



ANSIBLE 15 (February 1981) from Dave Langford: another issue of the world's finest sf/fan newsletter produced at 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks, RG2 7PW, UK. An urgent message concerning the Jan 1981 issue—there wasn't one. The GPO has as usual done the dirty, and despite promises that January's postal increases averaged a mere 16½% I was hardly surprised to find overseas ANSIBLE postage has risen 40-48%. Thus my new rates are 6/£1 (UK), 5/£1 (Europe), 4/£1 (rest of world). Existing subs will be honoured at the old rates; subs greater than £2 are not encouraged (ie. the excess may be treated as a TAFF donation), for reasons which should be obvious. Thanks to Keith Freeman as usual for computer labels (if yours says SUB DUE or *****, why is this? Send answers on the back of a cheque, money order or pound note, and win a further ANSIBLE sub); thanks to Simon Bostock for the heading. NEWSFLASH: I learn from the excellent SF CHRONICLE that a chap called Langford has a book called War In 2080 coming from Sphere in February and is working on a novel called (I regret to say) The Space Eater. The first is postponed to April, the second finished, delivered and accepted: ho ho. A serious question, now... is anyone out there actually interested in 'A has sold a story to B' news items? Let me know. (2-2-81)

* THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SCI FI

IAN WATSON writes: "Further to RUMBLINGS in ish 13, *Gardens of Delight* had sold to Pocket Books in America. It was a UK paperback sale I was bothered about, and that has now been consummated with Corgi (if that is not a slur on the Royal Family) for a princely low in advances almost on a par with the revenue from 'The Ultimate One-Word First Contact Story'. It is *God's World* that hasn't sold to America. Or, more accurately, Dave Hartwell told me at Brighton, 'I want to buy that book,' then when Gollancz pressed him repeatedly to be more specific he added (on UK publication day), 'So long as Ian rewrites it.' Now, I don't mind rewriting books, but after they've been published???"

BRITISH FANTASY AWARDS in 1980 went to: NOVEL *Death's Master* (Tanith Lee); SHORT 'The Button Molder' (Fritz Leiber); SMALLPRESS *Fantasy Tales 5*; FILM *Alien*; ARTIST Steve Fabian; COMIC *Heavy Metal*. (*British Fantasy Society*)

STARBURST FANTASY AWARDS, whatever they may be, went to all manner of actors, directors and things, plus: TV SHOW *Blake's 7* (gorblimey); FILM *The Empire Strikes Back*; BOOK *Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. (Simon Bostock)

HARLAN ELLISON and the *Comics Journal* publishers are being sued by some dolt called Michael Fleisher, the sum being \$2,000,000. Ellison, as a quick look at his DV or A,DV introductions will show, tends to praise writers he likes by saying how weird, twisted, crazy, nutty etc. said writers (or their imaginations) are. Ellison praised Fleisher's work during a *Comics Journal* interview. Need I say more? Well, yes: not having \$2,000,000, I'd better grovellingly retract the word 'dolt' above, and add that Fleisher will be doing his comics work and his recent novel a lot of good by this ludicrous defamation suit, which may force Ellison to repeat his 'praise' again and again with variations and annotations in order to justify himself...

SFWA has now declared an 'Overseas Region', meaning that in addition to the three regional directors representing various bits of the USA there will soon be a fourth (to be elected) who will take responsibility for all the rest of the world. Glory be!

PIERROT PUBLISHING LTD has collapsed in a sufficiently spectacular ruin to get several mentions in *Private Eye*, who roused Rob Holdstock to paroxysms of jealousy by mentioning Malcolm Edwards (also Moorcock and Paul Ableman) but not Rob. The creditors' meeting seems to have been a monumentally ridiculous affair, except of course for the creditors; latest reports on debts come to something like £500,000; there have been hints of great fiddling to squeeze more money from banks during the final crises. Secret Master Phil Dunn is said to have fled to a meditation dump in India (the same one favoured by Bernard Levin) accompanied by his ex-stripper mistress, while his wife waits for Pierrot creditors to grab her house, furniture, clothing etc... Rob Holdstock, protesting that his and Malcolm's final Pierrot book *Tour of the Universe* is no pot-

boiler but a beerglassboiler, has Vast Plans for things of his which Pierrot will now not be publishing.

BOB SHAW & JIM BARKER may by now have succeeded in selling their cartoon strip to the *News of the World*: it features a robot called Machinery, the creation of one Prof. Willis, and there's a charlady called Mrs Weston and next-door neighbours called Langford... oh, this is too much. I don't believe a word of it, Mr Barker. (Another Barker Datum is that Bob Shaw has been writing Donald Duck strips for publication in Poland.)

