

Ansible



Ansible 59 June 1992

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ANTI-PUBLISHING: Forget the traditional sf pastimes of fix-ups, sharecropping and remaindering. Literary agents now report that British sf publishing is taking the next logical step after non-books—*negative* books. Macho editors boast not of buying but of cancelling titles. In this era of backoff-list publishing some familiar sf names are prominent. John Jarrold, new man at Legend, has been hastily returning numerous works bought by his predecessor Deborah Beale. 'Commissioning editor?' he did not say to our reporter: 'More like decommissioning, har har.' Meanwhile Malcolm Edwards is pruning the Grafton list of 'unviabiles' bought by his over-optimistic predecessors Nick Austin and Malcolm Edwards, and by the end of 1992 hopes to be riding out the recession from a strong nil-book, no-authors position. Some writers thought themselves protected by contracts that bind their publishers to produce the book unless prevented by actual social collapse or nuclear holocaust ... but publishers have started invoking that obscure and rarely used contract clause which goes, 'So sue us.'

The Lunatics of Terra

Iain Banks and *Anne Blackburn* were married on 20 March at that trad Scots venue the County Court in Honolulu. [BGN]

John Brunner is having trouble 'thanks to virtually total cessation of support from my US publishers. During the whole of 1992 *Del Rey*, with 17 of my books, sent me less than \$300 in royalties, having contrived to avoid getting my last novel noticed even by *Publishers' Weekly* and *Kirkus Service*. Now DAW has served notice that all the dozen or so books of mine that were on their list have been withdrawn from sale. What I receive from Europe including the UK is and always has been negligible. I face, in short, the prospect of *effectively no royalties* for the indefinite future.

'I have a novel nearly finished, but the editor may insist on changes, so I must expect a long wait for the on-delivery advance. I have another in mind, that I believe will do well, but it will take months to secure a contract. If you know of anyone who's letting commissions that might keep the wolf from the door—no matter what, fiction or non-fiction (I'd welcome a chance to write some non-fiction for a change)—I'd be enormously obliged to hear about it.' [25 May]

Bruce Gillespie reports: 'Terry Pratchett was out here recently. It was the last day of his current trip to New Zealand and Australia, and he was speaking to the Melbourne Sf Club. [He] insisted on going off microphone, then talking in a strange way down at his feet or up at the ceiling, or anywhere else that could not reach the audience. The jokes I heard were very good. I had the satisfaction of asking a question that he had never been asked before, i.e. "How did you get involved in British fandom?" Turns out that he's been around the fringes for a very long time before becoming famous. [...] Although she could not attend (living 500 miles away in Adelaide), *Yvonne Rousseau* consented to write a report on the Gillespie-Cochrane Garden Party of 3 May. Using nothing but a telephone, she managed to reconstruct the entire event more or less as it happened. Brilliant stuff. There was only one Scandalous Incident, which *Yvonne* relates with some glee and absolute accuracy. The Villain of the Incident, needless to say, is *Peter Nicholls*.' [20 May] Very tantalizing....

Colin Murray is reportedly taking over at Orbit, but in

accordance with publishers' universal need to save money will continue to live in far-off Scotland. And commute by air.

Frederik Pohl still deplores the official acceptance of backward-looking fantasy writers into SFWA, now SFFWA: 'Sf is the very literature of change. In fact, it's the only such literature we have; and as such it really deserves to have its own, unshared institutions. Pity it doesn't.' [SFC May]

