



Ansible 90 January 1995

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NEW YEAR RESOLUTION: to show proper respect, after the disgraceful excesses of *Ansible 89½*, to the now fearfully imminent-seeming **Scottish Convention**. (Co-chair Martin Easterbrook, wistfully: 'If I was on the outside doing *Small Mammal* I would be much less responsible than you are being.')

The Golden Years Return

Poppy Z.Brite gained the ultimate accolade—her 5,271,009th exposition of how she's actually 'a gay male in a woman's body' made it into *Private Eye's* coveted 'Pseudos Corner' [30 Dec].

Arthur C. Clarke is to be awarded an honorary D.Litt from Liverpool University (home of the SF Foundation—*can this be coincidence?*) on 26 Jan. Inevitably it's all being done by satellite link between the State Broadcasting studios in Sri Lanka and Liverpool U's Senate Room. But the gown and scroll are likely to go by old-fashioned air mail rather than—as was helpfully suggested—fax.

David Garnett, in a logical next career step after editing *New Worlds*, has found glory on the back of a cornflakes packet. 'Kelloggs are offering free Power Trax Trucks—what we used to call toy cars. The drivers are Mark "Firestorm" McCreedy, Chang "Red Dragon" Gee, Chris "Thunder Warrior" Priest ... no, sorry, Smith. And Dave "Crazy Horse" Garnett. True fame!'

Newt Gingrich the US politician is writing an alternative-history World War II novel, with sf author William R. Forstchen. Actually it seems a three-way collaboration, with Jim Baen the publisher/ editor shoving in bits of his own: a Baen passage about 'goofy' young Lt. George Bush caused some stir when the draft was leaked, and was removed.... [MMW] Over here, NEL will be keenly interested in 1945 (the provisional title) and its novel concept of Hitler going into a deep coma after a 1941 air crash, leaving him unable to declare war on the USA following Pearl Harbour. In 1979 NEL published *The Moscow Option*, an alternative-history World War II novel by David Downing: 'August 1941. Hitler lies in a deep coma after an air crash....' [HP]

Simon R. Green, self-confessed rising star of British sf and fantasy, made the error of enjoying a heavy meal immediately before a spellbinding talk delivered by Graham Joyce. The room was dark and cosy, the talk hypnotically compelling, and by and by Mr Green was jerked upright (along with the entire audience) by a stentorian Joycean bellow of 'WAKE UP, GREEN, YOU BASTARD!'

Chris Priest has been up to something: 'I'm pleased to say that last night I wrote the finest, most wonderful passage in all English literature, a favourite of all writers. THE END. Phew.'

Peter Weston, 'after years of masquerading as a guinea pig, has shaved off his facial hair (well, most of it). The sight was greeted by shock and screams from at least two daughters, but SHE WHO MUST BE OBEYED likes it. Those uncertain if they can face the naked visage are assured that he *claims* to be planning to grow it back before the next fannish shindig.' [AW]

Contignation

11 Jan • **Three-Line TV Whip**. Fred Clarke insists, without telling us why, that fans should watch *The Mysterious World of This Is Your Life* at 7pm on BBC1. This supersedes the leaked date of 4 Jan; the series order has since been reshuffled.

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

3-5 Feb • **Transept** (7th UK filk con), Royal Cambridge Hotel, Cambridge. £22 reg, £17 unwaged. Contact 2 Westbrook

Pk Rd, Woodston, Peterborough, PE2 9JG.

4-5 Feb • **Generations** (*Trek*), Albert Hall, London. 10-step price scale from £8 (students, standing) to £30 for 'privileged seating'—*per day*, with 10% discount for booking both days, *but* 'there is a booking fee of £2.50.' GoH: more or less the whole *ST:TNG* cast. Contact 22 Reindeer Court, City Centre, Worcester, WR1 2DS. Tickets 01905 613005 or 0171 838 3100.

17-19 Feb • **Robocon**: half man, half machine, all **CANCELLED**.

