

Ansible



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SOCIETY SPOT. John Clute's sixtieth birthday party in September attracted the usual suspects to the famous Camden Town salon, including Peter Nicholls and Clare Coney from far-off Australia. Judith Clute dispensed unending streams of wine and sushi. David Pringle came clutching an early proof of *The Amber Spyglass* and babbling about the terrifying legal documents he'd had to sign to get it; Paul McAuley, not to be outdone, handed out proofs of his upcoming *The Secret of Life* from a large carrier bag. Pat Cadigan demanded that Thog must 'start poring over my work and find something to make fun of for the next six consecutive *Ansibles*, or face dire consequences. You dog.' M. John Harrison grumbled about having an 'unofficial' website thrust upon him. Also sighted were Hilary Bailey (with children and grandchild), Robert Irwin, Roz Kaveney, the Kincaid Spellers, Steve Jones, Kim Newman, Pamela Sladek, and others, all making remarks highly characteristic of themselves. Afterwards, John Clute cheerfully wrote: 'Couple of drunks at the end, whom I'd never met in my life; which is bog standard.'

The Protecting Ancestors

Ray Bradbury will be awarded an ever so prestigious (non-genre) lifetime achievement medal at the US National Book Awards in November.

Samuel R. Delany, at Readercon, remembered *Analog's* editorial policy in the swinging 1960s: 'John Campbell rejected *Nova*. He said his audience could not relate to a black central character.' [BD]

Stephen King fulminated in an *Observer* interview about 'Kingsley Amis types' persecuting genre authors like King and J.K. Rowling with accusations of 'not literature'. Even those ignorant of Amis's unashamed publication of sf, supernatural, spy and crime novels (and enthusiastic essays on these genres) might suspect that he said rather little about Rowling, having died two years before her first novel appeared. [D]

Michael Moorcock on piracy of yore: 'The French magazine *Fiction* was inclined to carry translations of *New Worlds* stories which the authors didn't know about. Ian Watson blamed me because the editor, Michel DeMuth, told him I'd given permission to reprint various *NW* stories by other authors (I'd told him he could reprint mine only). When I objected to this and sorted it out, he got stropopy. Years later at a convention I was admiring his large, handsome Briard dog. He wouldn't tell me its name. Turned out it's called Moorcock.'

Harry Harrison on Chicon (excerpts from long report): 'Joan and I went down for breakfast at the crack of dawn the first day. Fanac began when Bob Silverberg joined us. A few minutes later Terry Pratchett did as well. I was going to tell them what a great flight we had in animal class in a 777, but Terry described the joys of BA first class—just him and one other passenger. When Bob described buying opals by the handful in Australia. I realized I was outclassed and remained silent. ● I met a chubby guy with a bald head and a stick who resembled the Gene Wolfe whom I knew a scant twenty years ago. The resemblance was more than accidental. He reminded me that he was a neowriter then and that I had bought his almost-first story "The Horars of War". The years weighed heavily.... ● Dave Kyle, in the huckster room, bulged his eyes at me and kept saying "Oh my God!". Either I looked at death's door—or in the pink—after my open heart surgery. But when I asked him which it was he gasped and said "Oh my God!" Life is full of little mysteries. ● Fred Pohl has quit smoking after about 70 years of puffing away at it and, as you can well imagine, this did not improve his humor. ● A nice con. Got good vibes from lots of fen. Signed at least 3,000 autographs. Fat Fandom is even more gross than ever as they expand at an unbelievable, probably exponential, rate....'

J.K. Rowling dislikes critical works like the Foundation's *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature*, explained her agent Christopher Little as he forbade quotation from the sacred texts (at least their British editions) in the proposed *Harry Potter and the Ivory Tower*. Coincidentally, the *Publisher's Lunch* e-newsletter rumours that Rowling is thinking of changing agents, having discovered that an alleged 20% commission plus deduction of all charges and overheads is not exactly standard.

Alison Spedding, the UK fantasy author imprisoned in Bolivia for

drugs possession (see *Ansible* 132-3, 147), has been released on £1,300 bail to await the supreme court's final decision on her case. [CP/AS]

Ian Watson was invited to open Nottingham University's forum on 'Artists and the Built Environment' with a reading: 'What story could be more suitable than my "Talk of the Town", in which a Midlands town reveals to my hero its private language, understood by nobody else? "Hoodabonda? Shoochoo moochabal" et cetera. East Midlands Arts neglected to tell me that, laudably just in case any of the audience needed this, everything would be simultaneously translated into Sign....'

Concurbit

7 Oct ● **Margate Poetry Festival**, Margate Museum, Market Sq, Old Town. GoH Lionel Fanthorpe reads his own poetry! £5 admission.

