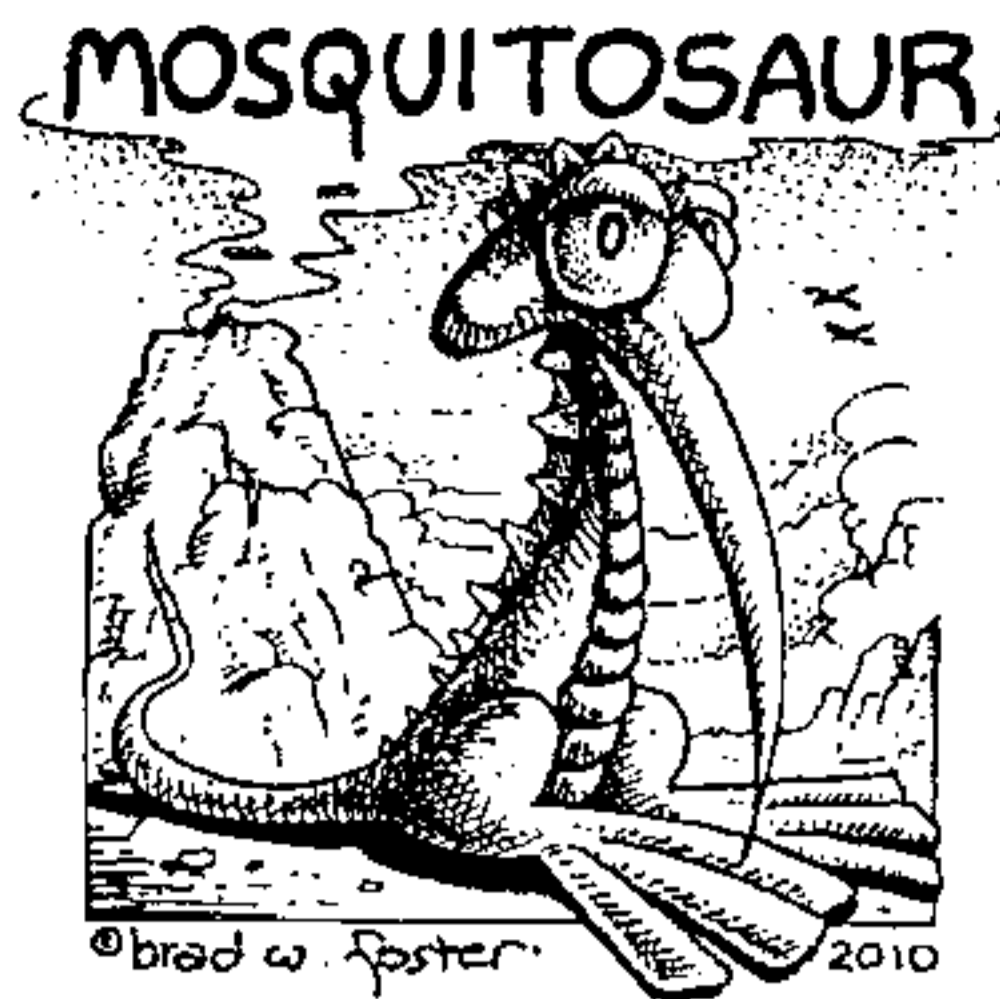


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From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Web news.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE, anzid, barbitide, sprine or wockle weed.

July's Hot Sun

Mike Ashley was guest of honour at a London party thrown by Constable Robinson to celebrate his 50th anthology for them, *The Mammoth Book of Apocalyptic SF*. Among those were Deirdre & Liz Counihan, Steve Jones and D. Langford. The latter caused general bafflement by congratulating the publishers on placing dozens of miniature thematic mammoths in nearby Green Park for this occasion (actually some of the 258 variously decorated Asian elephants then infesting the capital).