HORDES OF THE THINGS was BBC's attempt to repeat the success of *Hitch-Hiker* in fantasy format (Radio 4). Acc reviewer Philippa Grove-Stephensen covered it in three words, 'Feeble, bad—pity,' with an optional fourth 'exploitative'. More media fun from Michael Ashley, who says: 'A solo artist called Richard Pinhas has an album out on the Pulse label, called 'East-West': 'The opening track (misplaeed) is a fearsome roar of electronic power with vocals from SF author Norman Spinrad. The lyrics revolve around the last words of a pilot as his plane does a Plummet Airlines job.' Not to be outdone Michael Moorcock has a new single out on the small(ish) label Rough Trade, *Deepfix Dodgem Duds/Starecruiser*'

THE PENGUIN DICTIONARY OF MODERN QUOTATIONS (new edition) has discovered SF, with bits from Asimov, Heinlein, Clarke, Brunner, Aldiss (the last two get credits for having helped) plus surprises like Raymond (*Fungus the Bogeyman*) Briggs and a con-panel quote from Larry Niven.

SF BOOK CLUB STILL NOT DEAD, reports Peter Roberts (who unless there's been a strange coincidence of names is now trying to flog an 'encyclopaedia of fantasy'): the current titles from the UK club are JAN *Mockingbird* (Tevis); FEB *The Visitors* (Simak); MAR *The SF Solar System* (ed. Asimov et al); APRIL *The Face* (Vance). Former SFBC master Paul Begg, who I basely suggested was 'booted out', corrects me as follows: 'My departure from Readers Union was amid ill-feeling and perhaps a little unconventional, but I resigned of free will and in the time-honoured fashion.' The libel is hereby retracted...

MARKET REPORTS have been requested by a couple of readers. Um. To cover US markets would essentially mean my reprinting page after page from *SFC* or *Locus*—no thanks. I'll do you a market report on UK SF mags, though, since there are only two. *Ad Astra* (ed. James Manning, 22 Offerton Rd, London, SW.4) looks better and appears to have better distribution; after two years, though, it still pays a mere 1p a word. As well as fiction and science- or sf-related articles, *AA* runs a certain amount of fringe material (eg. occult) which signally fails to fit in. At least, following gentle hints from myself and other fans, the term 'sci-fi' was dropped from the cover last issue. *Entro* (edited by a consortium; 28 Moorcroft Drive, Burnage, Manchester, M19 1WH) looks more like a fanzine—at least

the issues I've seen do—but conforms more to the 'ideal' model of an sf magazine. The production's very messy and distribution practically nonexistent as far as I can see. However, payment is slightly greater than for AA, 1.5p a word; and by and large *Extro's* approach seems based on a better knowledge of the field. Short fiction, articles, reviews (no payment for these) and... well, *Extro's* friends will tell you how AA is a nasty mishmash, but *Extro* includes occult and rock material which it could do without. But it has higher standards in fiction (or so one editor says!) This is beginning to look more like a review column than a market report; I'll close with a mention of *Fusion* (ed. Ken Mann, 22 Pennethorne Rd, Peckham, London SE15 5TQ), which pays '£100 for the best, £20 for the rest', apparently demands full copyright in material used (very unusual—AA and *Extro* buy first serial rights only, which is as it should be) and takes anything *except* sf. *Fusion* seems elusive: I've never found a copy anywhere, and a polite letter of enquiry about the copy-right terms was promptly sent back, in the original envelope, with 'Sent in error—returned in haste' scrawled on the back by somebody initialling him- or herself 'KM'.

GEORGE HAY writes: "Almost the only thing I'm prepared to say about the last Council meeting of the SF Foundation is that one person present suggested that all the non-Poly members resign, but that they *did* not accept this suggestion... Did you know that Ben Bova has agreed to be chairman of our Free Space Society? We plan midsummer conferences starting next year up till 1984, World War III permitting."

CHRIS PRIEST's *A Dream of Wessex* is to be filmed, starting this summer. The mention of Chris reminds me that his old buddy Charles Platt has apparently been writing in Denvention PR3, among other things describing Chris as 'incapable of creative thought'. Don't ask me for more details—I only joined Denvention six months ago, so they haven't had time to send me any PRs...