Brian Stableford had a nasty moment: 'Took Leo to the "Meet Robert Jordan" event at Forbidden Planet; so he would know who RJ was I gave him my review copy of *The Eye of the World*, which he dutifully began to read on the train. The event was dramatically unattended (the only superstar present apart from RJ was Charles Stross) though not unpleasant—RJ is an amiable and likeable person—but as we left the FP security guard refused to believe that Leo's copy of *TEOTW* was not ripped off from FP's stock and, after some discussion, insisted on confiscating it. This means that Leo will never find out what happens in the 800 pages he didn't manage to read and that FP will make three times their normal profit when they sell that copy (unlike Orbit and RJ, who will make nothing). One can't blame the guard—after all, sf writers are professional liars, so how can you take their word for anything?—but when I recall that it has been my habit for two years to drop in to FP every Friday (Sept-March) before teaching my City Lit evening class, always carrying a briefcase bulging with sf books, I shudder at the thought that the whole lot might have been confiscated at any time. I shall be far more circumspect in future; profound embarrassment will prevent me from ever stepping into the shop again.' [28 May]

Alex Stewart has been wearing a vast grin since talking with Penguin: '*Temps* sold out, 15,000 copies, and they're *actually reprinting* it to sell with book 2 in the autumn, and *Villains* has cleared 5,000 already! I'm totally amaz—er, I mean, this is very much according to Midnight Rose expectations....'

D. West boasts that besides the dole, his 1992 income consists of 'the £4 our wonderful Policemen gave me for appearing in an identity parade. (No, I didn't get picked out. Didn't do the burglary, either.)' [19 May] A Leeds Group well-wisher adds: 'With the summer timetable, the last train for Keighley doesn't leave Leeds until 23:14. Leeds Groupers depart the Adelphi bar around 10:30, meaning that D. has to spend that time alone, *buying his own beer*. Time for an **Ansible Astral Appeal**: find this man a new drinking buddy to share those lonesome minutes. Star Trek fans, budding novelists and gun-owners all considered. 50p to the usual address.' [NER]

Gahan Wilson is to be amazed, or not, at receiving a Horror Writers of America award for 'Life Achievement' at the HWA's Bram Stoker Awards presentation on 21 June. [SFC May]

Jane Yolen bewails lack of time for cons and trips south while in the UK, adding: 'Scotland, while good for my soul, is not good for my writing. It seems to have slowed me down.' Yes, in nearly 3 months here she's done only 3 essays, 2 short stories, 2 picture books, 5 poems and 2 YA novel chapters. 'Not anywhere near up to my usual standard.' [27 May]

Consopition

17 Jun • BSFA—the monthly meeting rises from its grave. 3rd Wed, Victoria and Albert pub, Marylebone BR station concourse, 6:30pm on. (Speaker/event planned for 7:30.)

19-21 Jun • **Protoplasm**, Parkers Hotel, Manchester city centre. £14 reg. GoH Bob Shaw. £18 reg, £20 at door. Rooms from £18.50/person/night. Contact 1 Shoemsmith Ct, Merchants Place, Reading, Berks, RG1 1DT. Amoebae get in free.

21 Jun • **Langford Wedding**—my more famous brother Jon and Helen Tsatsos are getting married in Chicago and, alas, I can't make it. Passing fans please hurl confetti for me.

4 Jul • **Armageddon Fireworks**, Hardwick House, Whitechurch on Thames (near Pangbourne). 8pm, detonations 10-10:30 onward. £3.50. Beer tent. Contact 0734 588570. [MAH]

18-20 Jul • **Contagion**, Central Hotel, Glasgow. Trek con. £30 reg. Contact PO Box 867, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 4HR.

18-26 Jul • **Minehead Space Age Festival**, Town Hall, The Parade, Minehead. Arthur C. Clarke, Patrick Moore and John Brunner (18th only) plus cast of thousands, down to the soul-chilling 'An Evening of Entertainment by Minehead Dramatic Society on a Space Theme' (clashing with Terry Pratchett's talk on the 25th, poor sods). Contact 0643 707213. [DR]

25-26 Jul • **Hasticon**, Library, Claremont, Hastings. GoH David Gemmell (also me and allegedly Colin Greenland—who writes, 'I'm not bad at all, really, as long as I don't expect too much of myself and don't attempt to go anywhere.'). £2.50/day (10am-6pm) to Hastings Arts, 53b All Saints St, Hastings, TN34 3BN, or contact 0424 420634. Limited numbers.

