

Ansible



Ansible 54

JANUARY 1992

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. Fax 0734 669914. ISSN 0265-9816. Logo: Dan Steffen. Available at random fan gatherings, by whim or for stamped addressed envelopes—sorry, no paid subscriptions.

BSFA DIRECTIVE #5,271,009/91: Following summit talks on a Single European Fandom, all British fanzines must in future conform to A4 or A5 format. As from mid-1992 there will be heavy fines for using quarto or being Rob Hansen. Pass it on.

Who He? (Ed.)

David V. Barrett wishes it to be known that Chris Morgan's book *Fortune Telling* (see A53) will be utterly outclassed by DVB's *The Encyclopaedia of Prediction*, to be delivered soon.

Paul 'I wish you hadn't written that' Brasier's joyful Xmas card promises that his *Nexus 2* will appear Real Soon Now.

Chuck Death, cartoonist of 'Great Pop Things' (*NME* and *LA Times*), is actually my more famous brother Jon—now offered *Vast Sums* by Penguin for a collection of these 'total lies about rock people'. For some odd reason the Penguin contract has a no-blasphemy clause. 'That can't get you into any trouble?' I asked. JL: 'Er, um, there is this sequence where God gets totally out of his skull on LSD and destroys the world....' *Our media correspondent adds:* 'I refer you to the 17 Dec *Village Voice* (New York), in which your Jon of the Mekons makes an appearance. Or a bit of him does. In plaster. With instructions on how to do it. Or how it was done.' [RIB] What, again?

Garry Kitworth explains that Methuen made him change 19th-century yards and gallons (in *The Drowners*) to metres and litres because 'they said kids wouldn't understand'. Whatever next? 'The term "half a guinea" should be altered to "53p". References to playing halma and diabolo will not be understood—please substitute "Nintendo" throughout.'

Michael Moorcock's latest notepaper is headed, 'By Appointment: HARLAN ELLISON'S BRITISH MOUTHPIECE.' Pardon?

Terry Pratchett is overcome, not merely at being gently done over in *Private Eye*. 'Discworld may slow down a bit from now on ... after four or five years at this rate the social bolts are shaking loose. Besides, the sheer business of authoring takes up more and more time—we have to handle the mail with a shovel.' But the next completed draft is still expected 'around March/April. Trouble is, I really want to do yet another Granny Weatherwax one, and it's not her turn....'

Steve Sneyd offers a 3pp 'preliminary listing' of UK sf poetry collections: *Orbiting a Data Dump I ... 30p to 4 Nowell Place, Almondsbury, Huddersfield, West Yorks, HD5 8PB.*

Fay Sampson is alive and well in Selly Oak: 'Headline offered for my next two novels, but I wasn't sure if one would be right for their list, since it would be about the Synod of Whitby ... I haven't had the courage to tell my agent that I also want to do one about the Pelagian heresy. Headline are bringing out my first five adult novels as an omnibus, titled *Daughter of Tintagel*. In the final one, *Herself* [Jan], Morgan le Fay gets a chance to answer back at all the people who have written about her over the centuries. Some of those authors are still alive ... I shall wait for the libel suits.'

Brian Stableford, reproved by Simon & Schuster for his new book's inadequately thrusting title, has now offered them an author's note giving the S&S sales force total credit for replacing his merely relevant *Young Blood* with the enticingly perfervid *The Hunger and Ecstasy of Vampires*. [BS]

Alex Stewart, interviewed in *Imagination* (Nov), remarks: 'It took me a long time to learn how to write good.' [SG]

Ian Watson writes: 'I've gone DEAF in my right ear through

stupidly washing it—or washing it stupidly. Just back from a party where the resident dog went bananas when a hot-air balloon flew over. Apparently horses & sheep react similarly. This indicates a hard-wired genetic response, proving the existence of a garish, rotund, aerial predator unknown to modern so-called science.... Just sold an unwritten 2-volume epic to Gollancz for quite a few oodles. My powers as a hypnotist are growing—but I am stricken deaf by the Gods.' [On that screenplay:] 'The last word from Stanley [Kubrick] a fair while back was, "This is great, Ian!", followed by the fatal procrastinatory phrase, "I might just tinker with it a little...."' (Harrowing later descriptions of how Ian had his ear syringed are omitted, as somewhat too sensational for you lot.)

