



## ANSIBLE 199 FEBRUARY 2004

From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU. Net: [ansible@cix.co.uk](mailto:ansible@cix.co.uk), <http://www.ansible.co.uk>. ISSN 0265-9816. Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Joe Mayhew**. Available for SAE, hornswogglers, whangdoodles or snozzwangers.

**Diagnosis.** A little genre insight from Alec Wilkinson in *The New Yorker*, 19 January 2004: 'Science fiction is the schizophrenic cousin of literature.' [JBob] Personally, I'm in two minds about that.

### Siege Perilous

**Forrest J. Ackerman** has donated \$153,000 to the American Cinematheque arts organization, to have plaques in honour of his favourite people installed on 153 seats at Grauman's Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood. As well as friends, family and many film people, the Ackerman categories of glory include authors (Isaac Asimov, Charles Beaumont, Ray Bradbury, George Clayton Johnson, William F. Temple, Sir Arthur C. Clarke, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Richard Matheson, Ib J. Melchior, Amelia Reynolds Long, Olaf Stapledon, Stanley G. Weinbaum), artists (Frank R. Paul, Hannes Bok, Virgil Finlay, Margaret Brundage, Josh Kirby), sf editors (Hugo Gernsback, John W. Campbell, Horace L. Gold, Anthony Boucher) and 'Super Sci-Fi Fans' (Rick Sneyar, Julius Schwartz, Walt Willis, Harry Warner Jr). [MM]

**Margaret Atwood**—come back, all is forgiven! Despite those frequent claims that she doesn't write sf because that means rockets, chemicals, and talking squids in outer space, here is emotion recollected in tranquillity: 'I myself have written two works of "science fiction" or, if you prefer, "speculative fiction," *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake*.' (2004 Kesterton Lecture, 22 Jan; *Globe and Mail*, 24 Jan.) [JH]

**Ambrose Bierce** is still controversial. After reissuing his *The Devil's Dictionary* late last year, the publishers Bloomsbury were inundated with requests for Bierce interviews, while one UK bookshop chain complained bitterly about the lack of signed copies.... (*The Bookseller*) [RD]

**Mike Moorcock** ponders on how others see us: 'I think I know what people mean when they say they don't write sf. They mean they don't write sci-fi—i.e. *Star Wars*, *Star Trek* and so on. I believe there's been a bit of a shift in the use of the terms, these days. My guess is that most of the people who say they don't write sf wouldn't think Phil Dick wrote sf either. Of course, that could just be me being kind. Given that social fiction is now essentially a minority taste and that sf and fantasy are the dominant forms of fiction, should we be worrying about these distinctions? Mainstream means marginal, doesn't it? It's not we who are still in the ghetto, it's the likes of M. Atwood who are putting themselves in the ghetto. Or am I taking too much medication? Certainly not. You can never take too much meditation. I mean medication. Where is this, anyway? You're not the girl I came in with. Are you?'

**Alastair Reynolds** thrills to the occult power of Typomancy: 'Now and again I look at the Hugo recommendations compiled by the New England Science Fiction Association, for which the URL (as you undoubtedly know) is "www.nesfa.org". Imagine my immense delight at discovering that mistyping it as "www.nesfa.org" takes you to the home page of the New England Feng Shui Association ...'

### Conswap

9 Feb • **Reading at Borders**, Oxford St, London. 6:30pm. With Pat Cadigan, Ellen Datlow and Paul McAuley.

14 Feb • **Interaction London Open Meeting**, The Windmill pub, 6-8 Mill St (off Conduit St, off Regent St). 12:30pm to late.

21-22 Feb • **SF Weekend**, Watershed Media Centre, Bristol; part of local 'Great Reading Adventure' centred on *The Day of the Triffids*. With Brian Aldiss, Chris Priest, others. Bookings 0117 927 5100.

25 Feb • **BSFA Open Meeting**, White Hart pub, 119-121 Bishops-gate (near Liverpool St Station), London. NB: change of venue! 6pm on; fans in the bar from 5pm; no pub food after 5pm. With Roger Levy.

