

# Ansible



## Ansible 148 November 1999

From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU, UK. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816. E-mail [ansible@cix.co.uk](mailto:ansible@cix.co.uk). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Sue Mason**. Available for SAE, whim, or the Throne of the Erril of Sherill.

**NUMEROLOGY.** As the world prepares to go barmy over the arrival of a year ending in multiple zeroes, *can it be coincidence that Interzone 150 and Ansible 150 are scheduled to appear in December and January respectively, while my low-circulation Cloud Chamber is poised on the very brink of issue 100?* After consulting various oracles, auguries, entrails and bottles, I can confidently predict that I have no idea.

### The Great Slow Kings

**Greg Egan** bewails certain decadent countries' small-press ethics: 'Having declined to give an interview to UK magazine *Dreamwatch*, I was bemused to discover that they've gone ahead and published one anyway. In their September issue, they've cobbled together answers from past interviews on my web site with questions that bear little resemblance to the ones I was answering, and passed off the resulting collection of *non sequiturs* as an interview of their own.'

**Ursula Le Guin**, Master Namer of *Ansible*, was 70 on 21 October.

**Charles Platt** was charged with three misdemeanours in July, the most serious being for the hideous alleged crime of giving alcohol to someone under 21 at an open-air party in Jerome, Arizona. It may be relevant that, earlier, he had criticized local police.... All the charges were dropped in October, the alcohol one on condition that CP left town; he'd already departed owing to 'personality conflicts'. At **NASFiC** in August, Harlan Ellison had exulted over the charges before a large audience, claiming that CP (who in fact has no criminal record) had a lurid history of illicit sex, and bragging of having phoned the Jerome police to tell them this. Always a helping hand from Harlan!

**Carl Sagan** surely never had a weight problem of the order implied in Lynn Yarris's review of *Carl Sagan: A Life* by Keay Davidson Wiley: '... he was a six-foot gravity well toward whom everyone naturally gravitated.' (*San José Mercury News*, 24 Oct) [BB] Shades of *Raft*.

**Michael Swanwick** reminisces: 'I'm fresh back from Uppsala, where I was **GoH** at **Swecon**. I'd heard that Sweden was the third most wired country in the world, and this fact was confirmed for me at a pub meeting with the con committee when the time came to divide up the bill and two fans sitting directly opposite each other whipped out Palm Pilots and began squirting data back and forth across a gap of some five inches. An ensuant failure to communicate was finally resolved when it was discovered that a beer bottle was interfering with their transmissions. • A beautiful, beautiful country, and quite a nice convention. It was topped off by what I was told was only the second or third dead dog party in the history of Swedish fandom. It lasted till one in the morning. The Swedes appear to have a talent for this sort of thing, and I believe they should make it a tradition.' [29 Oct]

### Consuriaeth

5-7 Nov • **Novacon 29**, Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. **GoH** Ian Stewart. Advance booking closed; £35 at door. Josh Kirby and I are signing his art book *A Cosmic Cornucopia* at Andromeda, Sat noon.

6-7 Nov • **Memorabilia** (vast sf/pop-culture collectors' fair), Hall 17, NEC, Birmingham. Box office 0121 767 4555. *NB date correction!*

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.

27 Nov • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Florence Nightingale pub, on York Rd/Westminster Bridge Rd roundabout. 7pm on. With Juliet McKenna.

10 Dec • **BFS Open Night** • Princess Louise pub (upstairs), High Holborn, London. 6:30pm on. With the omnipresent Juliet McKenna.

23 Dec • **London Xmas Meeting**, Florence Nightingale, as above. 5pm on. Upstairs room booked, alas: fans must squeeze in downstairs.

21-24 Apr 00 • **2Kon** (51st Eastercon), Central Hotel, Glasgow. Rates rise on 1 Dec, from £25/\$45 to £30/\$55. Hotel bookings with £10 deposits must reach Flat 1/2, 10 Atlas Rd, Glasgow, G21 4TE, by 22 Nov to be included in the lottery for Central Hotel rooms. Contact (for everything else) 30 Woodburn Tce, St Andrews, KY16 8BA.

26-9 May 00 • **plokta.con** (small friendly sf event), Holiday Inn,

Leicester. **GoH** Ken MacLeod. £20 reg, to end of 1999 at least. Contact 3 York St, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH.

27-8 May 00 • **Silver Arrow** (*Robin of Sherwood*), Bristol Hilton Hotel. No rates indicated on flyer. Contact (SAE) 4 Stitchman House, Byfield Rd, St James, Northampton, NN5 5GH.

