

Ansible



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CONJOSÉ. The sixtieth World SF Convention happened, but for a variety of reasons I couldn't make it. (*The Plain People of Fandom*: 'Boring, boring! You say that every year.') 'Greetings from San José,' wrote Ben Jeapes, '—a town not unlike Milton Keynes but lacking the charisma. But the con is good...'. • **Worldcon 2005.** Against impossible odds and a daunting lack of opposition, the UK in 2005 bid won the right to hold that year's Worldcon in Glasgow: 'Interaction'. • **Hugos.** NOVEL Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*. NOVELLA Vernor Vinge, 'Fast Times at Fairmont High'. NOVELETTE Ted Chiang, 'Hell is the Absence of God'. SHORT Michael Swanwick, 'The Dog Said Bow-Wow'. RELATED BOOK Ron Miller & Frederick C. Durant III, *The Art of Chesley Bonestell*. DRAMATIC *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. PRO EDITOR Ellen Datlow. PRO ARTIST Michael Whelan. SEMIPROZINE *Locus*. WEBSITE *Locus Online*. FANZINE *Ansible*. FAN WRITER Dave Langford. FAN ARTIST Teddy Harvia. JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD Jo Walton. • Congratulations all round—and thanks! Honestly, I'd expected voters to tire of me this year, but the perennial winner who went out of the airlock was Gardner Dozois. • **Neil Gaiman** wrote: '(Memo to self: even if you don't think you're going to win, write a speech. Otherwise you will wind up on the stage in front of several thousand people, finishing an impromptu speech with "Fuck, I got a Hugo.")' Alas, 'Nobody seems to remember the other stuff I said.' • **Worldcon Bids.** A rival to the 2007 Japanese bid emerged, bidding for exotic Columbus, Ohio. Also a 2010 Australian bid committee was formed during ConJosé itself, and took hundreds of presupporting memberships at US\$20.

All the News in Fits of Print

Iain Banks, Philip Pullman and John Fowles were among the over 100 public figures who signed a protest letter to the BBC, complaining of its ban on atheist contributors to *Radio 4's Thought for Today*. [BB]

Robert L. Forward was recently diagnosed with terminal brain cancer, and is unlikely to be with us for more than another year. Too many farewells in the sf world lately.... (Charles Sheffield had surgery on 14 August for the brain tumour mentioned in *Ansible 181*, but needs follow-up chemo and radiation therapy. We wish him lots of luck. [JS])

David G. Hartwell is greatly taken by the latest trend in e-mail spam: faking a celebrity sender to lure you into opening the message. Thus the interesting juxtaposition 'From: William Gibson / To: David G. Hartwell / RE: dgh, Bigger breasts without surgery in 30 days ...'

Jeff Noon, still putting distance between himself and his shameful win of the 1994 Arthur C. Clarke Award for sc**nce f*ct**n (with his novel *Vurt*), assured readers of the Cheltenham Festival free newsletter that sf was a dying genre, now written only by zombies. We await the contemptuous return of his thousand quid to the Clarke administrator.

Terry Pratchett's old PC keyboard, on which he was practically certain he'd written a novel or three, aroused interest at the Discworld Convention charity auction: 'It's probably got my DNA on it,' Terry pointed out, and the bidding ran up to £125.

John Wyndham is still remembered, more or less, by reporters at *The Independent*. As we are informed in an August article about giant squid taking over the world, 'Most people are familiar with the opening lines of Tennyson's *The Kraken Wakes*, either through the original or via John Wyndham's 1953 thriller, *The Day of the Triffids*.' [SM]

Contrapone

9 Sep • **Reading at Borders**, Oxford St, London. With Miller Lau and Raymond Feist. 6:30pm. 'Wish Your Diva a Happy 49th. Or else.'

21 Sep • **FantasyCon**, Champagne Charlie's, 17 The Arches, Villiers St, London, WC2N 4NN. 10am-6pm, winding down to pub evening. £17 reg, £12 for British Fantasy Soc members; £20 at the door. Contact Beech House, Chapel Lane, Moulton, Cheshire, CW9 8PQ.

21 Sep • **South Hants SF Group Birthday Party**, Magpie pub, Fratton, Portsmouth, noon to about 6pm. Admission free to all, but there will be a raffle to cover buffet food and the like.

25 Sep • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Rising Sun, Cloth Fair, London,

EC1. 7pm on, fans present from 5pm. Guest speaker: no word as yet.

4-6 Oct • **Conquest** (media), Essex County Hotel, Southend-on-Sea. £50 reg, £20/day, £32 two days, under-14s half price, under-5s free. Advance registration closes 22 Sep 02. Contact 73 Bournemouth Park Rd, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 5JJ. Phone (01702) 469093.

