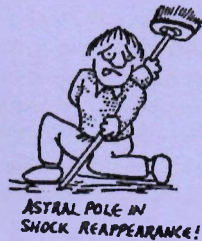


Ansible



ANSIBLE 82 MAY 1994

From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. Fax **0734 669914**. ISSN 0265-9816. Logo by Dan Staffan. E-mail ansible@cix.compulink.co.uk. Cartoon by Dave Mooring. *Ansible* is available for SAE or personal grovelling.

THE IDEAL FAN NEWSLETTER. 'Ansible isn't an organ playing the right tune here; I'm not talking about something three-quarters full of clever wordplay no matter how ingenious about a bunch of paid hacks.'—Greg Pickersgill, *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk 5*.

Mimsy Were The Borogoves

Harry Bell is now a paid hack: he bagged £500 as regional winner of the John Laing Art Competition for his oil painting of Pilgrim St, Newcastle—bought by JL (NE) plc for £600.

William Gibson muttered that, working on the *Johnny Mnemonic* film and meeting a producer, he knew exactly how a virus felt when it met with its own specific antibody. [VR]

Colin Greenland warns that the anonymous loon who plagues UK sf writers with plot ideas (see A75/76) 'has found a new game. This time he's written to the BBC posing as me. The woman in the PR dept said it was hard to understand what he wanted—"he goes on about the universe," she explained....'

Bernard King (author of the *Tyrfin* and *Keeper of the Chronicles* fantasy series) suffered several minor strokes, damaging short-term memory and eyesight. He hopes that his current medication will allow him to work again soon. [PB]

Paul McAuley is 'being troubled by a misguided idiot (or an incompetent crook) in Canterbury who insists that he has written a short story of mine using my name as a pseudonym. "Karl and the Ogre" was reprinted in Tom Shippey's *Oxford SF* anthology, and shortly afterwards my agent received a solicitor's letter demanding payment of the advance on behalf of the aforementioned loony-tune. Not only this, but my would-be doppelganger also hawked around a collection of short stories including "Karl and the Ogre". Stiff lawyer's letters have been sent out—this kind of behaviour is what is known as "passing off" to m'learned friends—so I can't actually name names, but editors should note that any material sent from a Canterbury address and claiming to be associated with my name, isn't.'

Steve Noon received the Arthur C. Clarke award (presented by Helen Sharman) for his sf novel *Vurt* and won all hearts at the event by getting totally smashed on the strength of it. The taped Voice of Clarke Himself—wot, no satellite link?—commended practically everything and issued an unexpected plug for the *SF Encyclopaedia* ... he must have liked his entry. Fun was had despite the Camden venue's being several hundred miles from any tube station. *Ansible* cannot confirm the rumour that a HarperCollins representative contrived to mistake ACCA administrator David V. Barrett for a woman. ("Which woman?")

General Manuel Noriega, interviewed by film-maker Oliver Stone, proves to be a fan. OS: 'What books do you read?' MN: 'I like science fiction very much.' OS: 'Any favourites?' MN: 'No, whatever, whatever.' *John Foyster* adds: 'Ya gotta admire Stone's dead sophisticated interviewing techniques, but what is Noriega trying to hide? A passion for Lois McMaster Bujold? David Drake? Etc? Is this worth a competition?' (No—Ed.)

Christopher Priest confirms the A78 rumour: Jim Owsley, writer of the DC comic *The Ray*, has legally changed his name to 'Christopher Priest' because 'I think it sounds ... cool.' He is so credited on the cover of the first issue (May 94). Our CP finds it 'a bit bleeding irritating to have my name pinched by another writer' and has suggested to DC that Owsley think again: 'If Jim must use a pseudonym, why doesn't he pick a really silly one, like, say, "Harlan Ellison"?' [RH/CP]

Carl Sagan has sued Apple for unspecified damages—*not*

for briefly nicknaming a new computer 'Sagan', but for re-naming it (after Sagan's legal threats) to BHA and letting it be rumoured that this stands for 'Butt-Head Astronomer' ... which Sagan claims has brought him 'hatred, contempt, ridicule and obloquy'. Is 'butt-head' defamatory? Is this pointless suit not the action of, well, of a BHA? Only the courts can decide. [BY]

George Turner, 'despite having not recovered fully the use of his right hand following last year's stroke, has started a new novel, one-handed. Truly heroic! And a US publisher has bought reprint rights to his earlier trilogy.' [LS]

