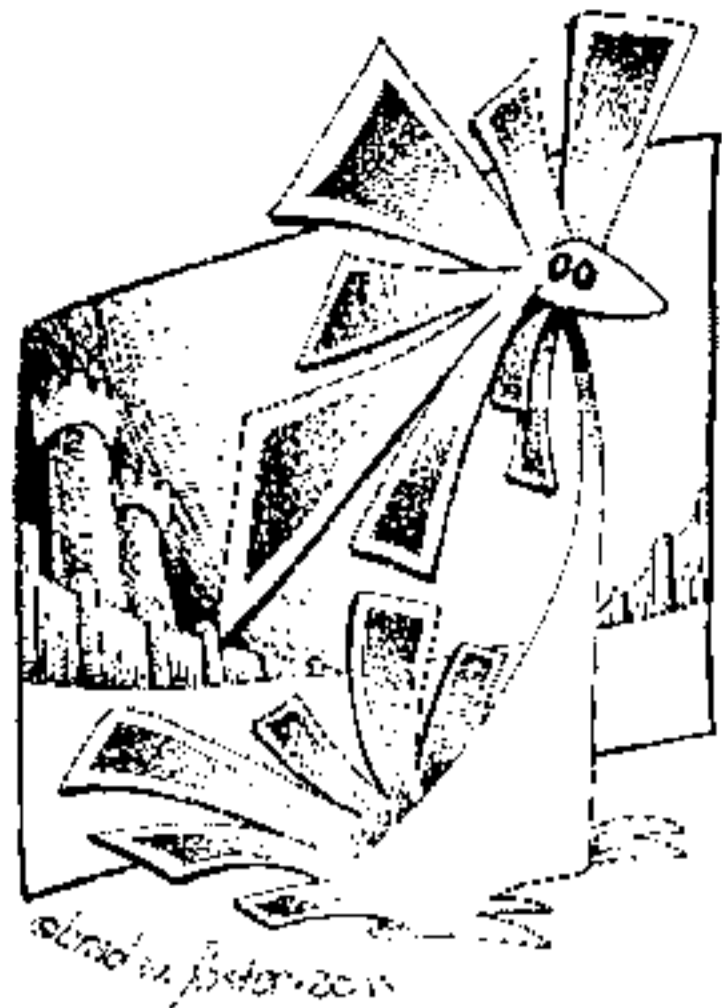


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From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Web news.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE, sympathy or the secret of heather ale.

SF Encyclopedia: as *Ansible* goes to press, the official public launch at www.sf-encyclopedia.com is mere days away. Allegedly. While we're waiting, you can read the hot gossip at sfencyclopedia.wordpress.com.

The Library of Babel

James Cameron explains how it is that Sigourney Weaver's character in *Avatar*, though fatally wounded in that film, will return in the sequel: 'No one ever dies in science fiction.' (BBC, 18 September) [MPJ]

Roald Dahl famously wrote his books in the garden shed. When his family started campaigning to raise £500,000 to restore this decaying hut and transfer it to the Dahl Museum, some people were so unfeeling as to say things like 'The international model and TV star Sophie Dahl is asking us for money to restore a shed?' (Matthew Sweet). Others noted that the Museum accounts show it holds funds of £4.63 million and brings in £478,960 a year (but somehow spends £550,900), while Dahl's books still generate hefty royalties, leading to such comments as 'Can't the chocolate factory pay?' (*Independent*, 14 September) [MPJ]

Harlan Ellison filed another of his famous copyright lawsuits on 14 September, asking to block the release of Andrew Niccol's new sf film *In Time* on grounds of substantial alleged borrowing from the 1965 Ellison story "'Repent, Harlequin!" Said the Ticktockman'. Both feature a 'dystopian corporate future in which everyone is allotted a specific amount of time to live', and both have enforcing authorities called Sandmen, sorry, Timekeepers. Interestingly, at least one critic—Richard Roeper—assumed after seeing the preview that *In Time* is in fact an adaptation of "'Repent, Harlequin!" ...'. The film's release was scheduled for 28 October. (*The Hollywood Reporter*, 15 September) [DKMK/JS]