12 Oct • **Hammer Films: The Bray Studio Years**, Cine Lumiere, London. Four-film showing, including the 'classic' *Plague of the Zombies*. MC: horror director Norman J. Warren (*Inseminoid*). Tickets £20, to him c/o 25 High Hill Ferry, Bakers Hill, London, E5 9HG.

9 Nov • **Costume Closet** (costuming), Warwick Arms Hotel, High St, Warwick. 9:30am on. £10 reg, £5 child. Contact 7 Church Close, Northwood, Middlesex, HA6 1SG. Prequel to 'Wardrobe' costume con.

9 Nov • **DangerCon 40** (*Dangermouse*), Ruskin House, corner of Park Lane and Lower Coombe St, Croydon. 11am-11pm. £1 at door.

20-23 Aug 04 • **Discworld Convention IV**, Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley, Leics. GoH Terry Pratchett, the usual others. Cost TBA. Contact PO Box 102, Royston, Herts, SG8 7ZJ ... or info@dwcon.org.

4-8 Aug 05 • **Interaction** (63rd Worldcon), Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre, Glasgow. GoH Greg Pickersgill, Christopher Priest, Robert Sheckley, Lars-Olov Strandberg, Jane Yolen. £75/\$115 reg, £32/\$50 child, £30/\$45 supporting (with assorted discounts for pre-supporters, 'Friends' and site selection voters) until 21 April 03. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. In North America: PO Box 58009, Louisville, Kentucky, KY 40268-0009, USA.

Rumblings. • **Unicon 21**: no bid emerged at ConteXXt (Unicon 20). There are plans to book the same venue at the University of Gloucestershire in Cheltenham for, most probably, 15-17 Aug 2003, in hope that a suitable committee will turn up. Apply to newbids@unicon.org.uk.

Infinitely Improbable

Yet More Awards. *Sidewise Awards* for alternate history: LONG J.N. Stroyar, *The Children's War*; SHORT Ken MacLeod, *The Human Front*. [SHS] Charlie Stross adds that the latter award 'was won by an alternate history author called "Ken MacLeod". At least, that's what it says on the plaque! (I am informed that due to cross-temporal leakage the plaque for MacLeod's similarly-named our-world equivalent will arrive later, proof-read. Oh, the embarrassment!)' • *Prometheus Award* for libertarian sf: Donald Kingsbury, *Psychohistorical Crisis*. [KL] • *Chesley Awards* (art) have millions of categories. Paul Barnett exults: 'I was named Best Art Director (take that, Langford! take that, Clute!). But the big news was that the winner in the "Colour Work, Unpublished" category was Anne Sudworth. Yahey! So rare to see a Brit artist even shortlisted ...'

As Others See Us. Film critic Chris Fujiwara of the *Boston Phoenix* explains the utility of sf: 'And we've had proof that adding "science fiction" to a whodunit (*Minority Report*) or a family-values heart tugger (*Signs*) is considered a valid option for filmmakers who seem mortally afraid that someone somewhere might regard a movie of theirs as well-crafted entertainment.' [DK] • Steven Bochco on the *NYPD 2069* TV series pilot: 'It's an interesting notion to envision a major urban centre like New York 65 years down the road ... This is not science fiction. This is trying to conceptualise a relatively near-term future that's logically a function of the world we know today.' [ST, others]

R.I.P. Tom Ölander, Finland's 'Mr Science Fiction' and a popular fannish ambassador to other countries, died unexpectedly on 26 August; he was about 60. Tom helped found the Finnish sf magazine *Aikakone* in 1981, and established a regular convention tradition with KingCon (1982) and the first Finncon (1986); Finncons now attract thousands of people. [AE/BR] I well remember Tom's wildly generous hospitality from my own visit to Finncon 2001. • **Dave Piper**, long-time UK fan whose letter announcing his terminal cancer appeared in *Ansible 181*, died on 3 August before he could read it. He was 63. Bruce Gillespie remembers: 'His cheery letters, always written in Dave Piperish, helped to keep me going during the 1970s. He wrote about his family growing up, life at work, jazz, and, most importantly, he wrote knowledgeably about all aspects of science fiction. Everybody has an ideal reader, and

Dave Piper was one of mine.' • *John B. Spencer* (1944-2002), UK rock musician, novelist (his sf debut was *The Electronic Lullaby Meat Market*, 1975) and founder of the influential Young Artists art agency, died on 24 March aged 57. Jim Burns writes: 'He had an eye for the direction the future was beginning to take in the world of sf art. He was totally tuned into the Zeitgeist of the time and had a way of inspiring one perfectly in the right direction. During the first half of the 1970s John hauled aboard myself, Les Edwards, John Harris, Tony Roberts, Angus McKie, Ian Craig, Bob Fowke, Alan Daniels.... The look of the covers that graced the sf novels of the 70s and 80s owes a huge amount to the generosity, encouragement and insight of this man.' • *Dave Van Arnam* (1935-2002), 'longtime NY fan and pro author, co-chair of NYCon III in 1967 and all-round good man, died from a heart attack on 3 August,' writes F.M. Busby. His first book was the TV novelization *Lost in Space* (1967), co-written with 'Ron Archer'—a pseudonymous Ted White.

