

# Ansible



Ansible 139 February 1999

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU, UK. Fax 0118 966 9914. ISSN 0265-9816. E-mail ansible@cix.co.uk. Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Atom, Arcturan Kama Sutra, 'The Butterfly Finds The Topmost Blossom!'

**EDITORIAL.** I'm busy with hordes of book reviews for Amazon.co.uk (to the point where Mike Ashley's *Mammoth Book of Fantasy* blurs in my mind with Steve Baxter's *Fantasy Book of Mammoths*), but begin to hear the terrible siren song of Windows programming as the mild success of my *SF Encyclopedia* CD-ROM viewer software lures me to believe (► HUBRIS) that we might just be able to produce the *Fantasy Encyclopedia* CD-ROM right here in the barn.... Watch this space.

## Among the Hairy Earthmen

**Michael Crichton** unveiled an all-purpose argument against anyone loathsome enough to grumble about dodgy or misleading science in his work: 'In a story like *Jurassic Park*, to complain of inaccuracy is downright weird. Nobody can make a dinosaur. Therefore the story is a fantasy. How can accuracy have any meaning in a fantasy?' Um. [BB]

**Simon R.Green** responds to Damien Broderick (A138): 'I never knew about the proposed all-Oz version of *F&SF*, but I do recall Mike Moorcock's reaction to the all-UK one: "the Special Indictment Issue!"

**Jane Johnson**, talking about her latest 'Gabriel King' collaboration in what she fondly believed to be the privacy of the *Bucks Free Press* (22 Jan), confessed she'd still rather be a publisher than a writer: 'Most authors that I have witnessed have been slightly mad. I am not sure that working from home all the time is good for people, and I think I would probably get quite neurotic.' Several British SF authors, when invited to comment, put pencils up their noses and said 'Wibble wibble.'

**Elizabeth Moon** writes that it wasn't she who proposed a vote of censure against the then SFWA President Robert J.Sawyer at Bucconeer. (Her name was thus cut from overseas, web, etc editions of A138.) As others confirmed, the proposer was eluhi be shahar; this motion was at once seconded by everyone's favourite critic Greg Feeley, and ultimately failed with about a third of the SFWA audience abstaining.

**Michael Scott Rohan** is trying hard not to feel paranoid about *SFX* magazine, where his last two novels (praised elsewhere) got reviews so vitriolic as to suggest some dreadful score being settled....

**Norman Spinrad** announced his candidacy as SFWA president, owing to what he calls the 'extraordinarily malodorous situation' where, by the wake of Robert Sawyer's resignation, almost half the SFWA board of directors have now been appointed by fiat rather than elected.

## Cond

Until 26 Feb • **The Return of the Triffids**: display from John Wyndham archive, Sydney Jones Library, U of Liverpool. Contact Andy Sawyer, U of Liverpool Library, PO Box 123, Liverpool, L69 3DA.

9 Jan - 27 Mar • **Naomi Mitchison**: A Century of Achievement, The Writers' Museum, Lady Stair's Close, Lawnmarket, Edinburgh. 10am-5pm, admission free. Further details 0131 529 4901.

5-7 Feb • **XI-Lophone** (film), Hilton National Hotel, Basingstoke. £30 at door, £20 unwaged. Too late to send a letter, I imagine.

6 Feb • **London (Media) Group**, New Connaught Rooms, Covent Garden. £8 reg. 10am onward. (Next LMG meeting is 22 May.)

6 Feb • **Picocon**, Imperial College Union, Prince Consort Rd, London, SW7 2BB. 11am-6pm. GoH Stephen Lawhead, Jane Johnson, Mike Harrison. £8 reg at door. Students £4/£5; ICSF members £1. Contact ICSF, 3 Salisbury Pavement, Dawes Rd, London, SW6 7HT.

19-21 Feb • **Lightspeed** (media), Hilton Hotel, Coventry. Contact (SAE) 16 Bramwell St, Eastwood, Rotherham, S Yorks, S65 1RZ.

24 Feb • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Florence Nightingale pub, on York Rd/Westminster Bridge Rd roundabout. 7pm. With Christopher Evans.

