



## Ansible 138 January 1999

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**RESOLUTIONS.** To write more fiction. To avoid Grecian 2000 despite Jim Barker's exaggeratedly white-haired Langford cartoons in *SFX*. To kill Barker dead. To be extra-critical of *Thog* submissions whose authors might just be trying for humour or over-the-topness. To refrain from calling fandom's new London-meeting pub the Dead Nurse. To eschew Millennium Bug jokes. To stop mistyping 'Ken Meload'. To keep things easier for my conscience by making fewer New Year resolutions. To give up ... er, the previous resolution says I have to stop there.

### The Year of the Jackpot

**John Barnes** explains why the blurb of his *Earth Made of Glass*, Orion UK edition, goes on about places and names (like Chaka Zulu) that appear nowhere in the book. 'Here's what happened: while A Certain Publisher was going through administrative chaos, with some resignations and places not filled, time came up for EMOG to come out, and there was no flap copy. They were just buying the printed pages from Tor/St Marty's, so they weren't fretting about the inside of the book, but a jacket must have copy ... so they went digging through the files to see what they could find, and what they found was a five year old proposal for a different, now never-to-be-written, book, called *Junction of Fear* ... which they and the American publishers had very wisely rejected. Parts of *Junction of Fear*, the better parts I hope, were cannibalized into *Earth Made of Glass*, so it's not wholly inaccurate ... just thoroughly bewildering to the poor reader. • At various times other publishers have done similar things to my bio, so I suppose that I must once again proclaim that I have never been to Khazakhstan, I am not fluent in Swahili, I do not hold eleven master's degrees, I am not the president of General Motors, and on advice of counsel I will not confirm or deny the business about painting French poodles.'

**Damien Broderick** is extremely eluffed to report that Russell and Jenny Blackford will be guest-editing an issue of *Foundation* in 2000: 'a fantastic breakthrough for Oz sf critical writing and editing.' Into reminiscence mode: 'Back in 1985 (or maybe late 1984), I rang Ed Ferman at *FRSF* and suggested that he give me his magazine for a special Oz sf issue to coincide with AussieCon II, akin to the Special British ish he'd done a while earlier. This wasn't as madly quixotic as it sounded, since I had a huge pile of good stuff for my original antho *Strange Attractors*, and the damned thing looked as if it were about to fall over because the Oz publisher was acting up. Ferman's voice, delayed by distance, was coldly incredulous. He declined my impertinent offer with a kind of trans-Pacific shudder of disbelief. Looking back on it, I still think he missed a great opportunity that would have catapulted Aussie sf into the US limelight about a decade earlier.'

**Pat Cadigan** instructed all right-thinking sf people ('specially YOU, Langford. You Dog') to buy the 30 Dec *Guardian* with her cutting-edge interview on the 'Parents' page. Here, in mordant, no-holds-barred phrases, the Queen of Cyberparenting laid bare her controversial fondness for Lego, pizza and TV wrestling. One revelation was regarded as too hot for *Grauniad* readers and thus becomes an *Ansible* exclusive: 'I would also like to take the opportunity to deny, categorically, that *Xena: Warrior Princess* is not based on me. No, it isn't. Absolutely not.'

**Tom Holt** passed on horrific movie news from Canada, where there are plans for 'a super realistic animated feature film: *Princess Diana Saves The World*.' The high concept is that Di returns to Earth as 'The world's most loved adorable angel.' Literally: advance publicity features an 'original oil masterpiece' showing her with wings and a halo, while the Union Jack subtly turns into a cross above her head. In editorial circles, the words 'Bags I write this movie entry for the second edition of the *Fantasy Encyclopedia*' were conspicuously not heard.

