



Ansible 145 August 1999

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AUSSIECON. *Yvonne Rousseau* encourages visitors: "Australia!" roared Robinson—"Australia! he's mad; who ever goes there unless they are forced?—He shan't go there! I wouldn't go there if my passage was paid, and a new suit of clothes given me, and the governor's gig to take me ashore to a mansion provided for my reception, fires lighted, beds aired, and pipes laid across the table."—Charles Reade, *It Is Never Too Late To Mend*, 1856. *Yvonne:* "The speaker, Robinson, is naturally arrested by police the moment he has finished uttering these unkind words."

Hordes of the Things

John M. Ford updates the A144 note on Lin Carter's grumble at Robert E. Howard for coining uninventive names like Thog: 'I was channelling the more-or-less departed spirit of Sir A. Conan Doyle, and the noted Spiritualist assured me that he and the shade of Two-Gun Bob Howard had "joined our etheric forces to "bushwhack" (Bob's word) the immortal remains of Linwood Carter for this nominative humbug, as well as other unresolved grudges between Lin and Bob.'" Sir Arthur's report, while vivid, forces me to Watsonian euphemistics—suffice it that the two, uhm, ghostwriters gave the offender's ectoplasm a thorough pringling.'

Colin Greenland, as fiction editor of *Adhoc* ('Cambridge monthly magazine of culture and stuff'), is looking for cultured 500-word stories at £200 a go. Send c/o *Adhoc*, 35 Parkside, Cambridge, CB1 1JE.

David G. Hartwell's letter to reviewers, sent with proof copies of *Greenhouse Summer* by Norman Spinrad (Tor, Nov), offers an unusual reassurance: 'Norman made a public fuss a couple of years ago about a mainstream novel that no one would buy. This is not it.'

Liz Holliday obituarized her *sf* magazine on 7 July: 'Okay, we killed *Odyssey* today. I'm waiting to hear from Dave [Ryan, of publishers Caliver Books] if he wants to do the one last issue or not (my money would be on not ...).' Officially, 'advertising wasn't coming in fast enough to support us until our rising circulation brought us into the black.' The non-appearance since 1998 of 'bimonthly' *Odyssey* didn't help. As for the games-oriented sister mag: 'Caliver will be relaunching *Valkyrie*. I will be fiction editor (one piece of fewer than 5K words per issue), and book reviewer. However, we are very overstocked.'

Josh Kirby does not deny the legends of his vast antiquity fostered by that chap Pratchett ('Jules Verne—such a kind man!'). *Andy Sawyer's* library skills duly unearthed his early art book: *The perspective of architecture ... deduced from the principles of Dr Brook Taylor, and performed by two rules only of universal application*, by Joshua Kirby, 1761.

George Lucas gave us a little lesson in statistics: 'This film cost \$115m to make. It's got to be one of the top ten grossing films of all time just to break even. And not many films can do that. In fact, only ten ever have.' (*Omnibus: The Story of Star Wars*, BBC 7 Jul)

Terry Pratchett had fun with the *Sunday Times*: 'I wrote an article for them on the British and Fantasy in which I used the word "numinous". The sub-editor, and they train them well on the *ST*, assumed this had to be a mis-typing of *luminous*, and duly corrected it. "Luminous and invisible" ... well, it's certainly poetic in a strange kind of way....'

Whitley Strieber 'has been sounding off on Art Bell's radio show in the US again, this time claiming that the UK is currently in the grip of a UFO flap the likes of which has never been seen before. Oddly, no UK ufologists appear to be aware of this.' (*Joe McNally*, 19 Jun)

Conbalingua

13-15 Aug • **Wincon V** (Unicon), King Alfred's College, Winchester. £28 advance reg. At door: £35, £15 Sat or Sun only, £5 Fri only. Contact 53 Havant Road, North End, Portsmouth, Hants, PO2 7HH. John Barnes has had to drop off the GoH list; John Whitbourn is a new GoH.

25 Aug • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Florence Nightingale pub, on York Rd/Westminster Bridge Rd roundabout. 7pm on; fans present c5pm.

27-30 Aug • **Galileo** (*Trek*), Heathrow Park Hotel. GoH Walter Koenig. £40 reg. Contact 38 Planetree Ave, Newcastle, NE4 9TH.

28-30 Aug • **Shinnenkai** (anime), Radisson, Heathrow. CANCELLED since the hotel withdrew conference facilities (but is honouring room

reservations—gee, thanks!). Contact PO Box 110, Didcot, OX11 7YH.

2 Sep • **London Circle.** *Ansible*-free evening?—I'll be in Australia. The Florence Nightingale pub is closing for a few weeks of redecoration, exact dates uncertain. Meet at the Jubilee if FN is closed on 2 Sep.