26-8 Feb • **Fal Tor Pan** (Trek), Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. Contact (SAE) 26a Napier Ave, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS1 1LZ.

26-8 Feb • **Redemption** (B7/B5), Ashford International Hotel, Ashford, Kent. GoH (slight change) Brian Croucher, Jane Killick, Sheelagh Wells, Joe Nazzaro. £40 reg. £45 at door. £15 supp. Contact (SAE) Waveney, 28 Diprose Rd, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 3QY.

6-7 Mar • **Microcon 19**, University of Exeter. GoH: me. Free entry, with no advance booking, but members are asked to give to University

Rag charities. Contact 16 Fairlea Close, Dawlish, Devon, EX7 0NN.

13-14 Mar • **Mecon 2**, SCR, Queen's U of Belfast. GoH Michael Marshall Smith. £10/£12i reg, to Queen's U SF Soc c/o Flat 2, 12 Ashley Avenue, Belfast, BT9 7BT.

24 Mar • **BSFA Open Meeting**, as 24 Feb. With Liz Holliday.

2-5 Apr • **Reconvenc** (Eastercon), Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Now £50 reg; £25 supp, children 5-14, over-60s. Under-5s free. £80 and £40 at the door. Contact 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ.

10 Apr • **Ananke**, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, Holborn, London. 2pm-9pm. GoH Alan Moore, Dr Truppy Owens, others. 'A symposium of real magick and global ritualism, formerly known as the International Symposium of Thelemic Magick, hosted by the Golden Dawn Occult Society.' (Gulp!) £10 reg, £15 at door. Cheques to Golden Dawn c/o Mandrake, PO Box 250, Oxford, OX1 1AP. 01865 2343671.

30 Apr - 3 May • **Supernova** (Trek), Jarvis Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester. £45 reg. Contact (SAE) 4 Burford Corner, Westhumble St, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6BS.

25-7 Jun • **Poets & Small Presses** con, Barlow Theatre, Langley, Birmingham. With Steve Sneyd talking on sf poetry. £4 advance reg to Geoff Stevens, 25 Griffiths Rd, West Bromwich, B71 2EH.

16-18 Jul • **Baroquon** (RPG), New Hall, Cambridge. GoH Mary Gentle. £18 reg. Contact 8 Saddler's Close, Baldock, Herts, SG7 6EF.

16-18 Jul • **Nexus** (media), Hilton National Hotel, Bristol. Contact (SAE) 1 Lullington Rd, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2LH.

27-30 Aug • **Galileo** (Trek), Heathrow Park Hotel, GoH Walter Koenig. £40 reg. Contact 38 Planctree Ave, Newcastle, NE4 9TH.

25-26 Sep • **Hypotheticon** (relaxacon), Glasgow. £15 reg. Contact Flat O/2, 11 Cleghorn Street, Glasgow, G22 5RN.

9-10 Oct • **Osteocun X** (Irish national con), Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Co.Dublin. Onconpmanship award for the first Euro membership rates in *Ansible*: £14(1)/€17.78 to Easter, £18(1)/€22.86 to 31 Aug, £22(1)/€27.93 at door. Contact c/o 43 Eglinton Rd, Donnybrook, Dublin 4, Ireland. Phone +353 (0)1 2605204, fax (...) 2694039.

5-7 Nov • **Novacon 29**, Britannia Hotel, Birmingham. GoH Ian Stewart. £28 reg, rising after Easter. Contact Carol Morton, 14 Park St, Lye, Stourbridge, W.Midlands, DY9 8SS.

12-14 Nov • **Armadacon 1999**, Copthorne Hotel, Plymouth, Devon. GoH Stephen Baxter; more TBA. £25 reg (to 1 Apr); concessions available, on request. Contact PO Box 38, Plymouth, Devon.

*Rumblings* • Devotees of that trad fan pastime Viewing With Alarm thrilled to news of a fire in the Adelphi Hotel on 18 Jan. *Chris Bell* visited next day and found the smell of smoke already fading; damage was confined to the ghostly basement nightclub not used by cons.