30 Jun - 2 Jul 00 • **Aliens Stole My Handbag** (sf/humour), Shepperton Moat House Hotel. **GoH** Robert Rankin. £20 reg to Easter, then £25; £27.50 at door; £10 extra for 'military vehicle excursion'. Contact 16 Dulverton Rd, Ruislip Manor, Middlesex, HA4 9AD.

8-10 Sep 00 • **Fantasycon 24**, Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. **GoH** Storm Constantine, Stan Nicholls. £50 reg (BFS members £40). Contact 46 Oxford Rd, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT.

10-12 Nov 00 • **Novacon 30**, Britannia Hotel, New St, Birmingham. **GoH** Chris Priest, special guest Rog Peyton. £23 reg to 8 Nov 99, £28 until Easter 00. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

**Rumblings** • **Dallas in 2006** ... this Worldcon bid is taking presupp memberships at \$20 and \$60, or \$100 for 'Friend' status (converts to full membership if they win), but still awaits its PO box address. • **2004 bids:** Charlotte and 'Nieuw Amsterdam'—i.e., New York, criticized for lack of function space and a 2-man committee including infamous Robert Sacks. New England's MCFI is seeking a 2004 bid site. [F770]

### Infinitely Improbable

**Publishers and Sinners.** At the 12 October creditors' meeting for the bankrupt Brighton outfit Pulp Publications, the usual gloomy news emerged: Pulp owed £56,800, with assets of £16,600 at best. Creditors include the Finnish printers (£17,900) and UK artist Bob Covington (£2,600), who painted many book covers and was never paid anything. Pulp's Matt Weyland, now working for a London publisher, promised that original artwork and borrowed books would be returned. [DP] • **Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine**, despite Bradley's recent death, is continuing—at least for the present—under Ann Sharp, the trustee for the trust which owns the magazine.

**Random Fandom.** **Jim Barker** is no longer illustrating the dread Langford column in *SFX*, owing to a change of format as exciting new columnists like John Brunsan came aboard. • **Mike Gyer** wanted to strangle the fan who, when Harlan Ellison called for questions at his **NASFiC** talk, instantly shouted 'Is Charles Platt still out of jail?' and set off a 40-minute rant (see above). [F770] Some wondered whether this unusual question, for which Ellison seemed so very well prepared, might just have been planted. • **Terry Jeeves**—whose fanzine *Erg* is in its 41st year—hopes to provide a home for one of two Pentium PCs to be built by Bernie Peek with parts left over from a fannish plan to upgrade the late Vince Clarke's system. • **Dave Lally** reports that **Portmeirion** and **Prisoner** fandom are aghast, if not akimbo, at the discovery of a Swedish porn video entitled *Private No.21* (1997), which features a 10min hardcore episode blasphemously shot within the Village itself. 'The term "Pornmeirion" has been frowned on....' Legal action may loom. • **Norman Shorrocks** is gravely ill in a nursing home. 'Fighting pain but sadly losing,' writes Ina Shorrocks. Ron Bennett adds: 'He might, I think, welcome cheering messages.' Send via Ina at 2 Arnot Way, Higher Bebington, Wirral, CH63 8LP.

**R.I.P.** **Frank Bryning** (1907-1999), Australian author of many short sf stories over five decades, died on 12 October aged 92. [MO] • **Joy Hilbert** (1959-1999), formerly Hibbert, British fan and 1980s con-goer, died on 27 October from complications of acute Crohn's disease. Her fanzines included *Sic Buiscuit Disintegraf* (with Dave Rowley), *Lilith's Child* and *Zetetic* [CB/SB]. She was only 40. • **Eddie Jones** (1935-1999), British sf artist, died on 15 October at age 64, after weeks in hospital following a stroke. He was a pioneer of glossily representational paintings of space scenes and hardware. From the mid-50s to the early 80s Eddie was popular and active in fandom: a regular exhibitor in convention art shows, and TAFF delegate at St.Louiscon in 1969. Rog Peyton writes: 'Eddie was one of the most prolific—and in my opinion one of the very best—sf artists in the 1970s. His first book covers were for the

notorious Badger Books, starting with *Space-Borne* (1959) by R.L. Fanthorpe. At his most prolific he was painting eight commissions a month ... in Germany he painted the covers for approximately 850 issues of *Terra Astra* magazine. For the last 10-15 years he had moved out of the sf field and spent his time painting military figures for a model shop in Liverpool. He made an unexpected appearance at this year's Eastercon, where he was surprised that anyone in sf remembered his artwork or his name. Tom Schlück [EJ's German agent] has expressed a wish that a memorial fund be started to keep Eddie's name and work alive. He was the only great name of the 70s never to have had a book devoted to his work ... perhaps that omission can now be corrected.' Contributions welcome: Eddie Jones Memorial Fund c/o Andromeda Bookshop, 2-5 Suffolk St, Birmingham, B1 1LT. • *Ingrid Jonsson*, Norwegian fan, was killed on 4 October—shot by her father, who then shot her mother and committed suicide. This tragedy creates problems for the 'Big European Con' ReConnaissance (Bergen, Norway, 31 Mar - 2 Apr 00), since Ingrid was membership secretary and the records are tied up in court.