15 Oct ● **Paperback/Pulp Bookfair**, Victoria Hotel, Buckingham Palace Rd, SW1. 10am-5pm. £2.50 entrance. With author signings.

21-22 Oct ● **Octocon 2000**, Royal Dublin Hotel, O'Connell St, Dublin 1. £25(I) reg to 42 Capel Court, Dublin 1, Ireland; sterling £20 to Dave Lally No. 2 A/C, 64 Richborne Tce, London, SW8 1AX.

25 Oct ● **BSFA Open Meeting**, Florence Nightingale, on York Rd/Westminster Bridge Rd roundabout. 7pm on. With Martin Millar.

27-9 Oct ● **Bats 2000** (multimedia/horror), Heathrow—CANCELLED. Members offered full refund or membership of *Eclectic* 21, 25-7 May 01, Leicester. Contact (SAE) 47 Bennetts Court, Bristol, BS37 4XH.

27-30 Oct ● **Cult TV Festival**, Barton Hall, Torquay. Contact Cult TV, PO Box 1701, Peterborough, PE7 1ER.

10-12 Nov ● **ArmadaCon 2000**, Copthorne Hotel, Plymouth. GoH £27 reg; concessions and day rates available. Contact 165 Egguckland Rd, Higher Compton, Plymouth, PL3 6QB. Phone 01752 257635.

10-12 Nov ● **Novacon 30**, Britannia Hotel, New St, Birmingham. £32 reg, £35 at door. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

11 Nov ● **Day of the Daleks**, Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. £29 reg; less for Dalek owners? Contact 8a Dovedale Rd, Wallasey, CH45 0LP.

24-7 Nov ● **Con-Fiction (Trek/media)**, Imperial Hotel, Blackpool. £45 reg. Contact 36 Finsbury Ave, Blackpool, Lancs, FY1 6QN.

29 Dec - 1 Jan ● **Hogmanaycon**, Glasgow—CANCELLED owing to lack of members (it's a tough time of year) and sponsorship. Refunds to follow. Contact 26 Avonbank Rd, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA.

3-4 Mar 01 ● **Microcon 2001**, Devonshire House, University of Exeter. Contact 22 Cottey Brook, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 5BR.

29 Mar - 1 Apr 02 ● **Helicon 2** (Eastercon), Hotel de France, Jersey. *Guests announced:* Brian Stableford, Harry Turtledove, Peter Weston. £30 reg, £15 supp/junior. Contact 33 Meyrick Drive, Wash Common, Berks, RG14 6SY.

28 Aug - 1 Sep 03 ● **Torcon 3** (Worldcon), Toronto, Canada. GoH George R.R. Martin, Frank Kelly Freas, Mike Glycer. Rates, to 31 Dec 00: \$170C/\$115US; sitevoters \$105C/\$70US; presupporters \$140C/\$95US; presupp voters \$75C/\$50US. Visa and (shortly) Mastercard accepted. Contact PO Box 3, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5W 1A2.

Rumblings ● **Chicon** statistics: 178 artists exhibiting, art show sales \$109,000, 21 newsletters, 613 programme participants in 1024 items, adult attendance 6204. Hugo eligibility extended by one year for all 2000 work published outside USA. [AIP] ● **The Millennium Philcon** (Worldcon 2001) will present additional 'retro Hugos' for 1950 work.

Infinitely Improbable

Publishers and Sinners. *SF World* folded after the September-dated issue 4. Editor Steve Holland says: 'The reason was a lousy level of advertising revenue which could not support the magazine. The state of magazine publishing in the UK is terrible, and most titles are reliant on their advertisers ... and unfortunately they weren't there for us. [...] I was more disappointed than shocked. The decision was made long before the publisher would have had sales figures for issue 3 (with the reduced price), so we'll never know whether we could have survived on sales alone. We ran a very tight ship when it came to our editorial budget and still managed to get a lot of first-rate features. With that in

mind, I hope that other publishers don't look on this as proof that an SF magazine can't survive in today's market.' ● *Gollancz* death reports by UK newspapers were exaggerated, as in the 16 Sep *Independent*: "The venerable Victor Gollancz list is in effect no more. The logo that once graced books by J.B. Priestley and Michael Foot will now appear only on science fiction titles." [DG] *Malcolm Edwards* confirms that VG will focus on sf/fantasy from January 2001: "This is not such a big shift as you might imagine, as this year those lists accounted for over 60% of all Gollancz sales and in next year's budget it was looking like 75%. [...] We will stop using the Millennium name on paperbacks, though the logo will remain (with the "M" changing to "G")." Ah, Gillenniug.