**Robert Sawyer** abruptly ceased to be SFWA President on 22 Dec: 'Enough. I resign. • Effective immediately, Dr Paul Levinson is the new President of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, Inc.' He'd recently stated that SFWA work was eating into his writing time. Although SFWA is tight-lipped about internal frictions, rumbblings of mutiny were apparently heard following RS's revival of the unpopular

membership requalification issue, use of rarely invoked presidential powers to 'fire' several long-serving SFWA volunteers (SFWA's lawyer and *Forum* editor were also allegedly under threat), and controversial plans to tinker with the Grandmaster Nebula Award rules. At the recent SFWA meeting at the Baltimore Worldcon, certain members had called for a vote of censure against RS. All great fun for spectators...

### Convallatoxin

5 Jan - 26 Feb • **The Return of the Triffids**: display from John Wyndham archive, Sydney Jones Library, U of Liverpool. Contact Andy Sawyer, U of Liverpool Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool, L69 3DA.

7 Jan • **London Group Meeting**, ending the current Jubilee series since it's landlord Kevin's last day: he's at the Florence Nightingale pub from 9 Jan, and fans are following. New location: east side of the roundabout where York Rd joins Westminster Bridge Rd. 5pm on.

27 Jan • **BSFA Open Meeting, Florence Nightingale** pub nr Westminster bridge (as above), 7pm on; fans around from 5pm.

6 Feb • **London (Media) Group**, New Connaught Rooms, Covent Garden. £8 reg. 10am onward. (Next meeting is 22 May.)

6 Feb • **Picocoan**, Imperial College Union, Prince Consort Rd, London, SW7 2BR. 11am-6pm. Goli Stephen law head, Jane Johnson, Mike Harrison. £7 reg to 31 Jan; £8 at door. Students £4/£5; ICSE members £1. Contact ICSE, 3 Salisbury Pavement, Dawes Rd, London, SW6 7HT.

24 Feb • **BSFA Open Meeting**, as 27 Jan. With Christopher Evans. 26-8 Feb • **Redemption (B7/B5)**, Ashford International Hotel, Ashford, Kent. £40 reg, £45 at door. £15 supp. Contact (SAE) Waveney, 28 Diprose Rd, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset, BH12 3QY.

6-7 Mar • **Microcon 19**, University of Exeter. Goli: mc. Free entry, with no advance booking, but members are asked to give to University Rag charities. Contact 16 Fairlea Close, Dawlish, Devon, EX7 0NN.

13-14 Mar • **Mecon 2**, SCR, Queen's U of Belfast. Goli: Michael Marshall Smith. £10/£12 reg, to Queen's U SF Soc c/o Flat 2, 12 Ashley Avenue, Belfast, BT9 7BT.

2-5 Apr • **Reconvene** (Eastercon), Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. £30 reg; £15 supp, children 5-14, over-60s, too late now for presupporter discounts. Under-5s free. *Repeated Warning Of Desperate Import*: rates rise to £50 and £25 on 1 Feb, £80 and £40 at the door. Contact 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ.

30 Jul - 1 Aug • **Clarecraft Event** (Disworld?), open air, Woolpit, Suffolk. With T.Pratchett and the usual suspects. £2.50/ticket to Disworld Collectors' Guild, Clarecraft, Woolpit Business Park, Woolpit, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP 30 9UP. Credit cards: fax 01359 242253.

Aug • **Eclipse Tour** to Romania. Jonathan Cowie answers the most common question, 'how much?': under £700 inc return flight & one week's accommodation. Party has own sf fan guides and translators. Hurry: flights are now getting full. Contact 44 Brook St, Eritch, DAB 1JQ.

4-6 Sep • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Sacha's Hotel, Manchester. £45 reg, rising in Apr. Tenth event in series. Contact 5 South Mesnesfield Rd, Salford, Manchester, M7 3QP.

5-7 Sep • **Nocturnal** (media), Sacha's Hotel, Manchester. £45 reg. Contact (SAE) PO Box 3870, Troon, KA10 7PZ.

28 Apr - 1 May 00 • **AD2000** (49th UK Trek con), Palace Hotel, Manchester. £50 reg. Contact (SAE) PO Box 3870, Troon, KA10 7PZ.