## Infinitely Improbable

**Paths of Glory.** *Clarke Award* shortlist for 1998 UK-published sf: John Barnes, *Earth Made of Glass*; Peter Delacorte, *Time on My Hands*; Ken MacLeod, *The Cassini Division*; Christopher Priest, *The Extremes*; Alison Sinclair, *Cavalcade*; Tricia Sullivan, *Dreaming in Smoke*. Winner announced May. • *The J.Lloyd Eaton Award*, presented since 1979 for sf critical works, went to *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* ed. John Clute & John 'Yahey!' Grant. • *Sapphiric Awards* (sf romance) were voted to: 1st place, Patricia White, *A Wizard Scorned*; 2nd, Jennifer Dunne, *Raven's Heart*; 3rd, Laurel K.Hamilton, *Blue Moon*. The dwindling print market for this subgenre led to the first two being published only on-line, a state of affairs finessed by award coordinator Patricia Bray as: '1998 will be remembered as the year that electronic books came of age.' • *Philip K.Dick Award* shortlist for 1998 US paperback originals: Geoff Ryman, *253: The Print Remix*; Paul Di Filippo, *Lost Pages*; Nalo Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring*; Steve Aylett, *Slaughtermatic*; Paul J. McAuley, *The Invisible Country*. Winner announced 2 Apr. [GVG]

**Subliminal Smut!** In a fit of nervous prudery, Disney withdrew 3.4 million new videos of the animated movie *The Rescuers* (1977). A whole two frames naughtily shown—in a window glimpsed briefly in the background—a naked lady's torso, lifted from *Playboy*. This was removed

from the cinema version, but by the time of the digitally remastered video everyone had forgotten. Rumour names the culprit as animator Don Bluth, who after *The Rescuers* left in some disaffection (with several other Disney animation staff) to start his own company. [PB/BB]

**Random Fandom.** John Bangsund has been appointed editor of *The Australian Editor*, which somehow sounds like RECURSIVE FANTASY.

• **Paul Barnett & Pam Scoville** are marrying in a strictly private ceremony on 27 Mar; congratulations will be in order at Eastercon. • **Ron Bennett** reports: 'It appears that at some time during the past few months I've had a mild heart attack. Not unpleasant to learn about this after the event. I'm now on the waiting lists for (a) a little by-pass operation ... hope Swampy doesn't hear about it ... and (b) an appearance on 15 to One. I don't think that the two are in any way related.' • **Vince Clarke** wanted his fanzine collection to remain safe in fannish hands: it's now in Rob Hansen's cellar, while Greg Pickersgill and Catherine McAulay salvaged the correspondence files and publishing hardware. Claire Braley & Mark Plummer are working on a memorial collection of Vince's fanwriting. • **Arnie Katz** (in *cripanca 11*) found the ultimate refutation of those who criticized his small-town metaphor of fandom: 'The existence of scoffer[s] didn't necessarily mean that Galileo had the wrong idea....' • **Jon Langford** is still reeling from a *Minneapolis City Pages* write-up which called him 'tireless, unbridled, grimly joyous and ever-true'—one to put on the business cards? • **Andrew I. Porter** celebrated his 200th issue of the Hugo-winning *SF Chronicle* in Jan, with such Bacchanalian excesses as 'This is the Longest SFC Editorial I've Ever Written'.... *SFC* is now officially bimonthly. • **Linda Stratmann** seeks photos of herself garbed as Vampirella at Skycon (Eastercon 78, 'Least Costume' winner): 78 Hatherley Rd, Walthamstow, London, E17 6SB. • **Chris Terran** was asked by the BSFA to stand down as *Matrix* editor (the issues he produced were excellent, but there were various communications/deadline problems) and a new editorial team is now sought. Contact 60 Bournemouth Rd, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ.

**C.o.A.** **Michael Andre-Driussi/Sirius Fiction**, PO Box 6248, Albany, CA 94706-0248, USA. **Paul Barnett**, c/o Pam Scoville, 330 West 45th St, Suite 9D, New York, NY 10036, USA (from 14 Apr; longer-term US address to follow; yes, He Who Channels *Thog* is emigrating). **Richard Brandt & Michelle Lyons**, 125 Vaquero Lane #24, El Paso, TX 79912, USA. **Dorothy M. Kurtz**, 401 East Gibbsboro Rd (Apt T-16), Lindenwood, NJ 08021-1991, USA. **Bernie Peck**, 1B Buxton Rd, Stratford, E15 1JU. **Julie Rigby**, 50a Warbeck Rd, Shepherds Bush, London, W12 8NT.

