



Anible 64 November 1992

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. Fax 0734 669914. ISSN 0265-9816. Logo by Dan Steffan. Guppies also by Dan Steffan—is there no end to the man's talents? *Anible* is available. Abigail Frost for TAFF!

POLICY BIT: as dull press releases pour in, *Anible* fancies more News As Entertainment. An unadorned 'Author Sells Book' does not excite (do trade journals elsewhere carry stories of 'Bricklayer Lays Brick?'). 'Stross Slays Seven, Dies In Cocaine Brawl'—now you're talking. 'Greenland Sells Book Despite Ravages Of M.E., Blames Illness On Occult Resonance Of Title Harm's Way, Claims Next Will Be Called *Sex, Wealth and Immortality*'—nice one, Colin, but don't try too hard....

These Restless Heads

Anonymous of Daventry confides: '24 November will see a legal battle in court between Games Workshop and Boxtree in the Warhammer corner, and Transworld in the other corner, over a matter of trademark infringement due to Transworld launching those young adult skiffy titles labelled "Dark Future". [A GW game™ which I thought had been discontinued—Ed.] Meanwhile Boxtree strides ahead, aiming for a January launch of the brand-new *Space Marine* by Ian Watson, which isn't at all like *Starship Troopers*, introducing a new art form: scrimshaw upon the finger bones of one's dead comrades.... Preliminary findings at Frankfurt indicate international potential for the Boxtree venture.' [AoD]

Steve Baxter's life imitates art: 'I have a story in *Weerde II* whose first line is "We want you to assassinate Stephen Hawking". Last weekend [17 Oct] I was in Cambridge signing books at Heffer's bookshop. Afterwards I was driving out of town and approaching lights when suddenly, out of nowhere—you've guessed it—a motorized wheelchair came plummeting across the road in front of me. I did an emergency stop, no harm done ... the chap in the wheelchair grinned hugely and a worried-looking lady came running to pull him back on to the kerb. I've heard the great man is prone to this sort of antic. So I almost lived through my own story. Spooky....'

John Brunner had trouble with antibiotics for an infected insect bite: 'You know how debilitating diarrhoea is. Ever had it for months on end? I literally feel drained.' He's been writing 'posthumous collaborations' ... luckily it's the other authors who are posthumous, such as Borges and Eric Frank Russell.

Avedon Carol counted up Hugos and now warns me for my own good: 'If you ever get nine, Langford, you will have to die.'

Chuck Harris's Worldcon was marred by rampant shingles: 'It's absolutely no fun waking in the morning nowadays, claspings a throbbing, nipple-erect breast and finding it's your own.'

Don Herron was at Fritz Leiber's funeral: 'If Jay Sheckley had limited herself to her opening remarks about reclaiming Fritz for horror and then just gone over and kissed the corpse in the open casket, throwing back her black veil and leaning over Dracula-like ... fuck, maybe it would have been in questionable taste, but at least it would have been short. She had to be ordered off stage after the first story she wanted to read. And she can't read for shit. As my and Fritz's pal John Law said to me somewhere during the almost-two-hour affair, "Hey, Don, could you get me a spot on the programme? I'd like to read *A Spectre is Haunting Texas*." So Sheckley did the corpse kiss after it was all over and almost no one was watching. Werewolf Mike put a cigarette in Fritz's hand and someone else a champagne glass for his last party (I don't think he would have objected for a second—though I hear Charlie Brown had big trouble with the open coffin). Poul & Karen

Anderson, Judith Merrill and Diana Paxson spoke. John de Cles gave a brilliant (and short) valediction. And Justin Leiber's reading of Fritz's "The Big Trek" from the mezzanine of the *fin de siècle* columbarium where the services took place was nothing short of magisterial (and the story selection could not have been better, if you knew Fritz). Maybe you had to be there, maybe you're glad you were not. The whole deal, while totally Fritzean, might have been a bit much for most folk I met in England—it was too much for many who were there. As I said to myself when the speeches, readings and songs were finally at an end, "Jesus, I need a drink!"

Maxim Jakubowski gloats: '100 Great Detectives edited by you-know-who won the nonfiction Anthony (crime's equivalent of the Hugo) at Bouchercon 22, the World Mystery Convention in Toronto [Oct]. Also, Nottingham beat Washington DC and Miami in the bid to host Bouchercon 25 in 1995. So, what with Glasgow and sf, both big worldcons come to the UK in '95.'

Stephen King recently helped save a TAFF candidate's life! Abigail Frost (for it is she) inadvertently inhaled a lump of Yorkshire pudding and was visibly choking to death; heroic Roz Kaveney leapt to the rescue with the Heimlich Manoeuvre, adding modestly: 'I read how to do it in *Christine*.'

Naomi Mitchison, vastly prolific and fondly remembered in sf circles for *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*, was 95 on 1 Nov.

