



Ansible 70 May 1993

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. Fax 0734 669914. ISSN 0265-9816. Logo by Dan Steffan. *Ansible* is available for stamped addressed envelopes, whim, or (rich idiots only) £12/year. Keep watching the skies....

HELICON. It seems there was some kind of convention in the Hotel de France, Jersey, over Easter, but I was busy doing its newsletter *Heliograph* and somehow missed the whole thing. ● **Brian Aldiss** said he managed to remain placid even when the *Independent* reporter asked him if he also wrote as Harry Harrison. ● **Iain Banks**, deprived of heights to scale, instead crawled around under the carpet of the hotel bar. ● **John Jarrold** was elected President of World SF but explained that he wasn't there at the time and knew nothing about it. ● **John Brunner's** GoH speech, reports Martin Hoare, was 'one long depressing whinge'. ● **Dealer's Room** highlight: a Russian table selling KGB credentials at exotic prices. 'Fans should beware the midnight knock on the door from authors Aldiss, Harrison and McCaffrey (who will be carrying a small, monogrammed flame thrower).' ● **798 full members** were reported (Sun), plus a handful of one-day visitors. ● **Bridget Wilkinson's** Fans Across the World outdid itself by importing 52 Romanians, which terrified both the States of Jersey (Helicon had to sign mighty pledges that none of them would try to stay) and the committee (rather than trek across the island to their campsite, dozens of the chaps shared hotel room floors). ● **Soft toy fans** were outraged at Tom Abba's X-rated art show exhibit of a teddy bear strung up with ghastly hooks à la *Hellraiser*. ● **Harlan Ellison** (as predicted) failed to turn up, but mysterious threats against Chris Priest reached the newsletter—a bit wasted, as CP wasn't there. ● **The SF Encyclopaedia** nearly sold out; one far-flung fan staggered off with 5 copies. ● **Malcolm Edwards** claimed bemusement on finding himself a Famous Monster owing to long-ago ConFiction debts which he didn't know were outstanding; he vowed to prod 'those who actually owe' into paying. ● **Jack Cohen's** exobiological influence was felt in the hotel swimming pool as crazed fans assaulted the inflatable shark and attempted to do artificial insemination with a water pistol. ● **Peter Weston** expressed constant bogglement at what his fandom had now come to.... **Eileen Weston:** 'Come on, Peter, when you start saying "in our day" we know it's time to go.' ● **Priorities:** the newsletter was blitzed with running statistics on hotel chocolate sales (circa 1.2 tonnes in 5kg bars alone), plus minor footnotes on old-fashioned issues like beer consumption. ● **Closing Ceremony:** this began with a 45-minute delay before the projectors for a multi-channel slide show (1,000 snaps from Helicon itself) appeared; all possible permutations of GoH pictures and names were shown repeatedly as ace technocrat Martin Hoare wrestled with the machinery. 'The committee said afterwards that they hadn't thought I could do it at all,' he exulted. ● **Jersey Zoo charity:** £1,000 was raised. ● **John Grant** gloated in carefully chosen type sizes that his sf quiz team crushed John Clute's by 365 to 220. ● **Vox Pop** (I paraphrase): 'The hotel was fine, Jersey was great, Helicon's organization was surprisingly wonky. Apparently as a point of policy, committee people were given jobs they'd never done before, without full briefing from those who had.... The main bad feeling was about the failure to signpost no-smoking areas properly.... There were mushrooms at breakfast, so it was a great con.... Some Continental fans had trouble with the newsletter's British humour.' [Oops—Ed.] ● **Corkage Horror:** the £1-admission 'Hawaii Party' was fined £500 when the hotel sniffed out its carefully hidden empties ... alerted, perhaps, by the subtle hint of its being advertised in the Helicon programme. ● **Eastercon 1995:** the Confabulation

bid was unopposed but confused everyone with a badge logo of a palpable reindeer which they insisted was a moose, traditional symbol of London Docklands. ● **40 Years On:** 10 April brought countless birthday congratulations on your editor's impending senility. Thanks to all (he snarled)....

Pilgrims on the Road to Nowhere

David Britton of Savoy Books was jailed for 4 months (2 Apr) under the Obscene Publications Act. I haven't heard which titles were the basis of this latest prosecution; it's hard to believe that relentless Manchester police raids on DB's bookshops are wholly uninfluenced by his novel *Lord Horror* with its send-up of their dippy ex-Chief Constable James Anderton.

