



Ansible 84 July 1994

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. Fax 0734 669914. ISSN 0265-9816. Logo by Dan Steffen. E-mail ansible@cix.compulink.co.uk. Cartoon by Ian Gunn. *Ansible* is available for SAE or deep personal grovelling.

SELLING POINT. *Ansible* has 'NO Nudity, Profanity, Overt Sex or Violence', a declaration which on David Garnett's advice I stole from *Offworld: The All-New Illustrated Magazine of SF and Fantasy* (USA). As Mr Garnett found himself thinking: 'Hey! A magazine without nudity, profanity, sex, violence. Must buy it!'

Down in the Black Gang

Anon: 'Are you going to the Orbit party for Iain Banks's *Stewpidde Tyettul?*' (The book is really called *Feersum Fonetiks*.)

John Clute, fabled vocabulary master, 'was recently casting his eye over an article submitted for the next Friends of Foundation Newsletter and was quite definitely heard to say: "What does this word mean?" *Dumbfounded Editor:* "I'll look it up in my dictionary...."' [AS]

Ellen Datlow is to be brutally censored, sort of: "You might want to let people know (or not) that *Little Deaths*, my sexual horror antho scheduled for September by Millennium in hc, will be cut by about 70,000 words for the American version which will come out some time next year from Dell/Abyss in pb. Space considerations. I've bought the Mike Harrison story to reprint in *Omni* for November.'

Patricia Fanthorpe, wife and agent of the almost-as-famous Lionel, announces his attempt on Guy N. Smith's alleged 'world record for a 24-hour marathon write-in' of 16,000 words (sounds oddly low ... besides Lionel's own legendary stints, didn't Barry Malzberg write a 60,000 word novel in 16 hours?). Date: 4/5 Aug. Sponsors are sought; proceeds go to the Cardiff Samaritans. Contact PF at 48 Claude Rd, Cardiff, CF2 3QA. [CM]

David Garnett 'had a story in *SF Age* recently—"Sherlock the Barbarian". There was NO nudity, profanity, overt sex or violence. Well, not much. But the word "shit" was changed to "dung".' (Context! We need context! If, for example, the resulting phrase was "Oh, dung," she hissed sibilantly....')

William Gibson flogged his latest novel *Idoru* for \$850,000 ... the noise you hear is envious whimpering from SFFWA. [SFC]

John Gullidge of the horror filmzine *Samhain* has been effectively driven from home into rented accommodation by further newspaper hounding, notably from the unspeakable *Exeter Express & Echo*: 'I'm now convinced it's a personal thing with the *E&E* ... their story [25 Jun] carried the headline HORROR MAG MAN "MUST GO" while the *Western Morning News* ran the same story with the headline MAGAZINE EDITOR CAN STAY WITH PLAYGROUP! • The *E&E* rang for a quote earlier in the week and I read out a three paragraph statement explaining a number of the errors that had appeared in their previous stories but they chose not to use it. The power of the press is a frightening thing and they have absolutely no regard for the damage they cause.' [JG] • How to do journalism: (a) raise concerned doubts about innocent playgroup kids in the merciless hands of a horror (ugh!) fan; (b) if any parent falls for that and withdraws their child, this justifies a more alarmist story about the ground-swell against this wicked horrorphile; (c) it's now useful to publish an editorial ostensibly supporting your chosen target but full of inaccurate smears ('... John Gullidge has enthusiasms that many find distasteful. But not illegal. / Mr Gullidge's magazine caters for those who share his interest in films like *Driller Killer* or *I Spit On Your Grave*.'—*E&E*, 30 Mar 94); (d) return to (b) and repeat the cycle until the object of your attentions leaves town; (e) look for someone else with a minority hobby.... • JG is now scraping up funds for a stropo solicitor's letter. Any stropo yet generous solicitors out there?

Patrick Nielsen Hayden had a tiny problem with the US

AvoNova pb of Nancy Kress's *Beggars in Spain*: 'The ornate cover type reads like it says *Beggars In Spam*. Of course, I speak as an employee of the company which, through the magic of Excessively Decorative Title Type, once managed to publish Greg Bear's blockbuster novel *The Forge Of Goo*.'

