

ansible



Ansible 62 September 1992

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. Fax 0734 669914. ISSN 0265-9816. Logo by Dan Steffan, cartoon by the late great ATom. *Ansible* supports thingummy for TAFF if she ever makes her bloody mind up.

R.I.P. 1987-1992: August's London sf meeting took place amid a hell of builders' partitions constricting the pub to half size, terrific behind-the-scenes hammering and a stench as of a glue-sniffers' convention, as the Wellington began its loathsome transmutation into an 'upmarket wine bar'. (Will the far from upmarket staff be sand-blasted and refurbished in keeping with this policy?) The juke-box having failed to shift us, this was the Final Solution. A partly democratic straw poll opted for a move to the Great Eastern Hotel's 'Hamilton Hall' bar in the new Liverpool St Station, at least for now.... 'Oh God, it's a yuppie bar,' reports one ashen-faced explorer [EC].

The Brains of Earth

Neil Gaiman's recent trip Down Under shed light on feminism at Aussie cons: 'In the panel on Genre Blurring, with Sean McMullen, NG and Helen Reilly, Neil eventually turned to Helen and said: "You haven't said anything yet"—whereupon, as Helen opened her mouth to begin, there was a shout from the audience of "That's because she's the token female on the panel!"—and Neil said something along the lines of Oh-I-didn't-realize-I-thought-you-might-have-wanted-to-speak, and turned back to Sean—and so the panel continued....' [NR]

George Hay reports: 'Hasticon was surprisingly successful. The *Necronomicon* reprint [from *Skoob Books*] should be available Oct/Nov, the sequel fairly early in spring. I pray this is not just another triumph of hope over experience.'

Patrick Nielsen Hayden (with Mike Resnick) has lately been assembling *Alternate Skiffy*, 'a mind-bending collection of tales that ask what if H.P. Lovecraft had inherited the editorship of *Astounding*? ... What if the 1940s owners of *Amazing*, casting about for a desperate fan in the Midwest to fob the editorship on to, had settled not on Ray Palmer but on Claude Degler?' ... and other sense-shattering hypotheses. [PNH]

Don Herron is once again editing Philip K. Dick's Letters: six volumes in all, with wistful hopes for a corrected reprint of #1, and #2 for 1975-6 'due by Nov or so' from Underwood-Miller.

Fritz Leiber, alas, had another stroke in mid-August and remains in hospital: 'looks unlikely that he will be able to return home' [JB]. He is 81 and remarried earlier this summer.

Duncan Lunan keeps smiling: 'The *Glasgow Herald* cancelled this year's sf competition, so threatening my writing class at the University; so I've been forced back into unemployment.'

Simon Ounsley, now mostly recovered from ME after his course of 'spiritual healing', reports: 'When I ventured to the Leeds group the other night, D. West immediately fixed me with his evil eye and announced his intention to denounce me and all my mystic claptrap in his forthcoming *Daisnoid*. "*Daisnoid*?" I cried in astonishment: "but what about the second collected works [Deliverance] for which all fandom waits with bated breath?" "It's going to be late," West replied without so much as the blink of an eye. ... My favourite LoC so far [on the mystic bits] is from Joseph Nicholas. It reads as follows: "Dear Simon. Jesus Christ Almighty. Yours, Joseph." That must be the shortest letter Joseph has ever sent to anyone.'

Terry Pratchett 'went to Arthur's [Clarke's] Week at Minehead, which had a sort of weird atmosphere. I don't think they knew what it was they were trying to do. Thank heavens for Sarah Broadhurst of *The Bookseller*, who lives down there; she'd managed to put across the novel idea that if they were

inviting a number of authors it might be a good idea to have some of their books around.... What spoiled it for me was the arrogant film crew commissioned to do a "commemorative video". They flourished an outrageous disclaimer form (the phrase "anywhere in the universe" was included) which I "had" to fill in. I'm afraid I fell prey to the sin of evil satisfaction when they got in a snit and took down all their lights and left after I refused to sign. We were able to get six more people into the library, though.'

TP on Sou'Wester's move: 'Har har, I was right about Bristol after all. Ah, the good old Adelphi, jewel of the South-West. I was at a con there Some Years Ago (within the last five). The guests, who included at least one far bigger name than me, were allowed to charge stuff to their rooms; in order to get this amazing privilege, the con committee had to front £400 for each guest. I had a nice time, left on the Monday and got a panicky call on the Tuesday from one of the organizers. Did the hotel give me any money when I checked out? No, I said. They say they did, she said, and they say they've got a signed receipt. And they say two other guests got given their balances, too. Overflowing with embarrassment, she explained: They'd collected the balance of the deposits from the management after the con. Then an irate manager phoned them and said, "No! A receptionist got it wrong! She thought the balance of the deposits belonged to the guests, and she gave it to them in cash! And we've got receipts to prove it! So the money we gave you was not yours, and we want it back right now!" In short, the Adelphi were saying we'd walked off with money—about £270 in my case—belonging to a group of fans. I'm pleased to say I was able to sort this out by means of a phone call and a very carefully worded fax, indicating that while I did not have the con's money I *did* have a solicitor with no sense of humour. And suddenly ... well, well, it turned out that the money hadn't been handed to us after all, and those "signed receipts" evaporated. Good old Adelphi, always helpful....'

