

Ansible



Ansible 131 June 1998

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Y2K. This *Ansible* has been fully proofed against the Millennium Bug. Why take risks? Copies of *Locus*, *SF Chronicle* and *BSFA Matrix* were reduced to ashes by the millennial compliance test protocol recently pioneered by Armageddon Enterprises Inc in India and Pakistan. Only *Ansible* survived the Year 20% FATAL HUBRIS Abort, Retry or Ignore?

Heaps of Quap

David Farland, who collected some praise for his 1998 debut fantasy *The Runelords: The Sum of All Men*, is reportedly a pseudonym of the established skiffy author Dave Wolverton. [IC]

Peter Hamilton was fascinated by a fervent Usenet discussion (based on *The Reality Dysfunction*) of whether he was gay or bisexual: 'Beats getting mentioned by Thog any day.' Major collateral damage was sustained by Ken MacLeod, who upon reading these speculations snorted coffee all over his computer keyboard.

Diana Wynne Jones sends a picture of chaps apparently mud-wrestling in their underpants, and with evil glee points out the caption: 'The Langford Ha-Ha Game, a muddy version of five-a-side rugby played in the ha-ha. It was discontinued about ten years ago.' I refuse to answer Diana's probing questions about what I was doing in 1988.

Lazarus Long emerged from Heinlein's pages to get an extensive write-up in the *Independent on Sunday*, 31 May. 'Prince' Lazarus (formerly US entrepreneur Howard Turney) plans to live forever and is building a New Utopia on platforms supported by concrete stilts above a sunken Caribbean reef. His dream is of a tax haven for capitalists oppressed by welfare states: one looks forward to Heinleinian scenes in which whining freeloaders who can't afford the oxygen charges will be, if not cycled through the airlock, at least permitted to walk the plank.

Andy Sawyer jubilates some moxy: 'Liverpool University has decided to definitely go ahead and buy the Wyndham Archive, after a short period of flabbergast at exactly how much money the upgrading of environmental conditions to meet the terms of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant would cost. They have taken the eminently reasonable tack that we're going to have to address this problem sooner or later. • We still need money! (Don't we all....) Donations welcome. Anyone with money to spare to support what really is one of the most significant moves in British sf, please contact me.' (c/o Special Collections, Sydney Jones Library, U of Liverpool, PO Box 123, Liverpool, L69 3DA.)

Brian Stableford must cherish fond memories of his GoH appearances at the Imperial College SF Society's annual London convention: his forthcoming novel *Inherit the Earth* (Tor) features an all-powerful and slightly unscrupulous biotechnology outfit called PicoCon.

Peter Straub had a moment of mystery at the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts, when interviewer Bernadette Bosky enquired about his novel *A Cottage by the Sea* (1997, according to his ICFA bibliography), of which no one had heard. 'He was as puzzled as anyone. Checking to see that the reference to this mysterious pseudobibliodid indeed appear in the Program Book, he said that he wished he'd had a novel published in 1997, but if he had, he would have given it a better title.' [AH] Watch out for it in future reference books....

Conywabble

24 Jun • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Jubilee pub, nr Waterloo. 6-7pm on.

4 Jul • **Fantasy Literature Day**, Town Hall, Ipswich. 10am-5pm. Talks by Maggie Furey, 'Jonathan Wiley'. Admission £4 for one talk, £6 for both. Contact 115 Anglesea Rd, Ipswich, IP1 3PJ. 01473 250949.

1-5 Jul • **Bram Stoker Summer School**, Clontarf, Co Dublin. Various speakers; 'Gothic Art Exhibition'. +353 87 2364829.

10-12 Jul • **Infinity** (media-ish), Angel Hotel, Cardiff. £40 reg to 1 Jun; £45 at door. Contact (SAE) 12 Stuart St, Treherbert, CF42 5PR. 17-19 Jul • **Nexus 98** (*Trek*), Bristol Hilton Hotel. £44 reg. Contact (SAE or 2XIRC) 1 Lullington Rd, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2LH.

5-9 Aug • **Buconceer** (56th WorldCon), Baltimore. S130/£94 reg to 15 Jun; S30/£22 supp. Contact PO Box 314, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701, USA. UK: J. Dallman, 92 Lichfield Rd, Cambridge, CB1 3TR.

22-23 Aug • **Prisoner Con**, Portmeirion, N.Wales. Contact (SAE) Six of One, PO Box 66, Ipswich, IP2 0TZ. In ugly scenes of chequebook journalism (i.e. the *Ansible* editor buying some postcards) sources close to the Prisoner shop in The Villages said this may be the last-ever August event: Portmeirion Ltd are getting stropky about allowing it to continue in their high season, to the mystification of billions of tourists.... [MH]

18-21 Sep • **Discworld Convention II**, Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Now £40 reg, £30 unwaged ... but £35/£25 to *Ansible* readers who join before 1 Jul. Booking closes 15 Jul. No memberships at the door. Contact (SAE/IRC) PO Box 4100, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2GZ.

