



Ansible 154 May 2000

From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU, UK. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816. E-mail ansible@cix.co.uk. Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Sandra Scholes**. Available for SAE, cider, or COPE LIGHT device.

2Kon. Over 900 fans crowded into the Central Hotel, Glasgow, over Easter, while *Ansible* stayed home with a cough; much-praised hotel liaison person Cuddles reckoned this would be the last Eastercon which the now rather small-seeming venue could contain. According to chairman Andrew A.Adams, the scanty programme with its lack of specific sf content was a deliberate reaction to recent Eastercons' programming 'overdose'. Party animals duly spent more time in the bar, while others grumbled like Ben Jeapes: 'You didn't miss much! A not very brilliant programme spread very thinly over four days ... vast gaps of not much happening.' Hotel grumps began with the usual lack of real ale and breakfast mushrooms (Chris Bell counted two mushrooms on day one, and that was that), continuing with soiled glasses, few and inept bar staff, broken agreements about food availability, and general griminess (skin-crawling Bell descriptions of hotel filth omitted here). Favourably mentioned programme items included Prof John Salthouse's lectures on exothermic reactions, i.e. mighty indoor bangs and flashes which caused only one light bulb to fall from a chandelier, and an Ian 'Sauron's Son' musical which did for Tolkien what the Rev Jim Jones did for soft drinks: 'How do you solve a problem like Moria?' • *Helicon 2*, a Jersey Eastercon bid chaired by Martin Hoare, effortlessly beat the opposition—three spoof bids—in 2002 site selection voting, despite terrifying room prices: £60 single, £55/person twin or double. • *BSFA Awards*. Novel: *The Sky Road* by Ken MacLeod. Short: 'Hunting the Slarque' (*Interzone* 141) by Eric Brown. Artwork: *Darwinia* cover by Jim Burns. [CH] • *Other Awards*. Ken McIntyre for fan artwork: Sue Mason, 2Kon PR1 cover. Doc Weir for unsung fannish good eggs: Tim Illingworth. Paper Tiger art show prize: Dominic Harman. *Ansible* gold star for most superfluously technological Eastercon newsletter: *Koka2*, ed Mike Scott and the usual *Plokta* suspects, whose six slim issues appeared on the web in real time. Perhaps its hottest scoop was the 2Kon chairman's shock nickname change from A³ to—as revealed in his own souvenir book—A_. • Fans had fun as always, including the fun of complaining.

The Vinegar Works

Brian Aldiss mysteriously hinted: 'Maybe we'll meet at the University of Reading on 29th June? An extraordinary occasion. I've had to buy a suit.' *Ansible*: 'Are they making you Vice-Chancellor?' *Aldiss*: 'YES.'

Edward Gorey (1925-2000) died on 16 April aged 75. His drawings and writings in 90-odd chapbooks were unmistakable, unique, and driven by a wonderfully warped imagination; but *Ansible* readers don't need to be told that. So many unforgettable pictures, and likewise captions—a favourite from the 'pornographic' *The Curious Sofa* (where no naughtiness is ever actually shown) being: 'They were soon joined by Donald, Herbert's singularly well-favoured sheepdog, and many were the giggles and barks that came from the shrubbery.' • A personal point of bogglement was that *The Guardian* had no prepared obituary for the great man, as a result of which I found myself urgently writing it.

Harry Harrison visited hospital last month for an angiogram and was kept in for a quadruple bypass operation, successfully carried out on 11 April. His daughter Moira reported next day that he was already recovering well and expected to be 'better than new'. As Brian Aldiss put it on the 13th, 'He is already looking perky, calling aloud for a glass of tequila and a good ten cent cigar.'

John Jarrold, whose editorial work for Simon & Schuster's Earthlight imprint had been part-time only, is now gloating over becoming a full-time S&S editor. Meanwhile a correspondent helpfully points out the existence of the John Jarrold Printing Museum.... [GNA]

Conusant

To 1 Jul • **Dan Dare** 50th anniversary exhibition, Atkinson Art Gallery, Lord St, Southport, Merseyside, PR8 1DB. £2.50 admission. More information from 01772 700874 or 0151 934 2111.