Anne McCaffrey was accosted at the 2 July FP signing by a fan wanting to know when any Pern novel would offer some throbbing romance between *male* dragonriders. She: 'I have a lot of younger readers and I must be careful what I write.' [AM]

Terry Pratchett reports, slightly bemused, from his tour Down Under: 'In one shop I had a can of Fosters, I think it was, and chucked the can away. At the end of the signing I was shyly presented with the retrieved can by a blushing fan and asked to sign it ... so now perhaps you can see why my new address is "somewhere in Wiltshire".'

Chris Priest heard from Gary Groth of Fantagraphics Books: 'Hot news! They shipped copies of *The Book on the Edge of Forever* to a convention in Chicago [1-3 July] where Ellison was guest of honour. When the book was launched the convention organizer absolutely refused permission to display, sell or even give away copies. Ellison threatened to stick his finger into Kim Thompson's eye. (Kim is Gary's partner, and because Gary was not at the con had to bear the brunt of this alone.) • Meanwhile, in spite of Ellison's attempts to suppress the book, it is now being distributed normally to bookstores and is selling quickly. • At the same con, Ellison reported that delays on *The Last Dangerous Visions* were caused by Epstein Barr syndrome, but that after yet another miracle recovery he is about to finish and deliver the book.' (HE, foe of censors and champion of free speech, subsequently boasted that he'd litigated the distributors into submission and killed *TBotEoF*: but GG insists that his two largest distributors are unintimidated.)

Conjee

8-10 Jul • **BAcon** (Unicon 15), New Hall Coll, Cambridge. GoH Geoff Ryman, Simon Ings. £16 reg. Contact 38 Scotland Road, Chesterton, Cambridge, CB4 1QG; (0223) 564483.

22-24 Jul • **Dimension Jump (Red Dwarf)**, Angel Hotel, Northampton. £30 reg. Send 'two stamps' to Garden Cottage, Hall Farm, Scottow, Norwich, NR10 5DF.

29-31 Jul • **Wincon III**, King Alfred's Coll, Winchester. GoH: Algis Budrys, James Hogan, Norman Spinrad (a surprise appearance of Clarke award laureate Jeff Noon has also been scheduled). £23 reg. Contact 12 Crowsbury Close, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7TS. No room bookings after 8 July.

19-21 Aug • **Portmeiricon 94 (Prisoner)**, Portmeirion, Gwynedd. Contact PO Box 66, Ipswich with SAE.

27-30 Oct • **World Fantasy Con**, Clarion Hotel, New Orleans. Many GoHs. \$95 reg, rising on 1 Aug and again at the door. Contact Box 791302, New Orleans LA 70179-1302, USA.

29 Oct • **Transylvania (Rocky Horror)**, Novotel, Hammer-smith, London. £30 reg (plus 3xSAE) to Timewarp, 1 Elm Grove, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9HE.

4-5 Mar 95 • **Microcon 15**, Exeter U, announces its GoH: Ramsey Campbell. Contact 17 Polsloe Rd, Exeter, EX1 2HL.

Rumblings • **Worldcon Fun**. Avoiding 1987's problem of overseas fans getting hotel booking forms late if at all, **The Scottish Convent-ion** will release the forms with PR4 at Conadian. Until then, a steely silence about hotel room rates is being maintained.... • **Steve Sneyd**, inspired by the 1995 Small Press & Poets' Con plans to wander by coach between its Huddersfield and Swansea venues with stopoffs for instant

book fairs or readings, babbles: 'Here is the answer to the Glasgow [fan room] aircraft hangar? A coachload of top sf glitterati wending its way slowly about the vast space, stopping suddenly to descend on whoever is stood near, in endless Brownian movement...' • **Australia in 1999 Spinoff:** if this bid wins, the USA will run its usual alternative NASFiC. In smoke-filled rooms at Westercon (1-4 Jul) the idea emerged: most Australia-US flights stop over in Hawaii, so a NASFiC there on the weekend after Aussiecon would be handy for US fans returning home. Bid flyers swiftly appeared, and a name: **VolConO**. *Puzzled Fan:* 'Is this Hawaii bid for real or a joke?' **Bruce Pelz**, *Showing Why They Call Him The Oscar Wilde Of LA:* 'Yes!' [KS] • **Sou'Wester** generously donated £250 to GUFF (see below). *A TAFF Administrator Wails:* 'I worked my bum off on their newsletter and all I got was this lousy T-shirt!'

