

ANSIBLE 14 (December 1980) Another issue of the sometimes monthly UK SF/fan newsletter, from Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Avenue, READING, Berks, RG2 7PW, UK. Rates were 4/60p UK, 6/£1 Europe, 5/£1 elsewhere, but will increase with coming UK postal increases. (The new UK rate will almost certainly be 6/£1.) Present subs will be fully honoured at the old rates; new subs and renewals/extensions come under the new rates, whatever they may be, as from the first Ansible after postal increases; if in doubt, send £1 and I'll work it out with incomparable fairness. See Keith Freeman's dinky little label, if there is one, for your present status. Heading: a doubtless festive but nevertheless rejected Xmas card design from Jon Langford. Speaking of which, it's time to air the now-traditional bad taste in golfballs and say *A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year To The Whole Flipping Lot Of You*. (1 December 1980)

\* NOVACON 10: 31 OCT — 2 NOV 1980

Novacon was perhaps the most consistently enjoyable convention I attended this year, so much so that I instantly made arrangements for others to do the reporting while I got on with the enjoying. Alas, all arrangements fell through and I'll just have to contribute some brief, dull notes myself.

Fortunately the pictures I took should jog the memory. Let's see... Greg Pickersgill with his tongue out (this must have been the successful Yorcon party. I think it was there that Steev Higgins, egged on by evil D.West, set fire to the shirt of huge Mike Brown and was, er, expostulated with). Peter Weston with a mike, looking like Nixon after Watergate, and Alan Dorey in the same position looking like someone annexing the Sudetenland. Goh Brian Aldiss brandishing a watering-can (a prop from his speech which purportedly proved something vondenikenesque. The speech was fun, but rambled in all directions—I overheard the editor of *Vector* deciding not to ask for a transcript). The disco, where apparently I almost picked up a spot prize as 'most aloof participant' while shoving through to collect Nova Award judges for the ballot counting at which Dave Bridges's *One-Off* emerged a clear winner—runners-up are said to be *Snorkel* and *Toll-Dau*. There are less than seemly photos of Gerry Webb, Cas 'See how far I can hitch my skirt' Skelton, Mike Meara, and various participants in an obscure landing orgy. The various Limp-wrist quiz teams (the Surrey version won the 'University Challenge'-style contest, I think). Rog Peyton auctioning a poster of JR from *Dallas* (his auctioneering was brilliant as ever, and at one point a surplus apple from the Langford garden went for 85p. Something like £200 for TAFF alone must have been raised at Novacon). Tom Shippey gave another talk, as usual Novacon's best 'serious' item (and all about language in SF, too, to Hazel's delight). Debates seem to have become instantly traditional after the successful one at Novacon 9: this year's had a much woollier topic, 'This house believes that the fragmentation of SF fandom is both inevitable and desirable', and became an interminable wrangle on definitions. A heavy veil of secrecy surrounds my own Novacon talk, since most of it is liable to be recycled into a TAFF report. The rest I mostly missed...

Novacon was crammed (450 attending, I think), friendly (at last the Angus kept a decent bar open most of the time) and drunken (see last bracket, not to mention the numerous room parties). Next year, attempts to control membership include refusal to take memberships until the rates are announced in PR1 (to be sent to all members of this Novacon, thus countering the euphoric and automatic signing for the next one which usually occurs) and abolition of conversion from supporting to attending membership: you have to decide which, straight away. Paul Oldroyd is rumoured as N-11 chairman with Rog Peyton as 'adviser' and Stan Eling as treasurer. Good use this year was made of a badge machine, producing permanent metal con badges which, for a UK con, must be an all-time best. Organization was good throughout without loss of fannishness. Top marks.



ansible

\* BIRTHS, ENGAGEMENTS &c...

This year, for the first time, Novacon ran into the Sunday night and effectively through the morning of Monday 3 November—and thus Dulcie Eleanor Jackson, born at 11.14am that morning, has started life auspiciously during a convention. Proud parents Rob and Coral Jackson have much to say about this event: I condense Rob's speech to '61b 7oz'.

US anglophile Rochelle Reynolds and BSFA Obergruppenführer Alan Dorey have announced their engagement and forthcoming marriage on the possibly appropriate date of 4 July 1981. Graham James will be responsible for losing the ring.