J.G. Ballard's private archives—including first drafts of fiction, from early unpublished stories to *Empire of the Sun*—were acquired by the British Library under the Acceptance in Lieu scheme, thus reducing the whopping tax bill following Ballard's death last year. [JY]

Sir Ian Blair, ex-Metropolitan Police commissioner, showed off his sf erudition regarding the number of UK police forces: 'It's 43, which is, by coincidence, the secret of the universe in the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and about as rational.' (Radio 4 Today, 25 June) [JB]

Pat Cadigan revealed her and a schoolfriend's 1960s fantasy of being alien twins with the awesome responsibility of 'secret exclusive contact with The Beatles', who 'came to us for advice about their songs and how to deal with fame and other important matters. [...] On occasion, they would ask us to use our highly developed shape-shifting ability to become them, and finish recording sessions and concert tours when they were too tired to go on themselves.' (www.npr.org, 3 June) [BT]

Neil Gaiman is weary of the current sparkly-vampire glut: 'My next big novel was going to have a vampire. Now, I'm probably not. They are everywhere, they're like cockroaches.' (Independent, 25 June) [MPJ]

Ray Harryhausen celebrated his 90th birthday on 29 June. Ray Bradbury—his friend since they were both 18—will be 90 on 22 August.

James Herbert received an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for 2010. So did Brian Clemens, screenwriter and—for its last three 1960s tv series—co-producer of the legendary *The Avengers*; and actress Sophie Okonedo, recently seen in *Doctor Who's* 'The Beast Below'. [MPJ]

Terry Pratchett and Transworld announced a £20,000 competition for best novel with a past/future/alternate-Earth setting. New (no published novel) UK, Irish and Commonwealth authors only. Deadline 31 December 2010. Fuller details from Transworld, 61-3 Uxbridge Rd, London, W5 5SA; or pratchettprize at transworld-publishers.co.uk.

J.K. Rowling made it on to the *Forbes* list of dollar billionaires, though only just: equal 937th with a miserable \$1bn (estimated), thus sharing the ignominy of the bottom rung with 74 other strivers. [MPJ]

Conjoun

4 Jul • **When It Changed** (panel/reading), Southbank Centre, London. With Geoff Ryman. 3:30pm. £7. Box office 0844 875 0073.

17 Jul • **Terror Scribes Gathering**, The Lansdowne pub, 121-3 London Rd, Leicester. 1pm-ish to 8pm. With readings, raffle, etc. Free.

24 Jul • **Beer & Blake's 7**, Knight's Templar, Unit 1 Temple Sq, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6DG. From 12:30ish to 7pm. Free.

24-27 Jul • **The Sirens of Titan** (open-air theatre), Sydenham Wells Park, London. 7:30pm. Also 29 Jul - 1 Aug Southwark Pk; 3-9 Aug Oxleas Woods; 11-14 Aug Hilly Fields Pk. Booking 020 7237 1663.

28 Jul • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Tce, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 6pm. With Lauren Beukes (interview).

31 Jul • **BFS Open Night** (afternoon, actually), The George, 213 Strand, London, WC2R 1AP. 1-5pm. With Lauren Beukes as speaker.

31 Jul - 1 Aug • **Caption** (small-press comics), East Oxford Community Centre, Princes St/Cowley Rd corner. Usually £10 at door; £5 day.

13-15 Aug • **Festival in the Shire** (Tolkien), Y Plas, Machynlleth, Wales. Many complex price tiers; some or all discounts ceased 30 June. See www.FestivalintheShire.com for more. Bookings 0800 6125469.

26-29 Aug • **Tricon** (Eurocon), Cieszyn/Cesky Tesin, Polish/Czech border. €22.50 reg, rising to €25 on 1 August. Guest list, online registration and other booking details at <http://tricon.info/>.

23-24 Oct • **Unconvention** (Fortean), U of Westminster, 35

Marylebone Rd, London, NW1 5LS. More TBA at www.forteanimes.com.