17 May • **Clarke Award**, Science Museum, London; by invitation.

17 May • **Skeptics in the Pub**, Florence Nightingale (as for BSFA below), 7pm for 7:30. Robert Rankin on 'Who wouldn't be a skeptic.'

24 May • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Florence Nightingale, on York Rd/Westminster Bridge Rd roundabout. 7pm on. With Roger Levy.

21 May • **Fantasy Fair** (10th anniversary), Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough. 10:30am-4pm. Contact 5 Arran Close, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire. CW4 7QP. 01477 534626.

26-9 May • **plokta.com** (small friendly sf event), Holiday Inn, Leicester. £20 reg (kids £10) to 15 May, £30 at door; room bookings closed 30 Apr. Contact 3 York St, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH.

27-8 May • **Silver Arrow** (*Robin of Sherwood*), Bristol Jarvis Hotel (name changed from Hilton). £52 reg inc. banquet. Contact (SAE) 4 Stitchman House, Byfield Rd, St James, Northampton, NN5 5GH.

28 Jun • **BSFA Open Meeting**, as above. With China Miéville.

7-9 Jul • **Nexus 2000** (media), Bristol Jarvis Hotel (name changed from Hilton). Cost: not revealed, and not on their website, and not disclosed to impious editors who ask by e-mail. Contact (SAE) 280 Southmead Rd, Westbury on Trym, Bristol, BS10 5EN. 0117 983 9603.

12-13 Aug • **Caption 2000** (small-press comics), Oxford Union. £8 reg (£5 students/unwaged), £10 at door. Contact 71 Hugh Allen Crescent, Marston, Oxford, OX3 0HL. Fax 0870 174 0622.

8-10 Sep • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Renaissance Hotel, Manchester. £60 reg or £30 supp, to Soc of Fantastic Films, 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN. 0161 707 3747.

13-16 Apr 01 • **Paragon** (Eastercon) has moved from the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool (big reported trouble with room and function space prices), to the Hanover International in Middle of Nowhere, Hinckley, Leicestershire. *New rates*, not sent for publication before the post-Easter increase: £35 reg, £15 supp, £17.50 junior (12-16), £15 child (5-11), infants free. Contact 379 Myrtle Rd, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

25-7 May 01 • **Seccond** (Seccon 2) has yet to finalize hotels and GoHs. Swindon seems a likely venue. Contact the Bradshaws: see CoA.

28 Jun - 2 Jul 01 • **2001: A Celebration of British SF**, U of Liverpool. Suggestions wanted for papers on post-war UK sf (all media), especially Clarke and Wyndham. Abstracts by 30 Sep 00 to Dr Farah Mendlesohn, Middlesex University, White Hart Lane, London, N17 8HR.

29 Mar - 1 Apr 02 • **Helicon 2** (Eastercon), Hotel de France, Jersey. No guests yet announced. £30 reg, £15 supp/junior. Contact 33 Meyrick Drive, Wash Common, Berks, RG14 6SY.

Rumblings • **UK 2005 Worldcon Bid**. Vince Docherty teases: 'We hope to announce the choice of site—between Brighton and Glasgow—in the UK at Plokta.Con.' Just *where* between Brighton and Glasgow?

Infinitely Improbable

More Awards. *Stephen Baxter* won the Philip K.Dick Award (best paperback original, 1999 US publication) for his 1997 collection *Vacuum Diagrams*. [GVG] • *Charles L.Grant* and *Edward Gorey* are to be honoured this month as Horror Writers' Association Lifetime Achievement winners. This was announced before Gorey's death. • *The James White Award* will celebrate James's memory by encouraging new writers with a prize (plus *Interzone* publication) for the short story submission deemed best by multiple panels of judges. Further details to follow.