My Minneapolis Correspondent writes: 'Paul [Kincaid] managed to ruin any chances he had of getting propositioned in Chicago by lecturing all & sundry on British beer.'

\* SUSAN WOOD, 1948-1980

We couldn't really claim to know her that well. We'd exchanged letters and fanzines over the years; we'd met at the last two American worldcons; she stayed with us for a few days before and after Seacon. It's hardly enough.

Her career—both inside and outside fandom—was very successful. She taught in the English department of the University of British Columbia, and earlier this year won a difficult battle to achieve tenure—which essentially meant lifetime job security. I was one of the outside academic referees for the work in SF criticism on which her application was partially based; we both made deadpan reference to her Science Fiction Achievement Awards in critical writing. These, of course, were actually her two Hugos for best fan writer, of which she was properly proud. She had three Hugos in all—the third as co-editor of *Energumen*, the last fanzine to win the award. After *Energumen* suspended publication most of her fanwriting appeared in a personalzine, *Amor*, which while it was appearing regularly was a model of what such a fanzine can be. She published serious criticism in various books and journals—by a painful coincidence the Fall 1980 *Starship* arrived this morning, containing her regular book review column, as well as an article on Kate Wilhelm. The article suffers a little from an academic stiffness of tone; the reviews are more characteristic—forceful, lively, intelligent. She was—on the one occasion I saw her—a lucid public speaker: I'd imagine

she was a good teacher. She was 32 years old.  
But it would be dishonest to pretend that her outward success mirrored a stable personal life: the fact is that for some while Susan had been—literally—desperately unhappy, and had taken refuge in alcoholism and pills which only exacerbated the problems. Though we have no definite information as yet, it seems her death was from natural causes, but it's impossible not to believe that this self-inflicted damage—with the emotional traumas of the past months—is the underlying cause. The news of her death is distressing and shocking but not, unfortunately, all that surprising. What a waste. (Malcolm Edwards/Chris Atkinson)

(An editorial note: Dave Rowe has just phoned to say that an inquest decided Susan's death was the result of a major heart attack. The suicide rumours are unfounded. Fran Skene sends a newspaper report, parts of which leave me speechless:— 'As an SF scribe might chronicle it, citizen Wood journeyed into the null on the Gregorian Calendar's Day 12, Month 11, near to 1045 hours...')

#### \* CONVENTIONS

Sometimes I wonder whether a con calendar is superfluous in *Ansible*, when most subscribers probably get Ken Slater's book catalogues with his near-complete listing—not to mention millions of flyers at other cons. Thus I agonize, wondering if you mind paying for what you know already...

YORCON II: April 17-20, Drágonara Hotel, Leeds. 32nd British Eastercon. GoHs Ian Watson, Tom Disch; FGoh me. Supp £3, att £6, rooms £12.50 sngl, £8.50/person dbl/twin (not inc breakfast & VAT). 12 Fearnville Tce, Oakwood, Leeds LS8 3DU; phone 0532-721478 evenings.

FAIRCQN 81: July 24-27, Ingram Hotel, Glasgow. GoH John Brunner, special GoH Ken Slater. Supp £4, att £8, rises £1 after Easter, rooms £17 sngl, £12/person twin (inc breakfast & VAT). 200 Woodlands Rd, Glasgow, G3 6LN.

BECCON 81: July 31-August 2, Essex Centre Hotel, Basildon. A 'new' convention aiming for ~150 attending. GoH Barrington Bayley. Supp £2, att £5, room rates not yet out. 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middlesex, UB5 4BU.

STUCON 1: August 14-16, Stuttgart, W Germany. GoHs Marion Zimmer Bradley, David Hardy, Helmut Gabriel. Membership \$12 (\$18 after 31 Jan). Jürgen Mercker, Eichenweg 24, D-7016 Gerlingen, West Germany.

SILICON 5: August 28-31 presumably. No data as yet.

UNICON 2: September 11-14, Keele Univ. GoH John Sladek, FGoh Alan Dorey. Supp £3, att £5.50, room rates not yet out. 'Bridge End', Shawbury, Shrewsbury, Salop.

NOVACON 11: probably 31 October-1 November. No data till PRI.