2-6 Sep • **Aussiecon 3** (57th Worldcon), Melbourne, Australia. *Advance booking now closed:* \$A300 reg at the door, \$A75 per day, \$A50 evening only. Contact GPO Box 1212K, Melbourne, 3001, Australia.

3-5 Sep • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Sacha's Hotel, Manchester. *Now £55 reg; same at door; day rate £25 Sat/Sun, £20 Fri.* Tenth event in series. Contact 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M7 3QP.

5-7 Sep • **Nocturnal** (media), Sacha's Hotel, Manchester. £45 reg. Contact (SAE) PO Box 3870, Troon, KA10 7PZ.

10-12 Sep • **Masque 7** (costumery), U of Wolverhampton, Dudley Campus, W. Midlands. *Now £35 reg.* Contact 130 Hamstead Hall Rd, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham, B20 1JB.

17-20 Sep • **Breakaway** (Cult TV '99), Pontin's Sand Bay Holiday Village, Weston-Super-Mare. £128 reg inc 3 nights' half board. Contact PO Box 1701, Peterborough, PE7 1ER. 01733 205009.

17-19 Sep • **Fantasycon 23**, Britannia Hotel, New St, Birmingham. £50/\$100 reg, £25/\$50 supp (BFS members £40/\$80 and £20/\$40). Contact (SAE) 46 Oxford Rd, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT.

18 Sep • **Whitchurch Fireworks**, near Pangbourne. Gates open c5:30pm. Firing nominally 8:30pm. Small entry fee; usual beer tent etc.

22 Sep • **BSFA Open Meeting.** CANCELLED owing to renovation work at the Florence Nightingale pub this month. Returns in Oct.

25-26 Sep • **Hypotheticon** (relaxacon), Glasgow. £15 reg. Contact Flat O/2, 11 Cleghorn Street, Glasgow, G22 5RN.

7 Oct • **London Circle.** In Jubilee if usual pub closed—see 2 Sep.

26-9 May 00 • **plokta.con** (small friendly *sf* event), somewhere in SE England. GoH Ken MacLeod. Probably £20 reg; send no money as yet. Contact 52 Westbourne Tce, Reading, Berks, RG30 2RP.

25-9 Aug 05 • [FX: OMINOUS, DOOM-LADEN CHORDS] **UK in 2005** Worldcon bid, Brighton or Glasgow. Pre-supporting membership £5, €8, \$8, \$A12, \$NZ15, or ¥950. Contact 379 Myrtle Rd, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

Rumblings • **Avalon**, the *Trek* con 'postponed' from 4-6 June 99, is cancelled. There's a scheme to co-ordinate refund demands (contact 13 Park End Rd, Romford, Essex, RM1 4AX, giving Avalon membership payment details)—but since the holding company is in liquidation with zero assets, it's most unlikely that any member will get a penny.

Infinitely Improbable

All the Sounds of Fear. Peter Jackson, director of the coming three-part Tolkien movie from New Line Cinema, chillingly declared: 'The *Lord of the Rings* is a classic English story. However, I think that New Line is concerned that having no American accents will alienate a US audience ...' [BB] Shooting begins this year. Recalling Disney's *Winnie the Pooh*, we eagerly await the 'Of Herbs and Stewed Gopher' scene.

Mythopoeic Awards were presented on 1 Aug. ADULT LITERATURE Neil Gaiman & Charles Vess, *Stardust*. CHILDREN'S Diana Wynne Jones, *The Dark Lord of Derkholm*. SCHOLARSHIP (INKLINGS) Walter Hooper, *C.S. Lewis: A Companion & Guide*. SCHOLARSHIP (REST OF UNIVERSE) Donna R. White, *A Century of Welsh Myth in Children's Literature*. [DB]

Random Fandom. Paul Barnett continues to explore America: 'I've survived addressing the NY Science Fiction Society without being lynched. I was somewhat nervous since, before I got started, two of the society's officers had an extended discussion of a point of order, which seemed to involve throwing the furniture around, using naughty words at the tops of their voices, and debating whether or not both of them had lawyers and if one of them (the society officers, that is, not the lawyers) was a sex pervert and child molester. Oh my. I quivered and went to the bathroom a lot.' • **Bill Bowers**, after 14 months' unemployment and fears that poor health may bar him forever from another job, is selling off fannish memorabilia: enquiries to eWorlds@iname.com. • **Neil Craig**, comics tycoon, made Glasgow headlines with his Kosovo analysis: 'A barmy Byres Road shop owner is accusing the Catholic

Church of atrocities and acts of genocide against the Serbs.' (*The Glaswegian*, 24 June) [BS] • *Justine Larbalestier* is researching a book on the Futurians (yes, she knows of Damon Knight's and has his support) and the Hydra Club; she pleads for fan info-sources. Contact at Aussiecon or c/o Dept of English, University of Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia. • *Robert Lichtman*, who cracked his pelvis in a car crash on 1 June, is happily walking and driving again. • *Roger Sims*, 1995 DUFF winner, had triple heart bypass surgery on 9 July and is recovering well.

