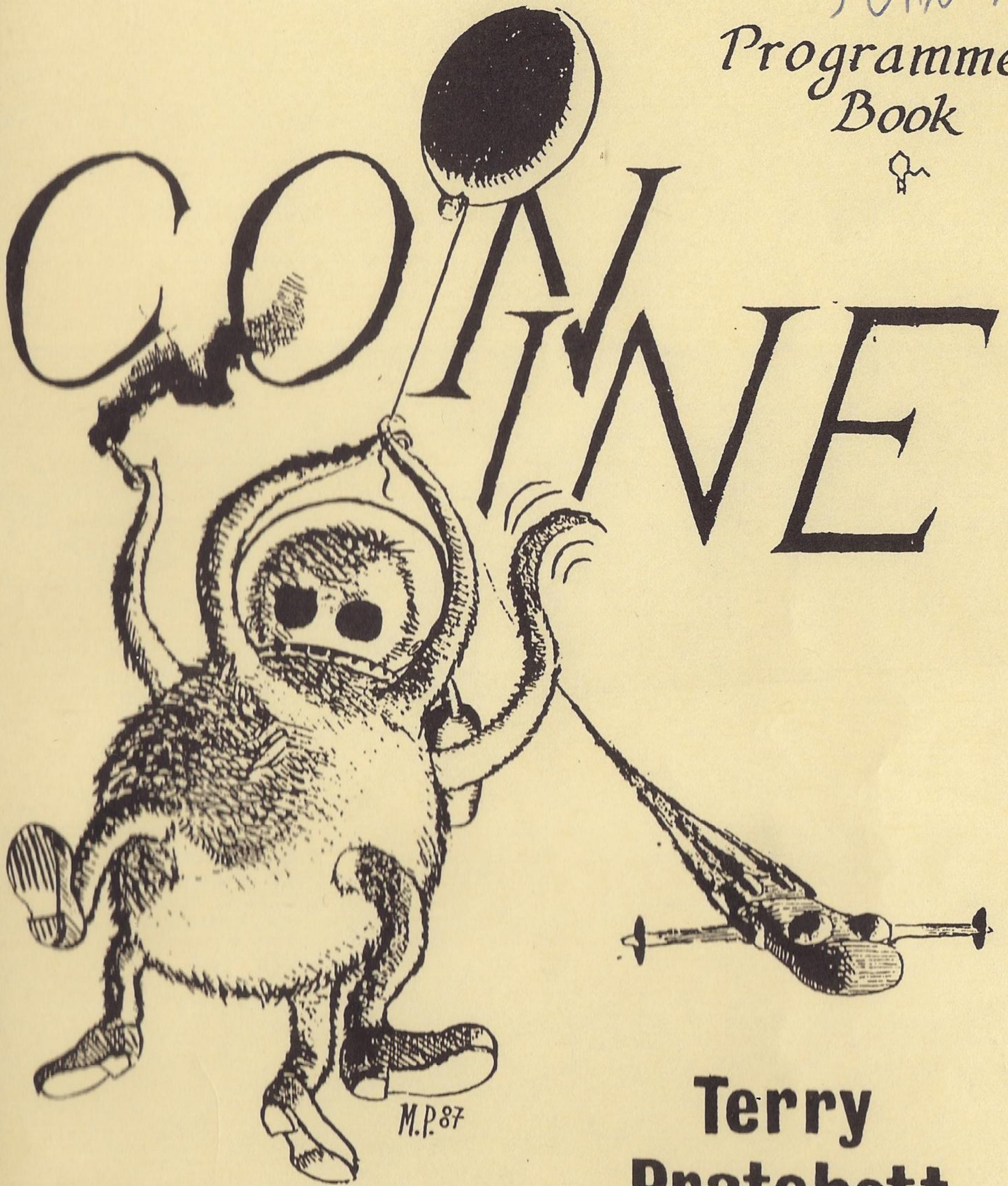


JOHN BRAY
Programme
Book



**Terry
Pratchett**

David Lally

5-7th August

Oxford Polytechnic

INTRODUCTION AND TRADITIONAL STAMMER-----
by Ivan Towlson

So. Here we are.
(More?)
Well. I think I can explain. There was this wardrobe, you see, and I was, for reasons that... anyway, I was sitting on top of it. Beneath me sprawled an OUSFG discussion meeting, at the centre of which lay a vast pile of fanzines, convention PRs, the bits of coloured mimeo paper you invariably pick up at cons, cocktail recipes, committee members and so on, in which Maria was making a nest. At one point she woke up for long enough to babble feverishly, "I wonder if it would be possible to run a convention in Oxford? Shall we have a look and find out?"
"What? Yes," I cried, drunk with oxygen deficiency.
"And I'll be the treasurer," said Dave.
Maria adopted an expression of faint nervousness. "We're not going to do it, you know," she explained, "just see if it could be done."

It has now dawned on me that Maria is far more of a devotee of the experimental method than I had ever feared. And now it is too late.
Blasphemous Deadline chitters in the shadows; the spectre of Th'Accountz hangs heavy over my dingy word-processor. Recently I have begun to hear strange noises in the night--noises which, in a horrible parody of human speech, seem to mutter phrases like "hmm... 29 people, of whom six are vegetarian, want dinner on Saturday... but only 13 people want rooms on Sunday night... mind you, some of them want doubles...". The nice men in white coats put it down to overwork. *But I know what is happening.*
For I have read the documents of the ancients: the mystic *Book Of The Progue Ram*, the inky *Con-Run-A* of Sorenson--and I know.
I have been bitten by the conrunning bug, and the horror will now run its course.
from the Diaries Of A Masochist, summer 1987

Er... can I go now?

)))
"OK, so you're into choirboys--so what? Cucumber sandwiches get boring after a while!"
--Adrian Cox

)))
THE COMMITTEE AND OTHER STRANGENESS-----

Dave Bate looked after the money, with his characteristic love, care and attention. John Bray hassled the rest of us, wrote lists and made nice to the Poly. Paul Cray addressed the envelopes and did the photocopying. Maria Hamilton sent messages from on high (Darlington, actually) and provided inspiration, verbiage and posters. Ivan Towlson took Finals and tried to catch up on sleep.