SF World in Sobriety Shock! *Malcolm Edwards* on the 6 April Gollancz/Millennium party: 'We laid in 8 cases of wine (96 bottles) for the 70-odd guests who had said they were coming, and I was shocked to discover this morning when we went to collect the glasses and show-cards that 13 bottles were left unopened and (it follows) undrunk. No doubt if we hadn't been turfed out at 10.00pm this would have been taken care of, but it's still a disappointing performance.'

Random Fandom. *Ray Gibberd* of Andromeda Bookshop has had two operations for brain tumours and needs expensive chemotherapy, £1,600 monthly for 6-8 months. Rog Peyton and Andromeda beg for cash and auctionable sf goodies: Ray Gibberd Fund, c/o Andromeda Bookshop, 2-5 Suffolk St, Birmingham, B1 1LT. A fundraising event is planned for, possibly, June. • *Greg Pickersgill* seeks new fanzines to review for *BSFA Matrix*—especially ones that talk about sf. 3 Bethany Row, Narberth Rd, Haverfordwest, SA61 2XG. • *Bob Tucker*, now 85,

has given up con-going: 'I went to my first convention in October 1939 and to my last one in October 1999. Sixty years, that's not too many. And it is a wise place to stop. Some things Beam's Choice can't cure.'

Life Imitates Larry Niven! From a Microsoft product support web-page: 'When you run Explorapedia and use the Exploratron to look at the Earth spinning, the Earth rotates in the wrong direction.'

C.o.A. Bridget & Simon Bradshaw, 19 Hill Court Rd, Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 3JJ. **Gregg Calkins**, SJO 0816 Express Mail, 1641 NW 79th Ave, Miami, FL 33126-1105, USA. **Russ Chauvenet**, 2328 Bermuda Village, Advance, NC 27006, USA. **Heidi Lyshol & Kjetill Gunnarson**, Kirkeveien 100C, N-0361 Oslo, Norway. **Tom & Tammy Springer**, 15515 NE 1st Circle, Vancouver, WA 98684, USA.

Outraged Letters. **Lloyd Penney** gently notes that the A153 FAAN results (being what Lenny Bailes could remember) omitted one vital category—'BEST LETTERHACK: Lloyd Penney'. • **Nigel Richardson** reports from the cutting edge: 'You may be alarmed to know that online diaries really are becoming the new fandom, if you can imagine a fandom where there are about 3,000 fanzines produced almost every day. The first convention is being held in Philadelphia in October and looks every bit as earnest and frightful as might be expected, with program items that run along strangely familiar lines. There's a lot of history repeating itself, only with prettier women, less beards, better design, no Gary Farber, absolutely no crotled greeps, and more media interest—I've been interviewed in the New York Times, you know. (And live on New Zealand Radio, which is not something I want to remember.)'

Publishers and Sinners. **Paul Simpson** decided to 'move on' from editing *DreamWatch*, as of the issue 71 relaunch.

Fanfunder. **GUFF's** northbound race to Eastercon 2001 is on: Eric Lindsay & Jean Weber vs Damien Warman & Juliette Woods. Voting closes 13 Nov. Ballots from P.Kincaid, 60 Bournemouth Rd, Folkestone, CT19 5AZ. • **2Kon United Fan Funds Auction:** Alison Scott's hard-sell team raised £550 in less than an hour, divided between TAFF, GUFF, the SF Foundation, Electrical Eggs and the Ray Gibberd Fund. [K]

R.I.P. **Catherine Crook de Camp** (1907-2000), US teacher, author and editor, died on 9 April. She married L.Sprague de Camp in 1939 and collaborated with him on much writing under his byline. • **William 'Bill' Danner**, who published 123 issues of his letterpress fanzine *Stefantasy* from 1945 to 1998, died this year; he was 94 and, Richard Lynch believes, probably the oldest sf fan. • **Jan Jansen**, chief editor of the first international fannish newsletter *Contact* (launched Oct 1956) and of *Alpha*, continental Europe's only fanzine in those days, died at his home near Antwerp on 23 April. [RB] • **Peter Jones**, the actor and comedian who voiced The Book in the original radio *Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy*, died on 10 April aged 79.