Steve Green confesses that '*Critical Wave* was forced to take a New Era ad against its will because we needed the money.' He notes that although New Era always protested that they weren't just a British version of Bridge, they send Bridge review copies of their latest L.Ron Hubbard pb ... along with a ready-made rave review to save recipients the trouble of writing one.

Stephen Hawking (Trekkie) visited the *Star Trek:TNG* set, was invited to be in the show, and couldn't resist—he plays a hologram of himself, playing poker with Einstein. [K-I]

Don Herron gloats: 'I too now have a Hugo. And a Nebula, a British Fantasy Award and one of those neat Gahan Wilson busts of HFL used as World Fantasy Awards. The Hugo is from 1967, for "Gonna Roll the Bones" (hey, a good one). Justin Leiber decided, rather than have Fritz's awards shoved away in a drawer along with his papers at the University of Texas in Houston, to have them distributed among Fritz's pals.... All these awards, except the Hugo, make great bookends. The Hugo is fucking *useless*. It's pretty, though.'

Roz Kaveney broke her wrist running for a bus a couple of weeks ago. 'There was a bus strike on,' sympathizes Abigail Frost, 'so *serve her right* for scabbing.' [AJF]

Ken Lake is 'desperate to get my name in *Ansible* again. Does "Love from Chickenshit Mountain" qualify?' [This on a postcard of said mountain, near Pohnpei, Micronesia. See COA.]

Joseph Nicholas went to Cairo: 'Tourist numbers are down, though it's mostly Brits who are staying away—there are plenty of French, Germans and Americans (and Japanese, as usual videotaping everything). Apart from the traffic—traffic policemen are routinely ignored—it feels perfectly safe. I walked through the old Islamic part of Cairo, visiting mosques, and was accosted by no one more threatening than bazaaris anxious to sell me tourist tat like camel saddles and hubble-bubble pipes. But then this is a residential and mercantile area, and the fundamentalists are unlikely to start planting bombs amongst the people they wish to "liberate"—although following an explosion in Chephren's Pyramid on Wednesday they issued a demand for all foreigners to leave Egypt immediately, which, given that about 1/3 of the economically active population depends on tourism, will hardly endear them to the "army of the oppressed". In this, the fundamentalists seem as much in contact with reality as the average Trot.' [2 April]

Consarcination

12 May ● **BSFA**, The Conservatory pub, London, 19:30ish. John Clute urges us anew to buy the *SF Encyclopaedia*.

28-31 May ● **Mexicon 5** (written sf), Scarborough. £20 reg to 15 May (no postal memberships thereafter); £25 at door. Contact 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, B66 4SH. Quickly!

28-31 May • **Masquerades** (*Beauty & the Beast*), Grand Hotel, Brum. £37 reg inc banquet. Contact 12 Jessop Clo, Leasingham, Sleaford, Lincs, NG34 8LJ.

18 Jun • **British Fantasy Soc** open night with F.Paul Wilson. 18:30 onward at Falkland Arms, Bloomsbury Way, London.

14-17 Apr 95 • **Confabulation** (Eastercon), Britannia International Hotel, London Docklands. £15 reg (£10 supp) to end 1993. Rooms £31/person/night in double/twin, £37 single. Contact 3 York St, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH. 'About 1/2 of the rooms have whirlpool baths!' gurgles the committee.

Rumblings • As Helicon ended, *Larry van der Putte* was spotted at hotel reception in a *snüt*, muttering furtively that he'd come for his appointment with the conference manager.... • **Martin Hoare** and radiant *Jean Owen* were married on 30 April, twice—registry office plus church. Fannishly, Martin had produced the church Order of Service himself, leading to 'La la la la' noises for missing lines in hymns; bits of the vows ('in sickness and in health') also went astray but were restored from memory by the vicar. The subsequent prolonged piss-up lapsed into what looked suspiciously like a series of Helicon post-mortems (John Richards: 'I am *not* pleased with myself.') and inter-section muttering sessions (it's now rumoured that, PR1 not having appeared for Helicon as intended, the Dutch—present in force at the wedding—are taking over publications). Once Wedding Ops had spent ages crawling round the pub floor laying PA cables, the Langford best-man speech got its third airing to traditional yawns of delight. Hic.