1 Aug • **Clwydcon**, 'SF poetry theme', Celyn Horticultural Coll., Northop, Clwyd. £6 reg, £13.50/room. Contact Rose Cottage, 3 Tram Lane, Buckley, CH7 3JB. 0244 543820.

7-9 Aug • **Scone** (Unicon 13), Clyde Halls, Glasgow. £12 reg. GoHs Iain Banks, Anne Page. Contact Glasgow U Union, 32 University Ave, Glasgow, G12 8LX. 'Games in sf theme. Positively *The Last Appearance of Ken Lake* (he says).

3-7 Sep • **Magicon**, 50th Worldcon, Orlando, Florida. \$110 reg to 15 July (more at door). Contact PO Box 621992, Orlando, FL 32862, USA. Featuring 'The Walt Willis Enchanted Miniature Golf Course'. • By coincidence the new UK human-rights campaign Death Watch, which urges tourist boycotting of US states with the death penalty, has taken as its first slogan: 'Don't visit Florida—the Sunshine State that kills.'

28-31 May 93 • **Mexicon V** is 'converging with 95% certainty' on a north-of-England hotel and has confirmed the very wonderful Pat Cadigan as a guest. £18 reg. Contact: 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, W. Midlands, B66 4SH.

Rumblings • London's Café Munchen is closed for refurbishment June/July, disrupting countless launches and signings (e.g. *New Worlds 2*, out 23 July: 'Possibly the greatest anthology ever edited,' says David Garnett. Spies hint that 'Warwick Colvin Jr', author of *NW2*'s 'hard-science serial', might also write under a name not unadjacent to Michael Moorcock).

Oh No, Not Again ...

The time has come to list awards. Well may you shudder.

Nebulas. NOVEL Michael Swanwick, *Stations of the Tide*. NOVELLA Nancy Kress, 'Beggars in Spain'. NOVELETTE Mike Conner, 'Guide Dog'. SHORT Alan Brennert, 'Ma Qui'.

Philip K. Dick award: Ian McDonald, *King of Morning*, *Queen of Day* (best original paperback of 1991).

Hugo nominations. NOVEL Lois McMaster Bujold, *Barrayer*; Emma Bull, *Bone Dance*; Orson Scott Card, *Xenocide* (winner, Langford Award for Best *Deus Ex Machina*); Anne McCaffrey, *All the Weyrs of Pern*; Michael Swanwick, *Stations of the Tide*; Joan D. Vinge, *The Summer Queen*. NOVELLA Nancy Kress, 'And Wild For To Hold' and 'Beggars in Spain'; Kristine Kathryn Rusch, 'The Gallery of His Dreams'; Michael Swanwick, 'Griffin's Egg'; Connie Willis, 'Jack'. NOVELETTE Isaac Asimov, 'Gold'; Pat Cadigan, 'Dispatches from the Revolution'; Ted Chiang, 'Understand'; Howard Waldrop, 'Fin de Cyclé'; Connie Willis, 'Miracle'. SHORT Terry Bisson, 'Press Ann'; John Kessel, 'Buffalo'; Geoffrey A. Landis, 'A Walk in the Sun'; Mike Resnick, 'One Perfect Morning, With Jackals' and 'Winter Solstice'; Martha

