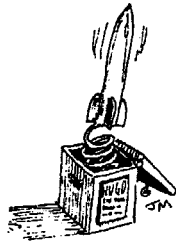


Ansible



Ansible 206 September 2004

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU. <http://ansible.co.uk>. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816 (print) 1740-942X (online). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Joe Mayhew. Available for SAE, freans, nurks, or flying snolls.

Noreascon 4. Some 5,600 people attended the Worldcon in Boston. To those of us enviously watching via the net, the lucky sods all seemed to be having huge fun.... Guests of honour Terry Pratchett, Jack Speer, William Tenn and Peter Weston reportedly performed well.

Hugo Awards for the best of 2003: NOVEL Lois McMaster Bujold, *Paladin of Souls*. NOVELLA Vernor Vinge, 'The Cookie Monster' (*Analog*, Oct). NOVELETTE Michael Swanwick, 'Legions in Time' (*Asimov's*, Apr). SHORT Neil Gaiman, 'A Study in Emerald' (*Shadows over Baker Street*). RELATED BOOK John Grant, Elizabeth L. Humphrey, and Pamela D. Scoville, eds, *The Chesley Awards for SF and Fantasy Art: A Retrospective*. PRO EDITOR Gardner Dozois. PRO ARTIST Bob Eggleton. DRAMATIC (LONG) *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. DRAMATIC (SHORT) Gollum's Acceptance Speech at the 2003 MTV Movie Awards. SEMI-PROZINE *Locus*. FANZINE *Emerald City*. FAN WRITER: Dave Langford. FAN ARTIST Frank Wu. JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD (not a Hugo): Jay Lake. SPECIAL COMMITTEE AWARD Erwin ('Filthy Pierre') Strauss. • Later I heard that I'd been a running gag in Neil Gaiman's MC patter during the Hugos. Neil: 'I talked about the Mysteries and Secrets of the Hugos which, if studied, tend to make one believe that somehow, one Dave Langford is at the bottom of everything (but one must not think these things, I said, that way lies madness) ...' Uncannily, at the Discworld con two weeks before, I'd been appointed Guild Leader of the Plumbers & Dunnikindivers, with special responsibility for monitoring Mr Pratchett's bowel movements—so I was indeed at the bottom of everything.

Retro Hugos for 1953 sf, as not presented in 1954: NOVEL Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*. NOVELLA James Blish, 'A Case of Conscience'. NOVELETTE James Blish, 'Earthman, Come Home'. SHORT Arthur C. Clarke, 'The Nine Billion Names of God'. RELATED BOOK Wernher von Braun, Fred L. Whipple & Willy Ley, *Conquest of the Moon*. PRO EDITOR John W. Campbell, Jr. PRO ARTIST Chesley Bonestell. DRAMATIC (SHORT) *The War of the Worlds*. FANZINE *Slant*. FAN WRITER Bob Tucker.

Japan won the 2007 Worldcon bidding with 935 votes to 692 for Columbus, Ohio—more below. A two-year bid period is now in effect, so 2008 will be voted at L.A.con IV in 2006, and there will be no site selection at Glasgow next year (but both Interaction and L.A.con members can vote on 2008; one fan, one vote). Future Worldcon bids include Chicago and Denver for 2008, Kansas City and Montreal for 2009, and (now a year old) Australia for 2010. Washington DC is a 2011 possibility, if hotels are built near the convention centre.

The Silent Multitude

Brian Aldiss makes another comeback: 'I have returned safely from my visit to Albania. My third visit. There is still no SF to be had there. However, I did discover (along with about fifty others) a Lost City! This is the lost city of Buktrint, founded by Rome four centuries BC. They're still hacking it out of the forest. A magical place....'

Gardner Dozois and Susan Casper were in a cab accident on 31 Aug; Susan emerged unscathed but Gardner's right shoulder was broken in three places. A 2 Sep op repaired the joint with a titanium bolt. Both missed the Worldcon; much sympathy! [JK/E] Gardner writes: 'Have my arm strapped up and am typing one-handed, but things could be worse.'