28-29 Feb • **Construction** (Interaction staff weekend), Holiday Inn to east of Swindon. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

5 Mar • **British Fantasy Society** open night, Princess Louise pub, Holborn, London. 6:30pm onwards. All welcome.

5-7 Mar • **Mعون 7**, Senior Staff Common Rooms, Queen's University, Belfast. Now £18/€28 reg; £20/€30 at door; £7/€11 supp. Contact 12 Hopefield Ave, Belfast, BT15 5AP, Northern Ireland.

5-7 Mar • **Oktokon/AKFT 8** (*Trek*), Fircroft Hotel, Owls Rd, Bournemouth, BH5 1AE. Latest rates not sent. Contact 0208 801 8867.

6-7 Mar • **Microcon**, Exeter University campus. Contact Daniel Bond, 100 Magdalen Rd, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4TU.

8 Mar • **Reading at Borders**, Oxford St, London. 6:30pm. With Pat Cadigan, Richard Morgan and Rob Grant.

9-12 Apr • **Concourse** (Eastercon), Blackpool Winter Gardens. £45 reg until advance booking closes on 21 March; £25 unwaged. Contact 4 Cody Rd, Waterbeach, Cambridge, CB5 9LS.

8-9 May • **Odyssey 2004**, 'Official Arthur C. Clarke Convention', Tacchi-Morris Arts Centre, School Rd, Taunton, TA2 8PD. Many guests, mostly media; Arthur C. Clarke video link planned. £38.00 reg (+£3.50 for concert, Sat). Bookings through T-M Arts Centre, 01823 414141.

2-6 Sep • **Noreascon 4** (62nd Worldcon), Boston, MA. \$180 reg—not rising on 1 March as planned but to be held until pre-registration closes on 31 July. Contact PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701, USA.

*Rumblings.* • **Eurocon**: Kiev, Ukraine, is bidding to hold the event in April 2006. • **Interaction**: further 'Construction' staff weekends are planned for 2-3 Oct 2004, 5-6 Feb 2005 and 4-5 Jun 2005.

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others Don't See Us.** *Invisible Hugo Dept*: 'JK Rowling seems set to win the only literary success which has so far eluded her—her first adult book prize. / Her latest book, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, was yesterday shortlisted for the £5,000 fiction section of the WH Smith book awards.' (John Ezard, *The Guardian*, 14 Jan). The adult shortlist also includes James Herbert's *Nobody True*, and the 'Teen Choice' fiction list comprises: Jonathan Stroud, *The Amulet of Samarkand*; Celia Rees, *Pirates!*; Philip Reeve, *Predator's Gold*; Mary Hoffman, *Stravaganza: City of Stars*; Terry Pratchett, *The Wee Free Men*. [A] (Later: on 19 January *The Guardian* ran one of its famous corrections and acknowledged Rowling's Hugo for *HP and the Goblet of Fire*. [PM])

**Arthur C. Clarke Award** shortlist for UK-published novels of 2003: Stephen Baxter, *Coalescent*; Greg Bear, *Darwin's Children*; William Gibson, *Pattern Recognition*; Gwyneth Jones, *Midnight Lamp*; Neal Stephenson, *Quicksilver*; Tricia Sullivan, *Maul*.

