



## Ansible 71 June 1993

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**MEXICON 5.** The usual reprobates and bastard scum (phrase © Paul Barnett, 1993) gathered at the Hotel St Nicholas in Scarborough last weekend—Friday being the 129th anniversary of the arrival of Maximilian of Habsburg in Veracruz to become Emperor of Mexico.... ● GoH *Pat Cadigan* remembered your editor from ConFiction, as evidenced by great ululating cries of 'YOU DOG, LANGFORD!' on each encounter. Her micro-skirts absorbed much male attention until *Deborah Beale* turned up to share this arduous workload. High-hemmed copycats were soon sighted, *P. Barnett* in unspeakable shorts and unwontedly mini-skirted *Maureen Speller* muttering 'I need velcro knees to keep my legs together.' ● Other GoH *Norman Spinrad's* secret giant chilli recipe ('serves 100-150') was doled out by Hotel Portion Control on the basis that 600-1,200 people were to be fed, leading to exciting Eurosurluses. ● *Low Cuisine:* in Scarborough a restaurant order of tagliatelle was liable to come with copious chips and Yorkshire pudding. *Lee Wood:* 'Do you have any of that oil stuff, you know, with kind of peppers, you know, floating in it?' *Waitress:* 'No. What makes you think we'd have that?' *Lee:* 'Well, this is an Italian restaurant....' *Waitress:* 'Yes, but it's in Scarborough, for God's sake.' [PB] ● *Iain Banks* danced erotically with a giant inflatable *Edvard Munch 'Scream'* doll from the *Linda Krawecka* Bad Taste Collection. ● *John Jarrold* loudly bewailed his 40th birthday but drowned the sorrow so effectively that he vanished for what seemed a whole day. ● *Faith Brooker* delivered a harpy tirade against worthless *Dave Langford* for having even mentioned *Critical Wave's* rumour that the Gollancz graphic-novels line might have folded. 'We've signed up Pratchett's *Mort*,' she screeched in triumph, 'and something by Gaiman & McKean too, so there!' As your editor searched the floor for portions of his anatomy, Faith flounced off with the parting cry, 'AND MAKE SURE YOU PRINT THAT!' ● *Colin Greenland* relentlessly plugged his new Arabian fantasy *Harem's Way*. ● *Peter Weston* geriatrically wheezed: 'I'm in Rotary now. Fandom for the over-50s.' ● *Eileen Weston* looked fondly on young *Martin Smith* and cried, 'Tighten those thighs, Martin!' ● *Gamma* hugely increased the health and sobriety level of Mexicon by (in company with D. West and founder *Greg Pickersgill*) not turning up. Also not drinking at Mexicon were *Rog Peyton* ('I just need to lose a few stone and then ...') and spiritually healed but still fragile *Simon Ounsley*. ● *Ken Campbell's* threatened one-man show *Pigsport* became a try-out performance of its new sequel *Jamais Vu*; our all-Stableford review team reported 'Great stuff ... beyond compare!' (*Brian*); 'A bit rude.' (*Kate*) ● *BSFA Awards* went to *Kim Stanley Robinson's Red Mars* (novel), other other GoH *Ian McDonald's 'The Innocents'* (short) and *Jim Burns's Hearts, Hands and Voices* cover (art). ● The long-heralded *BSFA AGM* saw what *Ch\*rlies Str\*ss* called 'wholly democratic unanimous votes and equally democratic one-candidate elections'. Co-ordinator *Kev McVeigh* was shuffled aside as Vice-President for Keeping Rather Quiet In Future, in favour of *Catie Cary* and *Maureen Speller*; the apathy-ridden Dramatic Presentation award category got the chop. ● *Linda Krawecka's* Collection also gave Mexicon the *Abigail Frost 'Fuck Off And Die'* editorial pistol, in the shape of a one-legged dinosaur with a huge, penile trigger; the revoltingly tactile rubber *Brain* (of Mexicon) with its large black moustache; and a video programme consisting entirely of epics like *Piranha Women in the Avocado*