Thanks are due to lots of people (I imagine), among whom are numbered Eleanor Moore of the Poly's conference office, Martin Pickles, Melanie Dymond, the quote victims, the St Anne's photocopier and of course the godlike Amstrad PCW8256 (what else?). Neal Tringham wrote all over the membership list, John Styles seemed resigned and Matt Bishop issued a challenge. OUSFG provided moral (well... fairly moral) support, loadsa gophers and even the occasional member. British Rail made an honest woman of Maria and ICSF made an irredeemably corrupt one of Dave. The costumes were supplied by Marina McDonald and Penny Heal, the explanations by Jason Stevens and the soundtrack by Daleks On Acid. Dolph Lundgren appears courtesy of Tesco Premium tea-bags. You don't care.

MAN MAKING PUNS AHEAD: TERRY PRATCHETT-----
by Melanie Dymond

In his own words, "Terry Pratchett was born. Little is known about his personal life, a state of affairs with which he feels quite comfortable. He has never worked as a security guard or gone around the world on a tramp steamer, but he has cleaned a chicken house (thus achieving one of the three exciting things authors must do before starting their writing career). It took him all afternoon.
"He used to write one book every five years and used the proceeds to buy a greenhouse. After *The Colour Of Magic* came out in paperback in 1985 it became apparent that he would soon be able to house a medium-sized rain forest, and he had to rethink his strategy. Since then he has written one book every six months, initially to escape the pressures of being a Press officer in the nuclear industry and, since he gave up the job last November, so that he doesn't have to be one again.
"It is rumoured that he's now on a huge contract with Gollancz. The rumours are essentially true. However, after a few drinks he will explain how huge world-rights advances, once various people and government bodies have taken their cut, always work out at a negative sum, and so if he doesn't write a book too often he might just about break even. Has money changed him? Yes, he says, it's made him a richer person.
"The seventh Discworld book, *Pyramids*, has just been handed over to Gollancz and should come out late next Spring. He's now working on a special project with Josh Kirby, and fears that ideas are even now assembling themselves for the next DW book. When he grows up, he wants to be Larry Niven."