Chris Evans recently celebrated a significant birthday, and Gary Kilworth sends his party speech: 'The Christopher Evanses of this world seem to proliferate. There are TV stars, film stars and well-known authors. My favourite Christopher Evans however, is a guy I met some 30-odd years ago who began his writing career by producing some exceptional science fiction novels. / I was introduced to Chris by our mutual friend Rob Holdstock, who pointed him out in a pub and whispered cryptically, "Beware of Welshmen wielding bunsen burners." The warning was unnecessary. Chris turned out to be a warm and amiable man, whose friendship I came to value highly and whose advice and criticism regarding my work has always been invaluable to me. There is no side to our Christopher Evans and all those other famous ones pale to insignificance beside him when it comes to insightful and intelligent observation on writing, ideas and indeed, life itself. / Chris's creative judgement became evident to me when he was editing the Other Edens anthologies with Rob Holdstock. I sent Rob and Chris three very short stories hoping they would take one of them. Chris suggested that I link the stories together under the generic title of "Triptych", a set of three tales hinged together as one piece of work. It was a brilliant idea. / Something must be said here of Chris's Welshness, because this is a deep, inherent part of the man and the writer. However, he doesn't wear it like a gaudy coat that shouts "This is who I am" but more as something that quietly proclaims, "This is where I was made". It gives him the air of a secretive, serious creature, like a lynx or a wildcat, that has emerged and appeared amongst us from an ancient landscape. To me, Christopher Evans the, the strong, confident Welshman, carries in his manner this line from a Ralph Waldo Emerson poem: *They know not well the subtle ways / I keep, and pass, and turn again.* / He is a good and treasured friend who I admire for his work and his ability to put a lightness in my step whenever we meet. As Shakespeare put it in one of his plays, "As well as impeccable integrity and loyalty, there are men on this Earth who hath stonking good brains that rattle out brave ideas." Christopher Evans is one of those men. / Happy 60th Birthday, Chris! And so say all of us.

Dave McKean received an honorary doctorate of design from the University of Wolverhampton on 2 September. [JG]

Betsy Mitchell editor-in-chief at Del Rey Books, is taking early retirement in December—a move regretted by her authors. [L]

Jonathan Mostow, director of *Surrogates*, offers an interesting insight in the DVD audio commentary: 'If you're gonna make a movie about people staying at home operating surrogate robots, [...] you're going to confront the issue, that you have multiple actors playing the same character. And how does that work? And since no one's ever done it before, we don't know.' [LA] What, *never* ...?

Terry Pratchett is suing Paul Bamborough and Camel Productions, who had an option on film rights for his Discworld fantasy *Mort*. He reckons the rights have now run out; one suspects he'd prefer another Sky/Vadim Jean/The Mob production. (*Telegraph*, 2 October) [MPJ]

Dave Prowse of Darth Vader fame long ago 'encountered regrettable sarcasm from co-star Sir Alec Guinness, after once approaching him about cashing in with some signed photos. Prowse, 76, writes: "The ones where I'd signed 'Dave Prowse is Darth Vader', he'd written 'Alec Guinness is Alec Guinness'.'" (*Independent*, 13 September) [MPJ]

Concloutment

7-9 Oct • **Sci-Fi London Oktoberfest**, Odeon Camden Town (all screenings) and other Camden Town venues. £10.65/film; £7.50 teens and concessions. All-nighters: anime £32; MST3K £25; no concessions. See <http://www.sci-fi-london.com/festival/2011/oktoberfest>.

15-16 Oct • **Octocon**, Camden Court Hotel, Camden St, Dublin 2, Ireland. €30 reg; under-18s/concessions €20; supp €10; accompanied under-12s free. Contact: Apt 56 Shalimar, Monastery Rd, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Ireland; info at octocon dot com.

16-18 Oct • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Days Hotel, Sackville St, Manchester. £70 reg. Contact 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN; Gil at manchesterfantasticfilms dot co dot uk.