**Rumbings • Paragon** (Eastercon 2001 bid, Norbreek Castle Hotel, Blackpool) now admits to a postal address: £2 presupp to Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Rd, Sheffield, S2 31UQ. Alice Lawson is chair.

### Infinitely Improbable

**The Sources of the Nile.** *Ned Brooks* discovered Revealed Truth in his local paper *The Atlanta Constitution*: "'J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1963) was the creator of the imaginary *Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*, which spawned the entire genre of fantasy science fiction." So now you know where where we're coming from....'

**Richard Evans Memorial Prize.** The first prize of £1,500 will be awarded in Apr to a genre-fiction author chosen for being highly worthy

but insufficiently recognized. Judges include Pat Cadigan, John Clute (chair), Rog Peyton, Terry Pratchett and David Pringle. [P]

**Random Fandom.** Vince Clarke's fanzine collection has (as he wished) been taken in charge by Rob Hansen, and all the convention material by Pat McMurray for Memory Hole Annex. • **Victor Gonzalez** ousted 'E.B.Froliver', mystery editor of the US fanzine *Twink*, as David M.Shea (who?). [S] • **Martin Hoare's** favourite Christmas present was a suspiciously familiar-shaped trophy, its base engraved with the legend 'BEST HUGO AWARD ACCEPTER: MARTIN HOARE'. • **Kim Huett** explains all: 'Contrary to rumour my low profile of late has NOT been due to my accepting the role of Thrusty the Wonderdog in the new Ken Russell philosophical action thriller, *Waiting For Godot II: Fists Of Death*.' It's good to have that cleared up. • **Joan Paterson & Tibs** announce the birth of Thomas Alasdair Ibbis on 26 Dec 98. • **M.J. 'Simo' Simpson** is apparently moonlighting: 'Remember that *Femme Fatales* magazine of mine that's a proper magazine about sci-fi actresses and not thinly disguised pornography at all? I'm now staff writer on it' [D] • **Lucy Sussex** ponders on Coincidence: 'You hear we had a shooting in our street? The day after I taught a class in how to write death scenes?'

**C.o.A. Bridget & Simon Bradshaw**, 46 The Oval, Henlow, Beds, SG16 6EU. **Tibs & Joan Paterson** (since 3/98), 22 Bullen Close, Cambridge, CB1 8YU. **David Redd** reverts to his home address: Plas Hyfryd, 48 Cardigan Rd, Haverfordwest, Dyfed, SA61 2QN. **Roy Tackett**, c/o Hallett Realty, 7800 Marble NE, Suite 5, Albuquerque, NM 87110, USA.

**Small Press.** *Lexicon Urthus: Additions, Errata & cetera Vol III*... the final appendix to Michael Andre-Driussi's guide to *The Book of the New Sun*. 34pp; \$3 inc post. PO Box 460430, San Francisco, CA 94146, USA.

**R.I.P.** **Jean-Claude Forest** (1930-1998), the French artist who created the original *Batarella* comic strip, died on 30 Dec. [JC] • **Joe Orlando** (1927-1998), long-time comics artist and editor, died on 23 Dec aged 71. Titles he was involved with include *EC's Tales From the Crypt*, *Little Orphan Annie*, *House of Mystery*, *Swamp Thing*—and right up to his death—*Mad* magazine. [BW] • **Don Taylor** (1920-1998), who directed *Escape from the Planet of the Apes*, *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1977) and *Damien: Omen 2*, died 28 Dec aged 78. [SG] • **George Wilson** (1921-1998), artist and cartoonist, died on 7 Dec. He drew comic strips for Fiction House, Centaur, and Ace in the early 1940s; in the 50s and 60s he was a prolific cover artist, especially for World Publishing: *Turok Son of Stone*, *Space Family Robinson*, *The Phantom* and others. [SH]

