

ansible



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BACK FROM AUSSIECON. Let's be obvious: it was the trip of a lifetime, Adelaide and Melbourne hospitality was wonderful, and I enjoyed the cosily sized Worldcon (estimated 1548 attendees). The programme may have fallen apart a bit, but DUFF winner Janice Gelb dextrously put it back together; the Melbourne Convention Centre may have been dry-ish (and inclined to charge \$75/hour for taping items—so little was taped), but the linked Centra Hotel's bar was reckoned Definitely OK by the Brits; and ... well, I'll have to write a trip report, won't I? • **Hugos.** NOVEL Connie Willis, *To Say Nothing of the Dog*. NOVELLA Greg Egan, 'Oceanic' (*Asimov's* 8/98). NOVELETTE Bruce Sterling, 'Taklamakan' (*Asimov's* 10/98). SHORT Michael Swanwick, 'The Very Pulse of the Machine' (*Asimov's* 2/98). RELATED BOOK Thomas M. Disch, *The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of: How Science Fiction Conquered the World*. DRAMATIC *The Truman Show*. PRO EDITOR Gardner Dozois. PRO ARTIST Bob Eggleton. SEMIPROZINE *Locus*. FANZINE *Ansible*. FAN WRITER Dave Langford. FAN ARTIST Ian Gunn. CAMPBELL AWARD Nalo Hopkinson. • **Worldcon 2002:** San José beat the spoof Roswell bid by 666 votes to 120. Meanwhile, a 2007 Australian bid is already taking shape. I must return!

Fruits of the Agathon

Iain M. Banks, man of versatile initials, told the *Telegraph*: 'If I do cowboy novels I'll be Iain Z. Banks. And Iain X. Banks for pornography.'

Raymond Briggs of *Fungus the Bogeyman* fame ranted—tongue in cheek, we hope—about J.K. Rowling's best-selling *Harry Potter* fantasies: 'It is very galling when a pip-squeak novice, decades younger, bursts into an oldie's profession and has instant colossal success. It's not fair. Some of us have been toiling in the vineyard of children's books for over 40 years. We are now just starting to draw our tiny pensions when onto the scene leaps this teenage upstart...' I here is much more. 'She'll probably turn to drink and drugs,' speculated Mr Briggs before adding, 'Mind you, I haven't read the books myself.' (*The Oldie*, Aug 99)

Neil Gaiman was startled by his Mythopoeic Award, a small seated lion officially not known as the Aslan, since 'the only awards I ever get are the ugly ones: awards in the shapes of bombs, springs, bricks, lumps of plastic, Easter Island H.P. Lovecraft heads and the occasional unlovely wooden plaque. I never get the pretty ones.' Diana Wynne Jones, in an unprintable communication, disagrees about the lion's prettiness.

William Gibson insatiably collects antique mechanical watches, bought at unfeasible prices through eBay on-line auctions (see A140). As though some bright accountant had suggested how this hobby might be tax-deductible, his new novel *All Tomorrow's Parties* contains a fair amount of expertise about dealing in antique mechanical watches....

Stephen King plotted revenge on the minivan which badly injured him in June: he bought the offending vehicle and gloated that he'd be laying into it with a sledgehammer. This didn't work in *Christine*. [BB]

Chris Priest was cited by crime author Ian Rankin as a master of sensuality. *Sunday Times*: 'What is the most erotic book you have read?' Rankin: 'One disturbingly erotic scene in Christopher Priest's *The Glamour*. Three-in-a-bed sex, only one of the three is invisible...' [28 Ser]

Brian Stableford, that notorious intellectual, was billed on the front cover of the Autumn 1999 *Weird Tales* as 'Brain Stableford'. [E2L] Messages of sympathy flowed in from Brain Lumley and Brain Aldiss.

Alison Spedding was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in Bolivia after being convicted for possessing and (which she denies) dealing in marijuana. Parole might yet halve the sentence. Messages c/o Debbie Aliaga, British Embassy, Avenida Arc 2732, PO Box 694, La Paz, Bolivia.