Infinitely Improbable

Not A Lot Of People Know—'The current Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Slovenia to the Court of St James is a former skiffy fan (Matjaž Sinkovec)... Maybe the BSFA should invite him to address them.' [WJ]

C.o.A. *Alyson L.Abramowitz*, 999 Perriera Drive, Santa Clara, CA 95051, USA. *Harry Bond*, 50 Mayer St, Hanley, Stoke on Trent, ST1 2JN. *Ken Lake*, c/o 32 Coolgardie Ave, Chigwell, Essex, IG7 5AY. *Steven McDonald*, 405 US Route 2, Grand Isle, VT 05458, USA. *Michael Moorcock (& Linda)*, now said to be living in a suburb of Austin, Texas. *Jonathan Palfrey*, c/o Mini Parc Alpes Congres, 6 Rue Roland Garros, 38320 Eybens, France. *Martin Smith*, 4 Austin House, St Mark's Hill, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 4LH. *Ian Watson*, Daisy Cottage, Banbury Rd, Moreton Pinkney, nr Daventry, NN11 3QS (postcode change only).

Trek Corner. Aficionados of stage magic have long chortled over the 60s *Star Trek* episode 'A Piece of the Action' wherein William Shatner tries the legendary Fizbin drop (a 'secret' magician's move hard enough that grown men have broken their wrists trying to do it) and flops miserably. Reputedly this bit was cut from repeat broadcasts, though it's still in some videos. Now an anonymous spy reports: 'Watch the new *Star Trek* movie real close. Shatner is going to try the drop again. I read in a magicians-only magazine that he vowed to his friends that it will be done with one take and included in the movie with no cuts. I guess he's still sore over the fiasco in the original series...'

Fan Funds. **TAFF** nominations open 15 July, close 30 Sept (ballots out Oct, voting closes 29 April 95). This race will bring an American fan to **The Scottish Convention**. *Impartial Ansible* knows of three intending candidates—nice Joe Wesson, the probably quite worthy Andy Hooper and the superlatively splendid god amongst men Dan Steffan. UK administrator Abigail Frost (95 Wilmot St, London, E2 0BP) wants candidates' nominations *in writing*, and *signed*, you hear? • **GUFF:** Joseph Nicholas is officially looking after the kitty for Euro-administrator Eva Hauser, to avoid problems with soft Czech currency. (This will continue until after the next Europe-to-Australia race, 'whenever that may be'.) Sterling voting fees and donations to him, please, at 15 Jansons Rd, S.Tottenham, London, N15 4JU. [JN] *Kim Huett writes:* 'I hope you keep mentioning that I'm the only GUFF candidate that drinks beer in quantities understandable to English fandom.' • **DUFF** was won by Alan Stewart (our hero Aussie distributor), who thus gets the coveted free trip from Down Under to Conadian this year.

Hazel's Language Lessons: *Gaelic*. *brochanach*, well supplied with porridge. *dobharchu*, an imaginary otter. *rotach*, a circle of filth on one's clothes. *paitreachd*, phrenology, thumping. *sgiomlaireachd*, mean habit of popping in upon people at mealtimes. *sgianach*, a charm or enchantment to enable its possessor to get all the fish around a boat or headland while his less fortunate neighbours stare with amazement. *sgriobhadairachd*, writing. *spairis*, the conduct or attitude of having the hands in the flaps of the trousers. (*MacAlpine's Gaelic Dictionary*, 1833)

RIP. Jim Barker sadly reports the death of his mother, famed in fandom for colossal High Teas and short-notice hospitality to visiting Americans. (On a cheerier note, Jim gloats that a Barker cartoon character has become the new logo for Falkirk Town Centre. 'You'll recognize it from the big feet...')