**Thog's Physics Masterclass.** Sighted (briefly) as Today's Space Fut at the NASA Human Spaceflight web site: "How can the space shuttle move when the astronauts are sleeping?" • One of Newton's laws of physics states that an object set in motion will remain in motion unless acted upon by an outside force. Since no such (gravity) force exists in space, the object (in this case the shuttle) falls around the Earth continually. The shuttle is affected slightly by the gravity of Earth, which allows it to fall around.' [GW] *Noises Off*: far away, Newton is heard continually falling around in his coffin.

**R.I.P.** **Frank Langford** (?-1998), the comics/advertising artist who drew *The Angry Planet* (1963 *Boy's World* adaptation of *Deathworld*, scripted by Ken Bulmer) and the *Lady Penelope* strip, died last year. [SH] • **Naomi Mitchison** (1897-1999) died on 11 Jan aged 101. Her 100-odd books—produced over a span of nearly 80 years—included several fantasies and three sf novels, of which *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962) is a classic of alien communication. UK newspaper obituaries were numerous, but tended to pass over her genre contributions. She so very nearly became the first sf author to live in three centuries. • **Brian Moore** (1921-1999), 'mainstream' author of some supernatural fiction and borderline fantasies like *The Great Victorian Collection* (1975), also died in Jan. • **Ron Turner** (1922-1998), who died on 19 Dec, 'remains one of the most collected of British comic artists who, alongside Frank Hampson's Dan Dare and Syd Jordan's Jeff Hawke, redefined SF comic art in the UK in the 1950s.' [SH] His work included early-50s Vargo Statton pb cover art and popular comic strips like *The Daleks* (1966-7); he was still painting covers for Gryphon Books in 1998.

**Small Press.** *Light's List 1999*, now in its 14th year, tersely lists 1,375+ small-press magazines. A5, 58pp; £1.50 to John Light, 37 The Meadows, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1NY. • Is it a subtle put-down of HarperCollins and Voyager that Richard Calder's *Dead Girls/Boys/Things* trio, which they publish, should be honoured by *Dragon's Breath* newsletter with a 'Small Press Award'?

**Fanfundry.** Apologies to GUFF for holding over the 1999 ballots (Davies, Headlong, Kincaid) from UK-mailed copies of *A138*. Too many enclosures.... DUFF voting (Eisenberg, Gelb, Hooper) continues.

**Photography.** "It began in England," the old man replied as he finished his cake. "I was born in Liverpool-on-Tyne. When I was still a boy ..." (Carolyn Keene, *The Sign of the Twisted Candles*, 1968.) [CB]

**BSFA Awards** shortlist ... NOVEL John Meany, *To Hold Infinity*; Ken MacLeod, *The Cassini Division*; Christopher Priest, *The Extremes*; Iain M. Banks, *Inversions*; Kathleen Ann Goonan, *Queen City Jazz*. SHORT Thomas M. Disch, 'The First Annual Performance Arts Festival at the Slaughter Rock Battlefield'; Gwyneth Jones, 'La Cenerentola'; Timons Esaias, 'Shift Change'; Mary Soon Lee, 'The Day Before They Came'; Eric Brown, 'Vulpeus' (all *Interzone*). ARTWORK Dominic Harman, *IZ 137* cover; Colin Odell, *BSFA Focus 34* front cover; ditto, back cover; Dominic Harman, *IZ 135* cover; Jim Burns (*Lord Prestimion/IZ 138* cover). Winners to be announced at Reconvene (Liverpool/Easter).