Now to the more nebulous stuff. To add to the worldcon bids listed in A12, I have word of a Madison bid for '85 (this being the SF<sup>3</sup>/*Janus* lot) and a Vancouver in '87 bid which apparently hasn't been officially announced. This has some relevance to UK fandom since our very own Martin Hoare has been muttering about a British '85 bid on the assumption that there was no opposition. A bid that year would cause some ill-feeling from US Midwestern fans, who under the rotation scheme lost out in '79 and might do so again in '85, with only the Chicago '82 con between. Considerably stronger and more organized opposition would arise if either Australia or Scandinavia were to win the '83 con. Worse, as US cons become more quasi-professional and their membership less 'fannish', it's possible that the chances for any 'foreign' bid at all are dwindling—while on the British side we have the problem that in terms of international clout from a con committee, we more or less shot our bolt for Seacon. Seems that very few Seaconcom members, having given their all to that convention, could face another committee role so soon. *Ansible*, the gadfly fanzine, offers no solutions as yet—merely the comment that '85 is probably Too Soon. Comments? Suggestions? Never too early to talk about bidding, folks, but don't go off half-cocked.

Over here a respectable-looking committee is preparing a bid for Eastercon '82, called Channelcon and chaired by the ever so respectable-looking Eve Harvey. The plan is to use the Metropole in Brighton, used for Seacon but found

unsuitable for the Channelcon '78 bid: this time, it's the management is being reasonable and hoped-for room 1 would be little more than Yorcon II's. Presupporting memberships cost £1: 4 Fletcher Rd, Chiswick, London, W4 5AY Martin Easterbrook observes that, since the USSR writer's (*sic*) union has mysteriously decided Eurocon '82 can't be held in Moscow, and since the backup country Hungary might well also drop out, it's conceivable that Eurocon might merge with a successful Channelcon in that year. The BSFA has been talking about sponsoring, though not necessarily running, a bid for Eurocon '84—if nothing else, Orwell's year demands something special from Eastercon! In either case the problem is that we'd be expected to make provision for simultaneous translation, to run a considerably more serious programme than normal, and to provide accommodation cheap enough for impecunious members (the Poles, apparently, are notoriously so)—the latter almost certainly meaning it would have to be a campus con. Thus it could be that Eurocon and Eastercon-as-we-know-it are incompatible and would have to be separate events.

SPACE-EX 1984 is still going, as reported many issues ago, with its plans for a week-long thingy in the Wembley centre. The 5,000 tickets must be selling like hot cakes, for their flyer now says 'WE HAVE ONLY 4,700 TICKETS LEFT'. Cost: £12 to the end of 1980, £15 to the end of 1981. 21 Hargwyne Street, Stockwell, London, SW9 9RQ. The other huge con, 'Project Starcast', has still not deigned to answer the enquiries I was invited to make: however, *Matrix* says the driving force is 'Power-Pulse Productions, the same people who sell old SF comics, and who made the fanzine *Star-Trek—The Magazine* and the cassette *Soundzine* [the latter reputed never to have appeared]'. Gosh, wow, &c.

\* "DARLING, YOU'RE SO WONDERFUL," HE EJACULATED

Chris Morgan writes: "It's James Blish corpse-rolling time. One day last week Pauline found, by the duplicator at her school, a copy of a sheet evidently intended for an English language class. It was headed '*Not Using the Word SAID*'. It went thus: 'When people write conversations in stories *said* can be a very overworked word. There are many other words that can be used to make a conversation more lively or interesting. Here are some of them. Copy them *neatly* and *correctly* into your exercise book.' The list which followed gave 55 alternatives, from 'added' via 'murmured' and 'muttered' to 'yelled' (though it did omit 'polevaulted')..."

Your editor can go one better than that: the latest Soc of Authors magazine has a small ad which runs: *WRITER'S AID—How to say 'HE SAID' 1000 ways—£1.25*. (Readers baffled by all this should consult Blish's *The Issue At Hand*, wherein mechanical variations on 'said' are Denounced.)

This seems a suitably irrelevant place to insert an irrelevant anecdote. A week ago I wrote to George Hay about the good old *Necronomicon*; a few days ago, along came a postcard from George which told me not to worry about the *Necronomicon* contract because everything was being handled by Colin Wilson's agent &c. For some hours I was haunted by the feeling that this reply was not quite to the point. Eventually I noticed the date, and the postmark, on the card. George had sent it in December 1977. "Good grief," I swallowed tautologically...