Keith Watson, who drew *Dan Dare* for *Eagle* 1961-7, died of cancer on 9 April aged 58. His first stripwork was *Captain Condor* (*Lion* 1960-1); he returned to *Dan Dare* in 1989-90 and his last published work was for *Thunderbirds*. A likeable man, he was highly respected in sf illustration and comics. [RT]

Contravallation

18 May • **Literate Fantasy Evening** ('i.e. no elves'), Gt Northern Hotel, Peterborough. With Robert (*The Arabian Nights*) Irwin, Eric Lane, Brian ('undead') Stableford. £3. Contact 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 ORB. [CW]

20-22 May • **Mexicon 6** ('The Party'), Hertford Park Hotel, Stevenage. £9.50 reg. £19.50 twin/dbl, £22.50 sngl. Contact 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH.

26-9 May • **EuROcon**, Timisoara, Romania. £15 reg. Contact 17 Mimosa, 29 Avenue Rd, Tottenham, N15 5JF ... fast!

27-30 May • **Inconceivable** (humour/sf), Tudor Court Hotel, Draycott, near gigglesome Derby. Now a hilarious £25 reg. Contact 12 Crich Ave, Littleover, Derby, DE23 6ES.

8-10 Jul • **BaCon** (Unicon 15), New Hall Coll, Cambridge. GoH Geoff Ryman, Simon Ings. £16 reg. Contact 38 Scotland Road, Chesterton, Cambridge, CB4 1QG; (0223) 564483.

29-31 Jul • **Wincon III**, King Alfred's Coll, Winchester. GoH: Algis Budrys, James Hogan and (new) Norman Spinrad. £23 reg, rooms £18/night. Contact 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7TS. *John Richards*: 'Look, Langford, who do we have to FUCK to get another mention in *Ansible*?' Now he knows.

5-6 Nov • **Armadacon**, Astor Hotel, Plymouth. GoH Mary Gentle etc. £20 reg. Rooms £29/person/night. Contact 4 Glendale Ave, Mannamead, Plymouth, PL3 5HL.

Rumblings • Atlanta dropped their 1998 Worldcon bid (they lost their hotel). *Martin Hoare* is recruiting for Boston in 1998—'Get the only ribbon Tim Illingworth won't wear!'—while Tim is UK agent for the incompatible Boston in 2001. Current rumoured bids ... 1997 San Antonio, St Louis (both confirmed); 1998 Boston (not MCFI), Baltimore, Niagara Falls, multiple New York groups; 1999: Australia, a possible Las Vegas bid run from Chicago; 2000 Kansas City, Chicago; 2001 Boston (MCFI), Philadelphia; 2002 Seattle, San Francisco. [KS]

Infinitely Improbable

Nebulas. Novel: *Red Mars*, K.S. Robinson. Novella: 'The Night We Buried Road Dog', Jack Cady. Novelette: 'Georgia On My Mind', Charles Sheffield. Short: 'Graves', Joe Haldeman.

C.o.A. Etc. *Molly Brown/Brandon Butterworth*, 21 Higher Dr, Purley, Surrey, CR8 2HQ. *Heidi Lyshol*, The Garth, Bury Lane, Horsell, Woking, GU21 4RR. *Pat McMurray*, 28 Plaistow Grove, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3PB. *Roman Orszanski/Sue Peukert*, PO Box 178, Kensington Park, SA 5068, Australia. *Ashley Pollard* (once Ashley Watkins) asks fans to note her name change: 'I've been out of the closet for a month!' *Pat*

Silver/Dave Holladay, 111 Weston Rd, Long Ashton, Bristol, BS18 9AE.

For Dirty Minds. Little, Brown catalogue copy for Anne McCaffrey, *The Ship Who Searched*: 'But Tia won't be satisfied to glide through life like a ghost in a glorified wheelchair. She would rather strap on a spaceship.' Roz Kaveney: 'Amanda Donohoe in *Lair of the White Worm*, eat your heart out!'

SF Encyclopaedia Forever. After many missed release dates, the Nimbus CD-ROM edition has been cancelled—the whole project was bought out by Grolier for a CD release using their far more suave software (Mac or Windows). There will be a 'non-commercial' Nimbus DOS edition of about 20 copies to placate the editors and those who made down payments for the CD-ROM at Sou'Wester. A Grolier publication date is awaited.