* CONVENTION MENTIONS

FANTASYCON VII will be in Birmingham's Grand Hotel, 10-12 July: supp £1/\$3, cheques to 'British Fantasy Soc'; 1 Buttery Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B67 7NS

NOVACON 11—Chairman Paul Oldroyd writes "to dispel the vicious and totally unfounded lies perpetrated by Peyton and Morgan in A14. Novacon 11's GoH is to be none other than the *real* Bob Shaw; the con will indeed be held from 30 Oct to 1 Nov. Numbers will, as last year, be limited to 500, as we will be returning to the Angus, and this is its legal limit." (Martin Hoare had been saying how much more traffic it would be for Novacon to move to the Grand Hotel. Martin is now SF Con Consultant to Grand Metropolitan Hotels Ltd, but there can be no connexion.)

EUROCON has got slightly complicated. The Moscow bid, ie. the official con, collapsed because the writers' union wasn't allowed adequate hotel space (they'd used up their allowance or something). The backup bid, Hungary, failed because boss Peter Kuczka had heart trouble and had to give up *everything* including his regular job. Luckily there is the backup-backup, Pascal Ducommun's Swiss bid—address Eurocon VII, CCP 23-20234, CH-2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland. Date Sept/Oct 1982, supp 15 att 30 Swiss fr. (provisional—sterling rates to be decided), GoH Pierre Versins (famed for a massive 1972 SF encyclopaedia as yet untranslated into English) plus planned guests including the Strugatskys. John Brunner strongly commends Pascal D. as a jolly good chap, so all seems well—*except* that new and mighty ructions have occurred in Hungary, where it seems that Kuczka's committee is immensely pissed-off by his unilateral folding of their convention. He didn't have any authority to do so without consultation, they say.

EUROCON 84: Pascal Ducommun also likes the British bid idea; John Brunner suggests a seaside venue with much cheapo B&B accommodation, and has been trying to get suggestions from the British Travel & Hols Assoc computer, so far without noticeable success.

SPACE-EX 1984—I hear Forrest J Ackerman may be a guest.

PROJECT STARCAST (82)—Steven Green writes: "The creative

combo behind Starcast is the same currently organizing the UK Psycons (the next is scheduled for Feb 28) and previously responsible for the highly commercially-orientated Alderaan cons (in reality, extended marts). The guests of honour are still undecided, although Forrest Ackerman and Robert Bloch have 'expressed interest' (and Terry Nation, I believe). Tables will cost around £50, and the fan rooms (ie. society rooms) will be organized independently of the 24-hour programme, as is the progress report, which is little more than a fanzine (and not a particularly inspiring one at that)." I'm also told that PR1 is startling for its total lack of information about the con. Famous Ken Mann has written to the BSFA explaining (amid various intimations that the BSFA has no right to express interest in or have opinions on Starcast) that a secret inner circle of 'media fans' (to which he presumably belongs) have forced Starcast to shift from the Harrogate centre to a much smaller venue (unspecified).

YORCON II has brought out a somewhat belated PR3 with the dread hotel booking forms—scream quickly if by some chance yours hasn't arrived. Details more or less as last issue; banquet £7 plus VAT, 2p promised off beer prices, train discounts, short story competition etc. One error: p.5 says Brian Stableford says he's coming. He isn't. (When I say 'one error' I charitably omit the misprints Alan Dorey put into my article whilst typing it blindfolded with his toes at 250 words per minute on a rather jerky bus taking him home from an all-night boozing session at the local Epileptics' Club...)

DENVENTION (Worldcon 81, Denver) have sent a couple of copies of their newsletter *Rocky Mountain Oysters*, which I regret to say is one of the tattiest-looking con publications I've ever seen. The tone is still apologetic... Our own Graham England will be running the con newsletter; the Hugo nomination forms are now out and must be posted back by March 15. Would that I could tell you about the three doubtless magnificent progress reports...

AUSTRALIA IN 83: the bidding committee has sent a press release listing nearly sixty committee members and their functions. Ever so many supporters are claimed (among whom is Jan Howard Finder, who in aid of the bid wishes to flog you a very classy Australian SF Calendar 1981 at \$4.75 post free and/or the Aussiecon 5th Anniversary Memorial Fanzine at \$3 pf—both together, \$7.50 pf—PO Box 428, Latham, NY 12110, USA). COPENHAGEN IN 83 has 600 supporting members and has booked the Sheraton, Copenhagen. One supporter, Ragnar Fyri, mutters that it's essential to break the US/UK/Australian monopoly (unquote) on world-cons: presumably he means the US/UK/Canadian/Australian/German monopoly... BALTIMORE IN 83 has said nowt to me. CHICON (Worldcon 82, Chicago) has named A.Bertram Chandler, Kelly Freas and Lee Hoffman (fan) as guests of honour.