They Told You So. The August 2002 BBC poll of the top 100 famous Britons of all time should confirm every fundamentalist's worst fears or hopes, by its inclusion of those very similar authors J.R.R. Tolkien, J.K. Rowling and Aleister Crowley.

Small Press. *The Third Alternative* was left short of £484 when emagazineshop.com—which processed subscriptions—went into liquidation. Harder hit was *Interzone*, owed £2,146, which as David Pringle says 'poses difficulties, especially as it comes on top of two previous bad debts of similar size (Firebird Distributing in the USA and Andromeda Bookshop in the UK). *Interzone* can't afford to lose circa £7,000 within 12 months! Still, I daresay we'll struggle through somehow.'

Random Fandom. *KIM Campbell* is pleased with her treatment's progress: 'The masses in my chest have all but disappeared and the tumour has shrunk from 4.5cm to 3cm. I have a further two courses of chemo and then a rest before any more treatment to the brain tumour.' • *Frank Denton* has alarming news: 'I thought that I had a lesion on my hand formed around a sliver. I found out instead that it was a very aggressive malignant melanoma. Will have my right index finger removed on Aug 26 and hope we stop the beast there.' • *Lee Hoffman's* 70th birthday surprise on 14 August was the one-shot fanzine *Happy Birthday LeeH!*—masterminded by Edie Stern and Joe Siclari, with 40-odd contributors reminiscing about Lee's life and fannish career, going back to her legendary 1950-53 fanzine *Quandry*. • *Dick Jenssen* (Martin James Ditmar Jenssen) must be the first sf fan to receive an award named after him: this year's Aussie SF Achievement or Ditmar award for best fan artist. Info from Bruce Gillespie, who was very nearly too modest to mention his fan writer and fanzine Ditmar wins. Studying photos of the presentation, DJ was heard to say: 'How is it possible for anyone to be so unabashed and shameless in their naked gloating?' • *David Kennedy* left the Discworld Con by taxi: 'The driver asked us "Were you at that sci-fi thing?" We admitted to this and he said, "There were some quite famous people there, I heard. One of those fellas who writes *Star Trek* novels was there, yeah?"' Yes indeed: eclipsing Mr Pratchett, one of the DWcon guests was that fella Diane Duane....

Thog's Nonfiction Futurology Masterclass, or, *What 2050 Will Be Like If We All Invest In Cyborg Links With Our Computers*: 'With super-intelligent brains, cyborgs have used their ability to think in hundreds of dimensions, to come up with a new Theory of the Universe. New forms of energy conversion were discovered. Now that the nature of light is better understood, it has become possible to obtain unparalleled energy supplies by direct light-to-heat conversion. Distant planets and galaxies are being visited since it was discovered that travelling faster than the speed of light was a trivial exercise.' (Kevin Warwick, Professor of Cybernetics at the University of Reading: *I, Cyborg*, 2002)

C.o.A. Andromeda Bookshop, 1 Suffolk St, Birmingham, B1 1LT (since 3 August—yes, next door to the old shop). *Harry Andruschak*, 734 W 214th St, Apartment 12-A, Carson, CA 90745, USA (from 14/15 Sep). *Vince Docherty*, Koninginnegracht 75a, 2514AH Den Haag, Netherlands. *Keith Oborn*, 26 Fenwick Rd, London, SE15 4HW. *Sarob Press*, 'Ty Newydd', Four Roads, Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire, SA17 4SF.

We Are Everywhere. No doubt mainstream critics gibbered with rage at the release from W.H. Smith which 'announced the results of a survey to find the nation's favourite books. It polled 1,000 adults and came up with a top five of *Lord of the Rings*, the Bible, *Harry Potter*, *The Hobbit* and *The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.' Not bad at all, notes our reporter Gary Wilkinson: one sf novel and four fantasies.