**TAFF:** TransAtlantic Fan Fund winner Velma 'Vijay' Bowen reveals her itinerary: 'Current—though tentative—plans are to fly in to London around 28 Mar, lurk about with disreputable characters there, then go to Reconvene, and then spend the next two weeks or so getting into entertaining positions in other places. About 16 Apr, I shall return to Brooklyn, full of beer and tales of great hospitality and perversity, if all goes well. For those of you who might consider putting up with a wandering TAFF delegate, I'm housebroken, short haired, fairly well domesticated, with no allergies, I don't smoke, but don't mind staying in smoking households; and I'm easily entertained, as well as easily talked into absurd situations. Again, thank you all. I'm still somewhat crogged by this, but should be able to pass for coherent within a few weeks.' PO Box 156, Village Station, New York, NY 10014-0156, USA. • **Snu/kin Goes West**, Maureen Kincaid Speller's collected 'Notes from the TAFF Trail'—not a full trip report—has a tasty Sue Mason cover; 10pp A4; £1.50 (cheques to Maureen Speller) or \$3 (to Roger Robinson) from Fishlifter Press, 14 Northway Rd, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6JE.

**GUFF:** The 1999 race is on, with Steve Davies, Julian Headland and Paul Kincaid contending for a trip to Aussiecon 3. Bailouts from Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Rd, Tottenham, London, N15 4JU, or from *Ansible*.

**All At Sea.** Since Patrick O'Brian is so popular among sf fans, we record his response when an Amazon.com interviewer asked if he knew about the many web sites devoted to his work: 'You know, I went to see my agent in London—a very nice woman who's looked after me for a great while—and she said she would show me the Internet. "Well," she said, "look, here it is." She pointed to a sort of screen, not unlike a television. Then she seized an object, which she called a mouse, and tweaked it in various directions. • Nothing whatsoever happened.' [BD]

**Chog's Language Lessons.** Years ago *Kingsley Amis* came down hard on the translation of Harry Martinson's *Anara*, for its skiffy use of 'silly made-up terms' [...], a habit now practised in only the very worst magazine stories. 'One of KA's execrated examples: *loxodrome*. Coops. (And it's the title of the BSFA committee/council newsletter, too...)

**Motes and Beams.** Fannish hearts, and bowels, will be stirred by this new breed of press release: 'Beaming Down. Stardate: 11-20 March 1999. Lincolnshire County Council is offering science buffs a close

encounter with many of the country's biggest names in science fact and fiction when they beam down in Lincolnshire next March for Elements, a new breed of literary festival. To go on the mailing list, write to Maria Lyon, Elements Festival Co-ordinator, c/o Cultural Services, Lincs County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1YL. Make a date ... and you too can go where no festival has gone before!' [AMB] **Press Officer:** 'But we failed to achieve a 100% score, Captain ... we didn't mention sci-fi or anoraks.' *Festival Co-ordinator:* 'Make it so!'

**Fabulous Fanzine Sale.** Irwin Hirsh is selling off a 15-metre stack of undistributed fanzines by John Bangsund, one of Australia's finest fanwriters, who's in financial difficulties again. Details from Irwin, 26 Jessamine Ave, Prahran East, Vic 3181, Australia; or Robert Lichtman (US\$ payments), PO Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, USA; or *Ansible* (sterling ... catalogue e-mailed on request). Any surplus over the needed \$A1500 bail-out goes to Aussie fannish causes like GUFF and DUFF.

**Five Years Ago:** *Ansible* gulped at Scientological plans to preserve L.Ron Hubbard's writings through any possible holocaust, in 10,500 titanium time capsules enshrined in nuke-proof vaults. There were also to be 'large, indestructible obelisks around the world covered with pictographs explaining Scientology "so that even a wandering savage will be able to understand and apply these principles."' (A78, Jan 94) Somehow I never got around to writing *A Canticle for Lafayette*.