*Jungle of Death.* ● *Pam Wells* managed to fall off two trains en route to the event and frequently showed people her scars. ● *Tom Shippey* gave the Mexican Lecture, infuriating Tech people by hurling himself to and fro, away from the microphone, out of the spotlight, etc. 'Who needs a PA to hear Shippey?' said one fan, adding: 'And not being able to see him is a huge improvement.' ● *Late-night Vignette:* a bleary but drooling *Simon Polley* hotly demanded to know the name of that short-skirted beauty over there, until informed that she was his wife. ● *Intersection* was referred to in hushed, superstitious tones as *The Scottish Convention*, and *Tim Illingworth* (in absentia) as 'the Thane'. ● *Rob Holdstock* panted, 'The slap of a wet oak leaf is one of the things I love most.' ● Only *Nic Farey* managed to collect the quota of 30 bottle-tops from vile 'Corona' Mexican beer required for a free t-shirt. ● *BASTARDS! SCUM! BASTARDS!* This tactful headline in the *Cactus Times* newsletter (following an argument about bar tables reserved 'for hotel residents' but not for Mexicon members residing in the hotel) led to very careful apologies next issue. Meanwhile *Arnold Akien* showed how to complain about noise by telling a glazed-eyed receptionist, 'There's this expiring dinosaur trapped within the walls of my room....' Plumbing problems seemed widespread; tact forbids discussion of how I survived 4 nights with no bath and a dud shower, but this proved worth 10% off my hotel bill. ● *Paul Brazier* amazed the world with the third issue of his utterly wonderful *Nexus SF* (£2.95), comprehensively reporting Mexicon IV in 1991. ● *The Kim Newman Appreciation Society* was unilaterally launched by *Linda Krawecka*. Her live-in artist *Dave Carson* professed himself unable to do human faces, only Lovecraftian horrors, but seemed quite happy to sketch the idol of this fan club.... ● *Arriba!*

### The Empire Never Ended

*Ken Campbell* offers further previews of *Jamais Vu* (follows *Furtive Nudist* and *Pigsport* in an 'epic comic triology') in Sept/Oct; official world première Oct; SAE for fuller details.

*John Clute* revealed to an awed BSFA meeting that the secret of getting *Encyclopaedias* into print was to swindle the publishers and never, never let them know how much over budget the thing will inevitably go. He cheerily hefted a wad of paper not as thick as the *SF Encyclopaedia* itself, being the initial batch of faxed corrections from the Americans.... A first update leaflet is available—SAE to 221 Camden High St, NW1 7BU. But: 'I have a lot of things to add to this,' chorused *John Grant*, *Roger Robinson*, *Brian Stableford* and many more.

*Avram Davidson* died on 8 May of a heart attack. He was 70. [CM] His best work (*The Phoenix and the Mirror*, *The Enquiries of Dr Essterhazy*) remains depressingly out of print.

*Lester del Rey* died on 11 May or thereabouts. [JC]

*Andy Sawyer* became the SF Foundation's first paid administrator since 1980, after a death struggle between 55 applicants (whittled to a shortlist of 6, including *Brian Stableford*). His scientific duties in Liverpool begin on 1 August.

*Andrew Stephenson—Comix Megastar?* Andrew is in process of selling a 'new comic character' to Marvel UK after 3 years of trying. A 4-book miniseries may be on the cards; no details revealed except that the whole thing is 'dead intelligent'.

*George Turner* (76) suffered a stroke in late April, while his flatmate was away. '[He] was paralysed on the right side, and

couldn't speak, and therefore couldn't telephone anyone. So he cleaned himself up as best he could, and then waited three days until his biographer Judith Buckrich happened to telephone. George lifted the receiver, and Judith realized when no one spoke that something was wrong, and came and found him.' [YR] At last report (now some weeks ago) he was recovering in hospital, fed by IV but 'extremely perky'....

**Karl Edward Wagner** addends: 'U fergot to mention that the highlight of the Author C.Burk Award Bash was when yer man stood up to say he wasn't going to make a speech and then spoke for seven hours nonstop, whilst we peons drank funny beers and only ten quid a bottle. Dave Carson and I found a dish of olives before passing out from boredom. We ate them. I had to tell Dave about the pits. The ones in the olives.'

## Concupiscible?

10 Jun • **Intersection** 'is having a ConFrancisco brainstorm at LCFI, 19:00-ish on. All welcome.' [JG-A] I gather this means the Royal Oak pub, Pimlico; St James's Park tube.