11-12 Mar • **Timewarp** (*Trek*), Grand Hotel, Malahide, Dublin. With Majel Barrett Roddenberry, Leonard Nimoy. £30 reg. Contact PO Box 4183, Dublin 16. *NB—previously advertised as being on 4-5 Mar. Please adjust your diaries.*

12 Mar (Sunday) • **Picocon 12**, Imperial College Union, Prince Consort Rd, London, SW7 2BE. 10am-late. GoH Iain Banks. £8 reg. Contact ICSF c/o Imperial College as above.

14-17 Apr • **Confabulation** (Eastercon), London Docklands. Now £25 reg—lots more at the door, if they let you in at all. Contact 3 York St, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9QH.

6 Jun • **H.G. Wells** stamps for *The Time Machine's* centenary issued by Royal Mail—'a must for all Sci-Fi fans', oh dear me.

22-24 Sep • **6th Festival of Fantastic Films**, Sachas Hotel, Manchester. With Roger Corman. £35 reg to April. Contact 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN.

12-15 Jul 96 • **Albacon 96**, Central Hotel, Glasgow. Contact, probably: 10 Atlas Rd, Springburn, Glasgow, G21 4TE.

Kamblings • *The Scottish Convention* will be larger than we think, reveals Michael White in *GQ* magazine—with the meticulous accuracy for which his unauthorized biography of Isaac Amisov is famed: '... expected to attract upwards of 50,000 people.' [DG] • **Reading SF Group**: the ICL Club, immemorial venue of Monday-night meetings, closed forever in Dec. Alternatives are being tried: the Three B's (Town Hall basement) on 9 Jan, The Forbury Vaults on 16 Jan. • Speaking of which, *Scott Edelman of Science Fiction Age* has sent hordes of UK sf groups a tear-jerking missive ('Like all editors, I am very protective of the stories I publish. They are like our children, and I want mine to do well out in the cold, cruel world.') promising freebies of all the mag's 1994 issues, to help Brits vote right in the Hugos. If you are a UK sf group or are thinking of becoming one, apply to him at PO Box 369, Damascus, MD 20872, USA. • **Lilian Edwards** is editing *The Scottish Convention's Timebytes* fanthology, collecting evocative 'time-binding' fragments about Significant Things in UK fandom since 1987. Suggestions to 39 (1F2) Viewforth, Bruntsfield, Edinburgh, EH10 4JE.

Infinitely Improbable

Wonders and Marvels. *Rob Hansen's* 33,000 word TAFF report, *On The Taff Trail*, is now available from him at 144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London, E6 1AB, for £3 (plus 50p p&p) or \$5 (plus \$1.50 seamail, \$2.50 air). All proceeds to TAFF; cheques to be made payable to Rob Hansen. [RH] As Mr Hansen failed to say in an exclusive *Ansible* interview, 'Suck on that, you non-publishing bastards!' • Even more legendary is Jack Speer's *Up To Now*, the first-ever fan history, covering doings 'up to the eve of the 1939 Worldcon'. Now reprinted: \$5 postpaid in USA (over-seas add \$2 seamail, \$4 air), to Richard Newsome, 281 Flatbush Avenue #1-B, Brooklyn, NY 11217, USA. [RN]

Updates. Despite the worried report in *A86*, *Keith Roberts* does not—I am instructed—now have any visual trouble and seems in cheerfully good literary form, well able to write letters as powerfully irate as legend credits him with.... (Signed: Small Heap of Carbonized

Remnants, Reading.) • *George Hay* remains in hospital following his hit-and-run accident, but has been moved: best to write to his home address, 53b All Saints St, Hastings, TN34 3BN. He's 'most appreciative of the many get-well cards and messages, in particular one that seems to have been signed by some drunken mob in a pub near Waterloo.' • The late *Karl Edward Wagner's* estate is apparently being looked after by his brother James R. Wagner, 3103 Trafalgar Dr, Augusta, GA 30909, USA.