Terry Pratchett has now had eight books published, with a ninth (*Wyrd Sisters*, the sixth Discworld book) due out in hardback this autumn. His first book, *The Carpet People*, was a children's book, published in 1971. It is set amidst the wool and dust found in the average carpet, and deals with the battle of the various creatures of the Underlay against their mutual enemy, Fray. It is notable particularly for the illustrations--all were drawn by the author himself, depicting the scenery and population of the Carpet.

The next book, *The Dark Side Of The Sun*, was published in 1976. In the far future, where death is not always final and the mathematics of probability have been refined to such a degree that the art of prediction has become a science, Dom Sabalos, hereditary chairman of the planet Widdershins, sets out to look for the Jokers' World, once home of the legendary race that had populated the universe before humans and left debris and clues to its existence throughout the Galaxy. Unfortunately, there are some people around who would much rather he did not succeed...

The last book that Terry Pratchett had published before the start of the Discworld series was *Strata*, which came out in 1981. It also deals with a flat, disc-shaped world, resembling Earth itself too closely for comfort and discovered by Kin Arad, an officer of a company that manufactures planets to order. (Did I hear anyone mention Magrathea? Surely not...) Her company did not manufacture this world--so who did?

The Colour Of Magic was the first of the Discworld novels. Where the previous books, although on the whole well thought out, convincingly written and amusing, had failed to bring Terry Pratchett the wider recognition he deserved, the fast-paced tale of the failed wizard Rincewind, the naive tourist Twoflower (with far more money than was good for either him or his life expectancy in the Disc city of Ankh-Morpork) and Twoflower's tenacious luggage finally broke through into the public eye--and the rest, as they say in the most cliché-ridden biographies, is history.

The rest of the Discworld books have followed at regular intervals ever since--*The Light Fantastic*, the further adventures of Rincewind in the company of Twoflower, and *Equal Rites*, the story of a young lady named Esk with ambitions in a wizardly direction, ever since a dying wizard passed on his staff to her in a case of mistaken identity--or, more accurately, of mistaken gender--are, at present, the only two available in paperback.

The last two, available in hardback only at the present time, are *Mort* and *Sourcery*. The former tells the story of a boy who is selected for apprenticeship to Death, who teaches him the tricks of the soul-taking trade, and still has time for some amateur match-making

THE PROGRAMME-----

OK, so it's not a startlingly original title.

	Main Programme	Discussion Programme	Workshop Programme
Friday			
6 00	Dinner-----		
7 00	Introduction (LT)	-	-
7 30	Gopher Meeting (LT)	Terraforming	-
8 00	Spock In Manacles (LT)	-	-
8 30			
9 00	The Clockwork Quiz		
9 30			
10 00	SF as Literature:	-	Assassin: game start
10 30	Panel	-	-
11 00	My Guitar Wants To	-	Fundament rehearsal
11 30	Cancel Blake's ?	-	
12 00	-	Midnight Storytelling	
Saturday			
9 00	Breakfast-----		
10 00	Mars In 1990	-	-
10 30			
11 00	Mars... when?	Media: Censorship and Quality	-
11 30			
12 00	-		Truth, Penitence and a whole lot of Silliness
12 30			
1 00	Lunch-----		
2 00	Terry Pratchett: the	-	-
2 30	Guest of Honour on	-	-
3 00	the spot (LT)	-	-
3 30			
4 00	-	The Joy Of Comics	Assassin: update
4 30			
5 00	Fantasy: the Search		
5 30	for Originality		
6 00	Dinner-----		
7 00	The Prisoner: David	-	-
7 30	Lally Speaks (LT)	-	-
8 00	Video: The Chimes Of	Son Of The Clockwork Quiz	-
8 30	Big Ben (LT)		
9 00	Video: The Alternate	The Spawn Of Non-Q:	-
9 30	Chimes Of Big Ben (LT)	Dave Langford	-
10 00	Fundament! (LT)	-	-
10 30			
11 00	-		Zen and the Art of Cocktail Mixing
11 30	-		
12 00	Tuneless Beyond Belief	-	