**Potterism.** Ubiquitous Harry Potter turned up in *The New Yorker* (Sept), with a squib about the fact that J.K. Rowling's books have been painstakingly translated into American for fear of baffling US kids with enigmas like 'wonky' ('crooked') or 'barking mad' ('complete lunatic'), while leaving them to cope with 'git', 'nutters' and 'shirty'—the latter cautiously italicized to show it's not a typo. One pun falls by the way-side: mending magic wands with Spellogate is not permitted in a land where only Scotch tape may be used. [YR/MMW] A final revelation is that book editor Arthur Levine left mint humbugs unchanged: "'Humbug' is clearly a magical term," Levine said. "It's something that should be imagined." Except it's not. It's a common triangular sucking candy.' *Yvonne Rousseau*: 'I see no convincing way for Levine to reply to this final sentence, except by shouting: "TU QUOQUE!"'

**C.o.A. Ansible** has a new fax number—see masthead. From overseas: +44 705 080 1534. *Ray Holloway*, 159 Windhurst Rd, Stechford, Birmingham, B33 9JN. *Jon Singer* (for about 6 months), c/o Humphrey & Losito, 308 Montgomery St, Laurel, MD 20707, USA. *Bjørn Tore Sund*, Lobergsveien 100 A, N-5073 Bergen, Norway. *Bridget Wilkinson* (temporary maildrop), 15 Manor Drive, Southgate, London, N14 5JH.

**Pringlewatch.** In an old tv script *Kim Newman* discovered what he calls a predictive vision of the growth of *Interzone* into the new millennium: 'You know, somewhere out there, beyond the Post Office Tower, there's a vast committee called Pringle, constantly regenerating itself.' (Troy Kennedy Martin, 'Thin Ice' episode, *The Sweeney*, 1975)

**15 Years Ago** at Novacon 14, GoH Rob Holdstock—who'd jokily asked for naked dancing girls—paled on being presented at the closing ceremony with a jiggling 'strippergram'. Which led to audience complaints about innocent sf fans, some of them mere babes in arms, being exposed to the alien terror of the female breast. (*Ansible* 41, 1984)

**Outraged Letters.** *Malcolm Edwards* rebuts the A147 niggles about his 'No Sodding Authors' pub quiz team, in e-mail headed NO SODDING SENSE OF IRONY: 'If Paul McAuley hadn't arrived late and hadn't been sitting at the back, he might have noticed that the Gollancz/Millennium contingent, which was sharing a table and a considerable amount of alcohol, actually consisted of two teams: the one containing Simon, Jo and myself, and the other including authors Tom Arden, James Barclay and James Lovegrove. It was probably as well for author/editor relations that we tied for second place—the winners (credit where due) being a Fantasy Centre team including Erik Arthur, Ted Ball and Roger Robinson.' • *Simon R.* 'Spoiler Warning' *Green* cannot be discouraged: 'Your death in *Deathstalker Destiny* seems to have gone largely unregarded, alas. Not so the death of Owen Deathstalker; I've been getting everything short of death threats from upset fans. Take a look at Amazon.com if you want a giggle. Normally my books average five or six reports; last time I looked DD had 21 ... most said things like "You bastard! How could you!" I personally am weeping all the way to the bank.' • *Tom Holt* offers a language lesson: 'Not only does "Anakin" mean "upwardly mobile" in Greek, but in Japanese, "Obiwan Kenobe" translates as "sword-belt of the belted dumpling".' • *Perry Middlemiss* on rumours of an Adelaide site for the Australia in 2007 bid: 'The only places in Australia that could adequately hold and run a Worldcon are in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Sydney and Brisbane suffer from a fatal lack of people on the ground who can do the work so it looks like being Melbourne again. [...] I think 2007 is a goer and I aim to help out in the planning stages.' • *Andy Sawyer* welcomes a new publication by the Sociology Dept and School of Humanities & Social Sciences at California State University: *The Journal of Mundane Behavior*. 'Somehow I think this is incredibly fannish. Or a wind-up. Or both.' • *Bryan*

*Talbot* bewails the curse on his *Heart of Empire*, with #7—my comics debut—delayed since 'the whole shipment bound for Blighty suffered "water damage" and is being replaced. I've no idea how long this will take.... This follows hard on the heels of #5 coming out in Britain three weeks late because the entire order for this country was sent to a warehouse in New Jersey by mistake. Hot stuff, modern business.'

