

# Ansible



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From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU, England. Fax **0734 669914**. ISSN 0265-9816. E-mail [ansible@cix.compulink.co.uk](mailto:ansible@cix.compulink.co.uk). Logo and cartoon (from *Pong*): **Dan Steffan** ... vote Dan for TAFF! Available for SAEs.

**NOVACON 24** (Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham) was probably just fine, only my hearing aid expired halfway and left me prey to gloom. Leaving early on Sunday night, I reckoned I could still enjoy one hour of the vaunted 'beer and sausage tasting'—little realizing that the hotel kitchens would procrastinate until well after that hour. Days later came horrific reports of how fandom red in tooth and claw descended on the sausage buffet in a welter of trough noises, leaving minimal rations for those further down the queue.... Lots of people helpfully told me there was plenty of beer and indeed that at midnight *Martin Tudor* pathetically begged fans to drink more—or, horrifically, it would be returned to the brewery and *poured away*. This has been a con report in Traditional British Mode. ● *Simon R. Green* was stunned to find that mere *Graham Joyce* was Novacon's guest of honour: 'Huh, how does *he* get to be guest when he's only published three novels? I've done fourteen.' ● *Jack Cohen* and *Ian Stewart* cracked bottles of champagne and gloated over vast US sales of their nonfiction *The Collapse of Chaos* (adv.), also informing a relieved *Ansible* reporter that they hate the practice of putting a capital letter after every colon but the US editors forced it on them.... ● *Nova Awards* went to Greg Pickersgill's *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk* (best fanzine; runners-up *Moriarty's Revenge, Attitude*), Greg himself (fan writer; also-rans Langford and Mike Siddall) and D. West (fan artist, trailed by Shep and Dave Mooring). Absentee West had Jackie McRobert represent him at the ceremony, hoping for double-takes at the hint of yet another fan sex change. ● *Tom Holt* secreted himself somehow on the margins of the convention, but his book reading was tracked down by a shambling figure (modesty forbids) who burst in and loudly apologized for late arrival at the BSFA meeting which proved to have been many hours earlier.... ●

## The Macabre Ones

**Terry Bisson** is reportedly to novelize the movie of William Gibson's 'Johnny Mnemonic'. [TB] They couldn't afford Gibson....

**Jo Fletcher** is standing in for still-convalescent Richard Evans at Gollancz, in a whirlwind of slushpile clearance: 'Richard isn't going to recognize his office without all those familiar old manuscripts,' muttered one agent on receiving a huge parcel of yellowed paper.

**George Hay** was the victim of a hit-and-run driver in November, and suffered concussion and serious injuries including multiple fracture of one leg (requiring an operation). He's now in good spirits, but likely to spend at least another week in Cookson Ward, Conquest Hospital, The Ridge, St Leonards, TN37 7RD. [CP] *Ansible* refuses to credit the persistent rumour that George was treated at length for delirium until medical staff realized he was telling them about the SF Foundation.

**Cecelia Holland's** long-standing complaints of being plagiarized in the William James *Sunfall* trilogy (published by Orbit) have finally taken effect. 'Orbit has capitulated; they gave James until November 1 to respond to the charges, which he has not done, so they are recalling everything, ceasing distribution, and trying to call the matter closed. I am in no mood to consider it closed; I want them to bleed a little, for making me bleed, if only metaphorically.... I found Colin Murray [*Orbit* editor] himself to be a pretty good guy: too bad he's caught in the middle. But I feel Little, Brown has acted very badly in the whole matter.' They certainly acted slowly;

resemblances between the Holland and James books were pointed out to Orbit/Little, Brown as early as July 1993.

**Charles Platt**, forthcoming *Interzone* guest editor (April 95), reassures us all: 'I gather no one is happy with the new *IZ* design. I haven't seen it yet. Rest assured, my design will be far more radical, disconcerting, and unpleasant to read.'

**J.I.M. Stewart** died in November, aged 88. He was famed for his witty, donnish and sometimes surreal 'Michael Innes' detective thrillers, some with sf McGuffins (biowarfare in *Hare Sitting Up*, mind control in *Operation Pax*): 'serious' work under his own name also included a few ghost and semi-sf stories.

