

Ansible

YES FOLKS! ALL KNOWLEDGE
IS FOUND IN FRNZINES!



WITH THE
CORRECTIONS
NEXT ISSUE

Ansible 181 August 2002

From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. ISSN 0265-9816. E-mail ansible@cix.co.uk. Fax 0705 080 1534. Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **D.West**. Available for SAE, itchers, burning fluff, witches' jelly or mosquito mange.

FAME AT LAST. Ben Jeapes, reading (for review) the just-published *Dr Who* novel *The Suns of Caresh* by 'Paul Saint', was startled to come across this strangely Fanthorpean line: 'He'd read the greats, the likes of Ursula Le Guin, Greg Egan, Gene Wolfe and David Langford, and he admired them' (p24). Ben also found a namecheck for himself in the same book: 'Sadly it doesn't mention Big Engine, *Leaky* or Sladek, but it does mention Jeapes' Syndrome.' Who is Paul Saint? Mr Jeapes says he knows but is not permitted to tell me. • Peter F. Hamilton performs a similar service for Graham Joyce in his latest novel *Misspent Youth*, with a walk-on part for Graham as 'a man in his eighties' some decades hence: 'Graham had won the last Booker Prize, back in 2012, when the publishing houses were collapsing in tandem with the copyright laws.' Overseas readers may mistakenly assume that since the book features much irresponsible sex (though not with Graham Joyce), its setting is an allegorical, invented English county: Rutland.

Visitation Zone

Steve Baxter has an important theological clarification: 'I see from *SFX* (August) that in ITV's upcoming drama *The Second Coming*—"Steve Baxter is the son of God ... The important thing isn't 'is he or isn't he?', he really is."—I'm to be depicted as "Jesus's 21st century successor, born in the guise of a virginal Mancunian". This is obviously inaccurate; I was born in Liverpool.'

Greg Feeley's sf criticism has led various authors to revenge themselves by writing him cruelly into their stories. James Blaylock, Lucius Shepard, the Niven/Pournelle team and Gene Wolfe are now joined by Grant Morrison, whose comic *The Filth* contains such tasteful dialogue as: 'Greg Feeley's just a para-personality [...] That's him running out of your nose.' Later, from the same woman: 'I'm washing Greg off my tits. Para-personas corrupt fast outside the bloodstream.' Man: 'Smells awful.' Woman: 'Well, that's "Greg Feeley" all over.' Oh dear, oh dear.

Jo Fletcher of Gollancz had a gruelling bone graft operation in July, to rebuild part of her neck and spine that had collapsed as a result of past car crashes. It seems to have been a success. Fingers crossed!

Warren Lapine of DNA Publications 'has fired Andrew Porter as editor of *SF Chronicle* ... The magazine will become just *Chronicle*, and the new editor will be John Douglas.' Thus our café society spy Ms Una Tributable, who wonders if this is because AP 'told a number of people at Readercon that Warren owed him \$20,000 in back pay.' Other sources point instead to Lapine/Porter disagreements over *SFC* editorial policy, dating from well before Readercon. • Andrew Porter himself—who founded *SFC*, published it himself from 1979 to mid-2000, and twice won the semiprozine Hugo with it—preferred not to comment.

Terry Pratchett picked up a 'mainstream' literary award at last: the Carnegie Medal for children's fiction, awarded (in a special ceremony at the British Library on 12 July) to *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* (2001). Terry confides: 'I am, I have to say, somewhat pleased—not because *The Amazing Maurice* is fantasy, but because it is—ostensibly—funny.' A later observation: 'Reading all the papers after the event gives you a wondrous insight into the workings of journalism, I can tell you. *The Truth* really was a fantasy book—it contained a journalist who wrote down what people said and got it right...'