**BSFA Awards**: nominations for 2003 work. NOVEL William Gibson, *Pattern Recognition*; Jon Courtenay Grimwood, *Felaheen*; Gwyneth Jones, *Midnight Lamp*; Alastair Reynolds, *Absolution Gap*; Justina Robson, *Natural History*; Tricia Sullivan, *Maul*. (Six finalists owing to a tie.) • SHORT ; Terry Bisson, *Dear Abbey*; Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean, *The Wolves in the Walls*; John Meaney, 'Entangled Eyes are Smiling' (*Interzone* 190); Geoff Ryman, 'Birth Days' (*Interzone* 188); Charles Stross, 'Nightfall' (*Asimov's* 4/03) • ARTWORK—all book covers. Judith Clute, *Scores* (John Clute); David Frankland, *Predator's Gold* (Philip Reeve); Lee Gibbons, *Maul* (Tricia Sullivan); Colin Odell, *The True Knowledge of Ken MacLeod* (ed. Butler & Mendlesohn); Steve Stone, *Natural History* (Justina Robson). NON-FICTION John H. Arnold & Andy Wood, 'Nothing is Written: Politics, Ideology and the Burden of History in the Fall Revolution Quartet' (*The True Knowledge of Ken MacLeod*); Mike Ashley, 'The Profession of SF #58: Mapping the Territory' (*Foundation* 87); Farah Mendlesohn, 'Reading Science Fiction' (*The Cambridge Companion to SF* introduction); Cheryl Morgan, 'A Sick Mind' (review of *The Thackery T. Lambshead Pocket Guide ...; Emerald City* 97); M.J. Simpson, *Hitchhiker: A Biography of Douglas Adams*.

**R.I.P.** *Jack Cady* (1932-2004), US author and writing teacher whose wide-ranging work won him both genre and non-genre awards, died on 14 January aged 71. His 1993 novella 'The Night We Buried Road Dog' won a Nebula and tied for the Bram Stoker Award; he received the World Fantasy Award for his collection *The Sons of Noah* (1992). [JF] Simon R. Green adds: 'Marvellous ghost stories, and a wonderful sense of the fantasy in everyday life.' • *Mary Margaret Kaye* (1908-2004), Indian-born UK author best known for *The Far Pavilions* (1978), died on 29 January aged 95; she wrote one fantasy for children, *The Ordinary Princess* (1980). [JE] • *Paula Raymond* (1924-2003), US film and

TV actress whose most famous genre part was in *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953), died on 31 December aged 79. [DK] ● **Don Lawrence** (1928-2003), UK comics artist best known in Britain for his work on the long-running sf adventure series *The Trigan Empire* (1965-1982, scripted by Mike Butterworth), died on 29 December aged 75. Miserably treated by UK publishers, he was better appreciated on the Continent: his second major series *Storm* achieved huge sales in the Netherlands, earning him many awards and a Dutch knighthood. [PD] ● **Jeff Nuttall** (1933-2004), a contributor to the 1969 sf poetry anthology *Holding Your Eight Hands*, died on 4 January aged 70. [SS] ● **William Relling, Jr** (1954-2004), US author of horror and supernatural fiction, committed suicide on 22 January; he was 49. [ED] ● **Patricia Roc** (1915-2003), UK actress who died on 30 December aged 88, had a rare genre part in the sf comedy film *The Perfect Woman* (1949). [GD] ● **Ray Stark** (1914-2004), Hollywood producer who co-produced *Somewhere in Time* (1980), died on January 17. This film was based on the novel *Bid Time Return* (1975) by Richard Matheson. [SFS] ● **Stafford Ernest Wright** (1920-2003), British fan active in the 1940s-50s, died on 19 December; he was 83. [JBir] Sydney J.Bounds remembers the old days: 'Staff was a regular at the White Horse with his wife, Margit, whom he met in Vienna at the end of WWII. He drew cartoons for fanzines of the day, and made and sold models of sf characters. Like other fans he bought and sold books on a Thursday evening.'

**Oscars: The Short Version.** *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* is nominated in eleven categories including Best Picture. *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* has five nominations and *Finding Nemo* four. And for the innumerable Patrick O'Brian fans among us, *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* has ten.

**Random Fandom.** Greg Pickersgill, joining the ranks of fans with medical conditions that sound like science fiction, has an eye problem known as map-dot-fingerprint dystrophy—but reports: 'Due to the miraculous intervention of modern medicine (including something that may actually be REALLY poisonous) I have regained the power of sight!'