9 Jun • **BSFA**, The Conservatory, with Colin Greenland. £1.

18 Jun • **British Fantasy Soc** open night with F.Paul Wilson. 18:30 onward at Falkland Arms, Bloomsbury Way, London.

25-7 Jun • **Unicon** (sf; not a Unicon), Unicorn Hotel, Bristol. £20 reg. Contact 55 Kildare Rd, Knowle, Bristol, BS4.

26 Jun ♥ **Wedding**: Maureen Speller and Paul Kincaid.

12-19 Sep • **Milford (UK) SF Writers' Conference**, in Keswick, Cumbria. Published authors only. Contact 56 More Close, St Paul's Ct, Gliddon Rd, London, W14 9BN.

30-31 Oct • **Octocon** (Irish national con), Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire. GoH Storm Constantine, Steve Dillon. £15 reg. Contact 20 Newgrove Ave, Sandymount, Dublin 4.

27-30 May 94 • **Inconceivable** (humour/sf), Tudor Court Hotel near Derby. £20 reg (£18 for Octarine or ZZ9 members). Contact 12 Crich Ave, Littleover, Derby, DE23 3ES. Ho ho!

**Rumblings** • **The Scottish Conventi...**: 1995 worldcon co-chair Vince Docherty (still in Oman) has now stepped down in favour of awesome Martin Easterbrook. 'Given the lassitude Intersection is displaying over processing cheques and issuing PRs,' says tactful Steve Green, 'shouldn't they be placed in charge of next year's Grand National? At least we'd be sure it wouldn't start prematurely.'

• **Confabulation**: in the tradition of wicked beermat scrawls from Croydon, a faxed *Computer Weekly* story about a conference in the Docklands Britannia Hotel ('95 Eastercon venue) claims the place was 'too yuppie' even for computer people, who whinged about '£2 for a small lager' and stayed away in droves. [DVB] • A one-day **Mexicon 6** may happen in '94 for the 10th anniversary (and 20th of Tynecon)—venue undecided, but 'somewhere on Inter-City': London, Brum, Newcastle? So far all is flux, but the '94 date offers the possibility of skipping to a **Mexicon 7** in '96 and avoiding the UK Worldcon year.

## Infinitely Improbable

**Ameritemps?** The Midnight Rose shared-world collective is crossing its fingers madly over a rumour that Roc in the USA (having bemusedly noticed that several copies were sold) might now publish a *Best Of the Roc-UK Anthologies* collection.

**Food Corner** with DUFF co-winner Leah Smith: 'Because Leah is the food-page editor of her local newspaper, she felt obliged in Perth to sample the local *cuisine*, including witchetty grubs. I understand that Terry Pratchett ate witchetty grubs (cooked, in French-style garlic sauce) with great enjoyment, anticipating the ghoulish pleasure of describing his deed later to Brits with sensitive stomachs—but I think Leah managed to eat only half a grub (in which she could distinguish the taste only of garlic sauce). I am sorry to say that (simply meaning to be helpful) I mentioned that the traditional way to eat witchetty grubs was raw and wriggling.... We showed Leah some of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's video *Bush Tucker Man*, in which Major Les Hiddens and a group of Aboriginal people eat alive not only

witchetty grubs and sugar ants, but also a muddy-looking species of worm. No doubt because she was falling asleep where she sat, Leah providentially had her eyes closed through most of this.' [YR] Also sighted *Down Under*: 'visiting awful fantasy writer Robert Jordan, of whom it was agreed that sending him out on tour was a very good way to warn people off buying his books.' [JH]

**C.O.A. Etc.** *Ken Lake*: last issue's Fiji address is no longer valid. *Helen McNabb*, 1 Grange Gdns, Llantwit Major, S Glam, CF61 2UX. *SF Nexus* costs £10/4 issues (\$25 outside UK) to PO Box 1123, Brighton, BN1 6JS. *Sylvia Starshine*, Flat 7, Stanhope Rd, Highgate, N6.

**Hazel's Language Lessons: Swahili.** *Colin Fine* explains that words beginning *ki-* pluralize to *vi-*, and thus *vipilefti*, 'roundabouts', is the inevitable plural of *kipilefti*....

**Asimov Award** ... it had to come. \$500 annual prize for the best unpublished sf/fantasy short by a full-time undergraduate. Guidelines and submissions: *Asimov Award*, USF 3177, 4204 E. Fowler, Tampa, FL 33620-3177, USA. Deadline 15 Nov.