J.K. Rowling, in Czech translation, has the appropriate feminine suffix added to her name: thus Harry Potter titles spotted in Prague bookshops are, rather strikingly, by J.K. Rowlingova. [LP]

Charles Sheffield has been diagnosed with a brain tumour; he and his wife Nancy Kress are skipping Worldcon; treatment begins almost immediately. (From Mike Resnick's mailing list, 6 August.) [JSc]

Conygree

9-11 Aug • **ConteXXt** (Unicon 20), University of Gloucestershire. Joint event with **HarmUni 2** (filk relaxacon). £30 reg, £15 concessions, small children £1. Contact ... too late; just turn up.

12 Aug • **Reading at Borders**, Oxford St, London. Probably.

16-19 Aug • **2002: A Discworld Odyssey** (DWcon 3), Hanover

International Hotel, Hinckley, Leics. GoH: T. Pratchett and lesser lights. Full rates are back, after the April-July reduction: £50 reg, £35 concessions, £15 supp. Contact (SAE) 23 Medora Rd, Romford, Essex, RM7 7EP.

17-18 Aug • **Caption** (small-press comics), Oxford Union, St Michael's St, Oxford. £9 reg (£6 students/unwaged), £12 at door. Contact 18 Hawkins St, Oxford, OX4 1YD.

22 Aug • **Skeptics in the Pub**, Florence Nightingale, Westminster Bridge roundabout, 7:30pm. £2 donation asked. Speaker: Nick Pullar.

28 Aug • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Rising Sun, Cloth Fair, EC1. 7pm on, fans in bar from 5pm. With Lucy Sussex, hoping to meet fan friends.

29 Aug - 2 Sep • **ConJosé** (60th Worldcon), San José, California. Now \$200 reg either in advance or at the door, or \$180 on Saturday 31 August. Contact PO Box 61363, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-1363, USA.

30 Aug - 1 Sep • **13th Festival of Fantastic Films**, Renaissance Hotel, Manchester. Numerous guests. £65 reg to 'The Society of Fantastic Films', 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN.

21 Sep • **South Hants SF Group Birthday Party**, Maggie pub, Fratton, Portsmouth, noon to about 6pm. Guests TBA. Admission free to all, but there will be a raffle to cover buffet food etc.

12 Oct • **Hammer Films: The Bray Studio Years**, Cine Lumiere, London. Four-film showing, including the 'classic' *Plague of the Zombies*. MC: horror director Norman J. Warren (*Inseminoid*). Tickets £20 to him, c/o 25 High Hill Ferry, Bakers Hill, London, E5 9HG.

21-23 Feb 03 • **Redemption (B5/B7)**, Ashford International Hotel, Ashford, Kent. £45 reg, rising to £50 on 1 September; £55 at door. Day: £30, £35 at door. Children £15 or £10/day. Concessions 10% off weekend, 5% day. Contact 26 King's Meadow View, Wetherby, LS22 7FX.

1-3 Aug 03 • **Finncon X—Eurocon 2003**, Turku, Finland. Contact Turku Science Fiction Society, PL 538, 20101 Turku, Finland.

10-12 Oct 03 • **Grissecon 1** (Wraeththu), Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford. GoH: Storm Constantine. £40 reg to 30 Dec 02, £50 to 31 Aug 03 (booking closes). Contact 6 St Leonards Ave, Stafford, ST17 4LT.

Rumblings. • **Eurocon**. At the Czech Eurocon in July, Finland won the 2003 bidding as above, although 'The Czechs had already printed lots of flyers of their next year's con calling it the Eurocon 2003. In colour....' [SS] Eurocon 2004 is to be in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. [BW]

Infinitely Improbable

Awards. *John W. Campbell Memorial Award*: this year saw a tie between *Terraforming Earth* by Jack Williamson and *The Chronoliths* by Robert Charles Wilson as best sf novel of 2001. Williamson, who is 94, says that *Terraforming Earth* will be his last novel. • *Sturgeon* for short story: 'The Chief Designer' by Andy Duncan (*Asimov's* 6/01). [L] • *Mythopoeic*: ADULT *The Curse of Chalion* by Lois McMaster Bujold. CHILDREN'S *The Ropemaker* by Peter Dickinson. SCHOLARSHIP/INKLINGS *Tolkien's Legendarium: Essays on The History of Middle-earth* ed. Verlyn Flieger & Carl Hostetter. SCHOLARSHIP/OTHER *The Owl, the Raven & the Dove: The Religious Meaning of the Grimms' Magic Fairy Tales* by G. Ronald Murphy.