22 Oct • **BristolCon**, Ramada Hotel, Bristol. Several guests of honour. £20 to 21 October; £25 at the door. Cheques to 34 Dongola Road, Bishopston, Bristol, BS7 9HP.

26 Oct • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 7pm. Free. With Tanith Lee.

4-7 Nov • **Irish Discworld Convention**, Falls Hotel, Ennistymon, Co. Clare. €45 reg; students €35; under-19s €30, under-16s €15, under-8s free. See idwcon.org; irishdiscworldcon@gmail.com

11-13 Nov • **ArmadaCon 23**, Future Inns, Plymouth. £30 reg, £20 concessions. Contact 18 Wadham Road, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 3BD.

11-13 Nov • **Novacon 41**, Park Inn, Mansfield Road, Nottingham. £40 reg. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

23 Nov • **Starmaker: The Philosophy of Olaf Stapledon**, British Interplanetary Society, 27/29 South Lambeth Rd, London, SW8 1SZ. 9am-4:30pm. 'Delegates' £60; BIS members £50; students £25; rates (including coffee, lunch) rise by £10 after 15 October. Only £25 for 'First Named Author', so presumably Olaf Stapledon can come on the cheap. With Stephen Baxter, Andy Sawyer, others. See www.bis-space.com.

29 Jun - 1 Jul 2013 • **Swords, Sorcery, Sandals and Space:** The Fantastika and the Classical World (SF Foundation conference), Liverpool University. See www.sf-foundation.org/events/index.html

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Research Us. TV critic Mary McNamara marvels at a new concept: 'People flee a polluted Earth by going back 85 million years in executive producer Steven Spielberg's promising new drama on Fox. / Easily the most exciting show of the fall season, Fox's "Terra Nova" has such obvious, instant and demographically diverse appeal—sci-fi fans, fantasy fans, 5-year-olds, 50-year-olds, Al Gore—that you have to wonder why no one thought of it before.' (*LA Times*, 26 September) [DB] Mass time-travel to the deep past! If only Julian May, Robert Silverberg or Clifford Simak could have come up with such a notion...

Magazine Scene. Steve Davidson (who blogs as The Crotchety Old Fan) has been granted the *Amazing Stories* trademark—abandoned by previous owners Hasbro—and plans to resurrect the magazine. • *New Worlds*: the latest announcement of the relaunch as *Michael Moorcock's New Worlds* says the first e-edition will appear online on 10 November.

No URL given, but the originally announced domain newworlds.co.uk is (though content-free) still registered to team member Roger Gray.

Science Masterclass. Sunscreen Alert Dept. 'The Dog Star rises and sets with the sun during July and August. Those are called dog days and are the hottest part of the year, so you see the Dog Star does affect our sunburn.' (James B. Garfield, *Follow My Leader*, 1957) [PL]

