

# ANSIBLE



ANSIBLE 94 MAY 1995

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**CONFABULATION.** The first Eastercon in London Docklands was overshadowed by the weirdly science-fictional tower of Canary Wharf, its pointy top exuding strange vapours and blinking with strobe-lights. Most appropriately surreal conversation there: Peter Weston (Man of Wealth) fantasizing about buying *Interzone* for his very own and making Sweeping Changes.... Guests: Bob Shaw revived his Serious Scientific Talks, Lois McMaster Bujold revealed plans to film her Vorkosigan stories (leading to an instant, discreditable rumour from Bob Day that Arnold Schwarzenegger would inevitably play Miles), and Roger Robinson, not content with doing a nifty booklet of the past Shaw talks, casually raised another £4,000 for RNIB Talking Books. All this was footnoted far more wittily than I could hope to phrase it in the con newsletter, appropriately named *Moose Droppings*. There was also a many-splendoured programme, but I was in the bar at the time.

## Sixty Horses Wedged In Chimney

**Stephen Baxter** stared pre-publication pulping in the face, but now writes with relief: 'I've come to an agreement with the H.G. Wells estate over approval for my *Time Machine* sequel *The Time Ships*. The estate approved publication in return for a modest share of the proceeds, and so the huge pulping machines have been turned back from HarperCollins's Glasgow warehouse. The launch will now go ahead, about a month late....'

**David Drake** knows all about the ghosted Newt Gingrich sf epic to be published by Jim Baen: 'I can tell you about 1945, if you're interested. At this point it's a pretty good book. On a scale from Tom Clancy (because he defines the genre) at 100 and the sort of series adventure Gold Eagle was publishing a few years ago (it's publishable because somebody published it) at 0, I give the current draft an 85. A previous draft (slightly cleaned up before being excerpted in the press packets) was a 55 in my opinion. (My opinion didn't thrill Jim.)'

**Chris Priest** was an emergency guest at Freicon in Freiburg, at mere hours' notice, after illness prevented both Fred Pohl and Walter Ernsting (75) of *Perry Rhodan* fame.... 'A great time was had by all. We saved their bacon ("we" means that Joe and Gay Haldeman rushed over at the last minute too), and the Germans were extra-appreciative. Joe and Gay had just come home to Florida from the Nebula banquet, tipped the dirty clothes into the washing machine ... and found the fax message. They sat and watched the washing go round, then tipped the clean clothes back into the suitcases and went straight back to the airport! Freicon was an excellent small national con; maybe 100 attendees. Beautiful city by the Black Forest as advertised, clean, busy and cheerful....' Just one moment of Priestly bogglement: 'One of the other US writers they had invited turned out to have been Harlan, and if he'd said yes I wouldn't have known about him until too late.'

**David Pringle** announces: 'Rumours have been flying around that *Interzone* has lost its Arts Council grant and is in danger of ceasing publication. Not true: we have an ongoing grant of £4,380 per annum. Issue 96 is at the printers, and we are planning ahead to a splendid #100. A.J.G. Ballard 65th birthday issue is scheduled for #104, to coincide with his long-awaited non-fiction collection *A User's Guide to the Millennium* in early 1996. So ceasing publication is not on the agenda. What may have started the rumours is my circular letter to *Interzone's* 100 lifetime subscribers, reporting withdrawal symptoms from Incentive Funding grants received in 1991-93, and arrears with payments to our printer.... I appealed for them to donate a little more to help clear that debt. This appeal has been a great success, and so far has raised over £4,000. The printer arrears should not unduly alarm anyone—that's the way things normally work! Because some new subscribers gained

through big subscription drives (paid for by Incentive Funding) have flaked away, the arrears had recently grown by a bit more than we could feel comfortable with. Now we have reduced them substantially, thanks to the kind generosity of many individual lifetime subscribers. We owe not a penny to the bank (and never have done, in 13 years of publication) and are paying no interest. Publishing *Interzone* has always been a tough slog, financially, and it no doubt always will be. We soldier on: and point to our 13 years and 95 issues as proof that we mean business. Currently, other plans are being laid for boosting the magazine, and I feel very optimistic about our prospects. So don't believe rumours: it's onwards and upwards to the year 2001!