Main Programme

Discussion Programme

Workshop Programme

Sunday

9 00	Breakfast-----		
10 00	-	-	Writers' Workshop:
10 30	-	-	Sfinx Wants You! Possibly.
11 00	-	Arthur C Clarke:	
11 30	-	discussion	
12 00	-		
12 30	-		
1 00	Lunch-----		
2 00	Humour in SF: Panel	Bridges: Iain Banks	Conrunning: or, AAARRGGHH!
2 30		under discussion	
3 00	-		Massage workshop
3 30	-		
4 00	SF As Illiterature:	Future Conventions	
4 30	A Woman In Space		
5 00	It's All Over Now: the	-	-
5 30	debris sorted (LT)	-	-
6 00	Dinner-----		
7 00		The discussion meeting	-
7 30		at the end of time	-
8 00	Ritual falling-asleep		-
8 30	of committee. That's all, folks.		

WHERE IT'S ALL HAPPENING

The Discussion and Workshop Programmes will be taking place in seminar rooms in the Lloyd Building conference suite. The Main Programme will take place in another seminar room, or, for those items marked (LT) above, in the Lloyd Lecture Theatre.

WHEN IT'S ALL HAPPENING

The events listed above will, we hope, occur at the times indicated, and will go on until interrupted by another event or those nasty dashes--i.e. a blank space indicates a continuation of the event above. Items which appear to be going strong after their allotted time has expired will be moved to the continuation room (yes, it's another seminar room) if necessary.

WHAT THE PROGRAMME DOESN'T TELL YOU

First of all, there will be a game of KAOS (which is not at all similar to Killer--see the article elsewhere) running on Sunday morning near Morrell Hall. If you expressed an interest in this, you should find details in your registration package--if you didn't, but want to know anyway, collar John Bray (the one with the beard and efficient look) before Saturday evening and ask him. (He'll be organising the Assassin meetings.)

Second, there will be videos running in the Lecture Theatre at random intervals during the convention: watch the blackboards for details. There will be a video and television in one of the Morrell Hall kitchenettes for the benefit of insomniacs and Prisoner addicts.

Third, and most important, where the programme above conflicts with the pocket programme, the latter is correct.

PROGRAMME NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS-----

Friday

7pm, Main Programme. Introduction to the convention, the guests and the Poly. Your last chance to see the committee conscious. **This event takes place in the Lecture Theatre.**

7.30pm, Discussion Programme. John Bray leads a discussion on terraforming: the science, the literature and the consequences. The discussion meeting format is borrowed from OUSFG: John will give a short talk, and the mob will then fight over a "speaking object" (probably the embalmed head of L Ron Hubbard) to get their two penn'orth in.

8pm, Main Programme. The classic fan video, *Spock In Manacles*. We hope. At the time of writing we are having problems with the soundtrack, so this may not occur. **This event takes place in the Lecture Theatre.**

9pm, Main Programme. A sf trivia quiz from the clockwork fingers of Dave Bate.

10pm, Main Programme. SF as literature: science fiction as science, or science fiction as fiction? Ivan Towlson, Mr Pretension-About-Town, wonders about the dividing line, about why we read sf, and about whether the label is now anything more than a handicap.

10pm, Workshop Programme. Assassin: John Bray explains and organises. How to kill friends and make enemies, all with a few sticky hole reinforcers.

11pm, Main Programme. My Guitar Wants To Cancel Blake's 7. So do Terry Pratchett and David Lally, who join forces to explain why. The panel will cover television sf in general as well, and will be moderated by David Bate.

11pm, Workshop Programme. Fundament rehearsal: Maria Hamilton and Ivan Towlson try desperately to get the right people in the right numbers to the right place at the right time. Singing in tune not compulsory.

12midnight, Discussion Programme. Laurence Barker leads a storytelling session by candlelight.

1pm: conference suite closed overnight; videos in Morrell Hall.

Saturday

10am, Main Programme. Mars In 1990--well, maybe not. The science of science fiction tends to go a bit off the mark. John Styles takes a look at the evidence.

11am, Main Programme. If not 1990, then when? If anyone knows, Gerry Webb does--his company is the UK leader in space flight, and has been closely involved with the Russian space program. A talk illustrated with slides.