Small Press. *The Inquisitor: Fan Columns from the Vargo Statten SF Magazine* collects all this 1954-6 mag's fan material: 'Inquisitor' (Vince Clarke) columns, con reports, fan profiles, fanzine reviews, assembled by Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer. 45,000 words, 48pp plus card wraps. Minimum contribution inc surface mail: £3 (cheques to Mark) or \$5 (to Roger Robinson) from 14 Northway Rd, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6JE. Profits to the usual fannish causes. • *No Moose Today, Thanks* is a collection of Sue Mason's art plus writing by and about her. £4 post free (cheques to Maureen Speller) or \$8 (to Roger Robinson) from Alison Scott, 24 St Mary Rd, Walthamstow, London, E17 9RG. Proceeds to TAFF. • *Fanthology '95:* editor Bill Bowers seeks recommendations of fine fanzine articles from 1995. Write to him at 4651 Glenway Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45238-4503, USA. • *Hilltop Press.* Steve Sneyd's status report: 'Poetry continues to sell like condoms at a Vatican conclave.'

Hugo Nominations. BEST NOVEL *A Civil Campaign* by Lois McMaster Bujold, *Cryptonomicon* by Neal Stephenson, *Darwin's Radio* by Greg Bear, *A Deepness in the Sky* by Vernor Vinge, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J.K.Rowling. • NOVELLA 'The Astronaut From Wyoming' by Adam-Troy Castro & Jerry Olton (*Analog*), 'Forty, Counting Down' by Harry Turtledove (*Asimov's*), 'Hunting the Snark' by Mike Resnick (*Asimov's*), 'Son Observe the Time' by Kage Baker (*Asimov's*), 'The Winds of Marble Arch' by Connie Willis (*Asimov's*). • NOVELLETTE (6 nominees owing to tie) 'Border Guards' by Greg Egan (*Interzone*), 'The Chop Girl' by Ian R.MacLeod (*Asimov's*), 'Fossil Games' by Tom Purdom (*Asimov's*), 'The Secret History of the Ornithopter' by Jan Lars Jensen (*F&SF*), 'Stellar Harvest' by Eleanor Arnason (*Asimov's*), '1016 to 1' by James Patrick Kelly (*Asimov's*). • SHORT 'Ancient Engines' by Michael Swanwick (*Asimov's*), 'Hothouse Flowers' by Mike Resnick (*Asimov's*), 'macs' by Terry Bisson (*F&SF*), 'Sarajevo' by Nick DiChario (*F&SF*), 'Scherzo with Tyrannosaur' by Michael Swanwick (*Asimov's*). • RELATED BOOK *Minicon 34 Restaurant Guide* by Karen Cooper & Bruce

Schneier; *The Sandman: The Dream Hunters* by Neil Gaiman & Yoshitaka Amano; *SF of the 20th Century* by Frank M.Robinson; *The Science of Discworld* by Terry Pratchett, Ian Stewart & Jack Cohen; *Spectrum 6: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art* ed Cathy & Arnie Fenner. • DRAMATIC *Being John Malkovich*, *Galaxy Quest*, *The Iron Giant*, *The Matrix*, *The Sixth Sense*. • PRO EDITOR Gardner Dozois, David G.Hartwell, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Stanley Schmidt, Gordon Van Gelder. • PRO ARTIST Jim Burns, Bob Eggleton, Donato Giancola, Don Maitz, Michael Whelan. SEMIPROZINE *Interzone*, *Locus*, *The New York Review of SF*, *SF Chronicle*, *Speculations*. • FANZINE *Ansible*, *Challenger*, *File 770*, *Mimosa*, *Ploka*. • FAN WRITER Bob Devney, Mike Glycer, Dave Langford, Evelyn C.Leeper, Steven H.Silver. • *Fan Artist* Freddie Baer, Brad Foster, Teddy Harvia, Joe Mayhew, Taral Wayne. • JOHN W.CAMPBELL AWARD (not a Hugo) Cory Doctorow, Thomas Harlan, Ellen Klages, Kristine Smith, Shane Tourtellotte. • Unlikely claims of subliminal Scientology propaganda in that gloomily-awaited *Battlefield Earth* movie have provoked debate about the unscrupulous use of hypnotic 'backwards masking' techniques by certain UK fanwriters, yened rof etov, reygl rof etov, repeel rof etov, revlis rof etov, drawa on rof etov....

