

# Ansible



## Ansible 118 May 1997

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**HUSTINGS.** Forget the General Election: here I am agonizing again over the Hugos. Should I have declined 1997 fanzine and fanwriter nominations? A straw poll of UK fans said 'No,' a prime concern being that rivals would prefer to trounce me soundly rather than win a 'Best Except For Langford' Hugo. Yes, perhaps this is the glorious year of the evil Dark Lord Langford's downfall. It's all up to you voters now....

### Mantra, Tantra and Specklebang

**Brian Aldiss**, master of the Caps Lock key, chides me for that East-eron report: 'IT'S ALL VERY WELL TO SAY THAT ALDISS WAS ALDISS. ALDISS WAS ALSO CALIBAN AND PHILIP K.DICK. BUT YOU BUDGES WHO STICK IN THE BAR ALL THE TIME DON'T SEE THE HARD WORK WE PUT IN TO THE JOB....'

**Kenneth Bulmer** had a stroke just before Easter and lay semi-conscious in his flat for two days before being found; later he was said to be doing fairly well in hospital. *Aldiss Footnote:* "When informed of this, his old mate Ted Tubb is reported as saying, "This is what comes of not keeping in touch with your old mates." *Verb sap*, and so on....'

**Jo Clayton's** cancer has been officially declared 'no longer life-threatening,' reports the much-cheered *Katharine Kerr*. 'She's still in for a long stay in hospital, however, as the disease has destroyed much of her bone mass, to the point where she can no longer stand without breaking her legs. She now has an electric wheel chair, outfitted with a large multi-coloured pinwheel on the back that whirls as she speeds through hospital corridors and a shiny silver and rubber horn, the sort that goes OOOOG-AAAA, to move pedestrians out of her way. • In short, being Jo, she's still fighting and her spirits are good.'

**Neil Gaiman** was presented in March with a GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) Award for 'positive portrayals of Gay and Lesbian characters' in *Sandman*. 'It's the only time I've ever had a room of people cheer the correct pronunciation of my name—all of them undoubtedly convinced it was some kind of political statement.'

**Liz Holliday** is to edit a new fiction-oriented British *sf/fantasy* magazine called *Odyssey*, to be published by Caliver Press: 'We want to put together an issue 0 for midsummer, followed (all being well) by issue 1 at World Fantasy Con.' Guidelines/rates: SAE to 31 Shottsford, Wessex Gardens, London, W2 5LG.

**Sam Moskowitz** (1920-1997) suffered a devastating heart attack on 7 April, and passed from coma to death on the 15th. He was 76. *John Clute* writes: 'Most of us in England did not know Sam Moskowitz in the flesh. We were not familiar with the angular tough-love rasp of his personality from the 1930s through the 1950s, when he was a dominant early American fan, the chairman of the first WorldCon, the author of *The Inmortal Storm* (1951), the first history of fandom, and one of the first writers from within the *sf* field—*from wholly and utterly within the *sf* field—to treat *sf* as a domain for scholarly study, in essays of "amateur" but pioneering scholarship collected in *Explorers of the Infinite* (1963), etc. And those of us who did not know him—and who may think of him essentially as a figure of a past era who had throat cancer and spoke Dalek-like through a voice box in recent years—may let pass his dying in April, from a massive heart attack, just like that.'*

'But that is not quite enough. Those who knew the man will write obituaries that evoke the man. The rest of us should perhaps think about *sf*, a genre intimately tied to the lives of those who created it as a literature and as a subculture, and who are dying now or dead. Certainly I personally find myself thinking—as I thought when Isaac Asimov died—that the genre is, inevitably, losing its default voices. That like some vast amoeba trying desperately to recollect the shape of its True Name, *sf* had become far too amorphous to know long before Sam Moskowitz ceased his acts of knowing. That he never stopped trying to keep the shape. That he carried the template of his era down with him when he died.'

**Terry Pratchett** has rather regretfully left Gollancz for Corgi/

Transworld; *Jingo!* will be his last VG hardback. 'It was a sad if inevitable parting, not a bust up. I'd been with them since Gollancz were owned by Gollancz, after all. [...] Corgi are much more recognizably an international company with more muscle and that's what I need right now. Let it be forgotten, they were also my first big publisher—they brought out the paperbacks of *The Colour of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic* before I moved to Gollancz for the hardcovers.'

**Colin Wilson** enthusiastically reviewed the *Fantasy Encyclopedia* (for *Literary Review*) and thought the H.P. Lovecraft entry particularly nifty; he then discovered it had been written years ago by himself. Overcome with excitement, the noted writer on Tolkien proceeded to credit Tolkien's coinage EUCATASTROPHE to someone called John Clute....

