

2-4 November 2007

NOVAcon 37
www.novacon.org

Guest of Honour
Charles Stross

Venue: Quality Hotel, Bentley, nr. Walsall
Membership: £35.00
Contact: 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ

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About our guest of honour:

Equally adept with “hard” science fiction, fantasy, crime, space opera and Lovecraftian horror, **Charlie Stross** is carving out a prolific, award-winning writing career on both sides of the Atlantic. He’s also active on the British convention scene, neatly reflecting Novacon’s own dual personality.

Whilst working towards degrees in both pharmacy and computer science, Charlie produced role-playing articles for the magazine *White Dwarf* before scoring his first fiction sale with “The Boys”, published by *Interzone* in 1987. His debut novel, *Singularity Sky* (2003), was nominated for a Hugo Award, and many of his short stories have reached the Hugo and Nebula shortlists. *Rogue Farm*, a short film based upon his story of the same name, was released in 2004.

The following year, Charlie won a Hugo for the novella “The Concrete Jungle”, whilst *Accelerando* (a novel constructed from previously published interlinked material) received the 2006 *Locus* Award for best science fiction novel, as well

as being shortlisted for the Hugo, Arthur C Clarke and John W Campbell Memorial Awards. His next release will be the novel *The Jennifer Morgue*, due out in December from the US imprint Golden Gryphon.

Charlie writes: “When Novacon 37’s esteemed chairman asked me to write a few words by way of introducing myself, I was a bit at a loss. ‘Introduce myself? Why on earth would I want to do *that*?’ I asked. He thought for a moment (or so I inferred from the delay in his email response): ‘you can touch upon your introduction to sf and sf fandom, why / how you became an author, what you’re working on right now... whatever you like.’ Which only made my headache worse. Because the terrible fact is, the answer to every one of those questions is, ‘I can’t remember.’

“I can’t remember my introduction to SF, because it happened some time before I was five years old. However, I *do* remember that the route to and from primary school was fraught with perils, and one particular peril lurked behind the bushes, just waiting to trap and debauch an unwary toddler ... the local library, whose entire collection of Andre Norton juveniles I drained by my sixth birthday. I was late starting to read, but once I got going I was voracious; and my parents left library tickets just lying around the house, like needles in a shooting gallery.

“As for why I started writing: that probably happened at the same time. I put it down to an accident of imprinting. For every writer who finishes a novel, at least ten begin one -- and some of my earliest memories are of my mother sitting at the kitchen table, bashing away laboriously on a manual typewriter. She never finished her novel, but somehow, at around the same time I was abusing library cards, I latched onto the idea that there was a *connection*, that books were something adults I looked up to hammered out on typewriters before they somehow went to live in the library.

“Most of us grow up consuming media, be it music or film or TV or books, but we don’t make the concrete connection between the stuff we’re enjoying and the act of creation. But before I could pick up the usual message that I should just lie back and be a passive consumer, I saw that writing was just one of the things that people did; so when at fourteen I shoved aside a Dungeons and Dragons project I was working on, and an Airfix model kit, and borrowed my sister’s typewriter in order to try writing a space adventure it didn’t feel unnatural or strange -- it was just another teenage hobby.

“I can’t remember exactly how I got into SF fandom, either. I suspect it was a Yorkshire Post article about Yorcon III, back in 1984 in Leeds; I went along for a day, bounced around a bit, and was hooked. Here, clearly, was a pool of people who shared my obsession! I must go to more conventions! And indeed I did.

Acquiring a more nuanced view of fandom took me several years and, I suspect, drove several SMOFs to distraction: but along the way I learned to hold my beer a bit better, sold a handful of short stories, did some growing up, and figured out that as long as I kept my embarrassing hobbies to myself, people wouldn't automatically guess that I was more than a little bit weird.

"... Until quite recently something I still don't entirely understand happened, and people started talking to me *because of* the weird stuff, rather than in spite of it.

"Which brings me back to Novacon, and how I ended up here. The answer is, *I can't remember*. Time changes us all, and I'm blessed -- or cursed -- with a really crap memory. It might have been something to do with that long-ago library, ten minutes' walk from the front door for a determined eight year old with a bunch of filched lending cards. Or it might be something to do with a drunken late-night bull session with Steve Green at a con gone by. Perhaps it was my mother banging away on the manual typewriter one rainy mid-term afternoon. Or it could have been John Brunner at a writer's workshop, graciously taking my short story seriously enough to explain what I was doing wrong, nudging me in the right direction. I really don't know: *why*: that would be an answer, and all I've got are questions.

"Starting with, which way to the real ale bar?"

[You can read Charlie's journal at www.antipope.org]

About Novacon 37

In addition to our traditional cocktail of literary discussion, desperate fun and offbeat science, Novacon 37's programme will carry the sub-theme "Celebrating Seventy Years of British Science Fiction Conventions", commemorating fannish gatherings since the very first sf con, held in Leeds in 1937. This will be echoed in our publications, via a series of articles by Peter Weston (covering 1937-1979) and Mark Plummer (1980-2006), as well as a photographic display.

About the Committee

Novacon 37's committee comprises: Vicky Cook (programme co-ordinator), Ann Green (secretary), Steve Green (chair & publications), Alice Lawson (treasurer) and Steve Lawson (registrations), plus Kevin Clarke (internet) and Chris Murphy (operations manager). Between us, we have decades of experience working on events ranging from programme-lite relaxcons to multi-stream worldcons.

Joining Novacon 37

...couldn't be simpler. Just fill out the enclosed form and pop it in the post to 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ, together with your cheque (made payable to "Novacon 37"). Should any of your friends need additional copies, these can be downloaded from our website (<http://www.novacon.org/>).

Membership Rates:

£35.00 until 30 April, 2007, then...

£38.00 until 31 October, 2007, then...

£42.00 on the door

About the Quality Hotel

The Quality Hotel in Bentley (just off Junction 10 of the M6) has been Novacon's venue since 2001, offering a central location, single-floor facilities, central bar and free parking. An extensive refurbishment programme began in early 2006; by mid-2007, all 154 bedrooms will have been refurbished. All public areas of the hotel are non-smoking and the building is wifi-enabled.

Room Rates:

£37.75 per person per night (twins & doubles), or

£50.00 per person per night (singles - see below)

All rates include full English breakfast. Please note the Quality Hotel has no single rooms as such, but is willing to redesignate a very limited number of its doubles for single use. It is imperative anyone wanting a single room books their accommodation as a matter of urgency via the enclosed form.

Contacting Novacon 37

Our first progress report will be out in early February. Meanwhile, we'd welcome your suggestions, feedback, etc, by mail (address above), through our website (<http://www.novacon.org>) or by posting on our new Live Journal forum (http://community.livejournal.com/novacon_37/), which can also be used to discuss such related topics as sharing rooms or car pooling.