* BIRTHS, ENGAGEMENTS, DEATHS, PEOPLE, THINGS...

GRAHAM JAMES, famous *Matrix* editor, and Linda Strickler (US) acquired a daughter called Naomi Elizabeth James during Graham's recent trip to California (7th Jan)... GREG PICKERSGILL and LINDA KARRH have announced their intention of getting married ever so soon, as have another sweet young couple whom terrible oaths forbid me to name...

F&SF writer DORIS PITKIN BUCK died in December, as did KRIS NEVILLE; H.WARNER MUNN, known for *Weird Tales* work and various fantasy novels including *Merlin's Ring*, died in January. German fan WALTER REINECKE ('Fux' to friends and fans) died in January after nearly 25 years in German fandom; from 1958 to his death he'd been co-editor of Waldemar Kummig's *Munich Round-Up*, and Waldemar adds: 'To a large extent, the longevity of the fanzine was made possible by his patient work.'

THE YORKSHIRE RIPPER gave his godmother a box of nice chocolates for Xmas; when he was arrested she lost her taste for them and gave them away, which is how they came to be eaten with enormous relish by the famous D.WEST... CARL SAGAN has seemingly sold an unwritten sf novel for a 6-figure advance plus 7-figure film rights deal, the subject being first contact with aliens...

COA ALLAN BEATTY (again!), PO Box 1906, Ames, IA 50010, USA // ALAN DOREY (again!), 64 Hartford Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 8SY // JOHN FAIREY (again!), 12a Claverley House, Grand Parade, Littlestone, Romney, Kent // ANDY FIRTH, 49 Crescent Rd, Wood Green, London, N.22 // RANDAL FLYNN, 123 Westbury Avenue, Harringay, London, N.22 // HUGH MASCETTI, Room 344, Lillian Penson Hall, London, W4 1TT // KEITH & KRYSZYNA OBORN, 20 Hanwood Close, Woodley, Reading, Berks, RG5 3AB // PAUL CLDROYD, Garforth House, 118 Domestic St, Holbeck, Leeds 11 // Ansible's Law: 20% of the mailing list does 80% of the moving...

INFINITELY IMPROBABLE COLIN GREENLAND sadly observes that his salary as Foundation writer in residence is not the exorbitant sum mentioned last issue, but a piffling £6000... ROB HOLDSTOCK & CHRIS EVANS have failed despite vast efforts to assemble *Focus 4* on time, meaning the first BSFA mailing of 1981 will be a bit thin... STEIV HIGGSNI, formerly known to a palpitating universe as Steev (sic) Higgins, wishes to be addressed in future as Steve Higgins (sic)... TAFF FIGURES released by Terry Hughes differ slightly from mine, since Terry allowed one late ballot which increased Stu Shiffman's lead still further; Stu adds that he's changed jobs and is now in ladies' undies (which fact will limit his TAFF trip to a couple of weeks)... ROB JACKSON pleads for more GUFF votes before closure on Feb 14 (ballots available from me at the Tun or him at Faancon, and of course from the ever-eager candidates who have so inundated fandom with their campaigning); Rob and Coral have tried to send the baby to sleep by reading *Inca* aloud, but 'she just screamed and screamed'... JIM BARKER begs all fans to stop asking him for dead hedgehogs, because he's run out (but hopes to kill a second batch before too long)... THE BRUM CROUP celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, *probably* with a mini-con/maxi-party in late June: tentative plans involve the Royal Angus hotel, Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison, 2-300 attendance, cost about £1, minimal programme, souvenir booklets, etc... ARTHUR HLA-VATY writes: "A few years back *F&SF* had a competition to write a misleading blurb for an sf book. Unfortunately the same issue contained an SFBC ad—'*He knew the Martian love secret and it spelled his doom!!! STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND* by Robert A. Heinlein.' None of the entries *F&SF* printed compared..."... THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY (TV version) provoked queries from computer magazines about how the BBC managed such fast, bright, sophisticated computer graphics: "Actually we faked them photographically," the BBC explained... MAGGIE NOACH, much-loved agent for millions of British sf authors, has resigned from A.P. Watt Ltd after a long and continuing illness... JOAN HANKE-WOODS, celebrated US fan-artist, will be in and around London for the first half of May and is 'most excited at the thought of meeting science fictional fans of the English persuasion'—little does she know (about Welsh ones, for example)... SF NEWS, an offshoot of *Extro*, runs an all-time-great Freudian misprint in the new issue, twice referring to Ben Bova's *As On A Darling Lain*... ANNE PAGE has again let the cloven hoof of her Trekkiedom show, this time appearing with other curiously clad folk on the unspeakable Russell Harty's TV show and explaining how she likes to dress up. Speaking of which, Radio 4 rang me to ask if I was a Trek enthusiast who'd like to appear on a programme they were planning which would treat the rumoured new *Star Trek* series lightheartedly (ie. put the boot in). It seemed they had lots of mockers and boot-putter-inners lined up, but were having trouble locating a purebred starry-eyed Trekkie... JOHN COLLICK SPEAKS: "All sf and fantasy games are worthless. They appeal to the lowest denominator." (sic)... HAZEL'S LANGUAGE LESSONS #5: when in Greece be sure to seize your opportunity and use the word κοριόζω, meaning 'I am full of bedbugs' (*John Brunner*)... TARAL AND/OR VICTORIA VAYNE are *also* interested in standing in the next US→UK TAFF race...