**Kirsty Watt** of Ringpull is worried that easily confused fans might have got the wrong impression from a perfectly routine liquidation, creditors' meeting and bankruptcy: 'Despite rumours to the contrary Ringpull are still very much alive. We did, in fact, go bankrupt last week—the financial kick from the Cantona book affair [see A93] was, unfortunately, too much for the Company to bear and we had no option but to call in the receivers. • But this week Ringpull is delighted to announce that we are joining Fourth Estate and are taking with us a number of Ringpull authors, including Jeff Noon. We shall be based in a new Fourth Estate office in Manchester and will continue to produce exciting and vigorous fiction. • You shall continue to see the Ringpull logo on the shelves as Fourth Estate wish to keep the Ringpull imprint with its own distinctive identity. All editorial and publicity shall continue to be co-ordinate from Manchester while Fourth Estate have responsibility for sales, distribution and marketing.' [23 April, *ibid*]

**Paul Williams**, the expert on (and literary executor of) Philip K. Dick, and founder of *Crawdaddy*, suffered severe skull injuries in an Easter bike accident. Two small pieces of luck: an ambulance came in 5 minutes thanks to a witness with a cell-phone, and a fortnight earlier Paul had bought health insurance for the first time. For a while he could communicate only by signs, but he is now able to speak at least occasionally. [PNH]

## Congroid

8 May • **John Grant** signing party at Dillons, Exeter, 2-5pm. 'FREE WINE'N'CHEESE!' the famous author adds irresistibly.

14 May • **Fantasy Fair**, Cresset Exhibition Centre, Bretton, Peterborough. 10:30am-4pm. £1 admission. Contact 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 0RB.

17 May • **Roy Lewis** (*The Evolution Man*) talk, 8pm: Room 14, Richmond Adult & Community Coll, Parkshot, Richmond, Surrey. All welcome. £1.00 at door. Info: (01734) 876572.

24 May • **BSFA**, Jubilee pub, York Rd, London (nr Waterloo). Upstairs room, 7pm. Hard sf panel with Steve Baxter.

27-28 May • **Albion** (*Robin of Sherwood*), Northampton Moat House Hotel. Contact (SAE) 14 Judith Rd, Kettering, Northants, NN16 0NX.

26-9 May 95 • **Masque IV** (costuming) ... CANCELLED. Too few members and not enough money, apparently: all fees are being returned. Contact 20 Westhall St, Brighton, BN1 3RR.

27-29 May • **Sol III** (*Trek*), Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. Contact 39 Dersingham Ave, Manor Pk, London, E12.

24-5 Jun • **Intersection**, Hertfordpark Hotel, Stevenage: *Scottish Convention* staff weekend (non-staff also welcome). Explores the awesome theme: 'Oh God, Less Than Nine Weeks Left!' Hotel £21.50/night. Contact address: as Intersection.

1 Jul • **Hypotheticon** (sf/gaming), Central Hotel, Glasgow. Contact 10 Atlas Rd, Springburn, Glasgow, G21 4TE.



11-13 Jul • **Speaking Science Fiction**, U of Liverpool conference. £130 inc hotel. Contact Andy Sawyer, SF Foundation, Sydney Jones Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool, L69 3DA.

15-17 Jul • **Conundrum (Trek)**, Hospitality Inn, Glasgow. £35 reg (£40 at door). Contact (SAE) PO Box 1598, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 4HS.

19-20 Aug • **Precursor**, probably in Leicester: 'fannish relaxacon', a pre-Worldcon party to welcome overseas fans (especially for Brits unable to afford *The Scottish Convention*). Contact 144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London, E6 1AB.

24-8 Aug • **The Scottish Convention (Worldcon)**, SECC, Glasgow. Now £90 reg, £100 at door. No advance memberships after 22 July. Contact Intersection, Admail 336, Glasgow, G2 1BR. Only three more *Ansibles* before the big day....

17-19 Nov • **Armadacon**, Astor Hotel, The Hoe, Plymouth. £20 reg. GoH John Brunner and others. Contact 4 Glengale Ave, Mannamead, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 5HL. (01752) 267873.

2-4 Feb 96 • **Obliiter-8** (8th UK filk con), Forte Crest Hotel, Milton Keynes. £20 reg, until the end of Intersection. Contact 212 Albert Road, Leyton, London, E10 6PD.

28-31 Mar 97 • **Intervention** (Eastercon), Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. GoH: Brian Aldiss, David Langford (blimey) and Robert Silverberg. £20 reg; cheques to 'Wincon'. Contact 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7TS.