Terry Pratchett, already interrogated about Hugoesque longings at the Discworld con, dropped pleadingly to his knees as Hugo-maker Peter Weston interviewed him in Boston. Peter: 'I have Hugos. You have lots of money. We can come together.' Terry also confessed that until he began writing YA novels, he had received no reward for his work, except of course a pile of money the size of St Paul's Cathedral.

Adam Roberts marvels: 'The workload of my summer has magically lightened. I had planned to spend it writing a new novel for Gollancz, to be called *Gradisil*. I had thought that this novel was not yet half completed. But checking the French Amazon site amazon.fr I discover that it has verily been finished, published and indeed sold out.'

J.K. Rowling's Edinburgh Festival spot received national newspaper coverage, raptly recording her answer when asked which character was most like herself. 'Hermione ... is an exaggeration of how I was when

I was younger. Harry is a bit like me. If you squeeze together Harry, Ron and Hermione ...' Hopes that this would continue with 'Voldemort is also a bit like me' were dashed when Rowling denounced her creation Dolores Umbridge. 'I am absolutely not like her. She is a horrible woman.' (Julian Hall, *The Independent*, 17 Aug)

Robert Sawyer sees the End Times: 'I would not be encouraging a young person today to be entering science fiction as a profession. I do have a fear that the science-fiction novel is as much an artifact of the 20th century as Victorian literature was of the 19th [...] No matter how hard you yell "clear" and go for the defibrillator paddle, you still can't get that spark of life going again.' (*Toronto Globe & Mail*, 8 Sep) [WD]

Condiddle

14 Sep • **Reading at Borders**, Oxford St, London. Guests TBA.

11-18 Sep • **Milford SF Writers' Conference**, Snowdonia. Contact Top Flat, 8 Bedford St, Kemp Town, Brighton, BN2 1AN.

17-19 Sep • **Wadfest 2004** (Discworld), Callow Top Holiday Park, Ashbourne, Derbyshire. £12.50 reg; camping accommodation. Contact (SAE) 210 College St, Long Eaton, Notts, NG10 4GW.

18 Sep • **Whitchurch Fireworks** (nr Pangbourne) run by the usual fannish suspects. Gates open 5:30pm. Firing 8pm. Beer tent etc.

22 Sep • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Star pub, West Halkin Mews, London, SW1. 6pm on; fans present from 5pm. With Cory Doctorow.

24-26 Sep • **Fantasycon 2004**, Quality Hotel, Walsall. £50 reg; £45 for BFS members and students with ID. Day membership £20, Sat only. Contact Beech House, Chapel Lane, Multon, Cheshire, CW9 8PQ.

2-3 Oct • **Construction 3** (Interaction staff weekend), to be held 'somewhere in the north of England.' The fourth Construction will be in Glasgow itself, Spring 2005. Further details to be announced.

16-17 Oct • **Octocon 2004** (Irish national con), Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth, Co.Kildare, Ireland. €40 reg. Contact Basement Flat, 26 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, Co. Dublin, Ireland. Sterling cheques: £30 to Dave Lally #2 A/C, 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX.

25-27 Feb 05 • **Redemption 05** (B5/B7), Hanover International Hotel, Hinckley. Now £50 reg, £55 at door. Day: £30, or £35 at door. Contact 26 Kings Meadow View, Wetherby, LS22 7FX.

11-13 Mar 05 • **DeciKon: AKFT 10** (*Trek*), Fircroft Hotel, Bourne-mouth. £20 reg to 7 Oct; £25 to 6 Jan; £30 thereafter. Rooms approx £33 pppn. Contact 12 Greenfield Rd, London, N15 5EP. 0208 801 8867.

23-27 Aug 06 • **L.A.con IV** (64th Worldcon), Anaheim, California. \$125 reg, rising to \$150 on 12 Sep. Contact L.A.con IV, c/o SCGFI Inc, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409, USA.