C.o.A. *Gollancz*, Wellington House, 125 Strand, London, WC2R 0BB. *Ken Lake*, 1a Stephen Ct, Ecclesbourne Rd, Thornton Heath, CR7 7BP. *Tom Perry* (yet again!), 1497 Main St #346, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA. *Art Widner*, PO Box 5122, Gualala CA 95445-5122, USA. *Tom Whitmore*, PO Box 46665, Seattle WA 98146-0665, USA.

Grammarwatch. Dire warning from Little, Brown accompanying review copies of Gary Haynes's *Carrion*: 'No review should not appear before the date of publication.' [DVB] • **Not Hazel's Latin Lesson** ... Motion at a recent UK Professional Association of Teachers conference: 'This conference believes that *mens sana in corpore sano* should in 1994 read *men's and women's sana in corpore sano*.' [via JB]

Arcane News. 'Self-styled psychic Uri Geller, known for claiming to bend spoons with sheer mental force, yesterday failed to connect with the legal minds of three appellate court judges who said he must pay nearly \$150,000 in sanctions for a lawsuit he filed against a rival three years ago.' Thus the *Washington Post* [10 Dec] on the latest legal round between Geller and magician/debunker James Randi (the 'rival'). The court called Geller litigious and his lawsuit frivolous. [MMW] • A favourite recent 'magic' story comes from a US conjuror whose skills over-impressed a fundamentalist: 'He started shouting that I was a satanist and had shunned the ways of the Lord. I tried to explain how the trick worked, to no avail. Every time he passed me in the hall he crossed himself, held a cross at me, and on two occasions spoke in tongues.... He started accusing me of sacrificing children to Satan and molesting children to offend the Lord. I decided I had had enough. It had been 3 months and I had tried several times to explain that I was *not* doing real magic. I have a device that fits over a finger and will shoot a ball of flash paper 20-30 feet. I kept it with me and the next time he harassed me I shot a ball of fire over his head and spoke in my own tongues. He screamed and ran out of the building and I have not seen him since.' [KEB] *We could use this man at certain sf cons....*

Fire! STOP PRESS, Maryland, 3 Jan: *Dick and Nicki Lynch* of fan Hugo fame were driven from home by fire (and firefighter) damage when the house next door burned down. Focusing on priorities, Dick notes that the cats, Hugos and stocks of *Mimosa* are all saved. Two months in rented housing are anticipated.

Dickery. 'Tim: I have moved out. Won't be back for a long time. Goodbye. Phil Dick.'—this hand-printed (and reputedly mendacious) 1972-ish note to Tim Powers will set you back \$750, as priced in the bargain catalogue of US bookseller Ken Lopez. If only Dick had commanded \$50 a word in 1972. [DG]

Ansible Transmissions

rich brown: 'Science Fiction Fandom', ed. Joe Sanders and published by Greenwood Press (88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881), 293pp., is finally out. At \$55 a copy, it's collegiately overpriced. A.k.a. *Contributions to the Study of SF and Fantasy*, #62. You'll recognize most contributors: Bob and Juanita Coulson, Sam Moskowitz, Robert A. Madle, Art Widner, Harry Warner Jr, **rich brown**, John & Bjo Trimble, Terry Jeeves ("British Fandom"), Pascal J. Thomas, Roelof Goudriaan, Wu Dinbo, Masamichi Osako, F.M. Busby, Hank Luttrell, Tom Whitmore, Debbie Notkin, Bernadette Bosky, Dick Lupoff, Jack Gaughan, Robert Weinberg, Howard DeVore, Russell Letson and Sandra Meisel.

'As someone who's not receiving any royalties, I have no problem judging that the book is overpriced. My own contribution "Post-Sputnik Fandom (1957-1990)" may or may not be typical—I haven't spoken to any of the other authors yet—but I hope not. My offer to proofread the chapter was not taken up, so I can safely blame the numerous typos and badly mangled quotations on Greenwood. My first two explanatory paragraphs having been excised at the last minute, the reader is left to figure out why I'm talking in fan speak, and just about fanzine fandom,