**In Typo Veritas.** 'He gave the Princess a farewell kiss that she bore with only a faint whimpering nose in her throat, and then slid out of the hovercar.' (Debra Doyle & James D. MacDonald, *The Price of the Stars* ... hastily corrected after first Tor printing) [CB]

**Gaylactic Network Spectrum Awards** for sf/fantasy/horror that's 'positive' about gay matters ... NOVEL *Anne Harris*, *Accidental Creatures*; Stephen Leigh, *Dark Water's Embrace* (co-winners). OTHER *Bending the Landscape* ed Nicola Griffith & Stephen Pagel.

**Y2K.** The Waterstones.co.uk on-line bookshop has been listing next year's titles with such interesting dates as '1st January 1900'. [BB]

**Fanfunder.** TAFF nominations remain open to 1 December, with the westbound race running until 6 May. Declared candidates so far are Tommy Ferguson and **Sue Mason**. • **GUFF.** Joseph Nicholas has passed European funds of £810.52 to new European administrator Paul Kincaid, after fixing one terrifying glitch: 'I've discovered that I've undercounted monies received by a massive 70p. Obviously, such a heinous offence cannot go unpunished, and I shall be presenting myself to the Abi Frost Correctional Institute for Wayward Fan Fund Administrators for a course of vigorous re-education without further delay.' • *New Routes in America*, Peter Roberts's collected 1977 TAFF trip report, may well—fingers crossed!—be published next month in hope of claiming the last \$500 SCIFI bounty for such an elderly report (see A147).

**Slow Glass?** Again the vital importance of patenting sf ideas is shown, as the *Telegraph* (7 Oct) reported a Japanese optics company's development of glass that stores and later emits light.... [JDR/AS]

**20 Years Ago.** *Ansible* 4 (Nov 79) had a first announcement of the mighty mega-convention Space-Ex 84, which over the years shrank from a colossal multimedia Wembley Conference Centre extravaganza with a £280,000 budget (dealer tables were to cost £2,000 apiece) to a shoe-string affair held on tick at the Westminster Central Hall, which on the promised day of 6 Aug 84 offered only a sign saying SPACE-EX IS CANCELLED. An early masterstroke of promotion came when *Ansible* asked organizer Mike Parry for an event-listing update and got a stropmy letter saying, 'Space Ex 1984 information is for registered members ONLY ...'

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Dept of Neat Tricks*: 'She had never drunk brandy before. How could she have known it would be so much stronger than wine? She finished what was in her cup as the duchess poured her a bit more.' (J.Gregory Keyes, *Newton's Cannon*, 1998) [PB] • 'Sidney made a show of locking her office door before shutting it.' 'When he slammed the car door shut, he noticed the vintage Silver Cloud Rolls-Royce high-stepping down the street toward him.' (both David Baldacci, *Total Control*, 1997) [PB] • 'Laurie reassembled herself without altering her position or moving any part of her body.' (Peter Straub, *Mr X*, 1999) [MMW] • 'That would give Doretia a chance to wear that strange gown that Great-Grandmama had left her in the will that was open at the sides and showed a daring hint of undergown.' (Jody Lynn Nye, 'Don't Break the Chain!', *Chicks 'n Chained Males* 1999) [TM] • 'Loud bird calls barked from the next tree over.' 'He looked in the rearview mirror, and his heart leaped into his throat as he saw it coming at him from behind.' (both Walter Jon Williams, *The Rift*, 1999) [ED] • 'His crotch was as hot and humid as an Orlando summer.' (Faye Kellerman, *Serpent's Tooth*, 1997) [PB] • 'Deep in the foothills of the High Reaches, within the Spire, the silent vault of obsidian that was its hidden seat of power, the red-rimmed eyes of the F'dor's human host broke open in the darkness.' (Elizabeth Haydon, *Rhapsody*, 1999) [EW] • 'As it approached almost noiselessly save for the frou-frou of its robes, Luke's blood congealed with strange surmises.' (Greysa La Spina, 'The Gargoyle', *Weird Tales* 1925) [DL] • 'Now, the beer sour in his stomach, he was standing in it watching, and for the past half-hour he'd been constantly on his radio.' (William Haggard, *A Cool Day for Killing*, 1968) [JB] • 'Or maybe it was just the extremity on my face, maybe she could see I'd come to the end of myself.' ('Reed Stephens' [Stephen R. Donaldson], *The Man Who Tried to Get Away*, 1990) [BA]

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