30 Aug - 3 Sep 07 • **Nippon 2007** (65th Worldcon), Yokohama, Japan. GoH Sakyō Komatsu & David Brin (authors), Yoshitaka Amano & Michael Whelan (artists), Takumi Shibano (fan). \$160 reg to 31 Dec; presupporters \$100; other discounts for site voters etc. Contact TBA.

Rumblings • Future Eurocons. At Eurocon 2004, Kiev (Ukraine) beat a late Moscow bid to hold the 2006 event. 2007 bids to date: Denmark, Ireland, Sweden. 2008: Russia and Hungary may bid. [DLa]

• **Discworld Con 2004:** the charity auction raised over £10,000 for the Orangutan Foundation. A fifth DWcon was announced for 2006.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Our wonderful British press is warming up for next year's Worldcon, with Alison Rowat of *The Herald* reckoning she can 'confidently predict that come next August, when the 83rd [sic] World Science-Fiction Convention opens its doors in Glasgow, there will not be an anorak, a roll of tin foil or an anal probe to be had this side of the Cairngorms.' Deeper analysis follows: 'According to excited tourism officials, the planet's biggest sci-fi bash will bring 6000 visitors and £4m to the city. What the mad fools fail to appreciate is the risk involved in rolling out the red carpet to people who are, to a man—and they are all men—wired directly to Mars.' And so on, and on: '... what's the betting bin Laden has a well-worn DVD of Plan Nine From Outer Space in his cave or a natty pair of mail order Vulcan ears?' [DL0]

Booker Prize. The 2004 longlist of 22 novels includes David Mitchell's borderline/slipstream *Cloud Atlas* as the bookies' favourite, and Susanna Clarke's historical fantasy *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* as one of four 'joint second favourites'. The shortlist should be announced on 21 September, and the winner on 19 October. (BBC News) *JS&MrN* is also longlisted for the *Guardian* First Book Award.

R.I.P. *Elmer Bernstein* (1922-2004), prolific Hollywood composer whose genre credits included *Ghostbusters* (1984), died on 18 August aged 82. While briefly under a cloud in the McCarthy years, he scored such low-budget films as *Robot Monster* and *Cat Women of the Moon* (both 1953). ● *Michael Elder* (1931-2004), Scots actor and author whose 1970s sf novels mostly appeared in Robert Hale editions aimed at the UK library market, died on 28 July; he was 73. [PD] ● *George Flynn* (1936-2004), long-time stalwart of the New England SF Association and master proofreader at NESFA Press, died on 29 August. He was 68. Geri Sullivan writes: 'I dedicate the missing "h" in "Massachusetts" on page 1 of the Noreascon 4 Souvenir Book to his memory.' ● *Pete Graham*, US academic librarian and fan, died on 12 August after a long bout with lymphoma. He was 65. Robert Lichtman writes: 'Many of you will remember Pete from his primary period of [fanzine] activity in the '50s. Later he was co-editor with Terry Carr of the early issues of *Lighthouse*, and still later one of the many co-editors of *Void*.' ● *Robert Lewin* (1920-2004), US screenwriter who wrote episodes of *Star Trek: TNG* and *The Man from Atlantis*, died on 28 August. [SFS] ● *Susan Peretz* (1945-2004), US actress whose best-known genre appearance was in *Poltergeist II* (1986), died from breast cancer on 27 August; she was 59. [BB] ● *Seymour Robbie* (1920-2004), US TV and film director responsible for episodes of *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* and *Lost in Space* (among hundreds of other shows), died on 17 June; he was 84. [AIP] ● *Peter Woodthorpe* (1931-2004), UK actor who voiced Gollum in both BBC Radio 4 adaptations of *The Lord of the Rings* and in the Ralph Bakshi animation, died on 12 August aged 72. [GD] ● *Fay Wray* (1907-2004), US actress eternally famous for her part in *King Kong* (1933), died on 8 August aged 96. She also appeared in *Doctor X* (1932) and *The Vampire Bat* (1933, which partly inspired *Batman*). [O/SG]