David Wingrove is not happy with *Vector* co-editor Catie Cary's sadistically violent attack on his *The White Mountain* (*Chung Kuo* #3) as 'pornography', in an editorial and a review. Feeling that the repressive BSFA junta will deny him the right to reply—possibly a self-fulfilling prophesy, as his rebuttal runs to six single-spaced pages—DW has been copying the whole voluminous controversy to every BSFA member he can trace. No doubt this one will run and run.

Don Wismer revives the traditional SFWA award log-rolling with a mass mailing rubber-stamped THIS BOOK HAS ALMOST MADE THE NEBULA PRELIMINARY BALLOT. IF YOU LIKE IT, PLEASE RECOMMEND IT.... His *A Roil of Stars* (Baen) looks fairly awful, but his market research is worse—I left SFWA ages ago.

Condom

Some Regular Evenings • BSFA 3rd Thur, Old Coffee House, Beak St, London. • Reading every Mon, ICL Club opp. station • 'The Black Lodge' (horror), 2nd Tue, Australian Bar, Brum • Brum Group, 3rd Fri, ditto • City Illiterates, every Fri, Lord Nelson, Stanhope St, London • Wellington, er....

25 Jan • PentaCon, Univ. Centre, Cambridge. £5 reg. SF/fan/academia mix in the much-revered tradition of Fencon. Contact Helen Steele, Newnham College, Cambridge.

29 Jan • Troy Club monthly symposium, Hanway St, near Tottenham Ct Rd tube. Featured drinker: Gamma. Last Wed every month. Toastmaster: Gamma. Regulars: John Brosnan and Gamma. Litres of fun for everyone!

31 Jan - 2 Feb • Fourplay, Victoria Pk Hotel, Wolverhampton. ↓ £18 reg, rooms £28/person/night. ↓ Contact 2 Craithie Rd, Vicars Cross, Chester, CH3 5JL. ↓ F*lk....

7-9 Feb • Trincon 400, Trinity Coll/Powers Hotel, Dublin. IRE15 reg, IRE7/day at door; IRE25 hotel b&b (sharing). Contact 75 Kincora Ave, Clontarf, Dublin 3. Many guests—they even asked me, but it clashes with a US trip. Poot.

14-16 Feb • Masque, Cobden Hotel, Birmingham. £20 reg. Contact 27 Coltsfoot Dr, Waterlooville, Hants, PO7 8DD. A 'convention for costumers'? I tiptoe nervously away....

21-23 Feb • Lucon IVy, Leeds Univ Union, Leeds. £7 reg. GoH Gwyneth Jones. Contact Leeds U SF Soc, PO Box 157, Leeds, LS1 1UH. Winner: 'Entry with Most Mentions of Leeds.'

7 Mar • Picocon 10, Imperial College Union, Beit Hall, Prince Consort Rd, London, SW7 2BB. GoHs Brian Stableford and me. £5 reg. Attractions promised: 'cheap bar!'

17-20 Apr • Illumination, 43rd Eastercon; Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. £25 reg. Rooms £28/person/night. GoHs Paul McAuley, Geoff Ryman, Pam Wells (fan). Contact 379

Myrtle Rd, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

24-26 Apr • **Freucon**, Eurocon; Freudenstadt, Germany. £15 reg (£20 from 1 Jan) to UK agent Oliver Grüter, Dept of Physics, RHBN College, Egham, Surrey, TW20 OEX. Yes, it was going to be in Yugoslavia, but....