Contabescence

First Thur • London Pub Meetings—*Evolution in Action*. Oct: fans voted with their feet for both *Hamilton Hall* (Liverpool St Station) and the *Wine Vaults* (Fenchurch St). #1 has everything going for it—free house, food, the Underground, a sheltered milling-around space outside—but is overcrowded at rush hour; having part or all of the upper bar reserved for us is contingent on a large, regular fan turn-out. #2 was quiet and emptyish, but wouldn't be so if the entire ex-Wellington mob descended; it also closes early, and lazier fans are not keen on the walk from the tube. (Advocates of each pub stressed the damning fact that the other advertises a smart-dress code. Several noted Worst Dressed Fans have failed to be thrown out of either.) '*Anible* should make the decision,'—claimed Tim Illingworth. My straw-polling now indicates *Hamilton Hall*; some early-coming ochlophobes may prefer to spend the rush-hour period in Fenchurch St first.

6-8 Nov • Novacon 22, Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham. £25 at door. GoH Storm Constantine. Too late to pre-register.

7-8 Nov • Armadacon 4, Astor Hotel, The Hoe, Plymouth. £20 reg or £10/day. GoH: various. Suck it and see.

13-15 Nov • Tkon (Trek), Arcade Hotel, Brum. £12 reg at door (also daily rates); no contact address known.

18 Nov • BSFA, V&A pub, Marylebone Station. No info.

27-9 Nov • Hillcon III, 18th Beneluxcon, Atlanta Hotel, Rotterdam. f65 reg. Eurocheques to Hillcon III, Bijltespad 52 II, 1018 KJ Amsterdam, Netherlands.

8-12 Apr 93 • Helicon, Eastercon: PR3 with tortuous and labyrinthine booking forms now out. £25 reg, rising to £28 on 1 Dec. Contact 63 Drake Rd, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 1LQ.

1-3 Oct 93 • Fantasycon XVIII, Midland Hotel, Brum. GoH Peter James, Les Edwards. Membership cost still an eldritch secret. Contact 15 Stanley Rd, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5DE.

24-8 Aug 95 • Intersection, 53rd Worldcon, Glasgow. Full attending membership £40 until 31 Dec, with discounts for all paid-up Presupporters, 'Friends' and 1995 site-selection Voters:

P £35, V £25, PV £20, F £15, PF £10, FV or FPV free. Supporting membership is £15, or P £10—free to other PFV combinations. Contact 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, B66 4SH.

? Oct 95 • Bouchercon 25, World Mystery Convention, Nottingham: details TBA. Contact Broadway Media Centre, 14 Broad St, Nottingham, NG1 3AL. (Or Maxim J. at Murder One.) [FW]

Rumblings • Easter 1994: Chris Bell has interrogated Robert Newman about his A63 news of a Dangercon 6 in Bristol while Sou'Wester (Eastercon) happened in Liverpool. Before being removed to intensive care, RN said that this was all a merry jape and was induced to send another bloody beermat. ('Moving Sou'Wester to Liverpool is the most brilliant idea since the deposing of Maggie Thatcher. I'll be there. Now can I have a plug for the Croydon sf group, 2nd Tue, Oakfield Tavern, St James's Rd, Croydon?' No—Ed.) • BSFA: the Oct meeting (Sue Thomas giving readings from her *Correspondence*) was enlivened when a visiting Thomas fan tried all by herself to throw out a party of non-sober outsiders who were Muttering in the background. *Barman*: 'I would have talked to them but you took matters into your own hands!'

Infinitely Improbable

Give Me Money! In the tradition of D. West, your skint editor hopes to defray the cost of *Ansible* etc. by flogging reprint collections. *Critical Assembly II* is the hotly awaited (one has to say these things) concluding book of Langford sf review-and-abuse pages from *White Dwarf*, *GM* and *GMI* ... 51 revised and updated columns, well over 70,000 words, 75pp A4, softbound with index, a mere £9. (Same as the 1987 price of the sell-out *Critical Assembly I*, reset and back in print soon.) *Let's Hear It For The Deaf Man* ed. Ben Yalow is NESFA's 1992 collection of my fan writing, 64pp mimeo plus covers, £5. Accost me at any pub or con. UK mail order of either or both: add 75p postage.

Gollancz Changes Hands—Cassell plc bought the venerable publishing house from its US owners Houghton Mifflin; London staff moved from their tatty old Covent Garden offices to Cassell's in the Strand (see COA). 'It's good news,' said galaxy-famous sf boss Richard Evans: 'Mine's a pint.' Changes have already begun: 'Cassell bought a new ribbon for the printer! A tradition dies as at last the world can read Gollancz royalty statements.' [CP]

Hazel's Tourism Lessons: *Venezuelan Guidebookspeak*. 'A very strange fauna only known by those who have had the chance of exploring their bowels is hidden in the "Tepuis".' [RB]

SF Foundation Move. The final decision to accept the University of Liverpool's offer of a home was taken on 1 Oct. [RR]

Ugh! Richard Calder's novel *Dead Girls* (HarperCollins) will, they say, be noted for the Hardback Porno Jacket of 1993. The editors hate it! All women: hate it! The book club cancelled its order because of it! And those in charge of the HarperCollins paperback not only loathe and despise it but begin to suspect that such a jolly striking cover must be worth re-using....