Thog's Maths Masterclass. Melvyn Bragg explains *pi* on BBC Radio 4: 'the longest number in nature.' (*In Our Time*, 2 Sep)

Mythopoeic Awards for 2003: ADULT LITERATURE Robin McKinley, *Sunshine*. CHILDREN'S Clare B. Dunkle, *The Hollow Kingdom*. SCHOLARSHIP (INKLINGS) John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War*. SCHOLARSHIP (OTHER) John Lawrence & Robert Jewett, *The Myth of the American Superhero*.

As Others See Us II. *The Daily Record* warns that reading fantasy may be bad for your sex life: 'Penguin books quizzed 1000 females about the holiday reads they would look for in a mate. / They found fantasy fiction like JK Rowling's series, JRR Tolkien's *Lord Of The Rings* and Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels put girls off. / Sex and relationships expert Tracey Cox [...] said men escaping into alternative realities appear to have less grip on the real world.' [GF] Oh dear!

Rhysling Awards for sf/fantasy poetry: LONG Theodora Goss, 'Octavia Is Lost in the Hall of Masks' (*Mythic Delirium*, 2003). SHORT Roger Dutcher, 'Just Distance' (*Tales of the Unanticipated*, 7/03).

Random Fandom. *Chris 'Fangorn' Baker*, summoned at incredibly short notice by Steven Spielberg, has flown to LA to work on storyboards and design for *The War of the Worlds* until (probably) Christmas. [PW] ● *Cat Coast & Dave Hicks* announce the birth of Penelope Susan Coast Hicks on 21 August. 'Mother and daughter are fine. Father will sober up any day now.' ● *Howard DeVore* went into hospital with a 'massive heart attack' on 4 August, and has been recovering at home with the help of oxygen. [DL] ● *Steve Green* tolls another bell: 'The British Amateur Press Association, the UK's oldest surviving APA, was officially wound up at its AGM on 17 August. Although its 25th anniversary mailing in 2003 proved a major success [...] recent mailings had suffered from general lethargy and the lure of alternative forums for comics fans on the internet.' ● *Kim Huett* bragged on 30 August: 'I was bitten by a marmoset last week.' ● *Pádraig Ó Méalóid* of *Irish SF News* was married on 13 August: 'as I am not a cruel man, Deirdre will be keeping her own name...' ● *Pat McMurray* can no longer cope with Memory Hole Annexe, a mass of sf con memorabilia 'held in trust for UK fandom', and was seeking some UK fan prepared to take charge of 3 cubic metres of material and 'promise to pass it on to someone appropriate when the time comes.' A rescue committee has since been formed. ● *Shelby Vick* was reported as 'stable' in hospital after surgery following a horrific car crash on 29 August. [rb]

Sidewise Awards for alternate history: LONG Murray Davies, *Collaborator*; SHORT Chris Roberson, 'O One' (*Live Without a Net*). [SFS] ●

But Laura Miller of the *NY Times* puts alternate history in its place: 'Just as counterfactuals employ too much imagination to qualify as historical works, alternate history often labors under too great a load of artificial "facts" to take flight as fiction. It is one thing to create a novel of ideas, and another to produce a novel that's a mere vehicle for its ideas, and this, more than any preoccupation with technology, is what gets alternate history lumped with the lesser forms of science fiction.' [GG]

In Typo Veritas. 'It didn't take him long to decide that Terran was the ideal language for the Blue Demons, despite the fact that the structure of their mouths and the shape of their tongues made it impossible for them to utter explosives.' (Mike Resnick, 'Cobbling Together A Solution', *Amazing Stories* #604, 2004) [JdV]

Prometheus Award for libertarian sf: F. Paul Wilson, *Sims*.