**Small Press.** Yet another British venture launches in July 2004: *Orbit*, edited by Steve Williams, is to be 'a monthly, full colour science fiction magazine. It's going to be distributed through SF shops, but if it's successful after 6 months, a large distributor in London has shown interest in giving it a wider distribution.' Contents will include articles, author interviews, and 'debate and discussion', but not apparently fiction. 1 Firs Hill Mews, Pitsmoor Road, Sheffield, S Yorks, S3 9AH, UK. One hopes there's no awkward clash with *Orbit*, the UK sf imprint of (currently) Time Warner.... ● *Wormwood* is a new UK critical magazine from Tartarus Press, covering 'fantasy, supernatural and decadent literature' (no new fiction). Paperback format, £7.99/\$13 post paid; Stable Cottage, Priest Bank Rd, Kildwick, Keighley, BD20 9BH.

**Outraged Letters.** Brian Aldiss remembers 'my last regular reader' (see A198 obituary): 'Bob Monkhouse, also known as a comedian, wrote to my mother back in the early sixties, shortly after the publication of my first novels and stories. He wrote to say how much he had enjoyed them. My mother wrote back, rather smarmily, I'd imagine. And received a smarmy response. From then on, the two corresponded, Bob always commenting on my books. What my mother said, I do not know. Mercifully, neither of them drew me into the correspondence. Besides, I was then talking to Ken Dodd about writing scripts for him. Now both my mater and Monkhouse are no more, and book sales have correspondingly declined.' ● Jonathan Cowie is hopping mad about censorship of the *Concatenation* web site. 'Bexley Borough has recently installed a thing called "Net Sweeper UK" as part of the "London Grid for Learning". For some reason it thinks that the *Concatenation* SF reviews index (which only consists of a list of links to books we've reviewed over the years) has "criminal content" and will not let Bexley Borough library and college users (and presumably other Boroughs using this grid) access it.' Later: the ban was lifted after a hint that public accusations of 'criminal content' could well be libellous. The mere mention of a *Terminator* novel may have been the problem, as this censorware seems to dislike the *Terminator* film website. (*Ansible* 198 was also bounced by certain hyperprudish e-mail filters, conceivably because the Anne Rice news item alluded to the fact that vampires, ahem, practise suction.) ● Gordon Davie adds: 'Bob Monkhouse [...] does have one SF connection that is in no doubt: he provided the voice for Zero-X navigator Brad Newnan in the Gerry Anderson film *Thunderbirds Are Go!*' ● Richard E.Geis exults: 'I was happy to not see my name in the RIP list; always a joyous occasion.' ● Simon R.Green on the New Year honours list: 'Can I just point out that I was offered a nightingale by Tony Blair's government; but I declined, as I never wear one.'

**Wee Free Awards.** Terry Pratchett is too modest and retiring to brag about all the US honours won by *The Wee Free Men*, but Anne Hoppe of HarperCollins leaked the list: ALA [American Library Association] Notable Book, ALA Best Book for Young Adults, Horn Book Fanfare Title of Best Books of 2003, Kirkus 2003 Editor's Choice, School Library Journal Best Book of the Year, Parenting Book of Year Award-winner, Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books Blue Ribbon Book, New York Public Library 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing book ... and so on, and on, with 'starred reviews' all over the place. [CS]

**Fanfunder.** GUFF: After panic at Pat McMurray's discovery that he couldn't make it to the Aussie Natcon at Easter, he will now attend Continuum (Melbourne 11-14 June), which welcomes the GUFF winner. ● DUFF nominations for the northbound race (Australasia to Noreascon 4) are open, closing on 15 Feb; voting will continue to 1 May. Details and, later this month, downloadable ballots at [www.DUFF2004.com](http://www.DUFF2004.com).

