

ansible



Ansible 226 May 2006

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Concussion in Glasgow. Everybody has been saying what a fine Eastercon this proved to be, and how silly I was to miss it. Grr. • **BSFA Awards.** Novel: Geoff Ryman, *Air*. Short: Kelly Link, 'Magic for Beginners'. Art: Pawel Lewandowski, *Interzone 200* cover. Nonfiction (chosen by expert judges rather than popular vote): Gary K. Wolfe, *Soundings*. • Also presented: the Richard Evans award (for active authors whose commercial success hasn't matched their critical acclaim) went to Pat Cadigan, and the Doc Weir Award (for unsung services to fandom) to Steve Lawson. • **Further Eastercons.** Convoy (Liverpool) won the bidding for 2007 and Orbital (Heathrow) for 2008, both unopposed. See below. • **Newsletters** went on line during Eastercon, and can still be read at www.connewsletter.co.uk. 600 attendees were reported by Saturday evening; the last issue noted that—as a change from drinking the bar dry—fans had eaten the hotel out of butter and ketchup.

The Fortress of Shadows

M.M. Buckner's *War Surf* won the Philip K. Dick Award for best original paperback published in the USA in 2005. A special citation also went to Justina Robson for her *Natural History*. [GVG]

George W. Bush is a skiffy fan, it says here: 'A book that the President did eventually read and endorse is a pulp science-fiction novel: *State of Fear*, by Michael Crichton. Bush was so excited by the story, which pictures global warming as a hoax perpetrated by power-mad environmentalists, that he invited the author to the Oval Office.' A visit which 'was not made public for fear of outraging environmentalists all the more.' (David Remnick, 'Ozone Man', *New Yorker*, 24 Apr) [GVG]

Jeffrey Ford was a winner in the 2006 Edgar [Allan Poe] crime fiction awards, with *Girl in the Glass* as best paperback original.

Lori Jareo, not previously a name to conjure with in *Ansible* circles, wrote a *Star Wars* novel called *Another Hope* and produced it through her own POD outfit, Wordtech. Lacking any authorization from Lucasfilm, the novel was of course shown only to family and friends. As Jareo explained in an interview: 'I wrote this book for myself. This is a self-published story and is not a commercial book. Yes, it is for sale on Amazon, but only my family, friends and acquaintances know it's there.' The incorrectness of that final clause was demonstrated by a flood of gibbering Amazon review comments, much discussion on *Making Light* and other weblogs, the rapid vanishing of Ms Jareo's website, and (soon after) an Amazon decision that THIS TITLE IS CURRENTLY NOT AVAILABLE.

Harry Harrison was honoured at Eurocon 2006 with a European Grand Master award; another went to Arkady and Boris Strugatsky.

Anne McCaffrey anatomized the 2006 SF Hall of Fame inductions: 'I'm delighted to be put in the same company as Andre Norton, Gordie Dickson and Isaac Asimov. [...] I never thought it could happen, since I've admired all three as stars in the fundament of our genre.' [DGH]

Geoff Ryman won his second Arthur C. Clarke Award bookend, plus a £2006 cheque, for *Air*. This follows his BSFA, Sunburst and Tiptree awards for the same novel. The 2006 Clarke event on 26 April had plenty of auditorium space in the Apollo Cinema, Regent Street, and the little tubs of ice cream were much appreciated. So were the copious pre-award drinks and snacks, served in a tiny, futuristic and incredibly noisy bar; no one seemed able to do anything about the canned music. There was a surprise presentation of an extra ACCA bookend to retiring administrator Paul Kincaid, who revealed that the judges' deliberations that afternoon had gone on for longer (by five minutes) than ever before. The new administrator is Paul Billinger. Congratulations to Geoff on becoming another ACCA over-achiever like Pat 'Two-Bookends' Cadigan and China 'Two-Bookends' Miéville.