11am, Discussion Programme. Dave Bate leads a discussion on censorship and the media.

12midday, Workshop Programme. SCREAM as you try to decide whether the astral pole is easier backwards or forwards. PLUMMET embarrassingly to the ground in the matchbox sex test. DIE laughing as you watch the CONINE committee attempt the five-man astral pole... Some very silly games. And (more important than that even) some very painful ones.

2pm, Main Programme. Terry Pratchett, CONINE's Guest of Honour, is savaged by Melanie Dymond in a no-holds-barred, cut-and-thrust, shock-horror-revelation interview. Beware of cheek muscle damage caused by overindulgence in laughter. **This event takes place in the Lecture Theatre.**

4pm, Discussion Programme. Over the past few years, the quality of comics has shot up remarkably. A new literary form? How literary are they? How do they differ from the books we know and love? Are their antecedents going to hold them back? Who knows?

4pm, Workshop Programme. An update on (and temporary ceasefire in) the Assassin game.

5pm, Main Programme. Panel: Is it possible to write a truly original fantasy? While science fiction seems to go from strength to strength, fantasy seems to be forever repeating itself. Is this true? If it is, why, and how can this be remedied? If not, why has it acquired this image?

7pm, Main Programme. Our special guest speaker, David Lally, talks about the Prisoner series, its making and his interest in it. The talk will be followed by the showing of the episode *The Chimes Of Big Ben* and an alternate, unscreened version of the same episode. **This event takes place in the Lecture Theatre.**

8pm, Discussion Programme. It's that quiz again!

9pm, Discussion Programme. Dave Langford presents a selection from his forthcoming book of sf parodies.

10pm, Main Programme. Fundament. (This is so embarrassing.) It's fingers-in-ears time as the musical version of a well-known science fiction trilogy gets its world premiere. Longer but more comprehensible than the infamous Ring Cycle. We hope. **This event takes place in the Lecture Theatre.**

11pm, Workshop Programme. Zen and the Art of Cocktail Mixing! Go reeling to your beds, and try not to think exactly what might have been in that glass--let alone how many substances... Carefully timed to obliterate Fundament from your memory.

12pm, Main Programme. The all-singing all-dancing evening comes to an end--there will be filking in here if anybody wants it. Obscure OUSFG in-jokes strictly forbidden, which may cut down on a lot of people's repertoires. Somewhere in the bowels of the committee room there may be a guitar, if one is needed.

Sunday

10am, Workshop Programme. Sfinx, the self-proclaimed/confessed "magazine of speculative fiction in Oxford", is always looking for contributions--no need to be anything to do with the town or University, just bring an idea and see how it goes.

11am, Discussion Programme. Paul Cray leads a discussion on Arthur C Clarke. Science or fiction?

Morning, Morrell Hall/Headington Hill Park (see map). KAOS--see John Bray for details.

2pm, Main Programme. Maria Hamilton chairs a panel on humour in sf. What are its special peculiarities? Does it rely on skills other than those usually employed by the humourist? Is it a particularly good vehicle for satire? Or what?

"If reality is for you, OUSFG probably isn't"--
by John Bray

These words have enticed many freshers over the years down the long dark road to corruption. Founded in 1961 by Brian Aldiss (reputedly 'to get all those drunken people off my floor'), the Oxford University Speculative Fiction Group ("science" fiction was frowned upon by the Proctors in the dim and distant past) has in 27 short years grown to the monstrous ravening penguin it is today.

Alumni include Dave and Hazel Langford, Hugh and Barbara Mascetti (Hugh led a pyrotechnic faction in the late seventies who delighted in blowing up (small) bits of Port Meadow, not to mention punts...), Dermot Dobson, Michael Scott Rohan, and more recently Max O'Connor, described by a national newspaper as the 'precocious guru of the new right' who featured on Wogan's cranks spot last summer as the head of Mizar, the UK offshoot of the American cryonics firm who offer 'life after death' by freezing either the whole body or just the head in liquid nitrogen. (We hoped Max could be at CONINE, but we fear that he must remain in California as he may have to testify in what might be a case of 'murder' in which a distraught son fled into the countryside with the head of his dead mother in a dewar flask of liquid nitrogen, after the state coroner threatened to thaw her out for a post mortem (it's all true, I tell you...)).