? Oct 97 • **World Fantasy Con**, London. No venue details. A £30 'special Supporting Rate ... until at least 1 June 1995' reserves your membership, with the vast undisclosed balance to be paid later. Contact PO Box 31, Whitby, N.Yorks, YO22 4YL.

**Rumblings** • **Microcon** aftermath: 'Jane [Barnett], Microcon Advertising Dept, received a solicitation from *The Dark Side*: for a mere £170+VAT she can place an ad for a convention that happened two months ago! With *TDS* came the sister magazine, *Scream Queens*, which consists largely of pictures of female horror-porn actresses you've never heard of straining to reveal to view the contents of their wombs. A letter to the advertising manager is in the pipeline: "Dear Sir, I think you may not know that I am a 17-year-old feminist...." [PB] • **Babcom '95** was indeed "significantly non-cheap" at £20/day, although the guests put in fine performances and were considered OK value for money. It wasn't clear why the promoters had populated the dealers' area with unfortunates trying to sell crayon renditions of the *Enterprise*, while failing to notice that there was that Babbling-wosname show around for which the admirably sparse merchandise happened to include a recently-released first novel and soundtrack CD. Some early arrival presumably picked up both copies of each of these rumoured to have been on sale. As for the NEC itself, I don't think I'd go there again if I were interested in atmosphere (hangar), acoustics (what?), food (how much?) or bars (shut). Take your own beer...." [DH] A special Heroic Public Suicide award went to Danny John-Jules of *Red Dwarf* for twice addressing a *Babylon 5* con without ever having seen the show.

## Infinitely Improbable

**TAFF**: after much toil over white-hot fax machines, *Dan Steffan* emerges as 1995 TAFF delegate from America to *The Scottish Convention*. The initial first-place votes (NA/Euro/Other) were: Samanda b Jeudé 124/18/2, Dan Steffan 100/51/3, Joe Wesson 46/9/4, No Preference 7/1/0, Hold Over Funds nil. Successive eliminations and reallocation of transferable votes led to Sbj 156, DS 180, HoF 19—an overall majority for Dan. (Reallocating HoF gives Sbj 162, DS 188.) Quite a close race. [UB/AJF] C.o.A. *Simon Bisson*, 18 High St, Twerton, Bath, BA2 1BZ. *Jenny & Steve Glover*, 24 Laverockbank Road, Trinity, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH5 3DE. *Mike Glycer* (tiny update), PO Box 1056, Sierra Madre, CA 91205-4056, USA. *Tom Perry* (yet again), 28 Sandpiper Lane, Crawfordville, FL 32327, USA.

**George E.Challenger's Mysterious World** is the third of Marcus Rowland's *Forgotten Futures* 'period sf role-playing rules and sourcebooks issued as shareware on disk. There's also a 'Forgotten Futures Library' of weird out-of-copyright articles

and arcana. Info: 22 Westbourne Pk Villas, London, W2 5EA.

**Down Deep** (jocularly known as *Down Under Visions*) has been drawn to my attention as a coming anthology of the very finest in Australian sf, edited by Terry Dowling and Harlan Ellison. It has been accepting stories since 1983, but....

## Glittering Pyrites

Pat Cadigan became the first two-time winner of the **Arthur C. Clarke** novel award, receiving this year's £1,000 for *Fools*. In the usual exclusive interview she cried, 'Langford, you dog.' ('So,' said David Garnett ominously, '5 times out of 9, the Clarke has been won by a person of N.American origin and of the female persuasion.' Who is this person? How can we stop her?) • Greg Bear's *Moving Mars* won the **Nebula** for best novel, and Damon Knight was named a SFWA Grand Master. Other Nebulas: Mike Resnick, 'Seven Views of Olduvai Gorge' (novella); David Gerrold, 'The Martian Child' (novellette); Martha Soukup, 'A Defense of the Social Contracts' (short). • **The Philip K. Dick** judges chose Robert Charles Wilson's *Mysterium* as best original US sf paperback. • Iain M. Banks bagged the **BSFA** novel award for *Feersun Endjinn* (runner-up Greg Egan, *Permutation City*). Other winners: Paul Di Filippo, 'The Double Felix' (short; runner-up Brian Stableford, 'Les Fleurs Du Mal'); Jim Burns's *Interzone 79* cover (art). • **Fan Achievement Awards** (voted at Corflu, USA)—fanzine *Blat*, fanwriter Andy Hooper, and fan-artist Dan Steffan. • **Confabulation** once again: Doc Weir award for towering splendiddness, Bernie Evans; Ken McIntyre award for fan art, Dave Harwood (*Attitude 2* cover); the 'Eastercon awards' were dropped.

