

Ansible



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MORE DEBAUCHERY. Our favourite Gollancz editor Jo Fletcher's 40th birthday was marked by a surprise party in Hampstead, organized by Steve Jones. The most admired present was a clockwork skull that chattered with its teeth when wound up (and so would you). A fairly glittering throng included John Brosnan, who wanted to know if you could buy chocolate Terry Pratchetts; John & Judith Clute, now locked in deadly combat with Camden building regulations; Rob Holdstock, who paled on learning that the press release for his new Earthlight sale alleges that the tippie of choice in Holdstock/Jarrolld pub sessions is a half-pint of lager shandy; Roz Kaveney, babbling about plans for a lengthy US research trip as Kathy Acker's biographer; and Paul McAuley. Gollancz staff dwelt with morbid glee on a hostile takeover bid from Macmillan. Discreet flyers on every available surface advertised versatile Jo's poetry collection *Shadows of Light and Dark* (£12.99/£21.50, £1 UK p&p, from Alchemy Press, 46 Oxford Rd, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6DT) and her secret powers of choral singing. Gosh.

The Burrowers Beneath

Pat Cadigan continues to ingratiate: 'Langford, you dog. First, you stopped libeling me in that rag you publish. Then you failed to show up at my book launch. Now I am off to the US to promote, with shameless yet unabashed enthusiasm, my new novel, *Tea From An Empty Cup...*' She's back, and speaking at Paddington Library (billed as Queen of Cyberpunk) on 23 Nov. More library fun: Gwyneth Jones, Pimlico, 10 Nov; John Whitbourn, Marylebone, 18 Nov; Paul McAuley, ditto, 24 Nov; Peter Hamilton, Paddington children's library, 26 Nov (most book tickets: 0171 641 4475); C.Greenland & R.Holdstock, Westminster City Archives, 10 St Anne's St, SW1P 2XR, 30 Nov. All talks 6:30-7:45pm.

Sam J. Lundwall was reported in a Swedish newspaper as having published his last book: 'I woke up one day and realized I couldn't publish books any more. The losses have been too big.' Lundwall-writers note that the same paper quoted him as 'quitting publishing forever' on several past occasions, each followed by a relapse.... [AE]

Chris Priest learned again that sf is ok if written by the Right People, like novelist Maggie Gee. Radio 4's *Start the Week* featured hard man Jeremy Paxman grilling her approximately thus: 'Now don't get me wrong. I can't stand science fiction. All those stupid ideas. But your book is SET IN A PLAUSIBLE FUTURE! It takes TRENDS FROM THE REAL WORLD! You are a woman but you WRITE IN THE VOICE OF A MAN! It has GLOBAL COOLING! I'm impressed, I'm amazed, where do you get ideas like that?'

Darrell Schweitzer fears that *Weird Tales* contributors may flee in droves at A132's innocent mention that *WT* is now edited by George Scithers. 'No, it is actually edited by George Scithers and Darrell Schweitzer, as it has been for many years, even, I admit, the years in which I was listed as sole editor. The only change (a significant one) is that *WT* has a new publisher, Warren Lapine's DNA Publications.... *WT* now has 3 companion magazines, *Absolute Magnitude* (sf, ed Warren), *Aboriginal SF* (ed Charles Ryan), and *Dreams of Decadence* (vampires, ed Angela Kessler). The most important result of this is that *WT* is really a quarterly, for the first time since 1990. The only "editorial" change is that we no longer list George as publisher, so we now list him as co-editor.' DNA is now also publishing the small-press *Pirate Writings*.

Jan Watson foresees Doom: 'For the final day of their Millennium Con the Israelis have hired none other than Armageddon, namely the museum at Megiddo (which otherwise is just a lot of baked earth). A fleet of cars will head there climactically from Tel Aviv. Truly inspired.'