Infinitely Improbable

TAFF. After an epic tussle via *Ansible's* fax machine, administrators Pam Wells and Jeanne Bowman announce that *Abigail Frost* is elected TAFF delegate to the 1993 Worldcon in San Francisco. There were 207 ballots, 192 expressing a preference. Under the 20% rule three candidates were instantly eliminated to leave *Abigail* winner by default (Michael Ashley failed to get 20% of the vote in Europe, Tony Berry in North America, Ashley Watkins anywhere). Boggled by this, the administrators nervously went through the whole single-transferable-vote procedure to see if anything would have come out differently: but no, the final-round count was TB 90, AF 93. When invited to make a victory statement, Ms Frost cried, 'Oh *shite*.'

C.O.A. *Colin Fine*, 33 Pemberton Drive, Bradford, BD7 1RA. *Steve Higgins* moans from France, 'The weather here is truly beautiful, and I'm going back to Manchester. The budget's been cut and my contract cancelled. Back to the same old address'—50 Cannon St, Eccles, Manchester, M30 0FT. *Ken Lake* (until when, who knows?), c/o Mr George Bennett, Post Agency Matei, Taveuni, Fiji. **TAFF** (Europe), c/o *Abigail Frost*, 95 Wilmot St, London, E2 0BP. *Pam Wells*, First Floor Flat, 14 Prittlewell Sq, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 1DW.

SF Encyclopaedia. CD-ROM edition expected from Nimbus in late June or so (to show what they can do, they sent *Ansible* their disc of that now superseded sf reference *The King James Bible*). • Attributed to Orbit publicist: 'We don't send *Encyclopaedia* review copies to genre journalists 'cos they'll all have to buy it anyway.' [A Disaffected SF Journalist] • Australia got country-wide saturation coverage: six review copies in toto. • Computer magazines report a new spin-off, 'the first Colour Look-Up Table Editor (CLUTE) from Visual Business Systems....'

Hand of the Beast: disconcertingly, Midnight Rose's shared world collection *The Weerde II* has cover artwork strangely similar to that L.Ron Hubbard *Invaders Plan* jacket last seen and deplored on the Conspiracy '87 pocket programme book.

SF Nexus magazine re-awakens ... '#3 out for Mexican'.

James Tiptree Award. This is interestingly funded by bake sales and cookbooks: I am now UK agent for the latter. Hordes of sf's famous and infamous contributed to *The Bakery Men Don't See* (90pp, a 1992 Hugo nominee) and *Her Smoke Rose Up from Supper* (112pp, new in 1993). Each £8.00 post free.

Lines on the Removal of the SF Foundation to Liverpool: 'So / Farewell then / North East London Polytechnic / As was. // "We

can't afford it." / That was / Your catchphrase.' *E.J.Thribb*, age 17½.

The Bleary Eyes is a 67pp collection of John Berry's legendary 'Goon Defective Agency' fan-fictions (1956-9), published by Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Grn, Stourbridge, W.Midlands, DY8 1LA. No price given.

Games Workshop vs Transworld drones on.... Though the appeal court upheld the injunction against TW sales of *Dark Future* books by Laurence James, GW™ were made to pay half their own ≈£60,000 costs after naughtily prevaricating about the existence of a crucial contract with Boxtree. *Judge:* 'I find your attitude over this disingenuous in the extreme.' *L.James:* 'Which is the legal equivalent of a headbutt.' In a separate case, TW are now challenging the original trademark grant on the basis that ordinary English phrases (e.g. *dark future*) shouldn't be 'fenced off' like this. Will it never end?