**John W. Campbell Letters vol II**: Asimov & van Vogt correspondence now out, \$47 inc from AC Projects, 5106 Old Harding Rd, Franklin, TN 37064. Overseas post may be extra. [GH]

**Tax Assessment.** Has Jack Vance had some experience of UK freelance taxation? In his novel *Throy*, the official term for brutal and summary punishment without trial is ... Schedule D.

**HarperCollins Science Fiction and Fantasy** will be the new, easily pronounced replacement for the boring old Grafton and Fontana imprints—as of August. [*Fire & Water*, May]

**Joyful Tidings.** Rumour has it that famous *Joy Hibbert* is expecting a baby fathered by reclusive hyperfan *Harry Bond*, while erstwhile ménage member *Dave Rowley* is in retreat somewhere else with someone else. *Abigail Frost* is 'considering as my inaugural TAFF fundraiser a sweepstake on whether the brat's first words will be "Blhog, Fiawol, Beanie" or "Castrate the bastards!"'

**Corrections.** *A70*: one Hugo short-story nomination omitted, 'The Arbitrary Placement of Walls' by Martha Soukup. • *Pat Cavanaugh* demands an aiject apology for *Ansible*'s suggestion that (in connection with certain *Pulphouse/F&SF* editorial advice) she once said 'Blow it out your ass!' This, she raged, was 'just the START of a 20-MINUTE DRUNKEN TIRADE!' We grovel.

**BSFA Life Memberships** are now available at £150. Strewth!

**Fiction Supplement.** A Mexican newsletter competition for 8-word novels (idea pinched from Nick Lowe) was won by Andy Lane's *The 90s SF Novel Revisited*: 'Elvis calling Mars. Kennedy dead. I'm coming home.' Best retelling: Brian Stableford's *The Time Machine* by A. Morlock: 'Stuff good public relations, there's Eloi for tea!' (The other judge preferred his *The Island of Dr Moreau* by A.Beast: 'Hand over your women! Are we not men?') My own condensed *Bug Jack Barron* was ruled ineligible ... 'Forever, televised live, she sucked his nitty-gritty.'

**Mail Auction.** Brian Ameringen offers six coveted *Diana Wynne Jones* first editions (1973-6). SAE for complicated details to 9 Graham Rd, Wealdstone, Harrow, HA3 5RP. First bidding round ends 30 June.

**Spellbound.** *Harpers Magazine* featured lists of words from noted novels at which a spell-checker balked. In Stephen King's *Misery*, for example: *autocannibalism*, *effword*, *ensouled*, *flumping*, *goosepimples*, *gravedigger*, *gunsel*, *guthole*, *horrorscope*, *incantatory*, *kaka*, *perfervid*, *pigfeed*, *poxy*, *strappado*, *stuporously*, *uncoalesced*, *weals*, *whoink*....

**TAFF Vox Pop.** Normal alternation means a Europe⇒NA race in '95 when the Worldcon's over *here*. So there's a mini-referendum on what to do: skip a year? shuffle the sequence? Forms from *Abigail Frost*.

**The Onlie Begetter.** 'Back in 1977 a debut novel called *Sword of Shannara* appeared and immediately invented the Epic Fantasy scene. Moving light-years away from the traditional theme of flawed futures, it instead depicted a fantastic other world of our mythological past. [... *The Shannara series*] made Terry Brooks into one of the most powerful names in fantasy fiction as well as one of the most widely imitated.' (*W.H.Smith Bookcase #43*) imitated, presumably, by feisty young plagiarists Morris, Eddison and Tolkien among others.... [DW] •

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**Langford Blows Memory Chips!** An ashen-faced Dave Langford confesses that in the white heat of being excoriated by lovely Faith Brooker of Gollancz, he contrived to 'remember' that the wicked and incorrect rumour about the possible folding of the Gollancz graphic novels line had appeared in *Critical Wave*. Actually it was in the BSFA's *Matrix 104* (Feb-March 1993), but DL has always had trouble with hard mathematical words like *Matrix*. He apologizes profusely in all directions, and hopes that although of course nobody will ever again vote him a Hugo, he may yet be rehabilitated into a useful member of the sf community.