Allan Weiss told *Ansible* that, contrary to Lloyd Penney's A135 report, he has no lawsuit against the *Toronto Star*. Also, Karl Schroeder of the writers' organization SF Canada notes that although 4 of 100+ members did resign over the Weiss/Sawyer lawsuit, this wasn't for fear of litigation but because SF Canada refused to take sides despite alleged social pressure by Robert Sawyer's supporters on those trying to stay neutral. Karl adds: 'Allan Weiss has never sued anyone before, and has no other known enemies; consequently there is no belief in the community as a whole that Mr. Weiss represents a threat to any other writer.'

Consilience

Nov • **C.S.Lewis Centenary Exhibition**, Belfast Central Library. Contact Linda Greenwood, BCI, Royal Ave, Belfast, BT1 1EA.

14 Nov • **Dangercon 7** (*Dangermouse*), Ruskin House, Croydon. 11am-11pm. Fan GoH Alan Sullivan. £5 reg at door. Cheques to Robert Newman, 37 Keens Rd, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1AH; 0181 686 6800.

13-15 Nov • **Novacon 28**, Britannia Hotel, New St, Birmingham. GoH Paul J. McAuley. No more advance memberships; £35 at door or £15/day. Contact 14 Park St, Lye, Stourbridge, W.Midlands, DY9 8SS.

13-15 Nov • **OryCon 20**, Doubletree Hotel, Portland, OR, USA. No more advance memberships; \$45 at door. Several guests, including (hence *Ansible* listing of a US non-Worldcon) me. (503) 283-0802.

20-22 Nov • **Armadacon X**, Cophorne Hotel, Plymouth. £25 reg, £19 unwaged. Contact PO Box 38, Plymouth; 01752 267873/812698.

25 Nov • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Jubilee pub nr Waterloo, 7pm on; fans around from 5pm. With Robert Holdstock. (No Dec meeting. As of 27 Jan, meetings move to the Florence Nightingale: see *Rumblings*.)

6-7 Mar 99 • **Microcon 19**, University of Exeter. Fee update: no advance booking since 'MicroCon is FREE! Well, not entirely, we ask that all attendees make a contribution to the University Rag charities.' Contact 16 Fairlea Close, Dawlish, Devon, EX7 0NN.

9 May 99 • **Fantasy Fair**, Cresset Exhibition Centre, Peterborough. 10:30am-4pm. Contact Bruce King, 01480 216372.

?Summer 00 • **Construction** (conrunning), somewhere in UK. The flyer makes us hope there will be seminar's on the use of apostrophe's. Contact Ground Floor Flat, 32 Theobald Rd, Canton, Cardiff, CFS 1LP.

Rumblings • **London Move**. Various fan groups plan to move from the Jubilee pub (current site of 1st-Thur-of-month London sf meetings) to the nearby Florence Nightingale, after Jubilee landlord Kevin transfers to the FN on 9 Jan 99. Kevin promises guest beers, upstairs function space (holds 150) thrown open on first Thursdays, disabled access on request, and substantial improvements to the FN's present taintiness. Directions for Jubilee-goers wanting to take a look: walk to Westminster Bridge end of York Rd and clockwise round the roundabout. • **Corflu 2001** ... Tommy Ferguson announces a Belfast bid for this fanzine convention. Contact 40 Deramore Ave, Belfast, BT7 3ER; 01232 293275.

Infinitely Improbable

World Fantasy Awards. John Clute and John Grant danced a jig at the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy's* PROFESSIONAL category win. Also: NOVEL Jeffrey Ford, *The Physiognomy*. NOVELLA Richard Bowes, 'Streetcar Dreams'. SHORT P.D.Cacek, 'Dust Notes'. ANTHOLOGY *Bending The Landscape* ed Nicola Griffith & Stephen Pagel. COLLECTION Brian McNaughton, *The Throne of Bones*. ARTIST Alan Lee. NON-PROFESSIONAL Pedogan & Bremer. LIFE ACHIEVEMENT Edward L.Ferman, Andre Norton. [GVG]

Publishers & Sinners. Virgin Publishing launch a new sf/fantasy imprint, Virgin Worlds, in March 1999. Policy is to publish new or little-known British writers; the three initial novels are by Trevor Hoyle and two unknowns. Extrapolating from a recent experience with Virgin Trains, *Ansible* assumes these books will appear late, move at a snail's pace, and completely miss the connection with any follow-up volume.