Condobolin

23-4 Oct • **Convergence** (multimedia), Stakis Bristol Hotel, Bristol. GoH Lionel Fanthorpe and others. £35 reg, £20 day. 200-member limit. Contact (SAE) 46 Brins Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8XU.

27 Oct • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Florence Nightingale pub, on York Rd/Westminster Bridge Rd roundabout. 7pm on. With Eugene Byrne.

30-31 Oct • **M.R. James Weekend**, Royal Victoria & Bull Hotel, Rochester, Kent. £25 reg. Contact (SAE) 150 Elstree Park, Barnet Lane,

Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 2RP.

5-7 Nov • **Novacon 29**, Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. GoH Ian Stewart. £32 reg to 30 Oct; £35 at door. Contact 14 Park St, Lye, Stourbridge, W. Midlands, DY9 8SS.

12-14 Nov • **Armadacon 99**, Copthorne Hotel, Plymouth. GoH Stephen Baxter, Michael Sheard, Lionel Fanthorpe. £27 reg; £22 concessions or £11/day. Contact PO Box 38, Plymouth, Devon.

13-14 Nov • **Memorabilia** (vast sf and miscellaneous pop-culture collectors' fair), Hall 17, NEC, Birmingham. Box office 0121 767 4555.

?11-13 Aug 00 • **Lexicon** (Unicon 2000), St Hilda's College, Oxford. Dates not yet confirmed. £5 supporting; full rate to be announced. Contact 18 Letchworth Ave, Bedford, Middlesex, TW14 9RY.

29 Aug - 2 Sep 02 • **Conjosé** (60th Worldcon), San José, California. GoH Vernor Vinge, David Cherry, Bjo & John Trimble, Ferdinand Peghoot. \$100 reg to 31 May 00. Contact PO Box 61363, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-1363, USA; UK agents 52 Westbourne Tce, Reading, RG30 2RP.

Rumblings ... Aussiecon's business meeting ratified 'No Zone' Worldcon bidding. Instead of NA zone rotation, future bids must be for sites at least 500m or 800km from the Worldcon where the vote is held.

Infinitely Improbable

That Hideous Acronym. On 6 August, the UK government betrayed its spin-doctors' unfamiliarity with C.S. Lewis by launching the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, or N.I.C.E.... Who is its Head? Where are Merlin and Mr Fisher-King now that we need them? [JS/TB]

Publishers and Sinners. There was a bloodbath at HarperCollins US on 21 September, when 75 staff were fired without warning, including SF notables John Douglas, John Silbersack and Lou Aronica.

Pulp Fiction. Matt Weyland of Pulp Publications has filed for bankruptcy (creditors' meeting 12 Oct in Brighton). His 'Pulp Fictions' imprint's jacket artists, notably Bob Covington, have had a long and unsuccessful struggle for payment, return of their paintings, or even replies to letters. Others owed money include the BSFA and *Interzone* (ads not paid for), and David Pringle (four Pulp book introductions).

Sidewise Awards for alternate-history sf went to Stephen Fry's *Making History* (long) and Ian R. MacLeod's 'The Summer Isles' (short).

Random Fandom. *Andrew Bartmess*, who wrote *Star Trek* 3D chess rules in the 70s and was long in dispute with the US Franklin Mint for pinching same without payment (see A92-3), is happy at last: 'I am pleased to say this has been resolved.' • *Avedon Carol* brags: 'Roger Scruton credited me on the radio the other day with being partly responsible for the destruction of the Empire's standards.' • *Morgan Linda Harriet Gallagher & David Lyndon Brown* were married in Reading, on 13 Aug. 'Mr and Mrs Brown would like to thank all their well-wishers.' [EJ] • *Ann & Steve Green* were trapped in a jammed lift at Wincon, leading to a happy realization of Ann's fantasies of being rescued by burly firemen. • *Linnette Horne*, FFANZ delegate at Aussiecon, entered hospital with cardiac trouble soon after, and is recovering at home. Cherry Wilder suggests sending good wishes: 28 Highbury Rd, Highbury, Wellington, New Zealand. *Simon Ounsley & Chris McCormack* were married on 17 July—see COA. • *Mae Strelkov*, queen of hecto art, 'is not having much luck trying to make hecto inks by the old Henley formulas and would like to try hecto carbons should anyone have any they can spare.' [NB via BBo] Estafesta Postal, 4501 Palma Sola, Jujuy, Argentina. • *Amy Thomson & Edd Vick* proudly announce their imminent adoption of Ding Yuán, a 7-month-old girl orphan from Szechuan.