R.I.P. *Eddie Powell*, the stunt-man who appeared in countless UK-made sf and horror movies from 1949 to 1996, died in August. His mostly uncredited roles included regular doubling of Christopher Lee in Hammer and other films, and the title role in *Alien*. He discovered conventions in 1998 and was tickled to find that he had a fan following. [S/JC] ● *Nancy Tucker Shaw* (1928-2000), US fan of many years' standing and Bob Shaw's widow, died on 17 September; her health had been poor since her 1998 stroke. She is much missed. ● *Iain Thomas*, Scots fan who in Cuddles's words was 'famous for his acerbic fanzine *Failed Voyager* and wild, drunken antics at cons', died early in September.

As Others See Us. *Geoffrey Wheatcroft* on the late Kingsley Amis: "He became a science-fiction fan, rarely a good sign ..." (*The Atlantic Monthly*, September 2000) [SC]

Fanfundery. *TAFF*: 25 years after tied winner Bill Bowers was unable to make his trip in 1976, *TAFF* hopes to bring him to the 2001 UK Eastercon—if his health permits. (He was hospitalized on 27 Sep with pulmonary oedema.) The date of the next 'normal' eastbound race is undecided. Vijay Bowen has taken over NA administration: PO Box 156, Village Station, New York, NY 10014-0156, USA. ● *DUFF*. Nominations open for 2001 race from America to Swancon down under: candidates need 3 NA and 2 Aussie nominations, 100-word platform and \$25 bond, sent by 31 Oct to Janice Gelb, 1070 Mercedes Ave #2, Los Altos, CA 94022, USA. Whose 1999 *DUFF* trip report is indeed now out: \$5 (US or Australian) in person, \$6.50 surface mail, from above address or from Cathy Cupitt, PO Box 915, Nedlands, WA 6909, Australia.

Thog's Alien Biology Masterclass. "Think back to *The War of the Worlds*," Van Buren retorted. "Terrestrial microbes would have killed them, because they would have had no resistance. So they've been gradually integrating terrestrial DNA into themselves during the so-called abductions—genetically modifying themselves until they are essentially human." (Nick Pope, *Operation Thunder Child*, 1999) How splendid that to UFOlogists like Pope, H.G. Wells is the cutting edge of science.

C.o.A. *Eileen Costelloe*, Trinity Hospice, Elizabeth Clark Ward, 30 Clapham Common N Side, London, SW4. *Jonathan 'Jonjo' Jones & Sharon Lewis*, 37 St Peters St, Duxford, Cambridge, CB2 4RP. *Mark Manning*, 915 Queen Anne Ave North #506, Seattle, WA 98109, USA. *Joe Siclari & Edie Stern*, 661 Hanover St, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598, USA.

Random Fandom. *Dave Clark* fondly recalls a Chicon GoH speech: 'Ben Bova talked, but that's when digestive torpor from dinner hit me, and I kept dozing off.' ● *Peter F. Hamilton* sends 'an entry for the *Hello* section', which I suppose is this one: 'I've just got engaged to Kate Fell; which might come as a shock to *SFX*, who in the last interview wrote that I was happily married.' ● *Ed Kramer*, writer, editor, and co-founder of Dragon*Con, was 'charged with aggravated child molestation of a 13-year-old boy,' reported the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* on 14 Sep. ● *Robert Lichtman* forwards a 19 Sep *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* small ad that you need to know about: 'SKULL OF CHRIST—This is the actual skull of our Savior. Passed down for many generations in my family. Radio carbon dated to 0 AD. Remarkably good condition ...' That would be his skull as an infant, then; I'm holding out for a grown-up one. ● *Perry Middlemiss* illuminates: 'I'm currently reading a document containing the acronym SMOF which, in this context, means "Single Mode Optical Fibre". Surprisingly apt don't you reckon?' ● *Jonathan Palfrey & Ana Llauradó* announce the birth of their first child, Marc Diego Palfrey Llauradó, on 18 Sep. ● *Marion Pitman's* Twickenham bookshop was destroyed by fire in mid-August, and her flat made uninhabitable. 'Attitude of all authorities and bureaucrats seems to be I am at fault for causing them inconvenience by having my house burn down.' Ouch! Marion plans to go into some entirely different line of business.

Awards. *Sidewise Awards* for alternate history: *LONG Resurrection Day*, Brendan DuBois—the only shortlisted item. *SHORT* 'The Eighth Register', Alain Bergeron (*Northern Suns*; *Tesseract*). *SPECIAL* Randall Garrett's Lord Darcy series. [SHS] ● *British Fantasy Awards*: *KARL EDWARD WAGNER* (life achievement) *Anne McCaffrey*. *NOVEL* (August

Derleth award) *Indigo*, Graham Joyce. *SHORT* 'White', Tim Lebbon. *ANTHOLOGY* *Mammoth Book of Best New Horror 10* ed. Stephen Jones. *COLLECTION* *Lonesome Roads*, Peter Crowther. *ARTIST* Les Edwards. *SMALL PRESS* Razorblade Press. [DJM] ● *Prometheus Award* for libertarian sf, whatever that is exactly: *A Deepness in the Sky*, Vernor Vinge.