Philip K. Dick Award ... the joint winners are *Growing Up Weightless* by John M. Ford and *Elvissey* by Jack Womack. [To]

SF Eye Crossed: Steve Brown wails that his *SF Eye* #13 ('two tons of paper') has been trapped on a Wisconsin loading dock by a US Teamster strike since 9 April. [SB, 23 Apr]

Random Fandom. Rob Hansen will, alas, have more time than anticipated to complete his 80s fan history; Sainsbury's have axed his job. ● Maureen Speller gloats that the BSFA raised £1200 at Eastercon. ● Alexander Vasilkovsky excoriates me for not mentioning the Russian/Ukrainian vodka party as a major highlight of Sou'Wester (his fault for plying me with Elixir of Amnesia).... ● John Whitbourn, awed by the A81 mention of J.P. Martin's books, offers signed and grovellingly dedicated copies of *Popes and Phantoms* to anyone who can locate *Uncle, Uncle & Claudius the Camel* or *Uncle & the Battle for Badgertown*, preferably in Cape hardback. Apparently P. Morwood and D. Duane begged Cape to reissue them but were told the books were too 'classist'.

Censored! A sample of Lois McMaster Bujold's sensitive sf dialogue was cut from April's *Guardian* sf reviews: 'Bothari the monster, Bothari, Vorrutyer's mad batman?' (from *Barrayar*)

Cover-Up. Let's skip the latest H. Ellison vs C. Platt exchange ... since (a) HE might get litigious if I quote his computer-net outburst (he's issued risibly weak legal threats in hope of suppressing the US publication of *Last Deadloss Visions*—one sadly recalls his Champion of Free Speech days); (b) while Ellison invective has often been a dazzling performance which even detractors can't help but admire, the present incoherence, paralogia and mud-slinging are not in the same class. (He even resorts to 'anyway I'm more famous than you'—what next, 'my Dad is bigger than yours?') Where are the marbles of yesteryear?

The Desire & Pursuit of the Whole

Yes, it's Hugo nominations time again (zzzzz) ... NOVEL *Moving Mars*, Greg Bear; *Glory Season*, David Brin; *Virtual Light*, William Gibson; *Beggars in Spain*, Nancy Kress; *Green Mars*, Kim Stanley Robinson ● NOVELLA 'The Night We Buried Road Dog', Jack Cady (*F&SF*); 'Mefisto in Onyx', Harlan Ellison (*Omnif*); 'An American Childhood', Pat Murphy (*IASFM*); 'Into the Miranda Rift', G. David Nordley (*Analog*); 'Down in the Bottomlands', Harry Turtledove (*Analog*); 'Wall, Stone, Craft', Walter Jon Williams (*F&SF*) ● NOVELETTE 'The Shadow Knows', Terry Bisson (*IASFM*); 'The Franchise', John Kessel (*IASFM*); 'Dancing on Air', Nancy Kress (*IASFM*); 'Georgia on My Mind', Charles Sheffield (*Analog*); 'Deep Eddy', Bruce Sterling (*IASFM*) ● SHORT 'England Underway', Terry Bisson (*Omnif*); 'The Good Pup', Bridget McKenna (*F&SF*); 'Mwalimu in the Squared Circle', Mike Resnick (*IASFM*); 'The Story So Far', Martha Soukup (*Full Spectrum* 4); 'Death on the Nile', Connie Willis (*IASFM*) ● NON-FICTION *Once Around the Bloch: An Unauthorized Autobiography*, Robert Bloch; *Encyclopaedia of SF*, ed. John Clute & Peter Nicholls; *PITFCS: Proceedings of the Institute for Twenty-First Century Studies*, ed. Theodore R. Cogswell; *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, Scott McCloud; *The Art of Michael Whelan: Scenes/Visions*, Michael Whelan ● DRAMATIC *Addams Family Values*; 'The Gathering' (*Babylon 5*); *Groundhog Day*; *Jurassic Park*; *The Nightmare Before Christmas* ● EDITOR Ellen Datlow; Gardner Dozois; Mike Resnick; Kristine Kathryn Rusch; Stanley Schmidt ● ARTIST Thomas Canty; David Cherry; Bob Eggleton; Don Maitz; Michael Whelan ● ORIGINAL ARTWORK *F&SF* cover Oct/Nov, Thomas Canty; Space Fantasy Commemorative Stamp Booklet, Stephen