Dead Files. George Orwell, who died in Jan 1950, was the subject of a startling revelation about paranormal CIA activities from Julie Burchill: 'And it turned out he was working for the CIA all through the 50s, fingering fellow writers as Communist sympathizers.' [JB]

Fan Press. *Atom 2000* is Ken Cheslin's 100pp (plus covers and 4pp prelims) A4 collection of Arthur 'Atom' Thomson's fan cartoons. £2/\$5 asked towards costs: send more, so Ken can continue with his planned *The Millennium Atom*. 29 Kestrel Rd, Halesowen, W. Midlands, B63 2PH.

Outraged Letters. *Jim Burns* on the Hugos: 'I, of course, am

devastated. I shall obviously have to dedicate myself to the painting of dragons, grow my hair to waist length and start behaving like a demented pirate.' • *Sue Harris* thanks fandom for nearly 100 condolence messages about Chuck's death. 'Even people he hardly knew said what a nice man he was and what a sense of humour he had.' Sue would now prefer to be dropped from fanzine mailing lists. • *Josh Kirby* was pleased that *A144* revealed his little-known 1761 publication: 'Tom Gainsborough said it should have gone to a 2nd edition, and Will Blake said it would have, if he'd done the engravings....' • *Dave Lally* clarified the *Prisoner* shop confusion: 'The old shop under Max Hora closed when Portmeirion's "banning" of [summer] Portmeirions led to strained relations with 6 of 1. Then Portmeirion redecorated the old shop, reopened it with a fanfare (and net access and two *Prisoner* souvenirs), and announced a "better" relationship with *Prisoner* fandom.' To the surprise of the fans. • *Paul McAuley*: 'At a quiz night held to raise money for the Richard Evans Fund, the Orion team, including Malcolm Edwards, Jo Fletcher and Simon Spanton, appeared under the uncompromisingly honest sobriquet "No Sodding Authors". Your correspondent is only too glad to comply; his next novel (here's the plug) will be published by HarperCollins.' • *Nathalie Mège* liked *Thog's* people living on an uninhabited island. 'This reminds me of the often quoted Claude Lévi-Strauss sentence: "The village left leaving us alone with the women and the children in the deserted houses." For some reason, French feminists always giggle at this one....'

C.o.A. *Michael Abbott & Anne Wilson*, 32 Rock Rd, Cambridge, CB1 7UF. *Karen Babich*, 6215 N Glenwood Ave #2S, Chicago, IL 60660-1807, USA. *William Bains & family*, 37 The Moor, Melbourn, Herts, SG8 6ED. *Jane Carnall* (to end Apr 00), The Basement Flat, 27 Christchurch Rd, Reading, RG2 7AA. *Chris Evans*, 36 Priestfield Rd, Forest Hill, London, SE23 2RS. *Tommy Ferguson*, 40 Deramore Ave, Belfast, BT7 3ER. *Jonathan 'Jonjo' Jones & Sharon Lewis*, 136 Kendal Way, Chesterton, Cambridge, CB4 1LT. *Murray Moore*, 1065 Hensley Rd, Mississauga, Ontario, L4Y 1C8, Canada. *Chris & Simon Ounsley*, 47 Birkdale Dr, Leeds, LS17 7RU. *Welsh SF Association*, c/o 12 Stuart St, Treherbert, Wales, CF42 5PR. *Mark Young*, 2 Lytham Close, Reading, RG30 3HU.

