

Ansible



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Cartoon: **Atom**. Available for SAE or sixth-order projectors.

COO ER GOSH. I was stunned, boggled and gobsmacked that the New England SF Association gave me its Skylark Award at this year's Boskone. This is presented in memory of Doc Smith, so my sf must contain more starkly inconceivable beams of coruscating, ravaging energies than I'd noticed. Thanks, NESFA! The stunnedness, bogglement and gobsmackery were enhanced by official acceptor Martin Hoare, whose almost impromptu speech likened me to such past winners as No Award, and who retains his ability to dial the Langford phone number at 3:15am British time. Thanks (through gritted teeth), Martin....

The Galaxy Primes

Arthur C. Clarke is reading classic sf: 'Just found this flawless gem for Thog's Masterclass (which I always read with apprehension): "He lit the dining room lamp, got out a cigar, and began pacing the room, ejaculating..." You might try it sometime! The source: *The Invisible Man*, Chapter 17—I'm writing the intro for a new edition, but don't think I'll quote this....' Told that Thog cited a similar Wells usage in *Ansible 134*, ACC got excited: 'I think we have the makings of a Ph.D thesis here.'

Henry Gee of *Nature* reports uproar at the Institute for Scientific Information, 'which produces the bibliometric statistics on which the careers of many scientists hang. ISI was having problems deciding which parts of our many-faceted magazine counted as original reports of scientific research, and were therefore "citable", unlike those parts which counted (in David Brin's words) as "entertainment fluff".' Some of their 1999-2000 'Futures' sf vignettes were cited as 'serious scientific information'.... 'I wonder which items ISI chose. After Kim Stanley Robinson wrote a piece structured as a review of two books published in the year 3000, we did get an inquiry from a librarian asking for help, as they were unable to locate the books.'

Simon R. Green probes the heart of the British TV market with a well-sharpened stake: 'A TV writer I know recently submitted a vampire series to Brit TV, and was told, "We like the scripts, but do they have to be vampires? Couldn't they be AIDS victims instead?"'

Stephen Laws, UK horror author, is 'recovering after abdominal surgery to correct a chronic case of the wibbles,' writes Steve Gallagher. 'The keyhole surgery, which appears to have been successful and effective, required no less than five entry points and, according to Laws, "I now look like Warren Oates at the end of *The Wild Bunch*."' [3 Mar]

Mike Moorcock remains a radio addict: 'Did anyone else hear Ballard on Radio 4? Very good, profound, original answers to people in the book club asking about *Empire of the Sun*. I've never heard him more relaxed or more eloquent. Great stuff. Cheered me up. Interesting to hear people coming round to the mindset as they read.'

Alan Moore failed to get a namecheck when the *Spectator* film reviewer wrote that *From Hell* 'might be quite an entertaining twist on the old Ripper tale, mainly because it was based on a graphic novel by some hairy man who is widely thought of in graphic novel circles, wherever they may be.' (Review summary: good twist, bad everything else.)

William F. Nolan was named as this year's International Horror Guild 'Living Legend', for his influence on horror/dark fantasy. [D]

Michael Swanwick reminisces: 'Boskone was fun, as usual. Neil Gaiman spent two hours signing autographs, despite the event being advertised as only one hour, and only quit because he had to be on a panel then. He came onto the panel with a plate of sushi which he gulped down, and then signed a book which a dear friend had required I get his autograph on. I was going to get him to sign a book for me, but after seeing how his hands trembled, decided to wait a con or two.'

Conklin

8-10 Mar • **MeCoN V**, Queen's University, Belfast. £17 reg at door.

11 Mar • **Reading at Borders**, Oxford St, London. Pat Cadigan, Kim Stanley Robinson and Peter Straub. 'Be there, you dog.'

13 Mar • **Skeptics in the Pub**, Florence Nightingale, Westminster Bridge roundabout, 7:30pm. With the Theosophical Society President.

27 Mar • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Rising Sun, Cloth Fair, London,

EC1. 7pm on, fans present from 5pm. Guest speaker: er, dunno.

29 Mar - 1 Apr • **Helicon 2** (Eastercon), Hotel de France, Jersey. £35 reg, £18 supp/junior. Contact 33 Meyrick Drive, Wash Common, Newbury, Berks, RG14 6SY. And fast!

13 Apr • **Signs of Life**, Friends House, Euston Rd, London. Free event 10am-5pm. GoH M. John Harrison, Gwyneth Jones. Including the thrilling BSFA AGM (pre-lunch) and SF Foundation AGM (end of day).

20 Apr • **UK in 2005 Open Meeting**, Florence Nightingale pub, London. 'Social' session from 2pm, Worldcon bid discussion 7:30pm.