BSFA BOSS PLANS TO FLEE COUNTRY: Alan Dorey fancies his chances for TAFF '82... HUGO FLAWS REVEALED: John Millard explains the sporadic pitting referred to in A13—seems the usual trophy makers, English Bros Foundry of California, are apathetic about the small order for Hugo rockets and don't bother to make them well, or to make them at all unless shouted at loudly and continuously. Their machined castings have varying amounts of pitting; the machined aluminium Hugos used as replacements from 1974-6 are nicer. John suggests that organizing vast supplies of decent-looking Hugos would be a useful function of a permanent Worldcon organization... GREG BENFORD of *Timescape* fame has succeeded in preventing Pocket Books (US) from mentioning their new 'Timescape' imprint in ads without plugging *Timescape* (which will now not be issued as a 'Timescape' book from Pocket—merely one of their ordinary 'Book' books)... MIKE GLICKSOHN is carrying on with *Energumen* 16 as a memorial to Susan Wood... THE 1980 RADIO AWARDS (UK) had one item of sf relevance: *Hitchhiker* won the category 'programme/series for young listeners'... RECESSION HORROR continues with Hamish Hamilton Ltd, nice guys of the publishing world, threatening to bump all authors' starting royalties from 10% to 7½%... NOREASCON is still sending me more and better-produced stuff than Denvention, including incredibly detailed Hugo statistics (at least I beat 'No Award' this time) and a \$30 membership refund because I appeared on the programme—good grief!... JAN FINDER (address p.2) also wants you to buy *Finder's Guide to Australterrestrials*, \$6 sea-, \$7.50 airmail, a compendium of noted fanartists and pro authors sold in aid of DUFF... GERRY WEBB, gay Lothario of Dateline, introduced me last Sun to a lady he claimed was "the best of three computer runs"—but little does he know that a lady registering for Yorcon has sent in a 4-page denunciation of him which she wants available at the con "for all unsuspecting females"... JOHN BRUNNER (A15 Most Mentions Award Winner) offers himself as ex-officio chairman—whatever that may be—for the British Eurocon-84 bid he hopes will take shape at Yorcon... BRUCE McALLISTER wants me to suggest obscure items for an sf-poetry anthology he's coediting—must send him some clerihews... TOM SHIPPEY is currently chairing (co-chairing) Yorcon from Harvard—you know, that American polytechnic—and tension mounts as the committee wonders if he'll be back in time... WEST MIDLANDS SF GROUP has been formed to challenge the all-potent Brum Group: ask Geoff Boswell, 59 Sorrel Walk, Brierley Hill, DY5 2QG... SFWA PROVED FANNISH: it has been announced that the Spring 1980 issue of *SFWA Bulletin* ought to have been in the mail around the end of that year. Alternatively, Real Soon Now... ANDY PORTER in *SFC* observes that "*Solar Wind* by Peter Jones is an incredible rip-off of American artists... steals images from Schoenherr, DiFate, Valigursky, Emsch, Frazetta and literally dozens of other artists. Incredibly, these are usually for British editions of the same books first published in the US."

HAZEL'S LANGUAGE LESSONS #6: ADVANCED
JAPANESE as taught by IAN WATSON

sakasa-kurage means (1) an upside-down jellyfish; (2) a one-night-stand hotel. (Anyone explaining the connexion will instantly graduate. I.W.)

Solution next time... meanwhile, this has been ANSIBLE 15 from

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