Hickman (US Postal Service); *IASFM* cover Nov, Keith Parkinson (no other nominee appeared on the needed 5% of ballots) ● SEMI-PROZINE *Interzone*; *Locus*; *New York Review of SF*; *Pulphouse*; *SF Chronicle*; *Tomorrow SF* ● FANZINE *Ansible* (wow!); *File 770*; *Lan's Lantern*; *Mimosa*; *Stet* ● FAN WRITER Sharon Farber; Mike Glycer; Andy Hooper; Dave Langford; Evelyn C. Leeper ● *Fan Artist* Brad W. Foster; Teddy Harvia; Linda Michaels; Peggy Ranson; William Rotsler; Stu Shiffman ● CAMPBELL AWARD (not a Hugo) Holly Lisle; Jack Nimersheim; Carrie Richerson; Amy Thomson; Elizabeth Willey [DB/SG] ● 649 ballots were cast. Some categories have over 5 nominees owing to ties. 'Dancing on Air' was moved from Novella, and 'Death on the Nile' and 'England Underway' from Novelette, 'to achieve a fairer balance' as allowed by the WSFS Constitution. This is less controversial than it sounds (boo, hiss): the nominations threshold of 5% of ballots cast or 32 nominations initially resulted in a Short Story shortlist of only three items.

Bram Stoker Awards. NOVEL nominations: *Anno Dracula*, Kim Newman; *Blackburn*, Bradley Denton; *Drawing Blood*, Poppy Z. Brite; *The Summoning*, Bentley Little; *The Throat*, Peter Straub. [IM]

Obituary (?): Brian Stableford

Francis Amery writes: Scanning the new edition of *The Writers' Directory* I noticed that Brian Stableford's entry had been transferred to the Obituary section; on turning to it I discovered the terse note: 'Died in 1993'. This came as a shock, not because BS was a close friend—I knew him slightly, having done some translations for his *Dedalus* anthologies—but because I had seen nothing in *Locus* or *Interzone*, which might have been expected to record the demise of even such a minor writer as he.

When I dropped in on his wife to offer my commiserations she admitted that the event had been quite unexpected. 'I'm so used to seeing him slumped in front of the TV I didn't think anything of it,' she said. 'I thought he was just off his food. How was I to know he was dead?' When I asked the cause of death she told me that the doctor had insisted on writing 'broken heart' on the death certificate in spite of her protestations. 'Bloody medical jargon,' she said. 'Truth is, he just couldn't be bothered to breathe any longer. He always was a miserable sod. Anyway, I've got to get things straight—I had no idea it would take so long to burn all those dusty old books, but they kept the Aga going all winter. Do you know anyone who wants to buy a cheap computer?'

I volunteered to buy the computer myself, as an act of charity. It wasn't until I got it home that I discovered all the unpublished novels, stories and articles on the hard disk. There was a certain terrible pathos in that mute legacy; when I remembered how much Brian actually did publish, one way or another (personally, I refuse to believe the rumours about bribery) I began to realize what a sad and empty life he must have led. I promptly decided that if nobody else was prepared to write a eulogy for him, I'd do it myself—but then I had second thoughts.

Would Brian really have wanted to be loudly and insincerely praised when it was too late to do him any good? Would he really have wanted so-called friends crawling out of the woodwork to proclaim that he had always been underappreciated, and to declare that his abysmal failure as a writer and as a human being had been at least a trifle unfortunate? I decided, on due reflection, that he would not.

I decided, in fact, that what Brian would really have desired, more than anything else, was to carry on regardless—to demonstrate that for a man as pig-headedly stubborn as he (he was, of course, a Yorkshireman), even death could not interrupt the cataract of hackwork which flowed ceaselessly from his calloused fingertips. Anyway, one or two of the items on his hard disk looked saleable, if only they could be polished by a writer with a better sense of style than poor Brian ever had.

For these reasons, I have determined to do the decent thing, regardless of all inconvenience to myself. I shall change my name by deed poll to Brian Stableford, and do my damndest to publish everything on that disk—and then I shall write more of the same. After all, if a no-hoper like him can master the delicate artistry of sarcasm and cynicism, so can I. What better monument could any man ask for than that one of his fellows should be prepared to lay down his own life in exchange for his?

Francis Amery is believed to be a pseudonym.

Ansible 82 © Dave Langford, 1994. Thanks to 'Francis Amery', Paul Barnett, David Bratman, Critical Wave, John Foyster, Seth Goldberg, Rob Hansen, Instant Message, Roz Kaveney, Joseph Nicholas, Chris Priest, Yvonne Rousseau, Maureen Speller, Kevin Standloe, Lucy Sussex, Ron Tiner, Usenet, Ben Yalow and our Hero Distributors: FATW, Janice Murray (USA), SCIS, Alan Stewart (Australia), Martin Tudor. 5 May 94