22-25 May • **Inconsequential**, Aston Court Hotel, Derby. GoH Robert Rankin. £21 reg; rooms £30/single, £52/double. Contact 12 Crich Avenue, Littleover, Derby, DE3 6ES. 'Humour' theme. Bring a joke.

29-31 May • **Shots on the Page!**, Rutland Sq Hotel, St James's St, Nottingham, NG1 6FW: first all-British crime & mystery con. Guests include Donald Westlake. £25 reg (£35 from 13 Jan) to Broadway Media Centre, 14 Broad St, Nottingham, NG1 3AL. Room bookings direct to hotel: £30/person/night double, £40 single. Linked with Nottingham 'Shots in the Dark!' crime/mystery event (28 May-7 Jun).

19-21 Jun • **Protoplasm**, Parkers Hotel, somewhere in Manchester. £14 reg. GoH Bob Shaw. Contact 1 Shoemsmith Ct, Merchants Place, Reading, Berks, RG1 1DT. Special Raspberry Award to PR2 for omitting membership fees and room rates.

'Late' Jul • **Hasticon**, Hastings. GoH David Gemmell. A George Hay Tentative SF Event, depending on local arts funding. Contact 53b All Saints St, Hastings, TN34 3BN.

1 Aug • **Clwydcon**, 'SF poetry theme', Celyn Horticultural Coll., Northop, Clwyd. £6 reg, £13.50/room inc breakfast. Contact Rose Cottage, 3 Tram Lane, Buckley, Clwyd, CH7 3JB. Steve Sneyd stresses the sf link while bossman Pete Presford assures small-press poetry folk that there won't be much sf at all, honest, don't be put off.... A Presford sighting in *New Hope International Review* shows his much-loved analytical style unchanged, with a review reading, in full: 'If you're a hippie from the 70s or so Green yer socks drop off, this is for you but it gave me a headache.' [JN]

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.

3-7 Sept • **Magicon** (50th Worldcon), Orlando, Florida, USA. GoHs Jack Vance, Vincent DiFate, Walt Willis. Cost: \$vast but temporarily mislaid by me. Contact 14 St Bernard's Rd, Sutton Coldfield, W.Midlands, B72 1LE.

6-8 Nov • **Novacon 22**, Forte Post House Hotel near Birmingham airport. £18 reg. GoH Storm Constantine. Contact 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, W.Midlands, B66 4SH... again.

8-12 Apr 93 • **Helicon**, 44th Eastercon (+Eurocon); Hotel de France, Jersey. £22 reg. GoHs John Brunner, George R.R. Martin. Contact 63 Drake Rd, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 1LQ.

28-31 May 93 • **Mexicon V**, Cairn Hotel, Harrogate. £18 reg. 'Written sf' slant. Contact: as Novacon. [Enough!—Ed.]

Infinitely Improbable

Ten Years Ago ... Malcolm Edwards got his foot on the ladder as associate sf editor at Gollancz. 'Pringle the Penguin' arrived at Chessington Zoo while the other David Pringle, on the first day of his new Brighton job, broke his leg in three places. London's *Dark They Were And Golden-Eyed* sf bookshop celebrated its first and last creditors' meeting and vanished from the scene, pursued by £100,000 in debts. *The Many-Coloured Land* (remember that?) had 50% more preliminary Nebula votes than the eventual winner *The Claw of the Conciliator*. From Birmingham came news of the COFF fund's first launch. And after wintry market trials, the *Omni Book of the Future* partwork was declared officially dead. (*Ansible* 23, Jan 82).

Biohazard! The sf/horror TV series *Chimera* was ill-received by genetic engineers. *International Biotechnology Laboratory* sneered, 'As a piece of sf it was not exactly Isaac Asimov or Brian Heinlein.' *New Scientist* pondered the origins of this new sf chimera: Heinlein crossed with Aldiss or with Stableford? Chris Priest was reminded of Ballard's early US collection

from Berkley, with the blurb: 'Only Brian Aldiss, Theodore Sturgeon and Arthur B. Clarke can rival him....'