Sfinx, our magazine started in 1969, grew to a circulation of nearly 1000 hawked from door to door in Oxford, featuring stories by Ian Watson, Rob Holdstock and Colin Greenland amongst others, until the infamous issue whose cohorts still lurk 800 strong in the bowels of Wolfson bankrupted it. But as the debts faded away a new series rose from the mire, leading to Sfinx 4 (70p) and a newly released Best of Sfinx (£1.00) containing stories by the old masters, all available from Neal Tringham.

A ms. found on a door reading 'Have set off for Zool, see you there' led to the epic tale of 'Zool - death planet where the intractable criminals of 10,000 worlds battle in the dark swamps amid the death throes of un-namable beasts, etc!' which is still going strong after 60 episodes and 200+ pages.

Currently the society has weekly library meetings (2000 books kept in some poor soul's room) and discussion meetings (apropos of which, the main problem in being secretary is phoning titles like "Suffice it to say that your arrival was like a turd falling into a Ming vase" into the answering-machine of the local information sheet), video meetings etc. Among the 'specials' (which have more than once led to 7 OUSFG meetings in 8 days--OIAWOL!) is the punt party, at which some dramatic extravaganza (this year Wagner's Ring Cycle in 20 minutes complete with chariots drawn by electric sheep) vies with attempts to blow up small furry (stuffed) animals). The twice-termly newsletter has grown under Ivan's tutelage to epic proportions (Ivan on his newsletters: "I think any reasonably intelligent person could understand *most* of that newsletter". On being asked what it would take to understand all of them: "A great deal. Being me, for a start.").

Any requests for merchandise, the mugs and the new design sweatshirt modelled by our gophers/thugs should come to me, as we may be putting in a new sweatshirt order next term.

Per dementia ad astra!

KAOS REIGNS IN OXFORD-----
by Maria Hamilton

A long time ago in the City of Conspiring Dreamers, life was simple and orderly and KAOS was unknown. A small band of renegades known as the Oose-fugg jostled in the streets and parks of Oxford, and the game they played was called Killer.

Despite its savage-sounding name, this was a game for gentlefolk, a game of few rules and much honour. Weapons were limited by Acts of Parliament rather than by the rules of the game, but you could knock out an opponent with a banana from less than six paces (and, indeed, from greater distances--if you *really* wanted to throw it and risk having your supper squashed on the cobbles!)

Yet even so, these were the days when the Oxford Bombers were more than just a memory, and weapons varied beyond the norm of bananas and Boswell's water pistols. And there was a player of Killer who resided in Wolfson, a wizard held in great awe by many, a man clothed in black: Doctor Death. And in his room was laid, by someone whose name shall not be uttered, a... device.

Unfortunately, though it was a device bigger than a cap, it was not, in fact, the room of the aforementioned wizard, but of a peaceful soul who was sore alarmed when it went off in the wee hours of the morning. And who did cry out for justice to the great chief of Wolfson. And the latter did make many enquiries, saying, who has done such a thing? 'Oose-fugg,' replied one whose tongue had sadly become loosed from their intellect.

So it was that the scribe of Oose-fugg, named the Barker for no obvious reason, was instructed to clothe himself as a penguin and make himself known to the Proctors, who sat on the Throne of Judgment. But when he obeyed, with great fear and trembling, he found the Proctors had not anger in their hearts, but puzzlement. For the chief of Wolfson spake unto them in no tongue that they could understand. And though the scribe of Oose-fugg knew whereof he spoke, he denied it, saying, I know nothing, I am a penguin. So they released him and he went away, rejoicing.

Well, after that "Killer" was not something ever played in Oxford. "Killing As Organised Sport" (KAOS for short) may have been played by some people, but they, of course, had *nothing at all* to do with OUSFG, and KAOS was *not at all* similar to Killer--in fact the words "OUSFG" and "Killer" never passed the lips of anyone holding a water pistol.