Random Fandom. **Paul Barnett** (John Grant) is marrying Pamela Scoville ... or rather, 'Pam and I are already married, but plan to sign the legal documents just before Eastercon.' • **Gregory & Joan Benford** have reportedly split up. • **Vince Clarke** was making fair progress and hoped that he'd 'be eating pulp (at least) by Xmas.' But he's now back in hospital with severe depression: Gillies Ward, St.Mary's Hospital, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6LT. • **Neil Craig** cunningly publicizes his Glasgow sf/comics shop 'Futureshock' with swastikas and pro-Serbian sentiments in the window, plus tasteful soundbites like 'Bosnian Muslims were famous for staging massacres of their own people and blaming the Serbs.' [C] • **Electrical Eggs UK** (disabled access at cons) plans an illustrated 'Easter Eggs' calendar: interested artists contact F4, 10 Atlas Rd, Springburn, Glasgow, G21 4TE. • **Kevin McVeigh** warns literary pilgrims that 'The

Griffin—the Glasgow pub featured in I.Banks's *Espedair, Street*—is to close for modernization (plastic, chrome and fake panelling probably). ● *Steve Stiles* is the first recipient of the Rotsler Memorial Fanzine Artist Award (\$300, a plaque and sempiternal fame), acknowledging his 39 years of fine fan art. SCIFI, the Southern California Institute for Fan Interests, set up the award. (GFS) ● *Peter Wareham* found this clue 'in the *Daily Telegraph's* General Knowledge Crossword, 10 Oct: "What Romulan and Klingon ships do to be rendered invisible (5)". In the *Telegraph!* What is the world coming to? ● *Pam Wells's* excuse for missing Novacon is 'a parachute jump in aid of Children in Need'. Sponsors are urged to send Pam all their money: Flat 6, 7 Bootham Tce, York, YO30 7DH, cheques to University of York Mature Students' Association. Videotapes of the death-defying event may well become available!

C.o.A. *Amanda Baker* & *Dave Clements*, 70 Birchwood Gdns, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF4 1HY. *Keith* & *Alison Brooke*, 53 Chapel Rd, Brightlingsea, Essex, CO7 0HB. *John Collick* & *Judith Fenny*, Flat 1, Halterworth House, Halterworth Ln, Romsey, Hants, SO51 9AE. *Gary Deindorfer*, Trent Center West, 465 Greenwood Ave #1104, Trenton, NJ 08609, USA. *Tom Digby*, 1118 Oakmont Dr #5, San Jose, CA 95117, USA. *Mike* & *Diana Glycer* (and *Pile 770*), 705 Valley View Ave, Monrovia, CA 91016, USA. *Charles Platt*, PO Box M, Jerome, AZ 86331, USA. *Chris Terran* (and *Matrix*), 53 Riviera Gdns, Leeds, W.Yorks, LS7 3DW.

Oh Dear. Marvel Comics recalled over 250,000 copies of their *Wolverine* comic book when a passing remark about an adversary—the killer known as Sabretooth—turned out to have been lettered as 'the kike known as Sabretooth.' Just to make things worse, the offending issue was scheduled for sale on Yom Kippur.... Although it seems that no copies were actually sold, Marvel have grovelled extensively. [BB]

R.I.P. *Ted Hughes* (1930-1998). Poet Laureate since 1984, died of cancer on 29 Oct; a great deal of his verse was fantastic, and his children's fantasy *The Iron Man* (1968) is widely loved. ● *Roddy McDowall* (1928-1998), the one-time child movie star best known to sf fans for his adult appearances in *Planet of the Apes* (1968) and its sequels, died of cancer on 3 Oct. He was 70. [BB]