As Others See Us. *Liam Neeson* favoured *Woman's Hour* listeners with his subtle insight about *That Movie*: 'Of course, it's not science fiction, because science fiction is set in the future and this film is set a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away....' [SL] • *Brian Sewell* showed how closely art critics keep up with science and sf, in a 26 July *Evening Standard* rant: 'It must by now be obvious to all sane men that space exploration has been and is a fatuous pursuit, for such technology as we have tells us that no man can survive the atmospheres of other planets even in our galaxy, let alone the galaxies beyond and beyond. Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov, however, continue to nurture schoolboy fantasies and cost us dear when grown men and governments refuse to relinquish the prepubertal ambitions they engender....' [AO] • BBC Radio 4's *Open Book* (30 July) devoted 10 minutes to alternative-history sf, now renamed 'Counterfactuals' in a snobbish effort to sever all links with horrid skiffy. *Presenter*: 'This sort of thing might seem to be science fiction but now it is the subject of mainstream literature.' [JR]

R.L.P. *Andrew Brown*, popular 1970s-80s Melbourne fan, died from unknown causes on 8 July. He co-edited the first 18 issues of Australia's sf newsletter *Thyme* (1981-2, with Irwin Hirsh). A nice guy whom I remember wandering around UK conventions, highly visible at 6' 10" in his 'I Absolutely Hate Basketball' t-shirt. • *Jean Hoare* (1948-1999), who had been smilingly holding out against cancer through years of chemotherapy and who in mid-July still looked amazingly well, died on 26 July. I have no words for this: *Martin Hoare is my oldest friend, I was best man at their wedding in 1993, and Hazel and I liked Jean very much indeed. Her ex-husband Barry Owen had died 3 weeks earlier; all sympathy to their grown children Andy and Karen, but especially Martin. Jean will be hugely missed. The crowded funeral and memorial services were both on 3 August, with substantial local and Dutch fan representation; Jean herself had insisted on the *Life of Brian's* 'Always Look On the Bright Side'. • *George 'Lan' Laskowski*, long-time filk and fanzine fan with two Best Fanzine Hugos (1986, 1991) for his *Lan's Lantern*, died on 19 July after a prolonged fight against cancer. He was 50. • *Mario Puzo*, 'best known for the *Godfather* series, but of genre interest for scripting the Christopher Reeve *Superman* movie, went to sleep with the fishes on 2 July. He died of heart failure at 78.' [SHS]*

Fannish Publications. *Space*Time Buccaneers*, the spiffy 1991-98 sf cartoon series by the late great Ian Gunn, is available worldwide as a 100pp graphic novel. UK: £5 to C. Brialey, 26 Northampton Rd, Croydon, CR0 7HA. NA: \$10.50 US or \$15.75 Canadian to D. Thayer, 701 Regency Dr, Hurst, TX 76054-2307, USA. Australia: \$12 in person (\$14 mailed within VA, elsewhere \$15) to K. Pender-Gunn, PO Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130. Proceeds to Ian Gunn Memorial Fund. • *TAFF Tales*, Ken Bulmer's trip report, has sprouted a 'new' closing chapter since its 1998 publication. Vince Clarke, who retyped most of the 1959-61 instalments, forgot publishing this bit in his own *Science Fantasy News*, Xmas 1955. [MP] Free *TAFF Tales* insert on request for those who bought it; full report still available from me at £5, proceeds to TAFF.

Outraged Letters. *Andy Butler* has gone all pear-shaped: 'The new *Pears Cyclopedia* is out or out soon and, despite once suggesting that there had been no decent sf since the 1930s, the new edition has an entry on science fiction writing, as written by yours truly.' • *Simon R. Green* is unmoved by abuse in *A144*: 'John Grant; you bitch. Generic? Moi? I shall take umbrage, twice daily in water.' He also wrote, in some blockbuster whose title we instinctively forget: 'Roj Peyton, Merchant Prince, was a large, square-built man with a history of cunning deals and hard bargaining. At his side stood the acerbic social columnist Dee Langford, purveyor of unsuspected truths and assassin of reputations, whose pieces everybody read, if only to be sure they weren't in them.' Next page, both these shifty characters die in a fire-fight. • *Charles Platt* on *Locus*: 'A notoriously unreliable American sf newsmagazine has published a gossip item claiming that I have been charged with four offenses, one carrying a potential 10-year jail term. This statement is untrue and actionable. The charge was not filed, because of lack of evidence.' Hostile hearsay had led police to search his house for nonexistent drugs.

Synchronized Fanning. 5,271,009 fans have rushed to inform me that (a) Sturgeon's Law, which I quoted Robert Rankin ascribing to

Heinlein, is in fact Sturgeon's—I know, that was the point; (b) ConJose (San Jose in '02) is doomed to be known by anagram-lovers as Cojones.