I was first introduced to KAOS in my first year at college. The game was played from six to twelve at night every day for a week. Ceasefires were declared for OUSFG meetings and within eyeshot of any university official--the only respite from the creeping paranoid horror associated with relentless pursuit by lunatics with water pistols. Though exhausting, it was a crucial game in the development of KAOS, because it used a limited death period--15 minutes--and saw an arms race develop that changed the face of future contests.

You and your puny pistol are trapped in somewhere closely resembling a prison. (Balliol.) The only way out is guarded by two zombies with bloody great squeeze bottles who are going to reanimate and soak you in the next minute. (Dave and Colin.) What do you do?

Easy. You invent a plot device, who lets you out the back with his magic key, circle round to the front and shoot them in the back. Easy...

By the summer I was organising a game on somewhat different lines. Several sub-games each lasting half an hour, where one player is given a target to reach by the end of the half-hour while everyone else tries to shoot him/her (and each other, of course). This system works quite well with about a dozen players or less, but with more people the half-hour games only last five minutes before everyone's been shot down! The problem of getting past the others to the target on time threw up some varied and imaginative solutions: Tim Adye disguised himself so masterfully that he walked straight past us all, whereas two others hid for nearly the whole hour under a bush with a hedgehog, and standing on a seat in the Ladies respectively.

More recent games have been notable for the level of weaponry toted--the *norm* is now the standard black Boswell's pump-action water-gun, with a range of up to 30 feet, and some players have turned up with battery-operated devices with a 45-foot range! Funnily enough this does not confer much of an advantage--stealth and aim are still equally important. And when it comes to being picked up by the firearms squad--which did happen, to the unfortunate Adrian "I'm not going to be allowed to forget this, am I?" Cox--a water pistol that *looks* like a water pistol is a definite plus!

But that's another story...

CONINE MEMBERSHIP LIST-----

Correct at 31.7.88

001a Terry Pratchett	039a Soft Wheatcroft	072a Gerry Webb
002a David Lally	040a Peter Hornby	073a Noelle Hall
005a David Bate	041a Matthew Brock	074a John Stewart
006a Paul Cray	042a The Living Underwear	075a Mel Dymond
007a Maria Hamilton	043a Robert Burrage	076a Tom Yates
008a Ivan Towlson	044a Mike Figg	077a Jason The Pink
009a John Bray	045s Paul Clough	078a Tim Adye
015a Mark Grant	046a Alex Stewart	079a The Beast That Shouted "Tweet!" At The Heart Of The World
016a Hugh Mascetti	047a Suzanne Welham	080a White Dragon
017a Neal Tringham	048a Andy Burke	081a Toby English
018a Colin Wilkinson	049s Phil Raines	082a Dave Langford
019a Ken Lake	050a Jurgen Marzi	083a Hazel Langford
020s Steve Linton	051a Trevor Barker	084a Graham Taylor
021a John Botham	052a Zoe Deterding	085a Tim Irons
022a Steve Rothman	053a Fiona McArthur	086a Steve Bull
023a John Dallman	054a Andy Morris	087a Alastair McCullough
024a David Elworthy	055s Dave Race	088a Natasha Sykes
025a Mike Damesick	056a J C Salmon	089a Dave Clements
026a Phil Allcock	057a Paul Dormer	090a Nancy Reading
027a Peter Cohen	058s Tim Illingworth	091a David Bass
028a Mike Cheater	059a Barbara Rochford	092a Simon Bradshaw
029s John Bark	060s Bernie Evans	093a Alan B
030a Paul Marrow	061a Jan Lake	094a John Purdom
031s Alex Perry	062a Robert Sneddon	095a Angela Cowdery
032a Laurence Barker	063s PPOG Penguin	096a Fiona Brown
033a Graham Ruston	064a Ben Brown	097a Graham Harper
034s John Richards	065a Odie	098a Mark Hayward
035s Marcus L Rowland	066a Rob Meades	099a Mike Stone
036s Tibs	067s Mike Abbott	100a Mo Holkar
037s Joan Paterson	068a Bill Ray	
038s Caroline Mullan	069a Melkólfur	
	070a Chris O'Shea III	
	071a Marcus Streets	