As Others See Us. '... the whole purpose of the novel is fiction; it's to imagine and to try and retain some credibility—unless you're writing sci-fi or something ...' (Ann Widdecombe, BBC Radio 4, 8 July) [EB]

R.I.P. **Donald L. Franson** (1916-2002), US member of First Fandom and long active in the National Fantasy Fan Federation, died on 5 June aged 85. [RF/JSt] His fanzine listing *Trash Barrel* provided useful contact addresses for many years. • **Jan Hails**, Australian author of *Back Door Man* (1992), died from congenital heart trouble on 2 August; he was in his late 40s. [JSc] • **Laurence M. Janifer** (1933-2002), US author who began publishing sf in 1953, died on 10 July. [L] He was 69. His work included early collaborations with Randall Garrett (their joint pseudonym 'Mark Phillips' achieved a 1960 novel Hugo nomination) and the ambitiously controversial *You Sane Men* (1965; reissued as *Bloodworld*), for which Janifer had high but unfulfilled hopes. • **Ward Kimball**, a pioneer of movie animation and one of Disney's fabled 'Nine Old Men', died on 8 July aged 88. His countless animation and animation-director credits include *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Pinochio* and

Fantasia. [PB] • **Leo McKern** (1920-2002), Australian-born actor fondly remembered as a standout Number Two in *The Prisoner*, died on 23 July aged 82. His genre film parts ranged from *X the Unknown* (1956) to *Ladyhawke* (1985), notably including *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* (1961), *The Omen* (1976), and its sequel. • **Rod Steiger** (1925-2002), Oscar-winning US actor, died on 10 July after a gall bladder operation; he was 77. His genre work included *The Illustrated Man* (1969)—with Claire Bloom, second of his four wives—*The Amityville Horror* (1979) and *Mars Attacks!* (1996). [SG/BB] • **Ron Walotsky** (1943-2002), US artist, died in Florida on the night of July 29/30, aged 59. Paul Barnett writes: 'Perhaps best known for his many F&SF covers, he was, although highly respected by his peers, considerably underrecognized: no Hugos or Chesleys came his way, although he had several close misses. He was immensely proud of his book *Inner Visions*. His fine art, especially the Ancient Warriors of Lost Civilizations series done on horseshoe-crab shells, was gaining an ever-widening audience of aficionados at the time of his death. A widely loved man, he will be sorely missed.'

Group Gropes. *London First Thursdays*: the 1 August move to the Silver Cross in Whitehall had complications, since (a) Simon Bradshaw was reluctant to book the entire downstairs bar for fear that fandom wouldn't turn up in force, so (b) there was an overlapping 6-7pm booking for a party of supposedly 20, which (c) actually numbered 80, (d) stayed on until 9-9:30, and (e) was not easily ejectable, being police. Fans arriving at the height of the resulting crush were dismayed, but by the end of the evening 'the consensus opinion was very strongly that the Ton has a new home', and the whole downstairs bar is now booked for the rest of the year. • **FONT** (Manchester) meetings, 2nd/4th Thur each month, are now at the Crown & Anchor, Hilton St. Info 0161 355 0599.

In Typo Veritas. Hot new stuff for role-playing gamers, courtesy of someone's spelling checker: 'Mongoose Publishing; Judge Dredd RPG: *Mega Cities Brit-Clit*. The first of the *Mega Cities* series for the Judge Dredd RPG, this 128 page d20 source book allows players to cross the Black Atlantic and explore the Land of Rain, Brit-Clit, introducing new rules for creating Brit-Clit characters, plus details on touring the fabled city and the cultural relics abound.' (Previews comic news, August) [GW]