26-27 Sep • **Multicon 98** (media, commercial), Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. Many media guests. £30 reg, to Dave Prowe Promotions Ltd c/o 12 Marshalsea Road, London, SE1 1HL. Proudly promises to be 'Europes [sic] Ultimate Convention'.

10 Oct • **Octocon Lite** (mini Irish national con), Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, nr Dublin. GoH James White. £10 reg (Irish or British pounds?). Contact 43 Eglinton Rd, Dublin 4, Ireland. UK agent D.Lally, 64 Richborne Tce, London, SW8 1AX; 0171 735 3819.

24-31 Oct • **Milford UK Conference**, Maidencombe, Devon—mainly invitational, for published writers. £15 reg, £200 hotel and meals. Contact Flat 2, 24 Marcham Rd, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 1AA.

26-8 Feb 99 • **Redemption (B7/B5)**, Ashford International Hotel, Ashford, Kent. £35 reg, £40 from 1 Sep, £45 at door. GoHs Gareth Thomas, Jane Killick, Sheelagh Wells, Joe Nazzaro. Contact (SAE) Waveney, 28 Diprose Rd, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 3QY.

20-24 May 99 • **Trinity** (Eurocon), Dortmund, Germany. £33 reg, cheques to 'German Conventions'. Contact UK agent Mike Cheater at 42 Elm Grove, Southsea, Hants, PO5 1JG.

24-25 Jul 99 • **Telefantastique 2** ('multi-media'), Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow. £45 reg. Rooms £50 single, £40 sharing. Contact (SAE) 38 Rochford Ave, Loughton, Essex, IG10 2BS.

Rumblings • **Cry Wolf** Some chap called Straczynski issued a minifatwa against certain UK events: 'I said, immediately after the last Wolf, that I would not be involved with any Wolf or Cooney convention until they got their act together in their treatment of fans and their organization. [...] There are many concerns in how the fans in the UK are being treated and exploited. For instance, Warner Bros donated their theater in London for the purpose of a free screening for BS fans as a gift. Warner Bros Legal Affairs has just discovered that those running the convention (which would be Bryan Cooney and other Wolf folks) are charging TWENTY POUNDS PER PERSON for what was set aside as a gift to the fans. There was never supposed to be any admission fee charged for the screening. (Suffice to say WB is investigating further.)' [27 May]

Infinitely Improbable

Arthur C. Clarke Award. Your editor fled the country (well, as far as Wales), leaving stakhanovite *Mark Plummer* to report: 'For once, the annual Arthur C. Clarke Award Presentation and Fashion Parade, held in London's Science Museum on 27 May, was almost entirely free of surprises, controversy and John Jarrold. The Brown Cousins (Molly and Tanya) were in the forefront of the "Best Frocks" category and Mary Branscombe collected the Norman Spinrad Memorial Award for "Most Striking Green Suit". Meanwhile, Claire Brialey's leopard-skin print sùlletos were, she assured us all repeatedly, post-modern and ironic. After being wine and dined (well, crisped) by the Science Museum's catering staff, the assembled throng were ushered in to the lecture theatre where warm-up act Chris Hill presented the BSFA Award for best novel to Mary Doria Russell, one of four Clarke nominees present (only Sheri Tepper and, surprisingly, Steve Baxter were absent). Moving on to the headliners, Paul Kineaid noted that it had been "a difficult year" for the Clarke family before dispensing the traditional thanks and inviting Clarke's niece, Angie Edwards, to make the presentation on behalf of 'Sir Uncle'. Once again, Mary Doria Russell was called to the stage and *The Sparrow* collected its second award of the evening. Russell acknowledged the contribution of her editor, Simon Taylor, and

also the efforts of booksellers Dick Jude and Rog Peyton in promoting the book in this country. Rog was almost as delighted as the winning author: "I make all this money selling the books and I get a name-check." Paul Kincaid closed proceedings with a "Same time next year," when hopefully I will not have to keep answering the question "Why isn't Dave Langford here?" [MP]

Publishers & Sinners. Steve Green reports the demise of SFX's sister magazine: "Cult TV is no more. Despite acting editor Steve Jarratt's attempt to jive the Anorak Reader's Digest up into Loaded territory with "retrotivity" (i.e. a 1970s Dr Who starlet [Katy Manning] with her kit off, pubic hair almost shielded by a Dalek's sink plunger), the death knell has sounded. What TV theme tune should be played here? Answers by e-mail, please, to anyone but me." Simon Forrester of Future Publishing confirms: "Yup—it's all true—the mag's just been flushed, after a bomb-out issue 10. They sent issue 11, and closed the thing. A damned shame, if you ask me—a fine start to a magazine, and a fairly nice website, to boot (even if I do say so myself)."