19 Feb 11 • **Picocon 27**, Imperial College Union, London. 10am-7/8pm. GoH Juliet McKenna, Kari Sperring. Membership TBA. Contact ICSF, Beit Quad, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BB.

17-19 Jun 11 • **Eurocon 2011**, Stockholm—now combined with Sweden's national Swecon. Current rates £35/€40/SEK400; free to those under 26 when it starts. Payment info: www.eurocon2011.se.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. 'Trekkers / how to refer to Star Trek fans unless you want to make fun of them, in which case they are **Trekkies**.' (Guardian/Observer style guide) [GS] No, there's no entry for 'sci-fi'. It is suspected that, even while avoiding the hate-speech 'Trekkies', David Cameron was making fun during Parliamentary Question Time when he referred to 'the Labour leadership election [...] beginning to look more like a Star Trek convention—beam me up!' (Hansard, 16 June) [MPJ] Another sf view of this contest was that, excluding the sole female contender, 'the rest of the leadership line-up made the Midwich Cuckoos look like a Benetton ad.' (Lucy Mangan, Guardian, 12 June) [PW]

Awards. BAFTA (British tv): the only genre winner, for Drama Series, was E4's superpowers saga *Misfits*. [MPJ] • Carnegie Medal (children's fiction): Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*. The Independent mysteriously commented 'The Graveyard Book is the first children's book to win the Carnegie award ...' (25 June; presumably a garbling of '... to win both the Carnegie and the Newbery Medal') [MPJ] • David Gemmell Legend (heroic fantasy): NOVEL Graham McNeill, *Empire: The Legend of Sigmar*. NEWCOMER Pierre Pevel, *The Cardinal's Blades*. COVER ART Didier Graffet & Dave Senior (illustration) and Laura Brett (art direction) for *Best Served Cold*. [L] • Lambda (LGBT), SF/Fantasy/Horror category: Catherynne M. Valente, *Palimpsest*. • Locus: SF NOVEL Cherie Priest, *Boneshaker*. FANTASY NOVEL China Miéville, *The City & The City*. FIRST NOVEL Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl*. YOUNG ADULT Scott Westerfeld, *Leviathan*. NOVELLA Kage Baker, *The Women of Nell Gwynne's*. NOVELLETTE Peter S. Beagle, 'By Moonlight' (*We Never Talk About My Brother*). SHORT Neil Gaiman, 'An Invocation of Incuriosity' (*Songs of the Dying Earth*). ANTHOLOGY Gardner Dozois & Jonathan Strahan, eds, *The New Space Opera 2*. COLLECTION Gene Wolfe, *The Best of Gene Wolfe*. NON-FICTION/ART Ursula K. Le Guin, *Cheek by Jowl*. ARTIST Michael Whelan. EDITOR Ellen Datlow. MAGAZINE *F&SF*. PUBLISHER Tor.

The Weakest Link. Q: In the 1968 film *Rosemary's Baby*, which actress played Rosemary? A: Audrey Hepburn. Q: Who wrote *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*—Wallis Simpson, or Oscar Wilde? A: Wallis Simpson. (BBC1, 16 June) • Q: In which sci-fi sitcom did the computer, Holly, change sex when the actress Hattie Hayridge replaced Norman Lovett? A: *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. (18 June) [MPJ]