As Others See Us III. Michel Basilières takes a crack at Philip K. Dick in his weblog—skipping over the issue of his unevenness with a flat 'Dick was a terrible writer' (who 'rarely made sense'), and deftly generalizing to sf as a whole: 'The genre is obviously low-grade escapism written for simpleminded adults or, at best, clever kids. Never mind any claims its writers may make for legitimacy, no matter on what grounds or with what evidence. Simply look at the reams of crap flowing through the bookstores like so many Big Macs—Billions Served!—and the truth becomes obvious. Or just look at the book covers.' Tra la.

Seiun Awards for sf in Japanese translation: NOVEL David Brin, *Heaven's Reach*. SHORT STORY Ted Chiang, 'Hell Is the Absence of God'. MEDIA *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. [L]

We Are Everywhere. 'Golf courses, how vile they are. They resemble distant planets, inadequately terraformed by ignorant but powerful alien beings.' (Will Self, *The Independent*, 14 Aug)

Gaylactic Spectrum Awards for positively gender-bending sf: NOVEL Nalo Hopkinson, *The Salt Roads*; SHORT Barth Anderson 'Lark till Dawn, Princess'; OTHER (tie): *Angels in America* (TV) and *Gotham Central #6-#10: Half a Life* by Greg Rucka & Michael Lark. [SFS]

Outraged Letters. *Stephen Baxter*: 'Did you notice the 12 pages the *Grauniad* devoted yesterday (26 Aug) to science fiction? Unfortunately it was sf as voted for by scientists, who, with all respect, knew nothing about sf and didn't like what they did know.... About as useful as surveying theologians for their views on synchronised swimming!' ● *Michael Swanwick* heard a joke while waiting for the Hugo ceremony to start: 'Q. How many Hugo nominees does it take to change a lightbulb? A. It's an honor just to be in the presence of the lightbulb.'

More Award Shortlists. *World Fantasy Awards* novel finalists: K.J. Bishop, *The Etched City*; Kij Johnson, *Fudoki*; Ian R. MacLeod, *The Light Ages*; Jeff VanderMeer, *Veniss Underground*; Jo Walton, *Tooth and Claw*. ● *British Fantasy Awards* novel finalists (August Derleth award): Simon Clark, *Vampyrthic Rites*; Christopher Fowler, *Full Dark House*; Jon Courtenay Grimwood, *Felaheen*; James Herbert, *Nobody True*; Peter Straub, *lost boy lost girl*; Liz Williams, *The Poison Master*.

C.o.A. *Stephen Baxter* has moved, er, somewhere. *New Scientist*, Lacon House, 84 Theobald's Rd, London, WC1X 8NS.

'Is Science Fiction About To Go Blind?' asks *Popular Science* associate editor Gregory Mone, apparently worried that this may be a symptom of too much fondling of one's Singularity. Naturally his concern focuses on that 'faction of geeky writers' comprising Charles Stross and Cory Doctorow.

A205 Update. *Dave Hipple* argues that *Thog's* quote from *A Scanner Darkly* was intentionally deranged, as the contributor should have seen.

Smudgy-Letter Day. On 20 August I forgot to celebrate the 25th anniversary of *Ansible*, first published for the 1979 Brighton Worldcon.

Thog's Masterclass. *Spare Parts Dept.* 'Britt pushed her capri pants down over her sweeping hips. After peeling off her long, shapely legs, she straightened and stretched her nude body luxuriously.' (Adam Coulter, *Debauchee*, 1963) [G] ● *Strange Gestation Dept.* 'Jenella was Natalon's wife. As she was very pregnant, Sis had stood in for her ever since the families had moved up to the Camp, six months ago.' (Anne & Todd McCaffrey, *Dragon's Kin*, 2003). [TW] ● *Neat Tricks Dept.* 'My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, but I managed the one word, "Immortality!"' (Milton Lesser, *Secret of the Black Planet*, 1965) [AR]

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