R.I.P. Jerome Bixby (1923-1998), best remembered for his 1953 sf/horror short 'It's a Good Life', died on 28 April from complications after a quadruple heart bypass. His other work included the original *Fantastic Voyage* script and several *Star Trek* episodes. ● **Jackie Causgrove** (1940-1998), long-time Cincinnati fan and partner of Dave Locke, died from lung cancer on 15 May. ● **Lee Elias** (1920-1998), the US comics artist who illustrated the 1951-3 *Beyond Mars* newspaper strip—scripted by Jack Williamson from his own sf novels *Seetee Ship* and *Seetee Shock*—died in early April.

In Typo Veritas. 'From *Space and the American Imagination* by Howard E. McCurdy (1997), on the aborted Superconducting Supercollider: "As the beans approached the speed of light, they would collide, releasing subatomic particles." Could this explain the effects beans have on some people? [DB] I am struggling not to mention Rob Hansen.

Random Fandom. Vince Clarke writes: "I'm making a little progress, but "treatable" is not "curable". I've been "nil by mouth" for about a month now, and dream occasionally of fish & chips washed down with coffee. I can walk behind a Zimmer frame, but still need to be helped by my feet. Still, there is progress." [21 May] And sf/fannish reading matter remains welcome. This week, the medics were talking of moving Vince into 're-hab'. [JC] ● **Jan Gunn's** next phase of cancer treatment involves autologous (using his own cells) bone marrow transplant. Good wishes and support still needed. [KPG] ● **Marcus Rowland's** latest disk of period fiction, graphics, and scenarios for his *Forgotten Futures* game is *Goodbye Piccadilly ... Adventures in the Destruction of London*. 22 Westbourne Pk Villas, London, W2 5EA. ● **Artis Trust** is seemingly a reincarnation of infamous net fan Pesach C.V. Lattin. "The Artis formerly known as Pesach" claims to run the only independent sf web site (what a surprise for all the rest); reportedly he continues the Lattin technique of offering to take over others' sf sites and then, upon refusal, denouncing the owners for unprofessionalism. Those who cross him are liable to be branded as anti-semites or, worse, 'anti-semetes'.

Fanfudery. Nominations are open for GUFF in its 'Going Under Fan Fund' aspect, with the winner travelling from Europe to Aussiecon 3 next year. Candidates should supply signed nominations (3 Euro, 2 Aussie), a 100-word campaign platform, £10 'bond' and a mighty oath that barring unforeseen disasters they will make the trip if elected ... all this by 30 Sep. Voting continues to 30 Mar 98. European administrator: Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Rd, S.Tottenham, London, N15 4JU.

C.o.A. Tommy Ferguson, 40 Deramore Ave, Belfast, BT7 3ER. Murray Moore, 2118 Russel Rd, Mississauga, Ontario, L4Y 1C1, Canada. Jenni Scott, 24 Campbell Rd, Florence Pk, Oxford, OX4 3PF.

The Skeptic magazine (UK counterpart of *The Skeptical Inquirer*) is installing Wendy Grossman as new editor-in-chief. The latest issue has Dr Susan Blackmore's report on a student who recalled being multiply abducted by aliens, and actually produced the tiny metal device they had implanted in his mouth. Intrigued, SB called for a scanning electron microscope and X-ray microanalysis. As the abductee was swift to point out, the fact that this implant was a mercury-amalgam tooth filling still failed to explain all the others which he didn't have handy... *The Skeptic* appears quarterly, £10/year; PO Box 475, Manchester, M60 2TH.

Mythopoeic Awards: 1998 shortlist. ADULT LITERATURE Peter S. Beagle, *Giant Bones*; A.S. Byatt, *The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye*; Charles de Lint, *Trader*; Neil Gaiman, *Neverwhere*; Patrick O'Leary, *The Gift*. ● CHILDREN'S Susan Cooper, *The Boggart and the Monster*; Dahlov Ipcar, *A Dark Horn Blowing*; Robin McKinley, *Rose Daughter*; Jane Yolen, *Young Merlin* trilogy (*Passager, Hobby, Merlin*). ● SCHOLARSHIP (INKLINGS) Verlyn Flieger, *A Question of Time: J.R.R. Tolkien's Road to*

Faerie; Janine Goffar, *C.S. Lewis Index: Rumours from the Sculptor's Shop*; Walter Hooper, *C.S. Lewis: A Companion & Guide*; Brian Horne (ed) *Charles Williams: A Celebration*; Kathryn Lindskoog, *Finding the Landlord: A Guidebook to C.S. Lewis's The Pilgrim's Regress*. ● SCHOLARSHIP (GENERAL) Glen Cavaliero, *The Supernatural and English Fiction*; John Clute & John Grant (ed) *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*; S.T. Joshi, *Lord Dunsany, Master of the Anglo-Irish Imagination*; Richard Mathews, *Fantasy: The Liberation of Imagination*. [DB]

Hog's Subeditor Masterclass. Paul Beardley learned how SFX editorial expertise can make all the difference to a review, when he wrote (of Chris Bunch's *The Demon King*) "There are no clever twists ..." and this was duly corrected to "There are clever twists ..."