R.I.P. Dede Allen (1923-2010), US film editor whose genre work included *Terror From The Year 5000* (1948), *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1972), *The Wiz* (1978) and *The Addams Family* (1991), died on 17 April; she was 86. [MPJ] • Everett F. Bleiler (1920-2010), US editor, bibliographer, critic and translator who compiled the pioneering *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature* (1948), died on 13 June aged 90. [RB] Besides further important genre checklists, he edited the first regular *Year's Best SF* anthologies (1949-1956) with T.E. Dikty, and—especially while at Dover Publications, 1955-1977—many notable anthologies and critical editions of sf and fantasy writers. • Arthur Herzog (1927-2010), US author whose debut novel was *The Swarm* (giant killer bees, 1974) and who wrote several other sf disaster and dystopia books, died on 26 May; he was 83. [JC] • Jerry Emerson Loomis (1933-2010), US author and SFWA member who began publishing short sf in 1972, died on 30 March. [SFWA] • F. Gwynplaine MacIntyre (?1948/9-2010), Scots-born author, journalist and illustrator whose sf novel is *The Woman Between the Worlds* (1994), apparently died in a 'suspicious' fire at his Brooklyn apartment on 25 June. [AIP] He suffered from depression and had issued various farewells; police/fire officials believe this was suicide. (NY Daily News, 26 June) • David Markson (1927-2010), US author of the

surreal last-woman-on-Earth novel *Wittgenstein's Mistress* (1988), died on 4 June aged 82. [JC] ● *Joe Messerli* (1930-2010), US comics artist who worked on 'funny animal' titles (e.g. *Daffy Duck*, *Pink Panther*, *Woody Woodpecker*) and designed tv's famous *Twilight Zone* logo, died on 23 June; he was 79. [PDF] ● *Ronald Neame* (1911-2010), UK film director whose genre work included *Blithe Spirit* (1945, as cinematographer), *Scrooge* (1970) and *Meteor* (1979), died on 16 June; he was 99. [AW] ● *Howard 'Howie' Post* (1926-2010), US comics artist/writer, cartoonist and animator, best known for creating DC's prehistoric hero *Anthro* (1968-1969) and the newspaper strip *The Dropouts* (1968-1981), died on 25 May aged 83. [SG] ● *José Saramago* (1922-2010), Portuguese novelist who frequently used sf/fantasy themes—such as the epidemic blindness in his novel *Blindness* (1995, trans 1997)—died on 18 June aged 87. He received the 1998 Nobel Prize for Literature. [AW] ● *Al Williamson* (1931-2010), US comics artist who worked for EC in the 1950s, on *Creepy*, *Eerie* and *Flash Gordon* in the 1960s, and adapted *Star Wars* for comics, died on 13 June; he was 79. [io9]

We Are Everywhere. Only an sf simile can do justice to World Cup background noises: 'Though insufferable to any foreigner, the vuvuzela is a piece of hardware to which the entire South African nation appears to have developed aural immunity—a bit like Omega IV, the planet in *Star Trek* where all the indigenous population is immune to the deadly virus in its biosphere, but a 400-strong exploratory Federation party immediately snuff it.' (*Guardian*, 11 June) [PW]