Jane Yolen writes: 'My darling husband of 44 years (and 46 years together) David Stemple, died on March 22 after a long and gallant battle with cancer. He had a lovely final day, in which he worked with his poetry group, then managed to eat in the kitchen (something he hadn't done in days). Then he went back to bed. He knew our granddaughters were safely out of the house, and so closed his eyes and went into a deep sleep from which he could not be roused. I held his hand

and stroked his head, and as son Adam played through "Jamie Across the Water" twice, I told David he could go across the water, that we all loved him and knew how hard he'd fought. After the last strum of the guitar, he took five shuddering breaths—and was gone.'

Contraprop

8 May • **Reading at Borders**, Oxford St, London. Top floor, 6:30pm. With Pat Cadigan, Tom Arden and Deirdre Coughlin. Forthcoming in June: Justina Robson, Adam Roberts. July: Amanda Hemingway.

13 May • **BSFA/SF Foundation** open sf event (including AGMs), Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1. 10am-5pm. Free to all. With Stephen Baxter, Bruce Sterling, and Juliet E. McKenna.

16 May • **Bruce Sterling Rants** at SPACE Media Arts, 129-131 Mare St, Hackney, London, E8 3RH. 7pm. Free—no advance bookings. Contact: heather at spacestudios org uk; phone 0208 525 4339.

24 May • **BSFA Open Meeting**, upstairs in The Star, West Halkin Mews, London, SW1. 5pm onward. With Rog Peyton.

27 May • **plokta.con** π, Horseshoe Inn, 26 Melior Street, London, SE1 3QP (not far from London Bridge Station). 12 noon - 12 midnight. £3 reg, students £2.50; all proceeds to League of Fan Funds causes. A mini-convention on the TAFF deadline day, at which the 2006 TAFF result will be announced—see 'Fanfundery' below.

2 Jun • **British Fantasy Society** open night, Devereux pub, Essex St, off the Strand, London. 6.30pm onwards. All welcome. Future BFS pub meetings are expected on 1 Sep and, provisionally, 8 Dec.

4-6 Aug • **MeCon 9**, Queen's Elms Centre, Malone Rd, Belfast. Now £18/€27 reg; £20/€30 at door. \$5/€8 supp. Cheques to QUB Science Fiction & Fantasy Society. Contact: 99 Malone Rd, Belfast, BT9 6SP

6-9 Apr 07 • **Convoy** (Eastercon), Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. GoH Judith Clute, Peter Dickinson, Robin McKinley, and Sharyn November. £45 reg, £22.50 supp, rising 1 Jul 06. Contact Convoy, 81 Western Rd, London, E13 9JE. Time is tighter than usual: 'Due to no bid last year this is a one year bid, so we ask people to join as soon as possible.'

21-23 Sep 07 • **Eurocon 2007**, Valby Medborgerhus, Copenhagen, Denmark. GoH David A. Hardy, Anne McCaffrey, more TBA. Rates until 1 Jan 07: DKK100, £10, €15, \$18, NOK100, SEK 130. See the website at www.eurocon2007.dk for contact and bank transfer details.

21-24 Mar 08 • **Orbital** (Eastercon), Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. GoH Neil Gaiman, Tanith Lee, China Miéville, Charles Stross, and Rog Peyton (fan). £35 reg, rising to £45 on 1 Jun 06. Contact 8 Windmill Close, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 3AL.

?? 08 • **Eurocon 2008** will be held in Moscow, Russia. More TBA.

Rumblings • **Year of the Teledu** product recall: 'Anyone who bought a promotional t-shirt from YoT dealers table at Eastercon is invited to contact us for maintenance instructions and a replacement.'

• **L.A.con IV** (Worldcon 2006) celebrates the fortieth anniversary of *Star Trek*, first shown Sep 1966. Wait for 2013 and *Dr Who's* fiftieth....