1-4 Jun • **plokta.con 2.0** (small, friendly, superfluously technological), Hilton National Hotel, Basingstoke. Guest(s) TBA. £25 reg. Cheques to *Plokta* at 24 St Mary Rd, Walthamstow, London, E17 9RG.

9-11 Aug • **ConteXXt** (Unicon 20), University of Gloucestershire. Joint event with **HarmUni 2** (filk relaxacon). £25 reg to 2 Apr 02, £15 concessions, infants £1. Contact 17 Cow Lane, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 7SZ.

17-18 Aug • **Caption** (small-press comics), Oxford Union Society, St Michael's St, Oxford. Contact 18 Hawkins St, Oxford, OX4 1YD.

2-6 Sep 04 • **Noreascon 4** (62nd Worldcon), Boston, Mass. Now \$120 reg (kids \$85), \$85 supp conversion, \$35 supp. Mastercard and Visa accepted. Contact PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701, USA.

Rumblings • Worldcon 2006. Kansas City is bidding to hold this (31 Aug - 4 Sep). Presupp membership \$20 US (£14 or €23), to Kansas City in 2006, PO Box 414175, Kansas City, MO 64141-4175, USA. •

Eurocon 2003. Finncon X (1-3 Aug, Turku) is putting in a bid.

Infinitely Improbable

Awards. *British Book Awards* ('Nobbies') for 2001 went to Philip Pullman as author of the year. Eoin Colfer's *Artemis Fowl* as children's book and HarperCollins as publisher. [PN] • *International Horror Guild* shortlists include NOVEL *Coldheart Canyon*, Clive Barker; *The Living Blood*, Tananarive Due; *American Gods*, Neil Gaiman; *Sex and Violence in Hollywood*, Ray Garton; *Threshold* by Caitlin R. Kiernan; *Black House*, Stephen King and Peter Straub. FIRST NOVEL *Biten*, Kelley Armstrong; *The Astonished Eye*, Tracy Knight; *Riverwatch*, Joseph Nassise; *Moontide*, Erin Patrick; *Ordinary Horror*, David Searcy. Too many other categories to list; familiar British names include Ramsey Campbell (short story, anthology, subject of nonfiction book) and Stephen Jones (anthology).

Andromeda Bookshop. *Rog Peyton* writes: 'The creditors' meeting was a non-event. The only creditors that turned up were one employee, Laurence Miller, who came to support us, and the late Ray Gibberd's sister, Gaia, who came because about £4500.00 is still owed on Ray's credit card for Andromeda's purchases. No-one from the publishing world showed up—but I'm reliably informed that this is the norm as the relatively "small" amounts we owe publishers is too small for them to bother with. [...] I can say that if anyone wants to be a part of a "syndicate" to buy the assets of the company, I'm looking for anyone who can afford to invest for one share = £5000.00, in a new company. I've looked in at the Job Centre for anything under the heading "Wanted—SF Expert" and found nothing (can't imagine why) so I guess the only way I can go forward is to start another company and do the only thing I'm any good at and that is to sell GOOD books. Otherwise, I'm on the scrap heap and may as well give up now (don't worry, Arline has already hidden my ties, belts and shoe laces!!!). If any readers of *Ansible* are interested in a GOOD investment, contact me quickly on 0121 643 1999 in the daytime, or 0121 477 6901 in the evenings.'

R.I.P. *Virginia Hamilton* (1936-2002), US author of children's fiction—including fantasies and some notable sf—died from breast cancer on 19 February. At 65 she had won all the major awards in her field, and was the only children's author so far to receive a MacArthur 'genius' grant. • *Chuck Jones* (1912-2002), the legendary US cartoon animator, director, author and artist who made over 300 animated films, died of congestive heart failure on 22 February; he was 89. His best-known creation was Bugs Bunny. In a 60+-year career he received three Oscars as director and an honorary Oscar for life achievement. • *Spike Milligan* (1919-2002), last of the Goons, had been ill for some

time and died at home on 27 February, aged 83. Besides the surreal fantasy of *The Goon Show* itself, he featured in several science-fictional productions including *The Bed-Sitting Room* (1969 film based on 1963 play co-written with John Antrobus) and *Monty Python's Life of Brian*. ● **Harry Nadler**, UK fan since the 1960s, amateur genre film-maker, and chief organizer of the Festival of Fantastic Films for the last 13 years, died from a heart attack on 1 March. Steve Gallagher fondly recalls his infectious enthusiasm: 'Not many film fans mobilize friends and family to buy, renovate and run their own cinema, as Harry did with The Savoy in Sale, Cheshire.' Ron Bennett adds: 'Great enthusiast for cinema and life. Great dry wit. Always an absolute joy to be with. Very sad.'