**Jules Verne** has a new book out: his second novel *Paris in the 20th Century* was locked away after its 1863 rejection until 1989, and is now a French bestseller. When the English edition appears in February, will Verne's mindboggling predictions of 1960's motor cars, universal electrification, canned applause and fax machines put him in line for his first Hugo?

**Ian Watson** bewails his popularity: 'WARHAMMERED, OR THE PERILS OF SUCCESS. Alarmed by the complete sell-out of all copies of IW's *Warhammer 40,000: Harlequin* available at Games Day (see A88), Games Workshop have forbidden this particular hardback to be on sale in any GW shop in case customers buy it instead of a game. Stunned publishers Boxtree are protesting vehemently. (Bizarre—but true!)' New readers should note that, yes, the book is an official, GW-authorized tie-in with GW's own *Warhammer* game....

**Deborah Williams** (née Beale) married Tad Williams on 29 Oct amid the ecclesiastical splendours of Finsbury Registry Office. Charon Wood, late of Millennium, was maid of honour. [SJ] In Spring the newlyweds are off to live in the USA for a couple of years at least, partly so that Tad can be reunited with his ancient pet dog for its final days. [PB]

## Conjobble

3 Dec ● **Academic Fantastic Fiction** conf, U of Reading. With G. Jones, A. Sawyer, B. Stableford *et al.* £10 reg (£5 unsalaried)—must register 10:15-10:45am. Ends by 5:30pm.

9 Dec ● **BFS Open Night**, Falklands Arms, Bloomsbury Way, London, WC1. 6:30pm onward. All welcome.

22 Dec ● **London Xmas Meeting**, Wellington, Waterloo Rd, opp. Old Vic exit from Waterloo Station. 5/6pm onward.

28 Dec ● **Special Gala BSFA Non-Meeting** ... please note the BSFA are skipping December to nurse their hangovers.

25 Jan 95 ● **BSFA London Meet**, Jubilee Tavern, York Rd, nr Waterloo. Upstairs room, 7pm. With John Whitbourn.

2-5 Mar 95 ● **World Horror Con**, Sheraton Colony Square Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia, USA. \$75 reg. Contact PO Box 148, Clarkston, GA 30021-0148, USA.

17-19 Mar 95 ● **Trek Dwarf 3** (thespically challenged and differently tall), Holiday Inn, Leicester. Now £35 reg. Contact 47 Marsham, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 ORB.

14-17 Apr 95 ● **Confabulation** (Eastercon), Britannia International Hotel, London Docklands. £20 reg rising to £25 on 1 Jan. Horrendous, extortionate and punitive rates are promised for anyone joining at the door; numbers may also be limited. Contact 3 York St, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH.

*Rumblings* ● **The Scottish Convention** has enlisted 'the lovely Jackie McRobert' (her own considered phrase), who is compiling a vast catalogue of local UK sf clubs/meetings—times, places and contact



names, please, to her at 75 Balmalloch Rd, Kilsyth, Glasgow, G65 9NS. Media fan club info is not required since she already has 'a comprehensive list', usually to starboard. ● **Octocon**, the 'premier' Irish sf convention, is bidding for Eurocon 1997. SAE to 30 Beverley Downs, Knocklyon Rd, Dublin 16. ● **Conseal** (25-7 Nov, Holland) was approved by *Dave Power*: 'A great con despite the worst breakfasts ever. Horrible tea, disgusting coffee and NO MUSHROOMS.' This saw 'the announcement of a new bid for the 1998 Eastercon: Westercon 98 or Westoncon 98, with Alison Weston [daughter of the more famous Peter] as chair. Possible sites include the Weston family mansion and the Central Hotel, Glasgow. Bid slogans: "West is Best!" and "I don't know how to run a con, but I know a man who does." This started as a spoof bid, but seems to be mutating into the real thing through popular acclaim. Alison was frequently heard proclaiming, "I was drunk. I didn't really mean it!" But supporters' badges soon appeared, with Alison proudly wearing her bid chair badge. Rumours that she had to be held down while this was pinned on are entirely true.' [DP]