**International Horror Guild** nominations go on forever; shorter fiction and nonfiction categories are omitted. Living Legend awards go to Stephen King and E.F.Bleiler, with a special posthumous award to Jack Gady (see R.I.P. above). ● NOVEL Tananarive Due, *The Good House*; Stephen King, *The Dark Tower V*; Stewart O'Nan, *The Night Country*; John Shirley, *Crawlers*; Peter Straub, *lostboy lostgirl*; Steve Rasnic Tem, *The Book of Days*. ● FIRST NOVEL K.J.Bishop, *The Etched City*; Matthew B.J.Delaney, *Jinn*; Michael Gruber, *Tropic of Night*; Matthew Pearl, *The Dante Club*; Mark Siegal, *Echo & Narcissus*; Jeff VanderMeer, *Veniss Underground*. ● COLLECTION Ramsey Campbell, *Told by the Dead*; Elizabeth Hand, *Bibliomancy*; Glen Hirshberg, *The Two Sams*; George R.R. Martin, *GRRM: A RRetrospective*; Reggie Oliver, *The Dreams of Cardinal Vittorini*; Michael Marshall Smith, *More Tomorrow*. ● ANTHOLOGY Ramsey Campbell, Jack Dann & Dennis Etchison, *Gathering the Bones*; Bill Congreve, *Southern Blood*; Ellen Datlow, *The Dark*; Stephen Jones, *By Moonlight Only*; Elizabeth & Thomas Monteleone, *Borderlands 5*; Jeff VanderMeer & Mark Roberts, *Thackery T.Lamb'shead Pocket Guide to Eccentric and Discredited Diseases*. ● PERIODICAL *All Hallows, Cemetery Dance, F&SF, The Third Alternative, Video Watchdog*. ● ILLUSTRATED NARRATIVE *Endless Nights, The Wolves in the Walls, The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen II, Dark Days, The Goon 1-4*. ● ART Caniglia, Dave McKean, 'Edward Miller' (Les Edwards), Todd Schorr, Bernie Wrightson. ● FILM *28 Days Later, Bubba Ho-Tep, Identity, Monster, Mystic River, Spider*. ● TV *Angel, Carnivale, Dead Like Me, Six Feet Under, The Dead Zone*.

**Now What's Missing Here?** ... Eric Temple Bell, who was known as a mathematician, a mathematical historian, and the author of several detective stories, under the name John Taine.' (John H.Conway & Richard K.Guy, *The Book of Numbers*, 1996)

**Sapphire Awards** (sf romance) novel shortlist: Sherrilyn Kenyon, *Dance With The Devil*; Robin D. Owens, *Heart Thief*; Catherine Asaro, *Skyfall*; Susan Grant, *The Star Princess*; Wen Spencer, *Tinker*. [SFS]

**Group Gropes.** London first-Thursday meetings continue to have problems at The Barley Mow. The latest controversial suggestion, promoted by flyers on 5 February, is a return to The Florence Nightingale, whose customer-hating landlord has reportedly been replaced. [RN/MP]

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Newtonian Dept.* 'It is impossible to shrug one's shoulders in free fall; the motion sends you flying across the cabin, and Brian was too well-trained to make waste motions of that sort.' (Marion Zimmer Bradley, 'The Climbing Wave', *F&SF* February 1954) [JBos] ● *Spare Parts Dept.* 'Botha slipped out of his chair. It rocked briefly in his absence, then steadied to await the next set of perambulating buttocks.' (Alan Dean Foster, *Diuturnity's Dawn*, 2002) [GS] ● *Dept of Innovative Nomenclature.* 'An emerald-green material paneled the room, neither glass nor wood, but something in between. She christened it "glass-wood".' (Catherine Asaro, *Skyfall*, 2003) [PH] ● *Nuclear Doom Dept (or, How I Learned To Stop Worrying and Hold My Breath).* "'It's certain," Dardanus was saying, "that the cobalt bomb, so incontinently exploded twenty-five years ago in the Pacific Ocean, robbed the planet of its atmosphere for at least thirty minutes. There's no need for me to recall the causes—superheating of the ionosphere, followed by elevation of the heavier atoms and a partial band of vacuum encircling the globe. It's possible that at least half the molecules existing at that time reached escape velocity and were lost into outer space...."' (Martin Jordan, 'Sheamus', *Science Fantasy* 14, 6/1955) [JBos]

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