And now a letter from the Rev P.H. Francis, responding to a curious enquiry of mine: "I do not have a copy of *The Temperate Sun*, having given all copies away. I have printed several books on the subject; but they are all in mathematical language. I can confidently state, as a result of my studies, that the sun does not send quantities of heat to the earth, after the manner of a bonfire. In fact no heat or energy leaves the sun or is received by the earth, from the sun. The sun, of course, *causes* heat to be generated on the earth. The earth's own supplies of heat or energy are used over and over again, and no loss of the earth's heat or energy occurs. This is much the same as with the earth's supplies of water. They change forms but their amount never varies. ...I regret not having a copy of *The Temperate Sun*." (Thus *ANSIBLE*'s scientific supplement is again postponed owing to a lack of textbooks.)

COA MARK CRASKE, 38 Ladybank, Birch Hill, Bracknell, Berks // JOHN FAIREY, c/o Southlands School, Station Rd, New Romney, Kent // JULIAN HEADLONG, 8 Highland Mews, Buscobel Rd, St Leonards-on-Sea, E.Sussex // PHIL JAMES, 42 Lincoln Rd, Stevenage, Herts // DAVE LOCKE & JACKIE CAUSGROVE, 4215 Romaine Dr (Apt 22), Cincinnati, OH 45209, USA // DAVE MONTGOMERY, 62 St Peters Ave, Caversham, Reading, Berks // LISANNE NORMAN (formerly Sutherland), 20 Helena Rd, Dereham Rd, Norwich, NR2 3BZ // PETER ROBERTS, 4 Oak Place, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 2EX (Peter adds that 'this may be temporary, so fanzines etc should continue to go to the Starcross address') // PHIL STEPHENSEN-PAYNE, c/o 'Longmead', 15 Wilmerhatch Lane, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 7EQ (from 12 Dec until he moves to Washington at the end of the year or thereabouts) // BOB WILKINSON, 16 Pound St, Warminster, Wilts // And Gary Farber was recently evicted, says Stu Shiffman: no new address.

**INFINITELY IMPROBABLE** Graham England warns (by phone) that the German postal strike has cut him off from fandom and his Xmas cards are liable to come from Austria... Globetrotting Kev Smith is spending time in Brussels in December and January, so complaints about *Vector 100* may be useless... *Galaxy* magazine has died, as has *Galileo*, and the decline of SF continues with the American Book Awards being lopped of SF and other categories ('these genres have their own awards')... Various meetings: the Reading pub meet has been shifted to Wed 17 Dec to avoid a clash with the Christmas Tun (18 Dec) or the BSFA meeting (19 Dec). The BSFA thing is planned to happen regularly on the 3rd Friday of the month (Tun 1st Thursday, Reading 3rd Thursday) and will next be on 16 Jan; yes, there will be a Tun on New Year's Day... The 1980 World Fantasy novel award went to Elizabeth Lynn's *Watchtower*... Dave Piper has broken his ankle in a Potts fracture and is 'all wired up like Spaghetti Junction'... Old time fan Peter Singleton reports that the BBC will be doing a programme on Park Lane Special Hospital (Liverpool), where he resides, and that he'll be wearing his BSFA etc badges for all to see... *You Travelled Through Time to Taste FORBIDDEN LOVE: BUT NOW YOU MUST MURDER HER!* This sober SFBC (US) ad unearthed by Andy Richards is, improbably though it may seem, referring to Asimov's *The End of Eternity*. Andy also notes that a film called *The Falls* (dir Peter Greenaway) was on at the NFT in November: 'appears to have been made by a learned, if somewhat eccentric, ornithologist with an obsession with linguistics, a knowledge of contemporary, new wave British SF (especially writings of Ian Watson)...' Quote source not given. A better title would have been *The Embirding*... Breathes there a fan with soul so dead as not to have noticed that our favourite film *Plan Nine From Outer Space* has received due recognition as an all-time nadir of film-making? This is in a book of 'Golden Turkey' awards for awful films: other nuggets about *Plan 9* include the information that the continual change from day to night in the film was because the director planned on using an optical process machine to darken the day-scenes to match—but he forgot... More on Worldcons: (1) Ahrvid Engholm and Anders Bellis contend that the 'Herman' Scandinavia-in-83 bid is effectively dead—largely because of the committee's failure to promote their bid. As virtually the only information on the bid to emerge from Sweden in 1980, this carries a certain weight. (2) It is whispered in my ear that Peter Weston is not unwilling to chair another UK Worldcon bid... WORLD SF has risen from obscurity with a directory of members and a newsletter, published by Gerald Bishop. Dues are now £5/year and presumably may be sent to him (2 Cowper Rd, Cambridge CB1 3SN) or Harry Harrison. Membership is open to anyone professionally connected with SF: the professed society aim is 'communication', and I originally thought it was intended as a kind of supranational SFWA—the newsletter speaks mostly of translations (Brunner), bibliography (Gerbish) and having lots of meetings...