Small Press. Iron Press is recklessly reading for *Star Trek—The Poems*. Max 3 poems per person, with SAE; 40 or fewer lines; closes 1 Jan 00. 'Submissions in Klingon must be accompanied by a full translation.' 95 Queens Rd, Whitley Bay, Northumberland, NE26 3AT. [SS]

C.o.A. *Jane Carnall*, 47 Buckland Road, Reading, RG2 7SB ('hopefully until October'). *Tommy Ferguson* (temporary), 90 Carnhill, Derry, N. Ireland, BT48 8BE. *Oliver & Jacky Grüter-Andrew*, 3615 W 8th Ave, Vancouver, BC, V6R 1Y9, Canada. *Andrew C. Murdoch*, 508-6800 Westminster Highway, Richmond, BC, V7C 1C5, Canada. *Paul Treadaway* (temporary), 10a Mill Street, Cambridge, CB1 2HP.

Pringlewatch. *David Pringle* feels inundated by sightings of the word 'pringling'. Just for a change: 'Oh, how I love Humanity, / With love so pure and pringlish, / And how I hate the horrid French, / Who never will be English!' (G.K. Chesterton, 'The World State', c1927)

The Dead Past. 20 years ago, *Ansible 1* (Aug 79) noted the coming launch of the Jacqueline Lichtenberg Appreciation Society at the Brighton Worldcon, and rashly promised: 'future issues will contain news.'

Chog's Masterclass. 'She rose, opening the carriage door and leaning out to pull her tethered horse up from behind the carriage and then quite literally flowed onto his back.' (David Eddings, *Domes of Fire*, 1992) • *Dept of Lit Crit*: 'In 2012, nine-year-old Prabir Suresh and his toddler sister Madhursree live on an uninhabited Moluccan island ...' (Russell Letson reviewing Greg Egan's *Teranesia*, *Locus* 7/99) [DB] 'As a contribution to natural history, the book is negligible.' (*The Times on The Wind in the Willows*, 1908) • *Dept of Eager Anticipation*: 'Sometime, a few minutes or a few years or a few hundred years from now ... something living would be coming down the tunnel. Something living. Breathing, perhaps. / Food! / A ripple of a thrill ran down its suckered tentacles, as it savoured—years in advance?—its forthcoming repast!' *Dept of Logical Facility*: 'His jungle-trained mind had taught him to use his mind for the purpose for which it was intended.' (both Barton Werper, *Tarzan and the Silver Globe*, 1964) [BA] • 'Under the chapka [a kind of hat], the impassive beauty of her features has the tender translucence of uncooked chicken breast, catching, at the extremities, the lavender tint of the winter sky.' (Adrian Mathews, *Vienna Blood*, 1999)

Chuck Harris, 1927-1999

Chuck Harris died unexpectedly at home on 5 July. To the end of his life he was proud of his involvement in 1950s 'Sixth Fandom' and the birth of three long-running fannish institutions: the TransAtlantic Fan Fund (TAFF), the Off-Trail Magazine Publishers' Association (OMPA) and Walt Willis's classic fanzine *Hyphen*, of which Chuck was a founding editor. What we most loved him for was his inexhaustible output of ribald, uninhibited, stream-of-consciousness letters. He'd been totally deaf ever since a bout of meningitis in the Navy during World War II, so fan correspondence was a lifeline for Chuck (the spelling varied according to 'whether I'm being Hims Ancient or Modern') and a joy for recipients. 'Sometimes I get so pissed off with fandom that I walk away again and think I will never ever go back, and then web-spinners like you tell me tales like Joseph [Nicholas] in mini skirts or tights and I know that I shall never be able to break the silken threads and get to Stanley Gibbons and buy a brand new stamp album and some peace and quiet.' One notably non-PC comment was sparked by the honouring of an sf author who'd long ago been one of Chuck's fan contemporaries: 'And just fancy an old queen like Ego being demoted to a mere knight.'

Chuck is survived by his long-suffering (according to him) and charming wife Sue, their twin children Sean and Samantha, and a wide-spread extended fannish family; at different times he adopted Avedon Carol as his daughter in fandom, and Geri Sullivan as his mother. He was amazed and delighted when the one-off Harris Fund brought both Chuck and Sue to Minneapolis in 1989 as special guests of Corflu 6. His humanist funeral was on 12 July, featuring the music of his favourite song, remembered from when he could hear: 'Chattanooga Choo-Choo'. I keep being reminded of him by silly things like a spam e-mail—'Are You Tired of Spending Countless Hours Searching for Pictures of Nude Celebrities?'—which I was about to copy to Chuck, already imagining his raucous chortle, when I remembered. Another painful goodbye.

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