Knives Out in Australia. The *MUP Encyclopaedia of Australian SF and Fantasy* (ed Paul Collins, assoc eds Sean McMullen & Steven Paulsen; MUP is Melbourne University Press) was not universally welcomed, despite fine bibliographies. While numerous minor writers get kindly and even gushy entries, laden with cosy trivia apparently lifted from author questionnaires, multiple award-winner Terry Dowling is singled out by Collins for dismissive sneers ('obscure ... impenetrable ... obtuse') found nowhere else in the book. Critics are unhappy: Damien Broderick calls this 'regrettable', Peter Nicholls prefers 'disgraceful', and to John Clute's finely tuned nostrils the treatment of Dowling 'stank'. It is said that the associate editors objected strongly, with McMullen returning his editorial fee and asking that his name be removed from future editions.

Small Press. For inscrutable reasons *Bernard Pearson* sends his artistic creation 'The Millenium Bug', an enjoyably disgusting beastie some 3' high which is busily rending and devouring a computer. Gorbimey. Enquiries: Windy Ridge Studio, Woolpit, Suffolk, IP30 9SH.

To Boldly Sue ... Paramount were unhappy about Sam Ramey's book *The Joy of Trek*, and succeeded in having it banned 'pending the outcome of a full-blown copyright infringement trial in which the studio will seek over \$22 million in damages.' The judge opined that Ramey's use of plot summaries and exposition of *Star Trek* background (which 'fictitious history is a story, created and owned by Paramount') went far beyond fair use. An appeal is in progress. Paramount's lawyers cocked things up by telling bookshops that sales of existing stock—allowed under the injunction—would be in contempt of court ... thus providing Ramey's company Carol Publishing with grounds for a countersuit.

The Perils of Plasticine. *Neil Gaiman* exposes bits of *A135* as old news: '*Archangel: Thunderbird* (which I tend to think of as Tony Luke's Thing) has been showing on the UK Sci-Fi Channel for about six months now, so I fear that my TV debut has already happened. I'm sure I'd be a shoo-in for the Best Heavily Electronically Treated Plasticine Demon Voice BAFTA award, if only there was one.' Our reporter *Joe McNally* blames the astute publicity folk who sent 'advance promotional bumf in mid-Sept. Neil's next thrilling role is as "an alien in a CD-ROM game called *Flying Saucers* ... where I had to say things like "don't give up little saucer buddy!" and "aaargh!" a lot. If *Flying Saucers* ever comes out, *Ansible* readers around the globe will write to you saying "I was playing this game and guess who said "aaargh" a lot but Neil Gaiman."'

Wedding Bells. *London*, 24 Oct: Even Dr Plokta's superfluous technology can't fix the weather, and the heavens opened to mark the most stupendous *plokta* wedding since ... well, the last one. This time it was

Alison Scott and Steve Cain. Apparently the rain had only been really bad during the parts of the wedding meant to happen outside. ● The bride sported an elaborate ivory silk and net hat that you'd almost have expected to get in the way of her drinking, and an extremely elegant hairstyle. It's not meant to be important what anyone else wore. ● Alison and Steven arrived at their Jubilee Tavern reception to find many of the guests already there getting confused about which pub meeting this was. Unfeasible quantities of champagne were unloaded from the car. "Don't forget you've got a daughter in there too!" yelled Friend of the Family Sue Mason, evidently not for the first time. ● The late arrival of the wedding party was blamed on the traditional excuse that the bride had been editing the digital wedding photos; pint in one hand and laptop in the other, Alison treated evening guests to a computerized presentation of the festivities and floods they'd missed. We marvelled in equal measure at the wonders of modern technology and the sight of Michael Abbott in a tie. (Mark Plummer & Claire Brialley)

Chug's Coppediting Masterclass. *Richard Bleiler* remembers: 'My all-time horrible copyeditor story involves Gale: I did the piece on Thomas Burke for the recently issued *Dictionary of Literary Biography 197*. One of my original lines involved a story in which a girl's father rents her bed to indigent seamen. The copyeditor changed bed to *body*....'