Soukup, 'Dog's Life'; Connie Willis, 'In the Late Cretaceous'. NON-FICTION Charles Addams, *The World of C.A.*; Everett Bleiler, *Science Fiction: The Early Years*; Jack L. Chalker & Mark Owings, *The Science Fantasy Publishers*; Jeanne Gomoll et al, *The Bakery Men Don't See Cookbook*; Stephen Jones (ed), *Clive Barker's Shadows in Eden*. ARTWORK Thomas Canty, cover, *White Mists of Power*; Bob Eggleton, c. *Lunar Descent* and *IASFM/Stations of the Tide*; Don Maitz, c. *Heavy Time*; Michael Whelan, c. *The Summer Queen*. DRAMATIC *The Addams Family, Beauty and the Beast, The Rocketeer, Star Trek VI, Terminator 2*. EDITOR Ellen Datlow, Gardner Dozois, Edward L. Ferman, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Stanley Schmidt. ARTIST Thomas Canty, David Cherry, Bob Eggleton, Don Maitz, Michael Whelan. SEMIPROZINE *Interzone, Locus, New York Review of SF, Pulphouse, SF Chronicle*. FANZINE *File 770, Fosfax, Lan's Lantern, Minosa, Trapdoor*. FAN WRITER Avedon Carol, Mike Glyer, Andrew Hooper, Dave Langford, Evelyn Leeper, Harry Warner Jr. FAN ARTIST Brad Foster, Diana Harlan Stein, Teddy Harvia, Peggy Ransom, Stu Shiffman. • JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD (not a Hugo) Ted Chiang, Barbara Delaplace, Greer Ilene Gilman, Laura Resnick, Michelle Sagara.

Eurocon awards. AUTHOR the Strugatskys. PUBLISHER Heyne, Germany. MAGAZINE *Foundation*. YOUNG AUTHOR (BRITISH) Ian McDonald. [FATW] (Me: 'Does that "British" mean that every country's nominated young author gets an award?' *Bridget Wilkinson*: 'It's still very meaningful and important.')

Infinitely Improbable

Ten Years Ago. 'This is the first time I ever told anyone: I masturbated to Robert A. Heinlein!' said Maxim Jakubowski in *NME*. 'Not the least bit true,' exploded Carl Sagan, angrily clutching certain copies of *Ansible*. And *Playboy's* June playmate-of-the-month boasted that her favourite authors were Edgar Rice Burroughs, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Michael Moorcock, Tolkien and John Norman. (*Ansible* 26, June 82).

Pegasus Bust: the sequel to this publisher's bankruptcy (see A57½) was 'the astounding coincidence that the company offices were burgled within 24 hours of the Receiver stepping in. Curiously, the thieves removed 4 filing cabinets of confidential paperwork and a couple of inexpensive PCs, yet ignored the 10 or 12 rather more valuable Apple Macs scattered around the room. My, how puzzling.' [SG]

Nexialism. Issue 2 of Paul Brazier's long-awaited sf magazine *Nexus* has appeared, to sounds of rejoicing; this month PB will announce deadlines for #3, *The Last Dangerous Nexus*. Rush £2.95 to SF Nexus, PO Box 1123, Brighton, BN1 6EX.

Oops: a Tor Books press release explains that Gene Wolfe's *Storeys from the Old Hotel* (1st ed. Kerosina, UK; Tor reissue) did actually *er tie* with H. Ellison's *Angry Candy* for its vaunted World Fantasy Award, as was not mentioned in earlier publicity. Wonder who insisted on this announcement? [28 May]

Proud & Lonely Thing Dept. 'The recent Trading Standards swoop on "video nasties" sounds less spectacular when you learn most of the teenage dealers were caught via the horror fanzine *Samhain*, through their own classified ads or when they responded to a fake placed by the authorities. Meanwhile, Channel 4's screening of the US *Roseanne* has reached the stage where the younger daughter's introverted and anti-social behaviour is explained: she's *an sf fan*. Hmmm.' [SG]

C.O.A. Arthur Hlavaty/Bernadette Bosky, 206 Valentine St, Yonkers, NY 10704, USA. *Jean Owen's Famous Spaniels That Howl Agonizingly At 3am*, 45 Tilehurst Rd, Reading, RG1 7TT.

Hazel's Translation Lessons. 'There is an old German proverb: "Every swine can give a plice of ham", or, speaking Russian, "take from a black sheer only one flock".' (Arkady & Boris Strugatsky, reported in *Fank: Special Volgacon Issue*.)