Award Shortlists. *John W. Campbell Memorial:* Margaret Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*; Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl*; Iain M. Banks, *Transition*; Cory Doctorow, *Makers*; Nancy Kress, *Steal Across the Sky*; Paul McAuley, *Gardens of the Sun*; China Miéville, *The City & The City*; Adam Roberts, *Yellow Blue Tibia*; Kim Stanley Robinson, *Galileo's Dream*; Robert J. Sawyer, *WWW: Wake*; Bruce Sterling, *The Caryatids*; Robert Charles Wilson, *Julian Comstock: A Story of 22nd-Century America*. ● *Sidewise* (alternate history): SHORT Paul Di Filippo, 'Yes, We Have No Bananas' (*Eclipse* 3, ed Jonathan Strahan); Alastair Reynolds, 'The Fixation' (*Solaris Book of New Science Fiction* 3, ed George Mann); Chris Roberson, 'Edison's Frankenstein' (*Postscripts* 20/21); Bruce Sterling, 'Black Swan' (*Interzone* 4/09); Sarah Zettel, 'The Persistence of Souls' (*The Shadow Conspiracy* ed Phyllis Irene Radford & Laura Anne Gilman). LONG Robert Conroy, *1942* (yes, one contender only). ● *British Fantasy:* NOVEL Joe Abercrombie, *Best Served Cold*; Sam Stone, *Futile Flame*; Conrad Williams, *One*; Mike Carey, *The Naming Of The Beasts*; Stephen King, *Under The Dome*. NOVELLA Rio Youers, *Old Man Scratch*; Rob Shearman, 'Roadkill' (*Roadkill/Siren Beat*); Sarah Pinborough, *The Language Of Dying*; Joel Lane, *The Witnesses are Gone*; Stephen Volk, *Vardoger*. SHORT Justin Carroll, 'Careful What You Wish For' (*Dragontales*); Rob Shearman, 'George Clooney's Moustache' (*BFS Yearbook* 2009); Nina Allan, 'My Brother's Keeper' (*Black Static* 12); Sarah Pinborough, 'The Confessor's Tale' (*Hellbound Hearts*); Michael Marshall Smith, 'What Happens When You Wake Up in the Night' (*Nightjar*). ANTHOLOGY D.F. Lewis, ed, *Cern Zoo: Nonymymous 9*; Holly Stacey, ed, *Dragontales*; Marie O'Regan and Paul Kane, eds, *Hellbound Hearts*; George R.R. Martin and Gardner Dozois, eds, *Songs Of The Dying Earth*; Stephen Jones, ed, *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror 20*. COLLECTION Ian McDonald, *Cyberabad Days*; Ramsey Campbell, *Just Behind You*; Robert Shearman, *Love Songs For The Shy And Cynical*; Allen Ashley, *Once & Future Cities*; Joel Lane, *The Terrible Changes*. SMALL PRESS Newcon Press, *Screaming Dreams*, Subterranean Press, Telos Publishing, TTA Press. COMIC/GRAPHIC *Fables*, *Freakangels*, *Locke and Key*, *The Girly Comic*, *Whatever Happened to the Caped Crusader?* ARTIST Charles Vess, Les Edwards, Shaun Tan, Steve Upham, Vincent Chong. NON-FICTION David Langford, 'Ansible Link' (*Interzone* column; gosh!); Peter Tennant, 'Case Notes' (*Black Static* column); Axelle Carolyn, *It Lives Again! Horror Movies in the New Millennium*; John Scalzi, *Whatever* (scalzi.com/whatever); George Beahm et al, *Knowing Darkness*. MAGAZINE *Black Static*, *Cemetery Dance*, *Interzone*, *Midnight Street*, *Murky Depths*, *Theaker's Quarterly Fiction*. TELEVISION *Battlestar Galactica*, *Being Human*, *Doctor Who*, *Lost*, *Torchwood: Children of Earth*. FILM *Avatar*, *Coraline*, *District 9*, *Let the Right One In*, *Watchmen*.

Outraged Letters. *Diana Wynne Jones* loves her fans: 'Meanwhile the DWJ List, having supplied me most generously with a vast bouquet of exotic blooms and a fine picture, are now selecting quotes from my books to put on T shirts. Farah Mendlesohn has pronounced this a breach of copyright, but since I have said I don't mind in the least, I don't think it is. Actually my own favourite quote is a sentence from a student thesis I was once sent: "Jones disagrees". Understand that this applies to Farah and not the List.' ● *Mike McInerney* looks forward to

August: 'Along the waterfront on the Embarcadero in San Francisco they will install a 40 foot high 8 ton sculpture of a rocketship starting in August for about a year ... looks like a giant Hugo Award to me!' This artefact has its own web page, including a blurb of Clutean fluency: 'The Raygun Gothic Rocketship is a rococo retro-futurist future-rustic vernacular between yesterday's tomorrow and the future that never was, a critical kitsch somewhere between The Moons of Mongo & Manga Nouveau.' (www.raygungothicrocket.com)

C.o.A. *Andrew Adams*, 902 Landstage Ryogoku, 1-20-12 Midori, Sumida-Ku, Tokyo 130-0021, Japan. *Anne & Brian Gray*, 2726 Sagebrush Cir #203, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103, USA.