Jane Yolen left our shores on 1 Sept (but Will Return): 'I go home to GEnie and the flaming debates where once Jerry Pournelle threatened to horsewhip one young man who said something slightly bad about me on line, even though it was Pournelle who—in another time and place—had called me "that feminist bitch". ("that" being the only correct part of the appellation.) See what I have missed?'

Conicopoly

First Thursday of month • **Nomadic London Meeting** as above.

11-13 Sep • **Contraction**, games con, U of East Anglia. £18 reg. Contact 4 Haddon Close, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 6DP.

21 Sep • **BSFA** with Kim Stanley Robinson, Victoria and Albert pub, Marylebone BR Station. 6:30pm for 7:30. NB one-off shift from '3rd Wed' norm to accommodate KSR.

2-4 Oct • **ConTaniméT** (anime), New Cobden Hotel, Brum. £16 reg, £20 at door. 20 Field Ridge, Shaw, Newbury, Berks.

2-4 Oct • **Midcon** (Trek), Holiday Inn, Leicester. £35 reg. Contact 8 Ennerdale Close, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 4TN.

9-12 Oct • **IFT Con** (Trek), Holiday Inn, Leicester. Contact 129 Westfield Rd, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 3HN.

16-18 Oct • **Octocon 92**, Irish national event, Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Ireland. £13 reg. GoH Orson Scott Card (Scourge of the Sodomites) and others. Contact 30 Beverly

Downs, Knocklyon Rd, Templeogue, Dublin 16.

30 Oct-1 Nov • **ConCert**, King's Manor Hotel, Edinburgh. £20 reg. Contact 97 Harrison Rd, Edinburgh, EH11 1LT.

6-8 Nov • **Novacon 22**: for writers' workshop contact Sally-Ann Melia, 11 Spinney Dr, Cheswick Green, Solihull, B90 4HB.

13-15 Nov • **T'kon** (Trek—they're insatiable!), Arcade Hotel, Brum. £12 reg at door; 'no contact address'. [BGN]

8-12 Apr 93 • **Helicon**, 44th Eastercon (+Eurocon); Hotel de France, Jersey. Now £25 reg. Contact 'Master of the Universe', 63 Drake Rd, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 1LQ.

Rumblings • Brian Aldiss, Barry Bayley, Michael Moorcock: what do they have in common? All were billed for the August *New Worlds/In Dreams* signing and didn't turn up. • Alan Moore speaks to the Preston group on 22 Sept (Bear's Paw pub, Church St). • Kim Stanley Robinson signs *Red Mars* at Forbidden Planet on 26 Sept.

Editorial: Year One

Your editor is as boggled as anyone to find that *Ansible's* new slimline series has lasted a year (12 issues plus two illogical half-issues: over 30,000 words and no lawsuits yet). At this juncture, apologies are extended to those far-off sf societies who wanted the agenda of all their weekly meetings listed in full, the bookshops expecting vast free publicity about every single signing, the con committees who are hurt that their 37 guests of honour and 18-tier membership rates aren't printed each issue merely because nothing has actually changed, and above all the fans who (not having fathomed the intricate subtleties of the stamped, self-addressed envelope) complain that *Ansible* is elitist and impossible to get hold of.

Kindly volunteers are now helping with the means of production, distribution and exchange, especially outside the UK (see credits box). This is very necessary because I am broke. For the future: when I can't afford it any longer, I'll stop.

Infinitely Improbable

Tales of Publishing. The Midnight Rose anthology collective's likely change of publishers is reportedly because despite high sales of *Temps* in particular, Penguin (i.e. Geraldine Cooke, who 'has a bad attitude'—A.Pundit) wants to swell its profits by cutting authors' payments from £60 to £40 per thousand words. • NEL's Humphrey Price blames falling sales figures and Recession Gloom for his decision not to take on another 'best of *Interzone*' anthology. • As for the rumoured GW Books revival, the 6 Aug meeting with the possible new publisher (an outfit I'd never heard of) was called off, but....

Too Good to Check: the story is that a young graduate newly employed by Radio 4 thought of a way to brighten it up, and on his own initiative wrote to Douglas Adams asking if he'd ever thought of adapting *Hitch-Hiker's Guide* for radio....

TAFF 1993: ghostly rumours of a 'conrunning candidate' have reached my ears. *Ansible* is not afraid to say, 'Pardon?' Jeanne Bowman is still writing up her 1992 adventure: 'One trip report segment is in the hands of Michael Ashley (oh look, "asshole" is the next word on my spell check).'