Outraged Letters. *Sir Arthur C. Clarke* finally read the A178 Thog department when it resurfaced in *Interzone 180*: 'Now I can die happy—finally made it to MASTERCLASS!' • *Guy Haley* recommends: 'Look on the net for a band called Bloodhag—all their songs are about SF. Here's

a line from "Alfred Bester": *When Campbell fell under L.Ron's spell / Alfred said, "Man, you can fucking go to Hell."* Which isn't at all how Bester told the story in 'My Affair with Science Fiction'.... • *Diana Wynne Jones* on A181: 'I hesitate to take issue with Thog (knowing none of us is safe), but I do think the Bujold quote was A Joke on her part: soldier laddie ignorant of all domestic matters encounters caustic soda for first time. I can vividly recall the first time I did, and think one can almost be pardoned for thinking that here IS the Universal Solvent. It seemed a miracle the drain didn't dissolve too.' • *Jon Weir* regrets his folly: 'Oh god—why did I do it? I actually paid money to see *Men In Black II*—it was movie making at its most cynical, commercial, product-placement worst. Any remnant of an original idea had been squeezed out to make room for endless though impressive CGI effects, and a piss-take reconstruction of the film's central plot point on a cheesy SF Mystery show (complete with UFOs on wires and subtitles beneath the actors announcing "Not Actual Aliens") was by far the best thing in it. You know a movie is bad when a dog singing "I will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor gets the biggest laughs. Somebody Neuralize me now—I don't want to remember I've wasted that (thankfully) 90 minutes of my life!'

Group Gropes. Reading. 7:30pm, 3rd Monday each month at Corn Stores, Forbury Rd. Other Mondays 9pm at Brewery Tap, Castle St.

More Hugos. Well, one more Hugo: as of Torcon 3 next year, the Dramatic Presentation category will be split into 'long form' and 'short form' for productions respectively over and under 90 minutes. [SHS]

The Dead Past. *Twelve Years Ago*, Colin Wilson predicted: 'I intend to do two more equally big parts to my *Spider World*—the first four volumes of which are out in America, and which in a sense is complete in itself already. That, as it were, is the first part. So that when it is finished it will be a twelve volume work, about twice as long as *The Lord of the Rings*. This sort of fantasy novel, which I started a long time ago, strikes me as one of the most interesting things I have ever done. I have a feeling that one day all kids will know my *Spider World*. They will know me as the author of *Spider World*, in the way that they know Lewis Carroll as the author of *Alice in Wonderland*.' (1990) [DB]

World Fantasy Awards nominations: NOVEL *American Gods*, Neil Gaiman; *Brown Harvest*, Jay Russell; *The Curse of Chalion*, Lois McMaster Bujold; *From the Dust Returned*, Ray Bradbury; *The Onion Girl*, Charles de Lint; *The Other Wind*, Ursula K. Le Guin; *The Wooden Sea*, Jonathan Carroll. • NOVELLA 'The Bird Catcher', S.P. Somtow; 'Cleopatra Brimstone', Elizabeth Hand; 'Eternity and Afterward', Lucius Shepard; 'The Finder', Ursula K. Le Guin; 'Karuna, Inc.', Paul Di Filippo; 'Struwelpeter', Glen Hirshberg. • SHORT 'His Own Back Yard', James P. Blaylock; 'The Honeyed Knot', Jeffrey Ford; 'Legerdemain', Jack O'Connell; 'Queen for a Day', Albert E. Cowdrey; 'Something to Hitch Meat To', Nalo Hopkinson. • ANTHOLOGY *Mammoth Book of Best New Horror 12* ed. Stephen Jones; *Mammoth Book of Vampire Stories by Women* ed. Stephen Jones; *The Museum of Horrors* ed. Dennis Etchison; *Stigmata* ed. Jerad Walters; *Year's Best Fantasy and Horror 14* ed. Ellen Datlow & Terry Windling. • COLLECTION *Dark Universe*, William F. Nolan; *The Essential Ellison* (revised), Harlan Ellison; *Skin Folk*, Nalo Hopkinson; *Stranger Things Happen*, Kelly Link; *Talking in the Dark*, Dennis Etchison. • ARTIST Donato Giancola, Allen Koszowski, John Jude Palencar, Douglas Walters, Gahan Wilson. • SPECIAL/PROFESSIONAL Randy Broecker (for *Fantasy of the 20th Century*), Ellen Datlow (for editing), Jo Fletcher (for Gollancz Fantasy Masterworks), Stephen Jones (for editing), Douglas E. Winter (for *Clive Barker: The Dark Fantastic*). • SPECIAL/NON-PRO Peter Crowther (for PS Publishing), Paula Guran (for *Horror Garage*), Raymond Russell & Rosalie Parker (for Tartarus Press), Jerad Walters (for Cocytus Press), Michael Waltz et al (for Sidecar Preservation Society). • Winners to be announced 3 November.

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of Hugo Winners*. 'Mr Ibis said nothing, but he smirked loudly.' (Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*, 2001) [RB] • *Neat Tricks Dept*: 'He held his left hand out in front of his face; palm down and with his index finger raised six inches above his hand.' (Nigel Atkinson, 'An Exhalation of Butterflies', *Interzone*, May 2002) [SL] • *Dept of Optimistic Pessimism*. 'Piles of floppyscreens lay scattered in the corner next to a couple of empty wine glasses that were half full.' (Paul Ebbs, *Dr Who: The Book of the Still*, 2002) [LC]

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