R.I.P. *Jack Adler* (1917-2011), US comic artist, colorist, at DC Comics from 1946 and eventually DC production manager and vice-president 1975-1981, died on September 18; he was 94. [PDF] • *Sergio Bonelli* (1932-2011), Italian comics writer and chairman of Sergio Bonelli Editore—publishers of many comics including the paranormal-investigator title *Dylan Dog*—died on 26 September aged 79. [PDF] • *Eve Brent* (1929-2011), US character actress who played Jane in two 1958 Tarzan films and whose other genre credits include *The Green Mile* (1999), died on 27 August aged 81. [PDF] • *Richard Datin* (1929-2011) US model-maker who created the first Starship *Enterprise* and headed the team that built the original *Star Trek's* eleven-foot version, died on 24 January. [SFS/SHS] • *Sara Douglass* (Sara Mary Warneke, 1957-2011), Australian author of several fantasy series and standalones, whose *BattleAxe* (1995) sold over a million copies in Australia alone, died from ovarian cancer on 27 September. She was 54. [IN] • *Norma Eberhardt* (1919-2011), US fashion model turned actress whose most famous genre role was in *Return of Dracula* (1958), died on 16 September; she was 82. [MPJ] • *David Z Goodman* (1930-2011), US screenwriter whose film scripts included *Logan's Run* (1976) solo and *Eyes of Laura Mars* (1978) as co-author, died on 26 September aged 81. [MPJ] • *Charles Hickson*, US shipyard worker famous for having supposedly been abducted by aliens in 1973, died on 9 September aged 80; his story was one of those incorporated into the dire sf film *Starship Invasions* (1977). [SJD] • *Dan Hoey*, US fan once active in the Washington SF Association (he chaired the 1995 Disclave convention), committed suicide on 31 August; he was 59. [RL] Dan was an occasional *Ansible* correspondent who helped rekey paper issues for the online archive project. • *George Kuchar* (1942-2011), US underground film director, comics artists and teacher who made over 200 films and videos, many of them sf/fantasy 'creature features', died on 6 September; he was 69. His 1975 cartoon biography *H.P. Lovecraft* had mixed reactions from HPL fans. [BT] • *Bill Kunkel* (1951-2011), US fan best known in fanzine circles for his witty cartoons, died on 4 September aged 61. Arnie and Joyce Katz write: 'A man of vast and varied talents, Bill was a professional writer of both non-fiction and fiction, the co-founder of the world's first video and computer game magazine (*Electronic Games*), a game designer, a comic book writer and a cartoonist. / As a fan, Bill Kunkel was noted for his trenchant, insurgent wit and his biting satiric cartoons. He was a member of the Brooklyn Insurgents in the 1970s and the Vegrants in the 1990s and 2000s.' • *Bill Trojan*, US fan and book dealer as Escape Books, died from a heart attack in his hotel room at the Reno Worldcon on 21 August. He was 63. [AC] • *Mark W. Worthen* (1962-2011), US horror author (publishing since 1993) and editor of the online magazine *Blood Rose* 1998-2005, died on 19 September. [SFS/SHS]

For the Record. A chap in Doncaster called Rob Hull has made his way into the *Guinness Book of World Records* by amassing the world's largest collection of Daleks: 571 in all shapes and sizes. His wife fondly commented, 'I hate the bloody things and I've got a feeling this is only going to encourage him.' (*Metro*, 15 September) [MPJ]

Awards. BSFA: 2011 nominations for the 2012 presentation are now open; see bsfa.co.uk. • *TV Choice*: best family drama, *Doctor Who*; best actress, Karen Gillan as Amy Pond in *Doctor Who*. [MPJ] • *Emmy Awards*: best supporting actor, Peter Dinklage as Tyrion Lannister in *A Game Of Thrones*. [MPJ] • *Heinlein Award* for sf or technical nonfiction that inspires human exploration of space: Connie Willis.

Fear & Loathing. Quoting Joss Whedon's *Firefly* is verboten at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, whose Professor Miller decorated his office door with a poster of starship captain Mal declaring (in reply to 'How do I know you won't kill me in my sleep?') his fair-play code: 'You don't know me, son, so let me explain this to you once: If I ever kill you, you'll be awake. You'll be facing me. And you'll be armed.' Campus police removed this in horror, threatening a charge of 'disorderly conduct'. In protest Miller substituted a joke anti-fascism poster—likewise removed, with further threats. The UWS chancellor says: 'This was not an act of censorship. This was an act of sensitivity to and care for our shared community ...' (*Huffington Post*, 29 September) [DKMK]

Outraged Letters. *Sam J. Lundwall*: 'As you might know, our best friend Harry Harrison is in rather bad shape, staying at a nursing home

outside Lewes, Sussex. I think he would appreciate visits; however, they should be cleared through his daughter Moira, since he is very weak.' I don't yet have permission to pass on her e-address but have enquired. • *Robert Newman* notes that London's riots (A290) did indeed impact Croydon fans: 'The monthly Croydon pub meeting didn't take place (on 9 August), for the first time in 22 years. The Dog and Bull was in the heart of the rioting area and although it escaped the Monday night looting and burning unscathed (shops both sides were seriously damaged and looted) it was boarded up and closed on Tuesday, as was every other pub within miles. [...] I could see House of Reeves burning from my bedroom window. Croydon SF and comic shop A Place in Space is just around the corner from Reeves, 30ish yards away. Most of the block it is a part of was completely gutted by fire. The front of the shop survived but I believe that there was damage to the rear.'