Prediction Corner. 'Before man reaches the moon, your mail will be delivered within hours from New York to California, from England to India, by guided missile. We stand on the threshold of rocket mail.' (Arthur Summerfield, *US Postmaster General*, 23 June 1959) [TH]

SF & Fantasy Hall of Fame. This virtual edifice appears to be in Kansas: July 1998 'inductees' will be Hal Clement, Frederik Pohl, Robert Heinlein and C.L. Moore. Not all of them plan to attend the ceremony.

Outraged Letters on A130 ... Ned Brooks was alarmed by debunkings of Lester del Rey's exotic name: 'Ghad, another fannish illusion shattered. I suppose next we will hear that Theodore Sturgeon was just Fred Fish instead of the explanation of how his original surname was Waldo.' ● **George Flynn** notes that Alex Schomburg's special Worldcon award wasn't in 1990 but, as any fule kno, came from Noreason 3 in 1989. Though led astray by the *SF Encyclopedia*, I avoided one trap: 'Locus erroneously refers to that award as a "special Hugo" (the wrath of the WSFS Mark Protection Committee has been invoked upon them).' ● **Several People** asked how to recognize the presumably rare defective copies of *A Tourist Guide to Lancre*. Over to Terry Pratchett: "One might end up believing that after the "key" numbers were overlaid on the map, in accordance with Paul's artwork, a gust of wind randomly shuffled them—and no one noticed." Meanwhile, *Barbara Barrett* ponders the rarity value of her World Books Fantasy & SF Book Club copy of *Jingo* with an extra pp33-64 signature in place of the missing 65-96... ● **Bud Webster** reminds me that, besides the Nebula awards and Grandmaster selection, SFWA chose Nelson Bond as their 1998 'Author Emeritus'.

SF Encyclopedia CD-ROM Viewer. As threatened in A128, I went ahead with this project for corrupt personal gain. The software is Windows 95/98/NT only—sorry!—and makes Grolier's CD-ROM of the 1993 SFE (and its recent Focus Multimedia clone) heaps more usable, with your own choice of display fonts and window sizes, slow-loading compulsory graphics screens eliminated, better backtracking features, new global search facilities, known corrections added at the ends of the relevant entries (including, with John Clute's permission, the big chunks of articles like LATIN AMERICA and Patrick MOORE which Grolier omitted altogether), and so on. Price £117.95 inc post and VAT, or US\$17.50: cheques/checks to me at the *Anisble* address. Despatched either on disk or as an e-mail attachment if you're in a hurry. NB: the 'SFVIEW' software does not include the SFE CD-ROM itself, but I'm negotiating with Focus Multimedia and hope to be able to bundle the CD-ROM with my own material for around £10-£12 more. In the immortal words of Spike Milligan, 'Please Help This Man Become A Capitalist.'

Hog's Masterclass. 'He sighed to himself and cursed the necessity of having a social worker in his midst.' (John Saul, *Suffer the Children*, 1977) ● **Dept of Something in the Wind:** "... Henkie, rather than giving the fellow a proper funeral, had followed Briello's instructions and had his friend stuffed. He'd kept the body propped up in a corner of his studio until the authorities got wind of its existence.' (Charles De Lint, *The Little Country*, 1991) ● 'He had seen few women in his life, and none at all like this one. The heart sprang out of him ...' (Robin Wayne Bailey, *Shadowdance*, 1996) ● 'Her nipples stood erect, like twin blades ...' (Graham Joyce, *The Tooth Fairy*, 1996) ● 'Saturday morning Jennifer awoke early, the sun prodding her eyelids like an animated alarm clock. (Joan Lowery Nixon, *The Stalker*, 1985) ● 'She felt the radiance of her own smile die, felt it slip from her face to land rather heavily somewhere in her stomach.' (Lisa Tuttle, *The Pillow Friend*, 1996) [PB] ● **Dept of Mary Doria Russell Critiques:** "The shadow froze and a noise like a disembowelled sparrow chirped above him." (N. Lee Wood, *Faraday's Orphans*, 1996)

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