Haze!s Language Lessons: Bashgali. *Zhī marē badist tā wō ayō kakkok damīti gwā*, a lammergeier came down from the sky and took off my cock. (Quoted by Eric Newby.) [SS]

Unauthorized Sex Co. please note ... the new James Tiptree Jr Award for 'gender-expanding sf. Expand yours now! (Thyme)

Biting The Hand That Feeds You was one bitter description of my jocularities on awful sf lines in *The Guardian* (19 Dec). Q: 'Why not write about good stuff? Or at least say there's lots of good sf too?' A: They requested a column on lousy fiction. They cut out my 'lots of good sf too' disclaimer.

British Fanzine Bibliography: Vince Clarke offers Part 4 for 1971-80, following Peter Roberts's 3 musty volumes. A5 booklet, 31pp+covers, 80p from 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BN. Seems like good stuff, with minor omissions only.

It Wasn't Me, Guv ... but Scientology HQ at East Grinstead was burned down on 18 Dec. A nation mourns.

GUFF. Will sultry Bridget Wilkinson or exotic Eva Hauser travel to the Aussie National Con in Sydney? Tension mounts. Voting closes 31 Jan; ballot forms copiously available.

TAFF. Vote for JEANNE BOWMAN (or R.Brandt) by 15 Jan!

Up the Fundament: 'Ayatollah Christianity continues in California ... a school reading series has been taken to court by the usual fanatics and dingbats who say that extracts from such well-known Satanists as C.S.Lewis and Roger McGough contravene the US Constitution (re teaching religion in schools). "If we can't, then these proponents of the Wiccan Religion shouldn't," they say....' [AS]

A53 Eratums! Ashley Watkins was in fact owed £641.25 by Newsfield Ltd (dec'd)—'the liquidator's report got it wrong.'

• The 'World Fantasy Awards' from *Fire and Water* must have been the British ones. In the WFAs, *Only Begotten Daughter* (J.Morrow) and *Thomas the Rhymer* (E.Kushner) tied for best novel. Of UK interest, besides the Gaiman/Vess *Sandman* as reported ... *Best New Horror* (S.Jones/R.Campbell) was voted best anthology and Dave McKean best artist. • David Pringle is hurt that his quoted brag about new *Million* subscribers mentioned only 'Frank Muir', omitting 'and Denis Norden'.

Editorial: I had a cold and missed all the New Year fun, including the fabled Martin Hoare Triple Party Dash. His first venue had stipulated drag, the third required you to come as a pub, and *Ansible* is almost sorry not to have gazed upon Mr Hoare passing through the intervening party at Whitchurch Rectory, dressed as (presumably) the Queen's Arms.

These Foolish Things ...

... remind **Chris Atkinson** of the almost recent *Altercon 666*:

• Throwing Mike Dickinson's wet socks at plastic bottles in the dark • Hitting Sylvia Starshine in the face with one instead • The simultaneous malfunction of three central heating systems connected only by the arcane knowledge of the fish-oil factor • Not being arrested while prowling lonely Tottenham parks at night carrying boxes of explosives and wearing funny hats • Bifurcated penises • Leroy Kettle with one green ear and one pink ear • Gamma saying to Jackie Gresham, 'Hello, you look like a tart, come and sit on my knee.' • The bared shoulders of Rob Holdstock • Tom Shippey in a cowboy outfit and a long curly wig • Abigail Frost turning water into wine • Cucumbers in the bathroom • The mystic transsubstantiation of fish-oil into quiche • The halo round Jane McKenna's head at the moment of reincarnation • Piles of stuffed dogs with their legs in the air • Holding on to my reticule despite everything. [CA via LK]

Text © Dave Langford, 1992. May be xeroxed freely. Inputs: Chris Atkinson, R.L.Barycz, Steve Green, Linda Krawacko (Fax Mistress), Joseph Nicholas, Andy Sawyer, Steve Sneyd, Brian Stableford and A Major SF Figura. Happy New Year! 2-7-92