Small Press &c. *The Sirius Book Company* (alias 'Not Kerosina') is a quasi-new venture from Mike & Debby Moir, kicking off on 15 Oct with Keith Roberts's *Kaeti on Tour*—guaranteed crammed with nubile young femininity. (£13.95 hc, 320pp. Nice cover by Jim 'I'm hoping people will forget about that "personal stains" remark' Burns. Listing here does not preclude failure to review it in a later issue.) • *Pong 41* is a surprise Ted White/Dan Steffan revival (see COA), bewailing *inter alia* an absence of UK fanzine activity—well, chaps, if you will fall silent for ten years or so you do tend to drop off mailing lists. • The US *Necronomicon Press* plans a 1993 Langford chapbook which (like their recent Stableford, *The Innsmouth Heritage*) will be in the great tradition of Lovecraftian Stories Written For The Socko

Centenary Anthology That Steve Jones Couldn't Actually Sell.

The SF Encyclopaedia Soap: champagne corks popped in mid-August and flying pigs were seen in the radiance of a blue moon as the UK editors still reeled in stark disbelief: *Peter Nicholls has finished writing his entries!* Delivery real soon now.

History Repeats: older readers will recall that London fan meetings moved to the Wellington pub after the One Tun's macho landlord threw out a fan for wicked deviancy. Certain filk-singers had more recently been meeting there, until 20-odd walked out at the landlord's expulsion of a male fan for wearing little but 'form-hugging Lycra'. (Take a bow, Teddy.) [RR]

drif's guide to UK second-hand bookshops is out in a new edition with an index at last (and without, I hope, its former sweeping claim that Guildford does not exist). Advance flyers speak mysteriously of a Channel 4 *Within Walls* involving Mike Moorcock and 'drif' himself on 6 Oct. The book is £11.24 post free from 'drif field guides', 41 North Rd, London, N7 9DP.

Curse of Ansible: 'The Red Fox copy-editor who fucked up *The Birthplace* by deleting subjunctives (and much more, and much worse [see A60]) has been fired from the series, at last, thanks to a colossal capitulation by the bastard of an in-house editor—who, it seems, for the first time has actually taken a look at the work before telling me I'm a thicko and awkward with it for protesting. An impromptu party was held here.' [JG]

GUFF: nominations are open for next year's race to bring a Worthy Australasian Fan to Helicon at Easter 93. Closing date 30 Nov, ballots available Dec. Euro-administrator: Eva Hauser, Na Cihadle 55, 160 00 Praha 6, Czechoslovakia.

Ten Years Ago ... Britain's long-running SF Book Club got its death warrant as 'basically an outmoded idea'. *Extro* magazine folded. A radio 'Brain of Britain' question asked what *Billion Year Spree* and *New Maps of Hell* had in common: the hesitant answer was, 'Drug addiction.' Too right. (*Ansible* 28, Sept 82.)

Collision! Brian Stableford and Martin Hoare were recently incapacitated in reckless, daredevil pastimes—respectively, cricket (colliding at high speed with a fielder gave BS a nasty faceful of infected tooth marks) and drinking (colliding at high speed with a chair-back in the Welly left MAH concussedly saying 'Who am I?' for about two weeks). All is now well, though Martin had a slight relapse after flying over for the current Worldcon and finding, at his destination airport, my brother.

Unattributable: A certain British games company (Guess Who?) is busy making litigious noises at an sf publisher thanks to some book title that duplicates a 'trademarked' game title.

Coital Wave? 'Martin spent five minutes staring at the cover art for *Critical Wave* 27 and muttering "There'll be complaints." Since any sexual subtext has to be imposed by the reader (the young lady is fully clothed), it'll be illuminating....' [SG]

Rejection of the Month, accompanying two non-fiction MSS: 'Please find enclosed your manuscript in which Knave are no longer accepting fiction.' [MG]

C.O.A. *The Conservatory* is the new incarnation of the former Café Munchen, venue of countless past and future signings. *Lucy Huntzinger*, 2305 Bernard Ave, Nashville, TN 37212, USA. *Ken Lake* ceases to have any fixed address on 16 Sept (except for 'temporary stopovers' in Singapore and Hong Kong) and promises that mail will not be forwarded. *Katie McAulay/Greg Pickersgill*, 3 Bethany Row, Narbeth Rd, Haverfordwest, Dyfed, SA61 2XG. *Simon Ounsley*, 25 Park Villa Court, Leeds, LS8 1EB. *Dan Steffan*, 3804 South 9th St, Arlington, VA 22204, USA.

The Searing Question: 'Does the column in *Interzone* mean that David Langford has sold out?' [LMT] Who, me?

Ansible 62 © Dave Langford, 1992. Thanks to rumour-mongers Jeanne Bowman, Brum Group News, Eddie Cochrane, Mike Gerrard, John Gram, Steve Green, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Don Herron, Robert Lichtman, David Pringle, Roger Robinson, Luke M.Tredinnick, and hero distributors John Foyster, Vikki Lee France, Steve Jeffrey, Arnie Katz, Yvonne Rousseau, Alan Stewart and Bridget Wilkinson (FATW). 3/9/92