**Hugo** shortlist ... NOVEL John Barnes, *Mother of Storms*; Michael Bishop, *Brittle Innings*; Lois McMaster Bujold, *Mirror Dance*; Nancy Kress, *Beggars and Choosers*; James Morrow, *Towing Jehovah*. • NOVELLA Michael Bishop, 'Cri de Coeur'; Michael J. Flynn, 'Melodies of the Heart'; Ursula K.Le Guin, 'Forgiveness Day'; Mike Resnick, 'Seven Views of Olduvai Gorge'; Brian Stableford, 'Les Fleurs Du Mal'. • NOVELLETTE Greg Egan, 'Cocoon'; David Gerrold, 'The Martian Child'; Geoffrey A.Landis, 'The Singular Habits of Wasps'; Ursula K.Le Guin, 'Solitude' and 'The Matter of Seggri'; Mike Resnick, 'A Little Knowledge'. • SHORT M. Shayne Bell, 'Mrs Lincoln's China'; Terry Bisson, 'Dead Man's Curve'; Joe Haldeman, 'None So Blind'; Barry Malzberg, 'Understanding Entropy'; Mike Resnick, 'Barnaby in Exile'; Kate Wilhelm, 'I Know What You're Thinking'. • NONFICTION Isaac Asimov, *I, Asimov: a Memoir*; Cathy Burnett/Annie Fenner, *Spectrum: the Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art*; Samuel R.Delany, *Silent Interviews: On Language, Race, Sex, Science Fiction and Some Comics* [not *Silent Interviewing* as on ballot]; Teresa Nielsen Hayden, *Making Book*; Christopher Priest, *The Book on the Edge of Forever*. • DRAMATIC 'All Good Things' (ST:TNG), *Interview with the Vampire, The Mask, Stargate, Star Trek: Generations*. • EDITOR Ellen Datlow, Gardner Dozois, Mike Resnick, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Stanley Schmidt. • ARTIST Jim Burns, Thomas Canty, Bob Eggleton, Don Maiz, Michael Whelan. • ARTWORK Brian Froud/Terry Jones, *Lady Cottington's Pressed Fairy Book*; Michael Koelsch, *Gun, With Occasional Music* cover; Michael Whelan, *Foreigner* cover. • SEMIPROZINE *Interzone*, *Locus*, *New York Review of SF*, *SF Chronicle*, *Tomorrow Speculative Fiction*. • FANZINE *Ansible*, *File 770*, *Habakkuk*, *Lan's Lantern*, *Mimosa*. • FAN WRITER Sharon Farber, Mike Glycer, Andy Hooper, Dave Langford, Evelyn C.Leeper. • PAN ARTIST Brad W.Foster, Teddy Harvia, Linda Michaels, Peggy Ranson, Bill Rotsler. • JOHN W.CAMPBELL AWARD Linda Dunn, David Feintuch, Daniel Marcus, Jeff Noon, Felicity Savage.

**Hugo Footnote**. 477 ballots were cast. Ties led to the 6 Novelle and Short Story finalists; only 3 Artwork items appeared on the necessary 5% of ballots in that category. Best Music was cancelled owing to 'marked lack of interest ... only one nominated item received more than 7 nominations'. [M&DM] Loud noises of 'We told you so!' are predicted from WSFS business meeting pundits who kept saying a Music category wasn't viable. Instead, 'there should be more categories relevant to contemporary sci-fi', grumbles *David Garnett*. 'Best Star Trek novel, for example, and best sequel to a book by a dead author....'

**Thog's Masterclass**. 'Laurent had not gasped or cried out. But Laurent's cock was bobbing uncontrollably. Tristan was in the same transparently miserable state, yet he looked, as ever, quietly majestic.' (Anne Rice, *Beauty's Release*, 1985.)

Ansible 94 © Dave Langford, 1995. Thanks to Paul Barnett, Joanna Bowman, Cuddies, Abigail Frost, David Hippie, Rox Kaveney, Mike & Dabby Mair, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Chris Priest, Jilly Reed, Chris Terran, Thog, and our Hero Distributors: Janice Murray (NA), SCIS, Alan Stewart (Oz), Martin Tudor and Bridget Wilkinson (FATW). 4 May 95