### Conuopsis

11 May • **Fantasy Fair**, Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough. 10:30am-4pm. Contact 01480 216372.

23-6 May • **Year of the Wombat** is still completely full.

24-6 May • **Fantasticon UK**, Harrogate International Conf Centre, many guests. £45 reg. Contact 38 Planetree Ave, Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9TH.

28 May • **BSFA** London meet CANCELLED owing to Clarks.

28 May • **Clarke Awards**, Science Museum. Invitation only.

9-10 Aug • **Clarecraft Open Day**, Bury St Edmunds. T. Pratchett signings, CC Discworld figures for sale, etc. Contact Clarecraft, Woolpit Bus Park, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 9UP.

30 Oct - 2 Nov • **World Fantasy Convention**, The International Hotel, Marsh Wall, London. Now £100/\$165 reg! Contact PO Box 31, Whitley, North Yorkshire, YO22 4YL. 'Dracula Centenary' and 'Hidden London' themes; membership limited to 750.

10-13 Apr 98 • **Intuition** (Eastercon), Jarvis Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester. Now £30 reg, £15 supp, to Spring 98. Contact 1 Waverley Way, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey, SM5 3LQ.

22-5 May 98 • **Lazlar Lyricon II** (*Hitch-Hiker*), Scotch Corner Hotel, Darlington. GoH: Kevin Davies (animator), Dirk Maggs (radio producer), more TBA. £30 reg; £29 members £25.

Contact 67 South Pk Gdns, Berkhamstead, Herts, HP3 1HZ.

10-12 Jul 98 • **Infinity** (media-ish), Angel Hotel, Cardiff, Wales. Now £40 reg. With Colin Baker, Ed Bishop, Dave Prowse, Dr Jack Cohen, Lionel Fanthorpe, David Banks, M.J. Simpson. Contact (SAE) 12 Stuart St, Treherbert, CF42 5PR.

18-21 Sep 98 • **Discworld Convention II**, Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Date/venue now confirmed. GoH: Terry Pratchett, Stephen Briggs, Paul Kiddy, Dave Langford, more TBA. Contact (SAE/IRC) PO Box 3086, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8TY.

2-5 Apr 99 • **Reconvene** (Eastercon), Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. £25 reg; £12.50 supp, children, over-60s (their PR got it wrong). Contact 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ.

*Rumblings • Cancún (Mexico) in 2003:* presupporting memberships are now available in the UK. Send £5 to KIM Campbell, 66 Lincoln St, Leeman Rd, York, YO2 4YP.

### Infinitely Improbable

**End of Infinity.** Our mole among this moribund *sf* magazine's contributors reports a gloomy impasse. 'None of us are going to be paid, or at best we'll get a few pennies in the pound. *Infinity's* losses have apparently to be borne by all concerned, although I don't remember this being part of the agreement when they commissioned me.... I'm told that if anyone—advertisers, suppliers, contributors—attempts to take legal action they'll wind up the company (an off-the-shelf job with liabilities limited to fifty quid) and even those pennies won't be forthcoming. No one's been told this officially, as "writing to people or ringing them is too expensive". I only found out by constant pestering.' As for the

As for the sister magazine, "The last two or three issues of *The Dark Side* have been late and notable for their absence of regular columns (I believe Steve Green has been "fired" from his fanzine column, no doubt for the heinous sin of requesting the money they owe him). So it's likely this title is in trouble too." • Meanwhile, from another informed source: "The people behind the deeply dubious *Infinity* have relaunched through yet another shell company, and are currently sending out sample copies to potential advertisers.... Apparently it's now called *Eclipse*, but the layout and content are virtually identical."

**R.I.P.** *Tomoyuki Tanaka* (1910-1997), Japanese producer of over 200 films since 1944 and creator of *Godzilla* (1954), plus its many sequels and some fine historical movies, died in Tokyo on 2 April.

**C.O.A.** *Tom Abba*, 40 Green Bank Rd, Ashton, Bristol, BS3 1RJ. *Bridget Hardcastle* & *Simon Bradshaw*, 27A Southview Rise, Alton, Hants, GU34 2AB. *Lawryn* & *Loren MacGregor*, 1484 Green Acres Rd, Eugene, OR 97408, USA. *Pat McMurray* (return to old address), 28 Plaistow Grove, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3PB.

