only problem with this is that the venue is below the Thames' high tide level.

On leaving Tate Modern, I looked for Keran's catamaran sailing down the river, searching for forgotten paradises of the reborn sun. It wasn't there.

**Below: "Felix" by Maurizio Cattelan; "Maman" by Louise Bourgeois.**



Advertisement

The 60th British National Science Fiction Convention  
**EASTERCON** 10TH - 13TH APRIL 2009  
THE CEDAR COURT HOTEL,  
BRADFORD **LX**

## ZombieCon

Quality Hotel, Walsall, 5-7 September 2008

Report by John Coxon

Photograph by Dominic Elliott

As someone who is (relatively) new in fandom, having been to only five conventions since coming onto the scene, Zombiecon was a new experience for me. I attended Contemplation (the 2007 emergency Eastercon), Year of the Teledu (the almost entirely member-run convention held in Leicester in the summer of the same year), Recombination (a fairly casual affair which was a melding of Unicon 21 and the British Roleplaying Society's annual convention) and Orbital (the 2008 Eastercon which brought that event back to London, attracting more members than any Eastercon since before my birth). Lastly, I attended Zombiecon, my first "James 'n' Stef" con.

Each con I've been to has been markedly different in some way or another, and the first thing that struck me about Zombiecon was how much everyone who went was putting into making sure they had a fun time. The feel at Year of the Teledu was that people needed to construct their own panel items, run them and find volunteers, which meant that the people who were comfortable organising such things were right at home and perhaps meant that the people who were not so comfortable had a more difficult time of it. This did not seem to be stopping anyone at Zombiecon: James Bacon and Stef Lancaster [pictured right] were relentless in getting people to help out and appear on panels or do various things, and it really created a positive, optimistic vibe, despite the horrible weather outside!



To be honest, zombies aren't really my forte (I talk on the subject at a reasonable length in *Procrastinations #6*) but that didn't matter. The programme coped well in providing something for people who aren't really into zombies but wanted to come to the convention anyway; the bar was spacious, relaxed and friendly; the programme area was away from the bar (but not too far), in a suite with its own toilet facilities, meaning that non-fans weren't able to accidentally wander into the programme items.

It was a really good convention - I could go into detail on the panel items and the brilliant, brilliant breakfast but I don't have room - and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend either the hotel or the organisers to anyone wanting my opinion on a convention.

## Newcon 4

The Old Fishmark, Northampton; 11-12 October 2008

*Report by Kev McVeigh*

When I said I was going to Newcon this year, rather than one of the other cons around that time of year, Lilian Edwards asked me what its USP was. It's a fair point: there seem to have been a lot of small cons and "events" this year, so how do you decide which to attend?

My first response was that a whole lot of people I like to spend time with would be at Newcon, but I'm sure the same would be true at Novacon, for instance. Different people, but still people I like (James Bacon, Mark Plummer and Clare Brialey are of course ubiquitous). That only diverts the question from why was I going to why were they going. Well, I can't speak for them, but this is what I found at Newcon:

The Old Fishmarket is an L-shaped space with high rafters. It's a great room in lots of ways, but in combination with PA problems, the acoustics weren't always so good. There were some interesting panels I only heard part of, exacerbated by some experienced speakers not always holding the microphone properly. It was impossible to understand John Clute at times for this reason; unfortunately, we *were* able to hear the dreadful band attempting to commit 'folk' on the Saturday evening (aside from not being in tune, the female singer was far too genteel for a song such as "Whiskey in the Jar"; we consoled ourselves with some fine malt from Tony Cullen's hip flask).

Newcon's programme wasn't packed, no attempt to please everyone all the time (which mars many con programmes), but there were enough interesting-looking panels to stimulate most people there. Okay, "Are graphic novels the future of SF?" seemed a little vague, and by virtue of none of the panel really arguing either way. it led to somewhat wavering criticism. On the other hand, "What would SF look like if no Britons had ever written any?" provoked a lot of interesting comment -- not just in terms of sf, but broader historical discussion too, and some of us carried that on into the bar. Discussing whether there are distinctly American-style and British-style stories amongst the early work of Arthur C Clarke (yes) and how much Cromwell's actions in Wales and Ireland impacted upon the British mentality and subsequently its sf. That, it seems to me, is what quite a few people want from their conventions. For me at least, forty quid is a lot of money just to sit in a bar with friends, without any focal point.

Not that I didn't spend a fair amount of time in the bar. It was a good space, close to the programme area, open so that passers by were visible. And the conversation was good: the usual eclectic mix of serious sercon, music, sex and Croydon. The Arthur C Clarke Award was debated in accordance with tradition, and slippery Jim De Liscard had "an unfortunate

barbecue incident and landed on my own sausage!” Scientific theories were expounded, including the revelation that shandy (the weak, shop-bought kids’ stuff) might be a form of homeopathic beer (more research needed here). On the other hand, it has to be left to Tony Keen to justify his assertion that “you are morally obliged to dance to ‘Dancing Queen’”.

It wasn’t all so deep and meaningful, though. James “there’ll be no bondage at my convention” Bacon was there, too. There was reminiscence about the ‘Knew Mutants’ bunch of young fans of the late ‘80s, comparing them to today’s (yesterday’s? I can’t keep up) ‘Third Row Fandom’: “Where did Third Row Fandom come from?” [beat] “The Third Row!”

What else did Newcon have? Organisers “Little Ian” Watson and “Big Ian” Whates had gone with a theme this year and invited Iain M Banks and Ken MacLeod (leading to scurrilous speculation that a typo had denied Iain R Macleod his invite). Storm Constantine was the third guest, and it is noticeable how much of the grass roots resurgence in UK sf and small press publishing links in with Storm and her coterie.

Three fine guests not enough for you? Okay, how about the ever charming Paul Cornell? The premiere of excerpts from Paul’s Radio 4 adaptation of Banks’ *The State Of The Art* was a definite highlight for many; worth catching when it’s broadcast early in 2009. Then, mid-afternoon, a buzz went round the bar. Pros and fans alike looked to the entrance. “Bloody hell,” somebody said near me, “Alan Moore’s here!”

And there was cake. Part of the celebrations of the major milestone in the British Science Fiction Association’s long and glorious history, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alan Dorey’s coup.

So, Newcon, not so new any more, being on its fourth iteration, but as a “slightly worn, one careful owner” convention, it was a fine weekend. I didn’t buy too many books, but what I did proved great buys. I met new people and got to know old friends a little more. Well worth the trip, and as enjoyable, thought-provoking, relaxing, inspiring and fun a small con as I’ve been to in many years. There’s your USP. When’s the next one, Ian(s)?

## **Critical Wave # 2.01**

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