or why I felt it necessary to refer to events before and after my designated period. I had been told that Dave Rike would be writing about the period immediately preceding mine, so I assumed Burbee and Laney might be mentioned, as well as Speer's numbered fandoms theory; instead it's by Harry Warner Jr., who doesn't believe in numbered fandoms and apparently never appreciated Burbee's and Laney's sense of humour. Not that there are not a few things I must take the blame for on my own hook. I slagged *Star Wars* for using "lightyear" as if it were a measure of time, when actually *Star Wars* used "parsec" as if it were a measure of time. And I found out too late to change it that my understanding of the "false" Seventh Fandom leaves much to be desired. Harry Warner's preceding piece about fandom from WWII to Sputnik doesn't overlap with my chapter at all; neither does his chapter with a "History of Fanzines" (although, as indicated, my piece concentrates on fanzine fandom).... My brief take on fanzines in the UK doesn't overlap with Terry Jeeves' chapter much, either. [No one overlaps with Terry Jeeves much any more—Ed.]

'If the book didn't cost so much, it would be interesting to find what other fans think about it.... It has been "in the works" for a decade or more, and was *much* more ambitious at one point; the publisher decided it was too big, so most pieces had to be cut and several [including *Tucker, Geis and White*] removed entirely.' [3-4 Jan, heavily edited]

• **David Clark:** 'One true story of obsession at ConAdian. We decided to send a special announcement about our Thank-You party to the staff and volunteers of ConFrancisco. We used the 'voodoo' message board for this (to leave a message you stick a pin by the member's name on the list). And since I didn't want to use up the supply of pushpins, I went out and bought my own. Note: the pushpins supplied by ConAdian were all red. I bought 100 green and 100 of assorted colours, and left messages for over 150 people I could identify as our workers.... After the party I checked the board again: not unexpectedly, many messages were still in place. However, someone had gone over the board, removed all my green/other colour pushpins, and carefully stuck red ones in their place. Did someone on staff have too much time on their hands? Is there a hyphen in "ana! retentive"?' [9 Dec]

• **David Drake** was angered on reading the supposed cause of Karl Edward Wagner's death, as reported in *Ansible* 89. 'In June, 1992, my mother died of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Shortly thereafter, Karl diagnosed himself as having Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and announced this to Bantam as the reason he couldn't turn in the novel 5 years overdue at the time. There was no sign of a tick, but Karl said he'd found a scab that might have been left by a tick bite.

'This made me angry enough that I spoke directly to Karl on the subject—one of the few times I tried to make him confront his problem.... Karl's liver failure was due to alcoholism, as anyone who knew him would expect, and as the autopsy confirmed.'

[Following up the 'Cyberbullies' note in the same issue:] 'I only glanced at the *Penthouse* article on "cyberbullies" (I bought the magazine for the pictures of naked tits), but I noticed with amazement that it was written by John DeChancie. Some years ago DeChancie launched an attack on GENIE against one of my editors (and a friend of mine). This had come to over a hundred pages by the time she heard about and downloaded it herself. As an example of DeChancie's wit: "Why is it that when female editors get married, they all get fat and slow?"

'I'd say *Penthouse* got the correct person to write the article.' [20 Dec]

• **Alison Weston** objects to being called 'daughter of the more famous Peter' (this should have read 'celebrity offspring of the now forgotten Peter') and insists that 'despite the fond delusions harboured by my "committee" there is no real bid for the 1998 Eastercon, at least, none that has anything to do with me! I deny it utterly. I will not be responsible for giving my dad a heart attack, and the mere mention of "conrunning" in his hearing could be enough to do that....' [22 Dec]

Ansible 90 © Dave Langford, 1995. Thanks to Anonymous Moles, John Bangsund, Ken E. Barham, David V. Barrett, Cuddles, Rob Hansen, Crazy 'David Garnett' Horse, Richard Newsome, Chris O'Shea, Harry Payne, Andy Sawyer, Alison Weston, Mike Whitaker, Martin Morse Wooster, and our Hero Distributors: Janice Murray (NA), SCIS, Alan Stewart (Oz), Martin Tudor and Bridget Wilkinson (FATW). Happy New Year! 5 Jan 95