**Random Fandom.** *Claire Brialey* and friends can't attend Lone-StarCon, and offer 4 bargain memberships at £50 apiece (current rate £85): 26 Northampton Rd, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7HA. • *Martin Hoare* is making his own stab at the fanzine *Hugo* by becoming the editor of CAMRA's local beerzine *The Thames Valley Drinker*, print run 3,500.... • *Richard Newsome* has reprinted the first ever chapbook of sf criticism, *Clyde F. Beck's slim Hammer and Tongs* (1937); a few remain at \$5 (\$6 overseas) from Arcturus Press, 281 Flatbush Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11217, USA. • *Harry Warner Jr* has a novel theory about the perceived lack of eager young recruits to fandom: "I might suggest that this is partly caused by the disappearance of so many millions of potential fans in abortion factories in recent decades." (*Fosfax* 185)

**Spawn: Latest!** *Kim Whysall-Hammond* & *Tony Hammond* both breathed huge sighs of relief that Kim's 'limited edition Sue Mason Scottish Convention Registration T-shirt' (which she was wearing at the time) survived the birth of Robert Daniel Hammond on 6 Apr.... • *Helen Tsatsos* & *Jon Langford* are still counting down to the big moment: "We are having wild fun and frolick for the Last time until "Little Tsatsos" grows up and goes to prison...." [Key West, 21 Apr] • *Helena* & *Martin Tudor* announced their new arrival, 25 Apr: "Despite being over two weeks early and sharing a birthday with Steve Green, Heloise is remarkably well and healthy."

**Voices from the Past.** "... there are all kinds of science fiction which I've been unable to read. [...] Also the *Asimov Foundation* series; I couldn't read those even when I was a teenager. They just didn't seem true or real; my memory is of saying, "This is obviously not the way things would be." (Greg Benford, interviewed by Charles Platt, 1979; now author of the *Asimov-Estate-authorized spinoff Foundations's Fear*, 1997) • "Are not the entire first hundred pages of *The Fulfilment of Martin Hoare* a masterly analysis of a bilious attack?" (Stella Gibbons, foreword of *Cold Comfort Farm*, 1932)

**Publishers & Sinners.** *SFX* seeks a staff cartoonist to illustrate the "Langford" column. "Cartoons should be (a) funny, and (b) SF-related rather than fanish.... Anybody actually submitting examples of what they would have drawn for recent Langford columns will probably stand a better chance." [S] Samples to *SFX*, Future Publishing, Beauford Ct, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. • *Tom Holt's* songbook *Bitter Lemmings* (39 songs, mostly parodies) is out: £4.75 post free from Beccon Publications, 75 Rosslyn Ave, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG. • *Steve Jones* gloats chronically that his *Lovercraftian anthology Shadows Over Innsmouth* has been chosen by The U of Massachusetts Lowell as a textbook for courses on the evolution of the British horror story. • *Andrew Porter's* delayed *SF Chronicle* 181 (Apr/May 97) has appeared, hot on the heels of *SFC* 180 (Oct 96).... • *TSR*, financially strapped and owing vast royalties to M.Weis, T.Hickman *et al*, are now being bought up by the dread *Magic* card-game people, Wizards of the Coast. [SFC]

**More Eastercon Eggs.** A117 failed to mention that John Harold won the Doc Weir 'Good Egg' Award. • *Cuddles* gratefully reports £80 in the collection can for Electrical Eggs UK, aimed at improving disabled access at cons. • The Adelphi manager's father, who had a stroke on Easter Saturday (hence the manager vanishing to his bedside for the rest of Intervention), has made a full recovery. • *Chris Bell* reveals her Easter 1999 security scheme: "I'm planning to shift the first floor to just above the sixth, and Tom Holt is going to knit an Adelphi-

sized chainmail teacose with Phil Nanson's assistance (provided that we can find 418 million split rings) so that after everyone is inside we can put that over the top of the hotel and then get the tech crew to run a lot of electricity through it. That should fix the cat burglars!" • The 1998 Discworld Convention, also using the Adelphi, has advertised for a volunteer to run Security: "No previous experience is necessary."

**DUFF.** The Down Under Fan Fund was won by Janice Murray (*Ansible's* splendid US agent) with 116 votes to Joel Zakem's 93 in the final round of intricate tallying; Andy Hooper, with 34 first-place votes, was eliminated earlier. Janice will thus attach corks to her hat and disport herself at the Australian national con: Melbourne, Sept 1997. • **TAFF:** that mail auction of Chuch Harris's rare old fanzines is still planned. Contact First Floor Flat, 14 Prittwell Sq, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 1DW.