Voice from the Grave. Kingsley Amis's letters to Philip Larkin piss on other authors, e.g. 'leading young novelists' like Ian McEwan in Mar 83: 'But the one we must put a contract on is D.M.Thomas ... Oh, and Christopher Priest and Pat Barker and Maggie Gee are no good. Don't know what to say about M**** A****. Bet you do, though, what?' [DW]

2Kon Revisited. **Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer** sent a surprise report, here savagely trimmed: 'Over 900 fans descended on Glasgow over the Easter weekend in search of an Eastercon. Exactly where the Eastercon went is a little more vague; critics noted that there was little evidence of it in the Central Hotel and many therefore went looking for entertainment outside. The 2Kon committee seemed to have opted for a deliberately minimalist approach to programming; support for the UK05 Worldcon bid, which shares several personnel with 2Kon, may have diminished as a result of this and a few other less than entirely successful organizational tweaks. Guests Guy Gavriel Kay, Katherine Kurtz and Deborah Turner Harris were well-received, and Professor John Salthouse's attempts to blow up the convention entirely was probably the most popular event of the weekend. Meanwhile, the masquerade included the entire cast of the wacky races and what seemed to be excessive technical difficulties. All three TAFF candidates were much in evidence amidst fast and furious voting: Tobes Valois paid for a pornographic picture of himself as drawn by Sue Mason and everybody paid to see Tommy Ferguson in a skirt, something which is fast becoming yet another Eastercon tradition. Overall a good time seems to have been had, although many people noted that this was despite rather than because of the convention itself.' [CB/MP] • **Mark's Favourite 2Kon Moment:** 'A clump of Sproutlore/ZZ9/Aliens Stole My Handbag people were hanging out in the bar in the early hours of Sunday morning. One was wearing shorts and the others were merrily singeing the hairs on his legs. Just to pass the time, you understand. A barman came out to investigate the source of the strange burning smell, but was presumably content that there was no risk. "It's all right," he yelled back to a colleague. "They're just setting fire to one another."'

15 Years Ago. **Colin Greenland** grumpily resigned from the *Interzone* collective, **Eve Harvey** overcame **John Jarrold** in GUFF voting for the southbound trip to Aussiecon 2, and **Harlan Ellison** smote **Charles Platt** on the jaw at the Nebula party. (*Ansible* 43, May/June 1985)

Thog's Masterclass. They were both roughly the same age, in their very early fifties, though a hundred years earlier they would have appeared much younger.' (D.F.Jones, *Colossus*, 1966) [BA] • 'The police report said there had been a thunderclap, as if the burning house had disappeared so suddenly that the air had rushed back inaudibly.' (John Barnes, *Finity*, 1999) [SM] • *Dept of Tortured Adolescence:* 'Girls. Suddenly they snagged at Whandall's eyes.' (Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle, *The Burning City*, 2000) • *Dept of Eyeballs in the Sky:* 'Then your eyes cleared. God, I've had your eyes in my head as long as I can remember ...' (Nora Roberts, *River's End*, 2000) [NLW] • *Dept of Scientific Units:* '... the world would do well to stick to the [ramjet] system, accepting that Mach 2 as an average transit time was fast enough for anyone.' 'Slipping and stumbling across tractor tracks ten meters wide and often two deep ...' (D.F.Jones, *Colossus and the Crab*, 1977) [BA]

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