The Greasy Pole

1993 Nebulas. Novel *Doomsday Book*, Connie Willis. Novella 'City of Truth', James Morrow. Novelette 'Danny Goes to Mars', Pamela Sargent. Short 'Even the Queen', Connie Willis. Grandmaster: Frederik Pohl [SFC]. • **1993 Eastercon Awards.** Long text *Was ...*, Geoff Ryman. Short text *Ansible* (gosh wow). Artwork *Kaeti on Tour/Interzone 66*, Jim Burns. Dramatic: Illumination's fireworks. Doc Weir: Bridget Wilkinson. • **Hugo Nominations** (argh).... Novel *China Mountain Zhang*, Maureen F.McHugh; *Red Mars*, Kim Stanley Robinson; *Steel Beach*, John Varley; *A Fire Upon the Deep*, Vernor Vinge; *Doomsday Book*, Connie Willis. • Novella 'Uh-Oh City', Jonathan Carroll; 'The Territory', Bradley Denton; 'Protection', Maureen F.McHugh; *Stopping at Slowyear*, Frederik Pohl; 'Barnacle Bill the Spacer', Lucius Shepard. • Novelette 'True Faces', Pat Cadigan; 'The Nutcracker Coup', Janet Kagan; 'In the Stone House', Barry N.Malzberg; 'Danny Goes to Mars', Pamela Sargent; 'Suppose They Gave a Peace ...', Susan Schwartz. • Short 'The Winterberry', Nicholas A.DiChario; 'The Mountain to Mohammed', Nancy Kress; 'The Lotus and the Spear', Mike Resnick; 'Even the Queen', Connie Willis. • Nonfiction *Enterprising Women: TV fandom and the creation of popular myth*, Camille Bacon-Smith; *The Costumemaker's Art* ed. Thom Boswell; *Virgil Finlay's Women of the Ages*; *Monad #2* ed. Damon Knight; *Let's Hear It for the Deaf Man*, Dave Langford ed. Ben Yalow ('I'll get you for this,' writes Ed McBain); *A Wealth of Fable: an informal history of sf fandom in the 50s*, Harry Warner Jr. • Dramatic *Aladdin*, *Alien 3*, *Batman Returns*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, 'The Inner Light' (ST:TNG). • Pro editor Ellen Datlow, Gardner Dozois, Beth Meacham, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Stanley Schmidt. • Pro artist Thomas Canty, David A.Cherry, Bob Eggleton, James Gurney, Don Maitz. • Original art *Aristoi* (cover), Jim Burns; *Dinotopia*, James Gurney; *F&SF Oct/Nov* (cover), Ron Walotsky; *Illusion* (cover), Michael Whelan; *IASFM Nov* (cover), M.Whelan. • Semiprozine *Interzone*, *Locus*, *New York Review of SF*, *Pulphouse*, *SF Chronicle*. • Fanzine *File 770*, *FOSFAX*, *Lan's Lantern*, *Mimosa*, *Stet*. • Fan writer Mike Glycer, Andy Hooper, Dave Langford, Evelyn C.Leeper, Harry Warner Jr. • Fan artist Teddy Harvia, Merle Insinga, Linda Michaels, Peggy Ranson, Stu Shiffman, Diana Harlan Stein. • John W. Campbell Award (not a Hugo) Barbara Delaplace, Nicholas A.DiChario, Holly Lisle, Laura Resnick, Carrie Richerson, Michelle Sagara. • 397 ballots cast. The new Hugo category 'Best Translator' was dropped through lack of interest. Nominations declined: M.Whelan (pro artist), Boris Vallejo (original art). Easiest category to get into: original art, 9 votes needed. Hardest: pro artist, 47. [ConFrancisco] • **Philip K.Dick Award:** *Through the Heart*, Richard Grant. • **Ditmars** (Australia): Long fiction *Quarantine*, Greg Egan. Short 'Closer', Greg Egan. Artwork *Blue Tyson* (cover), Nick Stathopoulos. Periodical *Eidolon*. Fan writer Robin Pen. Criticism (Atheling award) 'Australian SF Art Turns 50', Sean McMullen. 'Everything except the long fiction and art appeared in *Eidolon*, which distributed "How to Vote" cards during the election.' [D&LS] I miss my favourite Ditmar, 'Best Fannish Cat'. • **ClariNet Communications** (USA) is doing an instant, electronic Hugo nominees' anthology, but left me uncharmed by offering mere lowly fan writers 'a royalty share far less than that for the pro material'. Nagged about this, publisher Brad Templeton said he was trying to 'reflect the values I perceived in the world of Hugos'. Gee, thanks a bundle. •

Ansible 70 © Dave Langford, 1993. Thanks to Paul Barnett, John Dallman, Abigail Frost, Seth Goldberg, Jeanne Gomoll, Helicon, Kim Huett, Andy Porter (still faxing Hugo data at 4am), Yvonne Rousseau, Mike Scott, SFC, Dick & Leah Smith, Alex 'E.J.Thribb' Stewart, Chris Suslowicz, Bob Webber, Pam Wells and stakhanovite distributors Alan Stewart, Martin Tudor, SCIS and Bridget Wilkinson. (And perhaps soon Janice 'Use me!' Murray.) 6/5/93