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Shame On Your Filthy Mind Dept.*: "You can't make people good by force." / "They do us," he said gloomily. "With a hair brush." / "But ..." / "It seems to me," said Nicky, "that everything is in a muddle. If..." / "Look," said the practical Judge, "Do you approve of being spanked?" / "No, I don't." / "Well, then." / "Well, then what?" / "If you can't make people be good with a hair brush, you can't with a vibrator, can you?" / "I don't think it is the same." / "It is the same," said Judy. (T.H.White, *The Master*) [PH] • *Really Fannish Proffrauding Dept:* Peter Beagle's *The Last Unicorn*. (Reconvene flyer)

## Once More Into The Breach ...

**Nebula Awards.** *NOVEL Slow River* by Nicola Griffith; *NOVELLA 'Da Vinci Rising'* by Jack Dann; *NOVELLETTE 'Lifeboat on a Burning Sea'* by Bruce Holland Rogers; *SHORT 'A Birthday'* by Esther M.Friesner; *GRAND MASTER* (as proleptically announced in early March) Jack Vance.

**Hugo Nominations ...** based on 429 valid ballots received by Lone-StarCon2. • **NOVEL** (356 ballots) *Blue Mars* by Kim Stanley Robinson; *Holy Fire* by Bruce Sterling; *Memory* by Lois McMaster Bujold; *Remnant Population* by Elizabeth Moon; *Starplex* by Robert J.Sawyer. • **NOVELLA** (209) 'Abandon in Place' by Jerry Oltion (F&SF); 'Blood of the Dragon' by George R.R.Martin (*Asimov's*); 'The Cost to Be Wise' by Maureen P.McHugh (*Starlight*); 'Gas Fish' by Mary Rosenblum (*Asimov's*); 'Immersion' by Gregory Benford (*SF Age*); 'Time Travelers Never Die' by Jack McDevitt (*Asimov's*) ... six nominees owing to a tie vote. • **NOVELLETTE** (221) 'Age of Aquarius' by William Barton (*Asimov's*); 'Beauty and the Opéra or the Phantom Beast' by Suzy McKee Charnas (*Asimov's*) • 'Bicycle Repairman' by Bruce Sterling (*Intersections; Asimov's*); 'The Land of Nod' by Mike Resnick (*Asimov's*); 'Mountain Ways' by Ursula K.Le Guin (*Asimov's*); • **SHORT** (254) 'The Dead' by Michael Swanwick (*Starlight*); 'Decency' by Robert Reed (*Asimov's*); 'Gone' by John Crowley (F&SF); 'The Soul Selects Her Own Society ...' by Connie Willis (*Asimov's*); 'Un-Birthday Boy' by James White (*Analog*). • **NONFICTION** (163) *The Faces of Fantasy* by Patti Perret; *Look at the Evidence* by John Clute; *The Silence of the Langford* by Dave Langford; *Time & Chance* by L.Sprague de Camp; *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland* by Diana Wynne Jones. • **DRAMATIC** (283) *Independence Day; Mars Attacks; Babylon 5 'Severed Dreams'; Star Trek: First Contact; Star Trek: Deep Space Nine 'Trials and Tribble-ations'*. (B5 episodes 'War without End' and 'Z'Ha'Dum' received enough votes to appear, but J.M.Straczynski strategically declined.) • **EDITOR** (248) Gardner Dozois; Scott Edelman; Patrick Nielsen Hayden; Kristine Kathryn Rusch; Stanley Schmidt. • **PRO ARTIST** (226) Thomas Canty; David Cherry; Bob Eggleton; Don Maitz; Michael Whelan. • **SEMI-PROZINE** (223) *Interzone; Locus; The New York Review of SF; SF Chronicle; Speculations*. • **FANZINE** (224) *Ansible; File 770; Mimosas; Nova Express; Tangent*. • **FAN WRITER** (202) Sharon Farber; Mike Glycer; Andy Hooper; Dave Langford; Evelyn C. Leeper. • **FAN ARTIST** (177) Ian Gunn; Joe Mayhew; Peggy Ranson; William Rotsler; Sherlock (Brad Foster and Teddy Harvia declined. TH: 'Teddy Harvia is presenting the Best Fan Artist Hugo and does not want the chance of having to awkwardly announce, "And the winner is ... me!"') • **J.W.CAMPBELL AWARD** (not a Hugo; 156) Michael A.Burstein; Raphael Carter; Richard Garfinkle; Katya Reimann; Sharon Shinn.

**Round and Round She Goes:** there's talk of moving the London pub meetings again, from the Jubilee to the Moon Under Water (Charing Cross Rd), or the New Waterspoons Pub Near The One Tun. Data on comparative Thursday-evening crowdedness, please? The Jubilee is indeed getting crowded with fans; but *Ansible* is wary of new, central pubs which will soon be 'discovered' by vaster hordes of nonfans.

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