Censorship! Marion Pitman, as an AbeBooks vendor, found that John Norman's *Kajira of Gor* (2007) is banned: 'Abe's banned books policy is bizarre—they have a list of banned books. They cannot let you see it. They don't know where it came from or why any particular book is on it. If you list a banned book they will pull it from your inventory—but—it is absolutely impossible for them to tell you they have done so!'

The Dead Past. *30 Years Ago*, D. Langford took a momentous step: 'For reasons shrouded in official secrecy and middle-class reticence [...] this humble editor has left AWRE for the far more thrilling and less remunerative field of pro writing. Undaunted by the encouragement of publishers ("It's an easy decision to make, but ...") and agents ("The book trade is in the worst depression it has known for a great many years ..."), your hero freed himself with a single bound and is now self-employed!' (*Ansible* 11, 1980) And still doesn't have a proper job.

Random Fandom. *John Berry* (not the US John D. Berry) has been lying low after a difficult twisted-bowel operation last year. He spent some time in a convalescent home, and on return to his own house 'had no interest in writing or his other hobbies—which is most unlike him.' [PWe] Though still not fully recovered, he seems more cheerful now. ● *Jeanne Bowman & Alan Rosenthal* were married on 26 June. ● *Peter Cohen* was at John Birchby's funeral on 15 June: 'Eleven fannish persons duly turned up, making up roughly a quarter of the congregation. We learnt about John's time in the TA, his marksmanship and that his middle name is Varley. After the service those fans without urgent work commitments went on to a pub where we collectively bought a half of lager, John's usual tippie, which for once he couldn't insist on paying for himself.' ● *Anne & Brian Gray*, North American TAFF administrators, were married on 22 May (note name change from Anne K.G. Murphy). ● *James Nicoll* posted links to J. Neil Schulman's joke claim that he'd sue the US government for swiping ideas from his sf novel *Alongside Night* (see A275), and also to Nicoll's own review of the book. This provoked an irate reply, seemingly from JNS, taking Nicoll to task for being lukewarm about a work once endorsed by Anthony Burgess (So Who Do You Think You Are?); followed in turn by the real JNS, dissociating himself from this graceless 'anonymous defender'.

Thog's Masterclass. *Neat Tricks Dept.* 'Odan lifted his head so that it jutted from between his shoulder blades ...' (Manning Norvil [Ken Bulmer], *Dream Chariots*, 1977) ● *Dept of Too Much Anatomical Information.* 'With Mordred looking over his shoulder, and flanked by Arthur and Agravaire, Tich eased his bulk carefully onto a stool, rested his hands on his belly and puffed out his bulbous cheeks.' (Alan Fenton, *The Hour of Camelot*, 2010) [DVB] ● *Choice of Sense Organ Dept.* 'Lili rested a hand on the head of the control divan and pressed her lips together and looked around at us, mostly with her eyes.' (Fritz Leiber, *The Big Time*, 1961) [PB] ● *Crossing the Jordan.* 'Romanda took a longer look, and nearly gasped herself.' 'They were disparate men, alike only in the way a leopard was like a lion.' 'His scowl deepened creases on his flushed face that needed no deepening.' 'They slept together like puppies of necessity.' 'Elayne laid one finger atop a bronze horseman less than a hand tall, standing a few leagues west of the city.' 'His ears quivered with embarrassment yet again.' 'He looked furious. And near to sicking up.' 'She tried to work moisture into her mouth, but it was thick.' 'She showed him her teeth, hoping he did not take it for a grin.' 'Before you can have eyeless prisoners, you need an eyeless victory. What we've had are a string of eyeless defeats.' (all Robert Jordan, *Knife of Dreams*, 2005) [AR] ● *True Romance Dept.* 'And so it was, with full belly and empty bladder, Fred plowed into Mary like a moose through a windshield.' (David Marusek, *Mind Over Ship*, 2009) [CB]

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