● **FAAns**. Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards for work in 2001: FANWRITER Alison Freebairn, FANZINE *Wabe*, LETTERHACK Lloyd Penney, FAN ARTIST Dave Hicks, NEW FAN Max (she of *The Cosmic Hairdryer*).

● **Small Press**. Fictionwise.com's latest royalty statement comes with a circular that discreetly mentions: 'As some of you know, we no longer pay advances because of market conditions and other factors ...'

● **Random Fandom**. *John Foyster* had his final session of radiotherapy for that brain tumour on 19 February, but Yvonne Rousseau warns that 'it will be another three months before the effect of the treatment can be assessed.' ● *Sierra Grace Joanna Tintviel Rose Glycer* is the newly adopted daughter of Mike and Diana Glycer, born on 5 February. ● *Peter Mabey* spotted a fan in a TV quiz: 'Ron Bennett was on 15 to 1 yesterday: got into the last 3, but was eliminated first, guessing John Creasey as author of the Guinness "toucan" rhyme rather than Dorothy Sayers.' [8 Feb] ● *Peter McNamara*, editor of the mid-1980s Australian sf magazine *Aphelion* and later a publisher at his small press Aphelion Publications, has been diagnosed with brain cancer; despite surgery and coming radiotherapy, the best prognosis is 'maybe more than 12 months.' Fingers crossed for better luck; all sympathy to Peter and his wife Mariann in the tough times ahead. ● *Marcus Rowland* records the forensic physics of Channel 5's *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*: 'terminal velocity's 9.8 metres per second squared. He would have hit the ground in under five seconds.' [10 Feb] A fortnight later he added with relish, 'And tonight a suspected murder victim was one Alison Scott....'

● **Thog's Metaphor Masterclass**. 'In general, those bemoaning the commercial horse latitudes on which science fiction presently finds itself slowly twisting in the wind ...' (Norman Spinrad, *Asimov's*) [JG]

● **Outraged Letters**. *Neal Asher*, author of *Gridlinked* (sp.), spotted the typo in the official BSFA Awards release: 'Aaargh! Though I would appreciate the sales of *Gridlinked* to be confused with Ben Elton's book, I'm a little pissed-off with the confusion of titles! Steve Rawlings' artwork on *Gridlinked* is a contender for the award, not sodding *Gridlock* or even *Gridlocked*! The next person who calls it either of those will get a *Gridlinked* suppository and should be aware I only have the large format version!' ● *John Howard*: 'So Sir Arthur's Thog submission [see A174] has no attribution given. But the other great Said Avoidance Which We Doubt Ever Could Be Said appears in Greg Egan's *Schild's Ladder*: "No!" she hissed.' Even allowing for the character being in Eganian VR, cyberspace, novo-vacuum, or some other "nonreal" state don't excuse this one!' ● *Mike Moorcock* seizes yet another commercial opportunity: 'I thought you'd like to know that in order to exploit the current popularity of *Lord of the Rings*, Hawkwind will now be known as Orcwind (as they are indeed known by many already).' ● *Mike Resnick* offers a little sage advice: 'By the way, congrats on your short story Hugo. Next year write something that'll beat the Female Person From Colorado and leave me alone. What did I ever do to you?' I grovelled unconvincingly, but the great man was not appeased: 'You invaded my turf; I'm invading yours. Wildside is publishing a collection of 55 of my fannish articles this summer.'

● **C.o.A.** *Ellen Datlow* (fiction editor, SCIFI.COM), PMB 391, 511 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10011-8436, USA. *Cherry Wilder Grimm*, Room 44, Aotea Hospital, 16 Hellston Road, Newlands, Wellington, New Zealand. 'Cherry can no longer access her e-mail, and cards and letters would be very cheering.' [YR] *Catherine McAulay & Greg Pickersgill*, 3 Bethany Row, Narberth Road, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA61 2XG ... the alternative Reading address will no longer be valid.

● **The False Goulart**. Michael Swanwick reminisces about 'the CBW conference where I met a man posing as a fictitious character. He said he was a freelance writer and had been Ron Goulart's roommate in college. They'd both hit NYC, hoping to make it as writers, at the same time, he said, and Ron was so amused by his tales of difficulties getting paid that he'd been inspired to write the Jose Silvera stories, about a future two-fisted freelancer, capable of writing forty thousand words of trash overnight and then having to rappel down buildings and break

into editors' offices with flash-grenades to get paid. ● A month later, almost inevitably, I ran into Goulart and told him I'd run into his old college roommate. "I didn't have a college roommate," he told me.'