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. *Interviewer:* 'Were you a big sci-fi fan before [Dr Who]?' *Billie Piper:* 'Not really. But when I read the scripts, I found it was a great balance between sci-fi, which can be a bit detached, and real, genuine, emotions.' (*BBC Top of the Pops Magazine*, 19 Apr) [JG]

• James Dyson of vacuum cleaner fame declares '... a loathing of *Dr Who*. I don't like science fiction, I like the real thing and there's a pretentiousness about *Dr Who* that I couldn't stand.' (*Independent*, 16 Apr)

Nebula Awards. NOVEL Joe Haldeman, *Camouflage*. NOVELLA Kelly Link, 'Magic for Beginners'. NOVELETTE Kelly Link, 'The Faery Handbag'. SHORT Carol Emshwiller, 'I Live with You'. SCRIPT Joss Whedon, *Serenity*. • ANDRE NORTON AWARD (YA; first presentation) Holly Black, *Valiant: A Modern Tale of Faerie*. • DAMON KNIGHT MEMORIAL GRAND MASTER AWARD (previously announced) Harlan Ellison for lifetime achievement; William F. Nolan as Author Emeritus. [SFWA]

R.I.P. *Lisa A. Barnett* (1958-2006), US fantasy author who published three novels in collaboration with her partner Melissa Scott, died from

cancer on 2 May. [JS] • **Janet Figg** (née Shepherd, 1957-2005), UK fan who worked on many Eastercons and both Glasgow Worldcons, died from cancer on 27 December; she was 48. Mike Figg writes: 'She carried on living life to the full right up until the end and passed away peacefully at home in the company of good friends.' • **Diane Marchant**, Australian fan who in 1972 formed the Aussie *Star Trek* Welcomittee with Jacqueline Lichtenberg, and in 1974 published the first known 'K/S' (slash) fan fiction, died from pancreatic cancer on 5 April. [AIP] • **Muriel Spark** (1918-2006), major UK novelist whose work sometimes had a sinisterly fantastic flavour, died on 13 April aged 88. Her *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* entry cites several borderline-supernatural novels, of which *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960) is the best known. • **Kurt von Trojan** (1937-2006), Australian author of *The Transing Syndrome* (1985) and *The Atrocity Shop* (1998), died on 22 March after a very short fight against cancer. The week before his death, Altair Australia Books presented him with his last published book, a collection of his award winning and some new stories, *When I Close My Eyes*. It was the day of his 69th birthday. [RNS] • **Angus Wells** (1943-2006), UK sf and fantasy writer and former book editor, died in a fire at his house on the night of 11 April. [CP] Early genre novels were the tv sf tie-in *Star Maidens* (1977) as by Ian Evans, and the fantasy *Swordsmistress of Chaos* (1978) with Robert Holdstock, opening the 'Raven' sequence to which Wells contributed two solo novels. Later fantasy series are 'Book of the Kingdoms', 'Godwars' and 'Exiles'; his last book was the non-series *Yesterday's Kings* (2001). In the mid-1970s he edited several 'Best Of' sf collections showcasing individual authors.

As Others See Us II. Charlie (*Eternal Sunshine* ...) Kaufman issues the usual disclaimer about Philip K. Dick: "Dick has certainly been very influential on my work," Kaufman admits. "I like the fact that his science fiction isn't really science fiction at all." (*Sight & Sound* interview by Jamie Russell, Nov 2004) [AM] • How to rescue Stanislaw Lem's reputation: '... there is nothing remotely sci-fi about his plots. Even in the Pirx series, which is set in space or on distant planets, the story is always driven by something else: a moral dilemma, a logical paradox or a detective-style mystery.' (*Moscow Times* letter, 3 Apr) [NH]

Get Carter. Hardcover Theatre of Minneapolis adapts works that are safely in the public domain. Their latest, opening this month, is Edgar Rice Burroughs's *A Princess of Mars* (1912; book version 1917). But the very rich Burroughs estate has a cunning plan. The character John Carter was trademarked for a 1950s comic, and though this trademark was specific to the comic, the estate wants \$1,000. (*Minneapolis Star Tribune*) [DL] *Ansible* suggests that Hardcover should play safe by changing the hero's name to John PublicDomainYouGreedyBastards.