**Outraged Letters.** **Steve Baxter** muses topically: 'Clinton, Mandelson and now Sawyer; evidently Nemesis & Hubris don't take time off for Xmas.' • **Sam J. Lundwall** likes *Ansible* but deplores 'Arvid Engholm's moronic notice on me in *Ansible* 136. A typical example of fannish Engholm asshole journalism, a half-truth that ends up as a full lie.' • **Keith Oborn** reported an omission from the *Fantasy Encyclopedia* entry on RIDDLES: 'What do you get when you cross Lee Larocca with Count Dracula? ... AUTOEXEC.BAT.' • **Karen Pender-Gunn** notes that her A137 report of Ian Gunn's death was misdated owing to e-mail/datetime confusion: 'Ian passed away on the evening of Sunday 8 Nov. We were married on 7 Nov at 10.30am.... After the ceremony Ian was able to say what he'd wanted to say for a long time. "On behalf of me and the missus ..." and then told me to walk 10 paces behind Cheeky sod. He had his humour most of the day.' Mrs KPG will publish Ian's collected *Space-Time Bucareters* very soon, and hopes fans will remember his fine cartoons at Hugo time. • **Lloyd Penney** heard more about the hotelier who single-handedly killed the 2002 Seattle Worldcon bid by refusing room bookings: 'Yogi Hudson is rumoured to be a Born-Again Christian who thinks that fans are devil worshippers. Another victory for God's Own as the Spawn of Satan are thwarted yet again!'

**Millennial Thought.** The first series of *Ansible* began in 1979 and ended in 1987. Eight years. The second series began in 1991.

**Improving Movies.** **Bob Denney** mentions that China 'screened the dreadful *Batman and Robin* under a title that must have been the most entertaining aspect of the entire showing: *Come To My Cave And Wear This Rubber Coodpiece, Cute Boy!* [Stop Press] No, it was a spoof.'

**Group Gropes.** *Croydon SF Group*. 2nd Tue monthly at Dog & Bull pub, Surrey St, Croydon, 7:30pm onward. Tomorrow, the world.

**Chog's Flasterclass.** *Dept of Seriously Hard SF:* 'It was calibrated so that a level of zero equaled the mean solar gamma flux with a quiet sun. The current level—sixty-three—only meant something if you knew that the readout scale was the base-e log of the gamma intensity. That was easy to deal with if you knew, as Celme did, that  $e^3$  is about equal to twenty. So an increase in three in readout value was equivalent to a factor of twenty multiplier in actual gamma-ray level. Readout level sixty-three then meant that the current gamma flux was  $20^{63 \times 3}$  of the usual value.  $20^{21}$  was rather more than  $10^{27}$ . Space outside the shielded compartment of the *Schiaparelli* was hot, hell-hot, with the gamma-ray burst from *Supernova Alpha*.' (Charles Sheffield, *Aftermath*, 1998) [JB/GF] • 'David saw him nod imperceptibly.' (Tom Deitz, *Windmaster's Bane*, 1986) [TNH] • "'Yrech!' said Legolas, falling into his own tongue.' (J.R.R.Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, 1954-5) [DB] • 'Adrenaline pounds at her heart with rubber mallets.' (Walter Jon Williams, *Metro-politan*, 1995) [AC] • 'Dr Vlad sat back with his large ears poised like sinister microphones of flesh. (John E. Miller, *Return of Zeus*, 1962) [BH] • 'He was hauled into the air like a sack of miscellaneous helplessness.' (Stephen Donaldson, *Lord Foul's Bane*, 1977) [BH]

*Ansible* 138 © Dave Langford, 1999. Thanks to Judith Berman, David Bratman, Andy Butler, Arthur Chance, John Clute, Bob Denney, Doug Frost, Steve Green, Steve Holland, Brian Hunt, Robert Lichtman, Teresa Nielsen Hayden, Brent Hodges, Lawrence Person, Prism, Skink, Chuq von Rospach, Bob Wayne, and our Hero Distributors: Janice Murray (NA), SCS, Alan Stewart (UZ), and Brum Group News. 7 Jan 99