Random Fandom. *John Birchby* thanks UK fandom for its support and sympathy following the death of his wife Doris on 12 July; they had been married 25 years. • *Gary S. Dalkin* 'will be marrying Ms Anita Kerr of North Carolina on Saturday 28 September.' • *Tamasin & Sean Ellis* loyally boosted the membership of the Reading SF Group with the birth of James Peter David Ellis on 12 July. • *William Gibson*, who died last year aged 92, is of course not our William Gibson but did sf research great service by amassing 35,000 rare sf and pulp magazines, now donated to the University of Calgary, Canada. [BB] • *Dave Piper* has grim medical news: 'I have lung cancer, secondary bone cancer and a large aneurysm in my aorta. (All I need is a case of dandruff and I've got a full 'ouse.)' • For reasons too boring to relate, no surgery is possible and they are terminal and thus the prognosis is not good. • I suggested to my specialist that perhaps my life-long intention to read the complete works of Piers Anthony was now a dream turned to dust ... Heartfelt sympathies, Dave. • *Marcus Rowland* gratefully records that A.A. Adams, for the UK in 2005 bid, promptly refunded double the postage due on his rare unstamped mailing. • *Alison Scott*, according to my editorial spies, is a character in a forthcoming Steve Baxter novel. So, it seems, is wild-eyed environmental activist Gregory Pickersgill.

C.o.A. *Gardner Dozois & Susan Casper*, 874 N.Judson St, Philadelphia, PA 19130, USA. *Gary Farber*, 3981 Fuller Ct, Boulder, CO 80305, USA. *Colette Reap* (she of the fascinating earrings) & *Alan Bellingham*, 6 King James Way, Royston, Herts, SG8 7EF.

Strange Web Stuff. Robert Stanek's billions of followers are still subtly promoting him on-line. A reader review of *The Amber Spyglass* at the Barnes & Noble site from 'Peter Nickels, Librarian' begins: 'In the grand tradition of CS Lewis, Robert Stanek, and JK Rowling, Phillip Pullman delivers another action packed installment in His Dark Materials. [...] I compare this favorably to my current reading *The Kingdoms & The Elves Of The Reaches* by Robert Stanek.' The same Stanek-class novel is also reviewed by 'Wendy Brubaker, Assistant Teacher', with: 'Phillip Pullman is quickly becoming my favorite author and while this isn't the best book in the series, it is good. Only two other authors I know of are this good: Robert Stanek and JK Rowling.' Thinks: do all Robert Stanek readers spell Philip Pullman's first name that way? [JW]

Fanfundery. Jerry Kaufman has reissued Peter Roberts's fine TAFF trip report *New Routes in America*. \$10 postpaid within North America, from Jerry at 3522 NE 123rd St, Seattle, WA 98125, USA. All profits to TAFF. For the UK, I'll reprint my 1999 edition if anyone's interested.

Outraged Letters. Kevin J. Anderson has a familiar worry: 'Two years ago I sold my rather immense SF series, "The Saga of Seven Suns", to John Jarrold at Earthlight and Betsy Mitchell at Warner Aspect (US). Mere moments after I had delivered the ms for Book 1, *Hidden Empire*, Betsy Mitchell resigned her position and moved over to Del Rey Books. John Jarrold, though, toughed it out and remained at his editorial desk until I turned in Book 2. Mere moments after I had delivered the second manuscript, he, too, has announced his resignation. (Perhaps it has something to do with those two quotes you cited in Thog's Masterclass?) Regardless, I have grave concerns about the careers of my various foreign editors when I deliver Book 3....' • *Harry Connolly* on the *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* film (see A180): 'I've read the script, and the new villain hails from the only spot in the world more jam-packed with evil masterminds than Britain: France. The new baddie is the Fantom of the Opera, now equipped with an army of thugs and a secret Mongolian fortress. You think I'm kidding? Also, all references to Quatermain's drug use have been expunged, and he's now a dashing old adventurer grieving over his inability to save his son's life. Hence, Tom Sawyer as surrogate son. • If the film resembles the script I read, you can also look forward to a large supporting role for action hero Dorian Gray, and dialog like—*Quatermain*: "The vampire's got our backs!" • Don't make that face. What did you expect? • *Simon R. Green* seems strangely proud of baffling his American copyeditor with the common English phrase 'Ripped to the tits on absinthe.' • *Harry Harrison* 'would like to thank many loyal *Ansible* readers, for the kind messages they sent when they heard of Joan's death. She was indeed much loved and we shall all miss her.' • *Martin Rowson*, whose 'Abuses of Literacy' cartoon slot has long been killing off literary notables and providing them with ghastly doggerel epitaphs, finally got around to Terry Pratchett (*Independent on Sunday*, 7 July). At least, Mr Rowson told *Ansible*, 'I avoided the obvious rhyme with "cat shit".'