668: *The Neighbour of the Beast*—long proposed by Messrs Gaiman and Pratchett as the *Good Omens* sequel title (if ever), this just appeared as an Ace book by 'Lionel Fenn'. No comment on its dread 'decaying mansion at number 666 Langford Place' ... but 'isn't "Fenn" that US anthologist who published his "final" anthology last year—and has still neglected to pay certain authors or send out contributors' copies? I'm one of those in [Charles] Grant's "Final Shadows" who hasn't had copies of the book, but at least I've been paid. Mostly.' [DG]

Yet More *SF Encyclopaedia*: 'Bantam have ducked out of the US edition ... nothing to do with the book, just that they're trimming everywhere they can and hadn't actually signed a contract. I gather that New York editors are zeroing in.' [PB]

R.I.P. *Quantum* (once *Thrust*), the oft-Hugo-nominated sf review mag, will cease with its 20th anniversary issue in Jan.

Dracula Society: at 213 Wulfstan St, East Acton, W12 0AB.

Cultural Indicator. 'Offer in #1 of the magazine *Super-Nintendo*: "Free SuperNintendo Badge! Stick it on your clothes!

Take it off again! Hours of fun!" I thought of you at once.' [PB]

C.O.A. Jo Fletcher, 162 Clements Rd, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1BE. Gollancz, Villiers House, 41-47 Strand, London, WC2N 5JE. Cyril Simsa, from 9 Nov: c/o 18 Muswell Ave, London, N10 2EG or (urgent stuff) c/o Eva Hauser, Na Čihadle 55, 160 00 Praha 6, Czechoslovakia.

Skiffy Poets: short (100 lines max, preferably <50) pomes wanted for an A3 poster. S.Amos, 22 Albert Rd, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2SR.

A63 errata: in '1993 NASFiC' read '1995', for '£2/year' read '£2/issue', for [Intersection] "'attending" members' read 'paid-up members', for 'Setve Grnen' read 'Mratin Tudro', etc.

Letter from Texas. 'Despite a long list of accolades from the sci-fi wets, Kristine Kathryn Rusch of *F&SF* is slowly getting a reputation for being one of the more tedious writers in the field. Both she and her partner Dean Wesley Smith (of *Pulp-house*) go to workshops around the country where they encourage young writers to produce a story a week and get it in the post, stressing the writing of "saleable" stories, with the premise that a story is good if someone has bought it. Do we need more of this? ... Smith publishes *The Report*, a news-sheet for those writers who spend more time on the net and reading SFWA bulletins than they do writing. In a fussy, busybody voice it advises authors how to behave at cons, avoiding drink, poor dietary habits, lack of sleep, sex, etc. "Kiss my butt," I thought. Commentary from Pat Cadigan was: "Blow it out your ass!" ... Don't connect my name with any of this. I want all the editors in the field to think I love them dearly.' (Coward—Ed.)

Ten Years Ago: Ian Watson read *Ansible* and was 'not pleased to see Aldiss's court jester, the vulgarian of the universe, H. Harrison Esq, being abusive about the decent Mr Brunner.' (*Ansible* 29, Oct 82)

Fantasycon XVII

This was the usual genially shambolic event in sodden Birmingham. (Outsiders reported noises of massacre and dissent from Sunday's BFS-members-only business meeting.) • *Karl Edward Wagner* was, as usual when I see him, frothing with rage and despair—this time at the 'butchering' of his script for a DC graphic novel wholly rewritten without his permission. • *Andy Porter* waved a list of secret Hugo data showing that his *SFC* got 22% more nominations than *Locus*, that David Pringle is the #11 pro editor after Martin H. Greenberg, that *Ansible*, *Stet* and *Pulp* just missed the fanzine list, etc. (This would have carried more authority if his list hadn't omitted the winner, *Mimosa*.) • *Deborah Beale* of Millennium expressed unprintable feminist horror at the latest Piers Anthony title *The Colour of Her Panties*. • *Graham Joyce* tangled with the Millennium party's Free Bar: 'Pint of Murphy's please.' (Pause.) *Barman*: '£1.70.' *GJ*: 'WHAT?' *Barman*: 'It's only the halves of lager are free, sir.' *GJ*, paying up: 'AND a half of lager.' • *Ramsey Campbell* was mentally scarred from a reading which someone had livened up no end with drunken sound effects before falling loudly over. • *Richard Evans* looked strainedly enigmatic, confessing days later that he'd been defending the Gollancz Takeover Secret against my ruthless lack of questioning. • *British Fantasy Awards*: NOVEL (August Derleth award) *Outside the Dog Museum* by Jonathan Carroll, COLLECTION *Darklands* ed. Nicholas Royle, SHORT 'The Dark Land' by Michael Marshall Smith, ARTIST Jim Pitts (whose dentures had broken; since only the trophy bases had turned up, the spectacle was of an award with no award accepted by a man with no teeth), SMALL PRESS *Peeping Tom*, BEST NEWCOMER (Icarus award) Melanie Tem, and committee award (for Best Committee) Andy Porter. • *Linda Krawecka* left the horror artists nowhere with her art-show display of Real New Orleans Bad Taste (With Lobsters).... •

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