*SHIFFMAN IS TAFFMAN*: flyer enclosed where weight permits. For the rest of you, the voting figures were Gary Faber 43, Stu Shiffman 79, HOF 2: Stu will thus be attending Yorcon II as TAFF delegate... DUFF, the US→Australia fund, has candidates Joyce Scrivner and Jon Singer, and closes 15 January: to vote, rush \$2 (US) to Ken Fletcher & Linda Lounsbury, 341 E 19th St, Minneapolis, MN 55404, USA, and say whom you prefer... Out of the closet: *Ansible* says Australia in '83, Joyce Scrivner for DUFF, Joe Nicholas for GUFF and Britain whenever... Rumoured TAFF candidates for the next Eurotrip in '83 include Brian Earl Brown, Avedon Carol, Grant Canfield and possibly Gary Farber again... Vonda McIntyre, they say, has done a Trekkie book wherein, heh heh, McCoy has to pull the plug on Kirk's life support system and terminate him. (See how I steal Easterbrook's news even as he steals mine)... Chris Morgan rumours: 'I hear Paul Oldroyd may shortly announce (a) that Tanith Lee is to be GoH of Novacon 11 and (b) that attendance will be limited to two people, though this may just be a nasty rumour put about by Rog Peyton'... Hugh Mascetti ('I was talking to Gen Sir John Hackett last week, and...') reveals that he and a Skelding nearly blew up Brum Central Police Station at Novacon 9, that one David S Power disabled the lift at the same con, and that members of St Peter's Coll, Oxford, have just voted to annexe the Sudetenland... £6500/year is what Colin Greenland's post as Foundation resident writer is said to be worth... Tom Disch will be over here for 2-3 months as part of his Yorcon trip, and Good Friend Charles Naylor also... Reviewer-hater Keith Roberts has responded to Paul Kincaid's bit on *Molly Zero* (*Vector*) with a letter saying this is the second complimentary letter he's ever written to a reviewer... Yorcon PR2 is out; PR3 is imminent and will carry booking forms... Bellis & Engholm report a European apa (bimonthly, £1.50/year, contribution 12pp/year min: Joachim Henke, Jahnstrasse 21, D-6551 Volxheim, W GERMANY)... Also, Sam Lundwall's departure from DELTA SF 'wasn't a big deal' as he's only stepped down as managing director—he's still editing all the SF from this Swedish house... Our very own Gerry Webb has reached fame (*Daily Express*, 18-11-80): he's been 'selected' by Date-line's computer as an ideal mate for Lady Diana Spencer, the lady who is currently not going to marry Prince Charles. '*Lady Diana might soon forget Charles if she met Gerald Webb, a 34-year-old former trainee astronaut and Government space research scientist... What he lacks in high breeding, he surely makes up for in brain power.*' But what is this eligible former trainee astronaut doing on the dating computer in the first place, we wonder?... Harry Andruschak writes to say he's preparing a 200-page apazine, which he hopes to be a record: he's working towards this goal by running off 100 copies of everything he writes, including the letter to me wherein he announces that he's preparing (aaagh)... Pierrot Publishing have now definitely gone bust, immediately after releasing the latest Holdstock/Edwards potboiler: no connection, we trust... George R. Stewart of *Earth Abides* fame died recently at the age of 85... Next issue in February, probably. ♪

*Back by popular request:*

HAZEL'S LANGUAGE LESSONS #4: KIKUYU

*komaria*: to touch somebody reprovingly or threateningly with a stick and say 'weel'

(*Could be a new fan tradition...*)

ANSIBLE 14 from Dave Langford  
22 Northumberland Avenue, READING  
Berkshire RG2 7PW, U.K.

XXXXXX 10

DICK BERGERON  
1 WEST 72ND STREET  
NEW YORK  
NY 10023  
U.S.A.

AIR MAIL

PRINTED MATTER