Small Press. *Once There Was a Magazine* by Fred Smith is 'an issue by issue personal review of *Unknown* magazine' with extensive indexes. Illustrated by Sue Mason. 110pp A5 softcover, £7.75 post free in UK. Becon Publications, 75 Rosslyn Ave, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG. • *Nova Express* will die the death (at least as a printed magazine) two issues after the one now in production, says editor Lawrence Person.

In Typo Veritas II. When Mark Bould received an academic registrar's official list of his research publications, he learned that he'd reviewed an sf novel for *Vector: The Criminal Journal of the BSFA*. [AMB]

British Fantasy Award novel nominees: Mark Chadbourn, *Always Forever*; Simon Clark, *The Night of the Triffids*; Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*; Gwyneth Jones, *Bold As Love*; Graham Joyce, *Smoking Poppy*.

'Mmmmm,' **He Hissed.** Michael Quinlon of World Wide Words adds a footnote on unhissable dialogue—his own selection being: 'Lem,' he heard someone hiss. 'Over here.' (China Miéville, *Perdido Street Station*, 2000) Not a mistake, his readers insisted. 'A few American dictionaries do actually include a relevant sense of "hiss". The *Oxford American Dictionary*, for instance, has "to whisper something in an urgent or angry way" and even has the example "'Get back!' he hissed.'

The Dead Past. *Twenty Years Ago*: Two British sf magazines bit the dust, *Omni UK* (cancelled by the US head office, with editor Bernard Dixon booted out) and *Extro* (nobbled by a bank manager who changed the rules for editor/publisher Paul Campbell's overdraft). *Interzone*, as ever 'looking for money', struggled on.... (*Ansible* 28, August 1982)

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of True Romance, or Smoking In Bed*. 'Tita timidly touched the hard muscles on Pedro's arms and chest; lower down, she felt a red-hot coal that throbbled through his clothes.' (Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate*, 1992) [MMW] • *Dept of But What Do You Keep It In?* 'There was, after all, a certain fascination to the clever drain-cleaning devices. [...] There were chemical compounds that had some quite military properties, such as the ability to dissolve anything instantly including human flesh.' (Lois McMaster Bujold, *The Vor Game*, 1990) [BA] • *Dept of Athletics*. 'His stomach leaped with hunger.' (Megan Lindholm, *The Wizard of the Pigeons*, 1986) [LP] • *Purple Prose of Cairo Dept*. 'Yes. Unable to press her tongue against the word, Briony could only nod, and felt as she did so a sulky thrill of self-annihilating compliance spreading across her skin, ballooning outwards from it, darkening the room in throbs.' (Ian McEwan, *Atonement*, 2001) [LS]

Ansible 181 © Dave Langford, 2002. Thanks to Brian Ameringen, Paul Barnett, Barbara Barrett, Elizabeth Billinger, Andrew M. Butler, Robert Franson, Steve Green, Locus, Lloyd Penney, Lawrence Person, Jan Stinson, Joyce Scrivner, Shimo Sumita, Lucy Sussex, Jon Weir, Bridget Wilkinson, Gary Wilkinson, Martin Morse Wooster, and Hero Distributors: Rog Peyton (Brum Group), Janice Murray (N.America), SCIS, and Alan Stewart (Australia). 7 Aug 02