Outraged Letters. *Andy Sawyer* enjoyed Samit Basu's 2001 fantasy spoof *The Simoquin Prophecies*, featuring much strange homage: "The Guild of Superb Heroes was a group of people from all over the world, who had gathered in Kol to unite against the forces of Danh-Gem. Dressed in outlandish costumes, they would tell tall tales of their own exploits, and proudly proclaim that Kol was safe even if the Hero of Simoquin never actually turned up. Led by the Man of Reinforced Iron, a former champion of the WAK, and his brother, a trapeze artist named The Skimmer, they gave the people of Kol occasional hope and frequent mirth. Children ran home and told their parents about the mighty **Thog the Barbarian**, and a sumo wrestler from east Xi'en who painted himself purple and called himself the Unbelievable Bulk." • **Keith Walker** grumbles that the British Fantasy Society is 're-inventing its history' with a claim that the late lamented Ken Bulmer was the first BFS president: "This is I suspect yet another mental aberration of my bete noir Peter Coleborn who when he doesn't know something merely confabulates. [...] It was as first BFS President that I was dragged to the BFS AGM and my first convention. At that first AGM I handed over the Presidency to Ramsey Campbell ..." Ken Bulmer's presidency followed Ramsey's.

Black Books. Kazuo Ishiguro's Clarke-nominated novel *Never Let Me Go* is shortlisted for a James Tait Black Memorial Award.

Fanfunderly. *TAFF*. Don't forget the 27 May deadline. Vote early and restrain yourself from voting often. See *plokta.con* π above. • **ENFF?** Interaction (Worldcon 2005) hopes to sponsor a one-off trip from Europe to the Nippon 2007 Worldcon. But await a full announcement with a call for nominations before planning your campaign.... [CB]

C.o.A. *Sydney J. Bounds* (from 5 May), 6 Haygate Court, Haygate Road, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 1SR.

As Others See Us III. Kevin Brownlow on *High Treason* (1928), "The film is remarkably prophetic in some ways, yet also naïve, as science fiction invariably is." (*David Lean: A Biography*, 1997) [GD] • On BBC Radio 4's *Quote Unquote* (2 Apr) *The War of the Worlds* was cited

as containing possibly the first mention of a motor car in literature, causing Nigel Rees to reply with enormous wit: 'It depends, of course, on what you mean by literature'. How we all laughed. Perhaps surprisingly, Brian Sewell leapt to H.G. Wells's defence. [DK]

Small Press. *Science Fiction Chronicle* merged with its DNA fiction stablemate *Absolute Magnitude* for the Feb/Mar 2006 issue. Warren Lapine's editorial reveals: 'For the next six to twelve months we plan to combine *SFC* with our fiction magazines on a rotating basis. Next month we'll combine *SFC* with *Dreams of Decadence*, the month after that *SFC* will combine with *Fantastic Stories*, and then we'll start all over again with *Absolute Magnitude*.' Payment for all these magazines is being standardized at a tasty 'one to five cents per word'; as a result, 'Science Fiction Chronicle will once again be eligible for the Best Semi-Professional Hugo Award for 2006.' [GFM] *SFC* became just *Chronicle* to avoid confusion with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, but quietly restored 'Science Fiction' to its title in the Dec/Jan 2006 issue.

Thog's Astronomy Masterclass. "The Moon is only about one-quarter of the size of Earth. It does not spin on its axis so it keeps the same face towards the Sun at all times." (Lynn D. Newton, *Meeting the standards in primary science—A guide to the ITT NC*, 2000)