## Infinitely Improbable

**Copywrongs.** Sf artist *David A. Hardy* was less than delighted when six of his paintings were released for 'trading cards' publication by *Starlog* magazine, which neglected to ask permission or offer payment. His US lawyers have been told to sue for copyright infringement. Norman Jacobs of *Starlog* expressed annoyance that ungrateful artists should object on such piffling grounds to his sincere promotion of sf art.... '15 artists are involved (not all of whom are suing), inc. John Berkey, Robert McCall, Rick Sternbach, David Mattingly and Joe Bergeron,' writes Dave 'Green Blob' Hardy. 'By all means mention it: Norman Jacobs told me, "Publicity won't hurt ME!"' [DH/CW]

**C.o.A.** *Tom Abba*, 34 Frieze Wood Rd, Ashton, Bristol, BS3 2AB. *Chris Evans*, 8 Paddock Close, Sydenham, London, SE26 4SS. *Mab Sér* magazine (see A88) hastily changed its title to *Beyond the Boundaries* after English monoglots failed in droves to buy issue one, assuming wrongly that the contents must be in Welsh. *Charles Platt*, 1133 Broadway, Room 1214, New York, NY 10010, USA.

**More Football:** not just a typo but a contagious meme! Following Jerry Pournelle as noted last issue (but this time in a Pan flyer for their anti-Green polemic *Fallen Angels*), Larry Niven too is credited with co-writing the blockbusting *Football*. Will this haunt the pair all their lives, just as Brian Stableford is pursued by a chimerical Stapleford? (The semantic attractor of Olaf Stapledon has a lot to answer for.)

**Random Fandom.** *Eileen Gunn* is writing a biography of Avram Davidson: 'I'm anxious to get in touch with anyone he might have known or corresponded with in England, Australia, Israel, etc.' 525 19th Ave E, Seattle, WA 98112, USA. ● *Colin Harris* is now Literary Programme boss for **The Scottish Convention**. 'This is despite every person he mentions this to remarking that he must be totally mad.' [ME] ● *Teddy Harvia* moans, 'Dick and Nicki Lynch pulled the "Langford Must Die" article by Tom Sadler from publication in *Mimosa* after I'd drawn the illos. Do you know anyone who needs cartoons of moribund fan writers?' ● *Lloyd Penney*, hailed by Hugo megastar Andy Porter as 'the fan who keeps saying nasty things about me', demands full, frank and bilingual coverage of the Aurora awards for Canadian sf—featuring L. Penney for 'Accomplissement fanique (Organisation)', plus some other catégories.... ● *Ian Sorensen* is unmistakably Tuckerized in *Dreams of Dawn* by Marti Steussy (Del Rey): 'I understand Sorensens are unpopular here,' and, later, 'Anger washed over Skip as he realised that the enemy he had hated all his life didn't bother to reciprocate. Arrogant Sorensens!' [MB] ● *Meredith Sorensen* (possibly no relation), in *Australian Book Review*, effortlessly outstrips fandom's 'KTF' reviewers by first instructing that the children's book under discussion be torn to shreds. 'The males of the party, having consumed enormous amounts of something smelly and bubbly, must then piss on the remains. The females ... must then sauté the sodden shreds in a liberal amount of oil until golden brown.' Serves 4. [YR] ● *Harry Warner Jr* demolishes me utterly: 'Everything that happens yesterday, today or tomorrow has happened before in fandom, and I can't accept the fact that these events may be

news in the sense that they involve different fans, different locales and insignificantly different details from their previous incarnations.'

**A88 Update.** *Karl Edward Wagner's* death from liver failure reportedly resulted from Rocky Mountain Tick Fever: as Ian Watson points out, Karl would have appreciated (may, insisted on) this more exotic epitaph.