Stop Press. *Fandom's* last hand-typeset, letterpress fanzine, *Stefantasy*, has ceased publication after 44 years and 123 issues. The 123rd appeared in Dec 1998. Editor Bill Danner started work on a new issue but feels he's 'slowed down' too much ever to complete it: he's 92. [RL]

• Also, Robert Reginald's Borgo Press has closed down after 24 years.

Fanfundery. *TAFF*: nominations are open for next year's westbound race to the Chicago Worldcon. Nominations (3 Euro, 2 NA), 100-word platform and £10 bond to Maureen Kincaid Speller, 60 Bournemouth Rd, Polkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ, by 1 Dec. • *New Time Limit*: 'SCIFI has revised its policy of paying a bounty for published Fan Fund reports. As of 1 Jan 2000 it will pay \$500 for trip reports published within 5 years, \$100 for reports published beyond 5 years.' [BP] This replaces the past policy of rewarding every new trip report with \$500. Write fast, fans! • *TAFF Tales* Missing Chapter (as noted in *A145*): Ulrika O'Brien has copies for NA buyers of Ken Bulmer's 1955 trip report—SAE to her, 123 Melody Lane #C, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, USA. She can also supply the complete report, with this one-page insert, at \$10. (UK: £5 to *Anisble*.)

British Fantasy Awards. SPECIAL KARL EDWARD WAGNER AWARD Diana Wynne Jones. BEST NOVEL Stephen King, *Bag of Bones*. ANTHOLOGY Stephen Jones & David Sutton, *Dark Terrors 4*. COLLECTION Ramsey Campbell, *Ghosts and Grisly Things*. SHORT Stephen Laws, 'The Song My Sister Sang'. ARTIST, Bob Covington. SMALL PRESS *The Third Alternative*.

Thog's Science Masterclass. OSS scientific briefing on heavy water: 'This substance [...] was water to whose molecular structure had been appended another hydrogen atom. The Germans were apparently trying to cause a chain—or explosive—effect by releasing the extra hydrogen atom so appended.' (W.E.B.Griffin, *The Secret Warriors*, 1985)

World Fantasy Awards shortlist. NOVEL Charles de Lint, *Someplace to Be Flying*; Louise Erdrich, *The Antelope Wife*; Guy Gavriel Kay, *Sailing to Sarantium*; Sean Stewart, *Mockingbird*; Thomas Sullivan, *The Martyring*. NOVELLA A.S.Byatt, 'Cold' (*Elementals*); Ursula K.Le Guin, 'Dragonfly' (*Legends*); George R.R.Martin, 'The Hedge Knight' (*Legends*); Ian R.MacLeod, 'The Summer Isles' (*Asimov's* Nov); Peter Straub, 'Mr Clubb and Mr Cuff' (*Murder for Revenge*). • SHORT Neil Gaiman, 'Shog-ghost's Old Peculiar' (*Smoke and Mirrors*); John Kessel, 'Every Angel is Terrifying' (*F&SF* Oct); Ellen Kushner, 'The Death of the Duke' (*Starlight 2*); Kelly Link 'The Specialist's Hat' (*Event Horizon* Nov); Kelly Link, 'Travels with the Snow Queen' (*Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet 1*). • COLLECTION Jack Cady, *The Night We Buried Road Dog*; Karen Joy Fowler, *Black Glass*; Elizabeth Hand, *Last Summer at Mars Hill*; Graham Mast-

erton, *Manitou Man*; Gahan Wilson, *The Cleft*. • ANTHOLOGY *The Best of Crank!* ed Bryan Cholfin, *Dark Terrors 4* ed Stephen Jones & David Sutton, *Dreaming Down-Under* ed Jack Dann & Janeen Webb, *Legends* ed Robert Silverberg, *Starlight 2* ed Patrick Nielsen Hayden. • ARTIST Jim Burns, Tom Cauty, Alan Clark, Bob Eggleton, Charles Vess. • SPECIAL: PRO Les Daniels (*Superman: The Complete History*), Jo Fletcher (editing), David Pringle (*Interzone*), Robert Silverberg & Grania Davis (*The Avram Davidson Treasury*), Jim Turner (Golden Gryphon). • NON-PRO Richard Chizmar (Cemetery Dance), David Marshall (Pumpkin), Stephen Pesechnik (Edgewood), Jacob Weisman (Tachyon).