Fanfundery. *TransAtlantic Fan Fund*. The 2012 TAFF race begins in earnest. North American candidates for the trip to Olympus 2012 (Eastercon) are Warren Buff, Kim Kofmel and Jacq Monahan. Contact Anne & Brian Gray (akg.netmouse@gmail.com) or see taff.org.uk, now linking to what John Coxon calls 'new shiny places' where you can tweet or facebookify about TAFF. Ballot to follow soon, with an expected December voting deadline. • *GUFF*: nominations are open for the northbound trip to Olympus 2012. Australasian candidates need to find nominators, write a 100-word platform, etc., by 14 October; the voting deadline is to be 22 January. Contact Sue Ann Barber: activeim@hotmail.com, or PO Box 249, Pascoe Vale South, VIC 3044, Australia.

We Are Everywhere. The *Oxford English Dictionary* online Word of the Day for 24 September was 'Stepford, adj. Robotic; docile; obedient; acquiescent; (also) uniform; attractive but lacking in individuality, emotion, or thought.' [MPJ] • Jasper Fforde's *The Last Dragonslayer* includes a villain named Gordon van Gordon, leading to speculation as to whether he was thinking of Gordon Van Gelder. [AD]

Random Fandom. *Phillip Greenaway*, fanzine editor, married Helen Cocking on 24 September. [SG] • *Martin Lewis*, BSFA *Vector* reviews editor, triggered an online teacup storm with a very rude tweet—posted as 'VectorReviews'—about *Doctor Who's* Steven Moffat. Mass Who-fan outrage; grovelling BSFA apology; Moffat forgives; story over. • *Nova Awards*: all UK and Irish fans (not just Novacon members) can now vote provided they've read at least six qualifying fanzines, says administrator Steve Green. The Novacon.org.uk website—where an online voting form is promised real soon now, deadline 7 November—merely requires Nova voters to have received the said six fanzines.

The Dead Past. *70 Years Ago* in London: 'England's biggest fan reunion for the last year was held over the weekend, September 20/21, when in spite of the manifold difficulties attending such a proposition—far in excess of anything the US fans encounter—a muster of some 14 was managed. At Saturday lunch time a party gathered to welcome Maurice Hanson, ex-editor of "Novae Terrae" who had wangled leave from Somerset. After some bookhunting in Charing X Road, the party saw the film "Fantasia".' (*Futurian War Digest*, October 1941) In other FWD news, Ego (later Sir Arthur) Clarke had seen the film four times.

C.o.A. *Julia Daly & Douglas Spencer*, 2 Morton Gardens, Halfway, Sheffield, S20 8GJ.

Thog's Masterclass. *Reliant Robin of Rhetoric Dept.* 'As he stood there waiting for his lower brain to stop broadcasting retaliatory lizard thoughts, it occurred to him that this was a message loaded with semantic interference, a veritable Cadillac of cognitive dissonance.' (Jim Young, 'Ultraviolet Night', *F&SF*, March 2004) [BA] • *Multicoloured Eyeballs in the Sky*. 'On his breast was the representation of the sun, centred by an opal that changed color at every laboring breath. [...] Only his two eyes lived, and they mated the opal of the ornament.' (J. Allan Dunn, *The Treasure of Atlantis*, 1916) [BA] • *Artful Alliteration Dept.* 'They told me of the Yagas [...] in the grim city of Yugga, on the rock Yuthla, by the river Yogh, in the land of Yagg [...] their ruler was a black queen named Yasmeena ...' (Robert E. Howard, *Almuric*, 1939 *Weird Tales*; 1964) [CMG] • *Dept of Anatomy*. 'His thin mustache was neatly placed between a peaked nose and two eyes like black marbles.' (Michael Avallone, *Assassins Don't Die in Bed*, 1968) • *Neat Tricks Dept.* 'Every hair on my body joined those already upright on my neck.' (Kathy Reichs, *Bones to Ashes*, 2007) [PB]

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