**World Fantasy Awards.** NOVEL Lewis Shiner, *Glimpses*. NOVELLA Terry Lamsley, 'Under the Crust'. SHORT Fred Chappell, 'The Lodger'. ANTHOLOGY *Full Spectrum 4*. COLLECTION Ramsey Campbell, *Alone With The Horrors*. ARTIST Alan Clarke & J.K. Potter (tie). SPECIAL AWARDS: PROFESSIONAL Underwood-Miller, for publishing; NON-PROFESSIONAL Marc Michaud, for Necronomicon Press (yay yay). LIFE ACHIEVEMENT Jack Williamson.

**New Worlds 4** was launched by Gollancz last month in a blaze of secrecy, with only editor *David Garnett* able to reveal that the party invitations (mentioning a horror novel but not *New Worlds*) in fact contained this hidden agenda. Nevertheless the usual suspects enjoyed far too much wine in, for some arcane reason, the Murder One bookshop's romance section ... where *Garry Kilworth* seemed curiously at home.

**Author In 'Nice Publisher' Shock:** *David Redd* is still stunned following an experience with Heyne in Germany. He asked to buy a copy of their Xmas sf anthology containing a Redd story; this was out of print, but Heyne bought one in a second-hand shop and sent it free of charge. Seasonal spirit....

**Robert Bloch Memorial Award.** Initial funds were raised at this year's Bouchercon, the crime/mystery Worldcon: presumably any prize will be for that genre. 'We do not have a lot of it decided yet. Currently, it appears that it will be a juried award given for paperback original,' writes Andi Shechter.

**Cyberbullies.** Anyone seen the US *Penthouse* with the rant about Internet's 'dark side' promised in the Oct edition? 'Writer Harlan Ellison, one of America's most popular and prestigious authors, who found himself electronically pilloried for no reason, summed up one view of computer bulletin boards: "A breeding ground for bullies ... who would not dare to practice their hooligan ways were it not for an environment devoid of civility, courtesy, and the common properties which govern how human beings should behave toward one another.'" Coo!

**Fan Funds.** *Steve Sneyd* mutters: 'The icky tweneess of the candidates' campaign platforms in the TAFF ballot seems to provide even more evidence that all these intra-First World funds have become utterly naff and should be wound up, with the money used to transport 3rd world fans to Worldcons or some such....' ● *Andy Hooper*, hurt by UK reactions to his fanzine *Apparatchik* (which discussed British views on TAFF without involving irrelevant bystanders like Brits), describes himself in issue 16 as 'a very bad and unworthy person who hates everyone in Britain and most of the rest of the world as well'.

**Four's a Crowd.** 'A prime candidate for the World's Most Unsuccessful Signing Session must have been Janny Wurts and Rob Holdstock at Manchester Dillon's ... precisely 4 (four) people turned up to hear an interminable, soporific reading from Ms Wurts's latest fantasy blockbuster. Holdstock? He didn't turn up at all—at least, he hadn't when your correspondent made his excuses and left.' [MD] *Anyone thinking a turnout of 4 is a record low has never attended a Langford signing.*

**Ten Years Ago,** *Malcolm Edwards* advised: 'Take a look at Howard Jacobson's new novel *Peeping Tom*. There is a character called Dr Rowland Fitzpiers, "large and dark and affable" with "heavy black brows and a beard". He is an academic grown keen on sf, and is first seen explaining how all the great 19th century novels are really sf. He also has lots of girlfriends who are "all the wives or mistresses of SF writers". I'm sure even those of us who met Jacobson when he was best man at Peter Nicholls's wedding will realize that there are no roman à clef elements in this characterization.' (*Ansible 41*, Dec 1984)

Ansible 89 © Dave Langford, 1994. Thanks to Paul Barnett, Mary Branscombe, Tanya Brown, Critical Wave, Mike Don, Martin Easterbrook, Bernie Evans, Colin Greenland, David A. Hardy, Steve Jeffrey, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Dave Power, Chris Priest, Jilly Reed, Yvonne Rousseau, SF Chronicle, and our Hero Distributors: Janice Murray (NA), SCIS, Alan Stewart (Oz), Martin Tudor and Bridget Wilkinson (FATW). Merry Christmas! 1 Dec 94