15 Years Ago. We wondered whether Bob Shaw had his knife into John Sladek, who's consulted as a guru of Strange Phenomena in Bob's *Fire Pattern* but gives only flip, joky, useless answers. Bob explained: 'John wrote all his own dialogue for that scene.' (*Anisble* 40, Oct 84)

Group Gropes. The Welsh pub meeting at the Prince of Wales, Wood St, Cardiff, has moved to the second Monday of the month.

Thog's Masterclass. 'Cassini was not heading for the heart of Titan's face ...' (Stephen Baxter, *Titan*, 1997) [PB] • *Dept of How To Internalize A Small 18th-Century Pavilion*: 'It is, in fact, no longer a place, no longer out there, but a precise metaphysical node in the inner topography of my being, a conjuncture where fallibility, mortification and unease meet to gloat and whisper their incoherent secrets.' (Adrian Mathews, *Vienna Blood*, 1999) • *Dept of Split-Second Timing*: 'He was killed on a Thursday afternoon, crossing the street; run down by a taxicab, the driver racing to carry his passenger to Manchester Piccadilly in time for a noon train.' (Clive Barker, *Sacrament*, 1996) [KN] • 'She screamed as she fell through the nothingness, clutched at the wrists that held her wrists, and, at last, believed.' (Ray F.Nelson, *Timequest*, 1985) [KL] • 'The first thing she had done was take off the sweater. Without so much as blinking an eye at Cal whose breast-calloused eyes had seen the best, but were now popping and flashing signals, she exclaimed in her soft voice: "Freedom from social inhibitions is vital. Don't you agree?"' (Anon, *I.O.U. Me*, Ram Books undated 760s) [G] • 'Like sleeping giants, the island's twin volcanoes reawakened from centuries of inactivity. Neither matched the other in their violent display.' (Clive Cussler, *Shockwave*, 1996) [HP] • 'If eyes had been hands, he would've crushed her.' (Peter Hamilton, *The Naked God*, 1999)

R.I.P.

MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY (1930-1999) died on 25 September after a major heart attack on the 21st. She was 69. Her professional career began with short stories in 1953 and was dominated by the long-running Darkover series that first appeared as routine sf in 1958, became increasingly concerned with sexual politics over the years, and continued through the 1990s as, chiefly, anthologies of stories by other hands. Her most commercially successful novel was the revisionist-feminist Arthurian fantasy *The Mists of Avalon* (1983). In her role as publisher and editor of *Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine* (1988-current) she encouraged new writers, women in particular. Old fans also remember her fannish roots, going back to 1946: Harry Warner Jr cites her as the first female BNF to become a prolific pro.

JAMES WHITE (1928-1999) had a stroke on 21 August and died next day without emerging from coma; this was at least mercifully quick. Professionally he was best known for the Sector General series of witty and inventive space-hospital stories that began in 1957 and was still going strong this year despite his failing eyesight. Other notable if underrated novels are *Second Ending*, *The Watch Below* and *The Silent Stars Go By*, whose Del Rey blurblurb line 'When Irish Spies Are Smiling' caused James to murmur, in his mild-mannered way, 'Kill! Kill! Kill!' Fannishly, he was a key member of Irish Fandom—the Wheels of IF—who co-produced *Slant* with Walt Willis, wrote for the legendary *Hypfen*, and created what many regard as the best fanzine piece ever, 'The Exorcists of IF' (1975; reprinted in *The White Papers*, 1996). Personally, James was famous for being a perfect gentleman without a trace of the stuffiness implied by that description; he was full of gentle charm and understated wit, an ever-popular convention guest whom fandom loved dearly. All sympathy to Peggy White, his wife since 1955.

JERRY YULSMAN (1924-1999), whose one sf book was the fine alternate history *Elleander Morning* (1984), died of lung cancer on 6 August.

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