Bram Stoker Shortlist. NOVEL David Morrell, *Creepers*; Charlee Jacob, *Dread in the Beast*; Gary Braunbeck, *Keepers*; Tom Piccirilli, *November Mourns*. • ANTHOLOGY Julia and R.J. Sevin, *Corpse Blossoms*; Del Howison & Jeff Gelb, *Dark Delicacies*; Nancy Holder & Nancy Kilpatrick, *Outsiders*; Stephen Jones, *Weird Shadows Over Innsmouth*. • COLLECTION Chuck Palahniuk, *Haunted*; China Miéville, *Looking for Jake*; Kelly Link, *Magic for Beginners*; Joe Hill, *Twentieth Century Ghosts*. • NONFICTION Sam Weller, *The Bradbury Chronicle*; Stephen Jones & Kim Newman, *Horror: Another 100 Best Books*; Loren Rhoads, *Morbid Curiosity #9*; Michael McCarty, *More Giants of the Genre*; Rhonda Wilcox, *Why Buffy Matters: The Art of 'Buffy The Vampire Slayer'*; • LIFE ACHIEVEMENT Peter Straub. See www.horror.org for other categories.

Random Fandom. *Harry Bell* appeared on *Balderdash and Piffle* (BBC2, 17 Apr), thrilling OED researchers with an early print appearance of the word 'balti' in a Silicon 6 progress report from 1982. • *Ellen Datlow*, *Eileen Gunn*, *Martin Hoare* and others were photographed in protective overalls at the Chernobyl reactor—all part of the Eurocon experience. • *Eastercon Horror*. Several Concussion attendees suffered from a nasty gastric bug. Its effects gave Martin Easterbrook a mild heart attack; he was taken to Glasgow's Western Infirmary and kept in until the Wednesday after the con. John Jarrold, also stricken, couldn't MC the awards ceremony as planned: 'Bloody hell. I felt awful about letting people down. Claire Brialey has done a wonderful job as BSFA Awards Administrator over the last three years, ably supported by Mark Plummer, and I was very sorry not to be able to say that, and thank her personally for her tireless efforts. / I was on the mineral water all weekend, because of a dozen meetings with agency clients, some of whom I was meeting for the first time. Chaz Brenchley noted the irony of getting a stomach bug in those circumstances ...' • *Harry Turner* was in hospital in April; a get-well card was organized at Eastercon. [CB] • *Martin Morse Wooster* ingratiated himself by quoting your editor in his Stanislaw Lem appraisal for the *Wall Street Journal* on 8 April.

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of Uncertain Albedo*. 'Her shining hair absorbs all light.' (Joan D. Vinge, *World's End*, 1984) [BA] • *Sheepish Metaphor Dept*. 'The big destrier liked fire no more than Sandor Clegane had, but the horse was easier to cow.' (George R.R. Martin, *A Clash of Kings*, 1998) [DG] • *Neat Tricks Dept*. 'I left him scratching his head with the circuit board wrapped up in the spare shirt in my backpack.' (Brian Rideout, 'Pupate' in *Neometropolis*, June 2005) [DL] • *Dept of Understatement*. 'Lancinations of unendurable ecstasy ravened through his consciousness, starbursts of warring sensory impulses that slipped once more to coherent phenomena, an instant before his mind shattered to follow into final chaos.' (Karl Edward Wagner, 'The Dark Muse', 1975) [BA] • *Miss Manners Dept*. 'The dragon's drool splat upon the verdant ground, a hiss of steam spiraling up in its wake.' (Michele Hauf, *Seraphim*, 2004) [BMS] • *Dept of Martial Arts Truisms*. 'It is obviously impossible for an unarmed man to kill a bigger one with his bare hands.' (Margaret St. Clair, *The Games of Neith*, 1960) [BA]

Ansible 226 © Dave Langford, 2006. Thanks to Brian Ameringen, Claire Brialey, Gary Dalkin, David Goldfarb, Gollancz (who reissued *The Wyrdest Link* in April), John Goodridge, Niall Harrison, David G. Hartwell, David Kennedy, Denny Lien, Dave Linton, Alastair Montgomery, George R. Morgan, Andrew I. Porter, Chris Priest, Brian M. Scott, Joyce Scrivner, Robert N. Stephenson, Gordon Van Gelder, and our Hero Distributors: Rog Peyton (Brum Group), Janice Murray (N.America), SCIS, and Alan Stewart (Australia). 7 May 06