Some Hope. Millions of fans rushed me *Variety's* report on the coming US TV movie *Reaper*, featuring 'a computer virus that produces images that can kill anyone who sees them.' Now A.E. Van Vogt turned a profit on *Alien's* pillaging of his 'Discord in Scarlet', and I'm wondering whether anyone remembers my own stories 'Blit' (*Interzone* 25, 1988) and 'What Happened at Cambridge IV' (*Digital Dreams*, 1990)....

Ici On Parle Raman. *Joe McNally* is at the cutting edge again: "Dropped into Borders on Oxford Street this afternoon to check out their "untranslated literature" section.... Fannish linguists will be glad to hear that they sell Anne Rice and Arthur C. Clarke in the original French.'

Fanfunder. *Joseph Nicholas* bewailed early apathy about the 1999 GUFF race to Aussiecon 3: 'Is everyone so rich that they can afford to make the trip at their own expense, and doubtless fuel their reception with turcons of caviar and magnums of champagne?' Deadline extended to 30 Nov 1998. Candidates should send nominations (3 Euro, 2 Aussie), 100-word platforms and £10 'bond' to Joseph, 15 Jansons Rd, S.Tottenham, London, N15 4JU. *Stop Press:* Julian Headlong and Paul Kincaid are standing, nobly planning to nominate each other and do joint GUFF Profile-Raising. ● **DUFF:** US candidates for a trip to that same Aussie Worldcon are Lise Eisenberg, Janice Gelb and Andy Hooper. Ballots available in UK real soon now, on request from *Ansible*.

Outraged Letters ... *Richard Lynch* disputes the universal obituary listing of Leigh Couch as a member of First Fandom, which requires visible fan activity before 1/1/38. Fanac from a girl of 12 (LC was born in 1925) would arguably have been recorded in fan histories.... ● *Robert Newman* listed all the Z29 people involved in that Neil Gaiman TV debut (see above) and went on: 'Criticism of *Archangel: Thunderbird* is a criticism of members of Z29. We therefore declare a fatwah against Joe McNally for calling it "sub-manga nonsense", even though that is blatantly true and it is the biggest pile of wank I've ever seen.'

Group Gropes. *The Black Lodge*, Birmingham's/sf/horror pub meeting, has moved: 1st Tue each month at Old Centemples, Livery St (Snow Hill Station side entrance), 8:30pm on. [SG] ● *London (Media) Group*, Sat 21 Nov from 10am, New Connaught Rooms, Covent Garden.

Chug's Masterclass. *Dept of True Romance in Author's Acknowledgements:* 'And two very special people, Richard and Kahlan, for choosing me to tell their story. Their tears and triumphs have touched my heart. I will never be the same again.' (Terry Goodkind, *Wizard's First Rule*, 1994) [CB] ● 'Her blond cheeks gradually turned to a darker color as the day—unlike other days, which were often as slow as forever—devoured itself, digesting hours in great gulps.' (A.E. Van Vogt, 'Humans, Go Home!', 1969) [JB] ● *Dept of Short Attention Spans:* p10. 'Pick ... was a six-inch-high sylvan, a forest creature ... with body and limbs of twigs and hair and beard of moss.' p28. 'A second look suggested [Pick] was a poorly designed child's doll made out of tree parts. He was a sylvan, in fact, six inches high ...' (Terry Brooks, *A Knight of the Word*, 1998) [PBa] ● *Dept of Detached Privates:* 'Some detached part of him heard the click of two sets of teeth meeting after they cleaved through skin, meat, veins and urethra.' (Simon Clark, *Vampyrria*, 1998) [PB]

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