AB3 Updates. *Ellison* vs *NESFA*. *NESFA* members confirmed that the

Cordwainer Smith MS they published was legally acquired in its original, unedited version—but they did regret a failure of tact in not telling Harlan Ellison, and flaunting the story's *Last Dangerous Visions* antecedents in publicity. • *Liverpool MA in SF*. Andy Sawyer protests that despite Steve Sneyd's gadfly claim, the course is open to people with degrees not merely in Literature but in 'related subjects' ... though 'it's obviously best at this stage not to go for people with third-class chemistry degrees who read a lot of Warhammer books.'

Ten Years Ago: Gordon Dickson was the acclaimed winner of the Folio Society's 'Worst First Sentence' contest, for the opening of his skiffy epic *Naked to the Stars*. 'The voice, speaking out of the ancient blackness of the night on the third planet of Arcturus—under an alien tree, bent and crippled by the remorseless wind—paused, and cleared its throat: "Ahem", it said. "Gentlemen..."'

World of Wonders

Maureen Speller was at the Fortean thrash, **Unconvention94:** '... a curious affair. Almost but not quite like an sf con. Seriously intensive on programme, in a sweltering hot hall, often standing room only, it was a good effort for a first time but lacked certain things I've come to expect from sf conventions. Few speakers took questions from the audience, so there was little hope of discussing theories or challenging their ideas. Little socializing, partly because it was definitely a daytime event, partly because the halls were too big for meaningful contact. People seemed to have arrived in groups, in which they stayed. It would have been very lonely had I gone on my own. • Still, it was enjoyable. The American UFO abduction specialist turned out to be David Jacobs, the mystery member of the group so far as I'm concerned. He was a personable academic, spoke well and all that, but vacillated curiously between presenting himself as an objective commentator and talking enthusiastically about "well, we know more or less what they're doing at this point in the abduction" and so on, with a degree of credulity I found alarming. Jenny Randles's lecture contradicted him nicely on several points. Unfortunately I missed the first 20 mins as (after 2½ hours in a sweltering hall) I wanted a drink desperately. The programming was rigorous—blink and you missed something vital. • Other highlights included Doc Shiels, though maybe "highlight" is not the word. Imagine an Irish version of Gamma. He was drunk on a panel on Saturday, and gave a presentation on Sunday morning which was more or less incoherent, not merely because he dropped the slide carousel before starting. There was a sighting of Jeremy Beadle (yes, really, and no I didn't strangle him, can't think why) and another of Robert Rankin.' [MS]

Jenny Randles, famous ufologist, had a further close encounter with our wonderful Press. *Paul Barnett* reports: 'Some source within the ufology world shopped to the *News of the World* the colossal secret (as never before revealed, because we couldn't get a publisher interested in her book on the experience) that she started life as a Christopher but had a sex-change. The reptile concerned told her that either the story would be run without her consent, or she could agree to be interviewed and get a fistful of money plus full rights to vet the copy. Would I negotiate the deal for her? Turns out that, with pressure, the *NotW* will cough up £1500 for an inside-page story like this—not bad for two hours' work by Jenny letting herself be interviewed. Freephone 0800 010-373 ext 4471 (that nice Mr Murdoch foots the phone bill) and ask for Alex Marunchak if you'd like to try to get a similar sum for your horrific secret, or just have a chat. • When I stop giggling I'll probably get very angry. Still, it was funny hearing those seedy wankers fall over themselves to press money on this hard-hitting salesman who was telling them punchy things like "Everybody already knows this, but if you insist on running it anyway you can increase your offer by 50%." *Later:* 'Those lovable guys at the *Screws* headlined the piece on Jenny I HAD UFO—OLEDD1, which is upsetting her more than somewhat since it implies that she's somehow been mounting a pretence. Also, they altered the agreed text so that it reads as if *she* came to *them* to sell her story—publicity-seeking, in other words.' [PB] (Is the entire British gutter press conspiring to make *Ansible* seem relatively accurate and respectable?)

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