● **Fanfundery**. *Jean Weber & Eric Lindsay* 'are pleased to announce that the 2001 GUFF Trip Report (*Jean and Eric 'Avalook at the UK*) has now been published.' 5Mb PDF version available for a GUFF donation, from their page at <http://www.ericlindsay.com/guff/donate.htm> ... The 54pp A4 printed report, with colour photo cover of British fan mugshots, can be yours for a 'suitable donation' to GUFF at PO Box 640, Airlie Beach, Qld 4802, Australia, or 60 Bournemouth Rd, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AX. I suggest at least £5 or equivalent US/Oz dollars. ● No southbound GUFF race seems imminent, owing to a dearth of candidates. ● John & Eve Harvey found a pile of *Pieces of Langford*, the fundraiser collection of my *SFX* columns which we thought was out of print—still only £5 or \$10 US from me, all profits to GUFF. ● *DUFF* nominations for the northbound trip from Australasia to ConJosé (2002 Worldcon) are open to 2 Apr. Details from NA administrators Naomi Fisher & Patrick Molloy, PO Box 9135, Huntsville, AL 35812, USA.

● **As Others See Us**. The *New York Times* e-mail Books Update notes that the blurb on Doris Lessing's latest novel features '...the publisher's statement that this book marks Lessing's return to "realistic fiction." Rockwell, the editor of *The New York Times* Arts & Leisure section, says this blurb may reflect "the lingering disappointment felt by some Lessing fans about her voyage into imaginative storytelling and about her 'space fiction' in particular.'" [MA] Another poor stray welcomed back to the fold after years of slumming around in imaginative storytelling. ● *Carl Djerassi* (whose play *Oxygen* was about to open in London) doesn't write that nasty sf stuff: 'They are science-in-fiction plays, which he distinguishes from conventional sci-fi because his plays are based on real or plausible science. It's a way to "smuggle science into theater," he told students Tuesday.' (*San José Mercury News*, 20 Feb) [DB]

● **Don't Tell Fred**. 'There are a number of unsung heroes in the sf world. One of them is the brother of someone extremely famous,' begins the secret message from Maureen Kincaid Speller and Andy Sawyer. 'At the "Celebration of British SF" in Liverpool last year one of the things that struck some of the organisers was the number of people who came up and said "I've just met Fred Clarke. Isn't he wonderful?"' ● Well, isn't he? Fred Clarke is known to many of us as keeper of the Clarkives. The Arthur C. Clarke Award owes a lot to his energy. Those of us who have the good fortune to know Fred will be aware of how hard he works behind the scenes to support the British sf scene. We can point to his support of the SF Foundation and the Clarke Award over the years, but more important are the small acts of kindness and encouragement he has offered to so many individuals.' In short, there are plans for a presentation to Fred Clarke at the Clarke Award ceremony in May, and donations are solicited—sterling or US dollars to Maureen Speller, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ, UK. This is a 'public secret', safe from Fred since he doesn't read websites or *Ansible*....

● **Numerology**. In the wake of Uri Geller's earth-shattering discovery that 11-letter names and phrases are deeply fraught with meaning and significance, sceptic Nick Pullar is carefully not filling the 3- and 6-letter blanks in his test phrases 'XXX is insane' and 'YYYYYY is mad'.

● **Thirty Years Ago**. Malcolm Edwards, a mere fan, became editor of the BSFA's *Vector*. Poul Anderson's *Operation Chaos*, John Brunner's *The Traveller in Black*, and Robert Silverberg's *The World Inside* were all ruled ineligible for the 1972 Hugo, presumably for being collections or fixups rather than 'real' novels. (*Checkpoint 15*, March 1972)

● **Thog's Masterclass**. *Dept of Temporal Science*. 'The remains gave off a strong earth smell. It suggested great age, century piled upon century in which this jumble of now articulated bones had lain forgotten in the volcanic silt of John Day Canyon. They had been ancient already when Christ reportedly spun fishes and loaves from thin air. Older still when Moses allegedly parted the Red Sea.' (Kirk Mitchell, *Ancient Ones*, 2001) [NR] ● *Dept of Splendid Simile*. 'He sounded like a dead child discovering that eternity is some buzzing, langorous dream of Bath.' (M. John Harrison, 'Running Down', 1975) [BA] ● *Dept of Strange Endowments*. 'Her slender chest rose and fell gently and slowly with her sleeping inhalations, her small breasts and rather larger nipples outdenting the flimsy fabric of her ragged tunic ...' (Fritz Leiber, *The Knight and Knave of Swords*, 1988) [BA]