Hazel's Devout Language Lessons. 'He had heard that some pamphlets had been found at Chatsworth in a language which no one could understand. Consultation with the British Museum proved them to be from the *Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge* translated into Maori. Re-translated, the organization's name was found to have been rendered as "*Society for Extreme Pleasure in the Sexual Act between Christians*".' (Violet Powell, *The Constant Novelist: A Study of Margaret Kennedy 1896-1967*, 1983) [YR]

Small Press. *Sansato Press* launches Oct with *88 Gray's Inn Road*, comprising an unpublished sf novel plus shorter work by William F. Temple, introduced by his old flatmate (at the title address) Arthur C. Clarke. Cold Tonnage, 22 Kings Lane, Windlesham, Surrey, GU20 6JQ. ● *Fanthology '94*, published Spring 2000, is available for \$15 postpaid, \$14 in USA—with Corflatch t-shirt while supplies last; choose M/L/XL. Andy Hooper, 4228 Francis Ave N #103, Seattle, WA 98103, USA.

Outraged Letters. *Mike Cule* ponders: 'On p239 of *Darwin's Radio* Greg Bear describes a woman as having a "thickly flossed pubis". Am I the only one this makes think of *vagina dentata*?' ● *Diane Duane* is thrilled by the reissue of J.P. Martin's classic 'Uncle' children's books—see Amazon.co.uk. ● *Simon R. Green* has abandoned the pre-owned term 'necronauts' in favour of his familiar-sounding coinage 'death-walkers', and adds: 'I've contributed enough material to *Ansible*, I almost feel justified in asking you to send me the top quarter inch of your Hugo.' ● *Chris Priest's* call to kill off Thog's Masterclass brought 46 votes to keep Thog, two—other than Chris—for ditching him, and one fence-sitter. Thog fans included Pat Cadigan, Mike Moorcock ('Expecting Thog to spot my worst literary moments is what keeps my standards up, Dave. I live in constant terror.'), Teresa Nielsen Hayden, and Ian Watson; but I'm now persuaded that the department needs to be kept short.

Oops. Ned Brooks's *IGOTS 22* offers a sample from Tom Cockcroft's pile of evidence that sf pulp illustrator Virgil Finlay copied many details of his drawings from Aussie artist Norman (*The Magic Pudding*) Lindsay.

Another Major Party. *Maureen Kincaid Speller* was there: 'John and Eve Harvey celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary in energetic style, with a gathering of the clans, family and fannish, who, as tradition required, sat in entirely different groups throughout the evening. "Is that Ian Maule?" enquired someone, and indeed it was, along with Janice Maule, who gleefully revealed that as Chief Finance Officer she'd just been on the front of the local paper for telling Hillingdon Council it couldn't spend any more. ● John and Eve entertained us in great style, including Eve demonstrating newfound skills on the keyboard while John strutted his stuff with the band Jack o' Herts (to be seen at Novacon 30, where we just have to get Ken MacLeod and the band's lead singer together; the resemblance is uncanny). The band's contribution to the celebration included making a tape of a particular favourite, enabling the lead guitarist on that number to enjoy the novelty of dancing with his wife to his own music.'

The Dead Past. *5 Years Ago*: Kirsty Watt of Ringpull Press caused alarm with her *Ansible 99* (Oct 95) brag that 'we are the first publishers to accept unsolicited submissions over the Internet. The idea is to speed up the whole process of submissions and make publishing rather more open than it may appear at the moment ...' Anyone heard from Ringpull lately? ● *20 Years Ago*: Keith Walker announced his return to fanzine publishing with, 'well sorry, to disappoint you ...' (*Ansible 13*, 1980)

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of Communications*: "They went back to the pilot's room where Solly blinked the running lights. / "Please inform us if you can hear this transmission," came the reply. "One blink for yes. Two for no." (Jack McDevitt, *Infinity Beach*, 2000) ● "The housekeeper found her way into the bedroom and lay down in a pathetic crumble." (James Patterson, *Virgin*, 1980) ● "And he burst himself with chortles." (Sheri S. Tepper, *The Family Tree*, 1998) ● *Dept of Thog Bites Creator's Hand*: "He glanced behind him, careful to move only his eyes, not his head ..." (John Grant, *The World*, 1992) [all JG] NB: the John Grant obituarized in the 4 Oct *Guardian* is not 'our' JG, alias Paul Barnett.

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