**Cry Wolf Again!** Notorious UK conrunner Brian Cooney of Wolf 359 fame went transatlantic with VorCon in Los Angeles, Oct 98. The great J.M. Straczynski was swift to comment: 'Stephen Furst asked me to mention that a huge portion of the B5 cast who attended VorCon here were stiffed for the bulk of their fees. Michael O'Leare, Peter Jurasik, Mira, Bill, Pat, Jeffrey and others were never paid what they were promised. • That the cast nonetheless came out and performed and did their all for the fans in spite of this says a lot for them, I think.' [AH]

**Gaughan Art Sale.** After years of cataloging, Jack Gaughan's widow Phoebe Adams Gaughan is now offering selected works of Jack's for sale. Both B&W illos and full-color cover illustrations are for sale. [PD] Enquiries to her at 93 Fair St, Kingston, NY 12401, USA.

**Liquidation Horror!** All we know of Creative Independent Productions (London) Ltd is that they 'recently embarked on a scheme to raise finance from the public for the production of a science fiction film, to be named *The Return*.' But the Dept of Trade & Industry wants them wound up pronto: DTI High Court petition in Jan, Official Receiver appointed liquidator. [BB] Hope it wasn't based on Ted Tubb's *The Return*....

**Outraged Letters** ... *Almost Everyone* pointed out that the *A138* 'Chinese retelling of *Batman and Robin*' is from a 'Top Five' web site list of droll imaginary retellings, wickedly recirculated as news to fool the *New York Times* and *Ansible*. • **Simon R. Green** devotees will rejoice to hear that 'The last *Deathstalker* book is now finished.... First response from my UK editor Jo Fletcher: "Your fans are going to be really pissed off with you." Heh heh heh.' • **Patrick Nielsen Hayden** has an editorial eye for double-entendre: 'The funniest line in this *Ansible*, of course, is "SFWA is tight-lipped about internal frictions." Coff, coff.' • **Michael Swanwick** administers egoboo: 'I just sent in my year's short-fiction summary to *Locus*, in which (presuming it survives the editorial process) your story "The Spear of the Sun" is referred to as "almost pointlessly brilliant." I mention this because I know you'll want to inform all your friends and blazon it across the covers of your future books.'

**Thog's Masterclass.** "At least it proves he's vulnerable to our energies!" Morton smiled grimly. "Because he rendered them harmless." (A.E. van Vogt, 'Black Destroyer', 1939) [TM/GF] • 'Sarah sat opposite the noisy young people with a huge wholemeal sandwich filled with slices of fresh ham and a half pint of Guinness.' (Graham Masterton, 'Fairy Story', 1996) [S] • 'Sherlock Holmes leafed through the papers with one hand, and with the other he continued to crunch toast and marmalade.' (Colin Bruce, *The Strange Case Of Mrs. Hudson's Cat*, 1997) [MKK] • 'One sight-seer shakes his head like a collecting box for a good cause.' ... 'She drifted away from me, her dress clinging to her like a drowned man.' (Jeanette Winterson, *The World and Other Places*, 1998) [PB] • 'A muscle fired in her throat and her pupils got big and floaty.' ... 'His eyes were like bottles with something moving at the bottom.' (Windsor Chorton, *Cold Fusion*, 1999) • **Dept of Raunchy Thrillers:** 'The rubber left little to the imagination, and Barazo's face showed its pleasure at the lubricious fission triggered by his woman's colliding nuclei.' ... 'The Gulf Stream was rocking the boat in the cleavage of its D-cup bosomy swells.' (Christopher Buckley, *Wet Work*, 1991) [MMW] • 'But there was that rule of engagement that forbade any unavoidable damage to the infrastructure.' (David Sherman and Dan Cragg, *Steel Gauntlet* [Starfist #3], 1999) Avoidable damage was presumably OK. [SB] • 'The men I went there with were killed. Most of them in the first few years. We lost three hundred thousand men on Yeowe. They never talk about it.' (Ursula K. Le Guin, 'Forgiveness Day', 1994) [PB]

Ansible 139 © Dave Langford, 1999. Thanks to Paul Barnett, Barbara Barrett, Steve Baxter, Chris Bell, Seth Breibart, John Clute, Paul Difilippo, Greg Frost, Steve Holland, Alison Hopkins, Mory Kay, Kare, Matix, Tom Marcinko, Sina, Gordon Van Gelder, Bridget Wilkinson, Gary Wilkison, Martin Morse Wooster, and our Hero Distributors: Janice Murray (NA), SCIS, Alan Stewart (Oz), and Brum Group News.

4 Feb 99