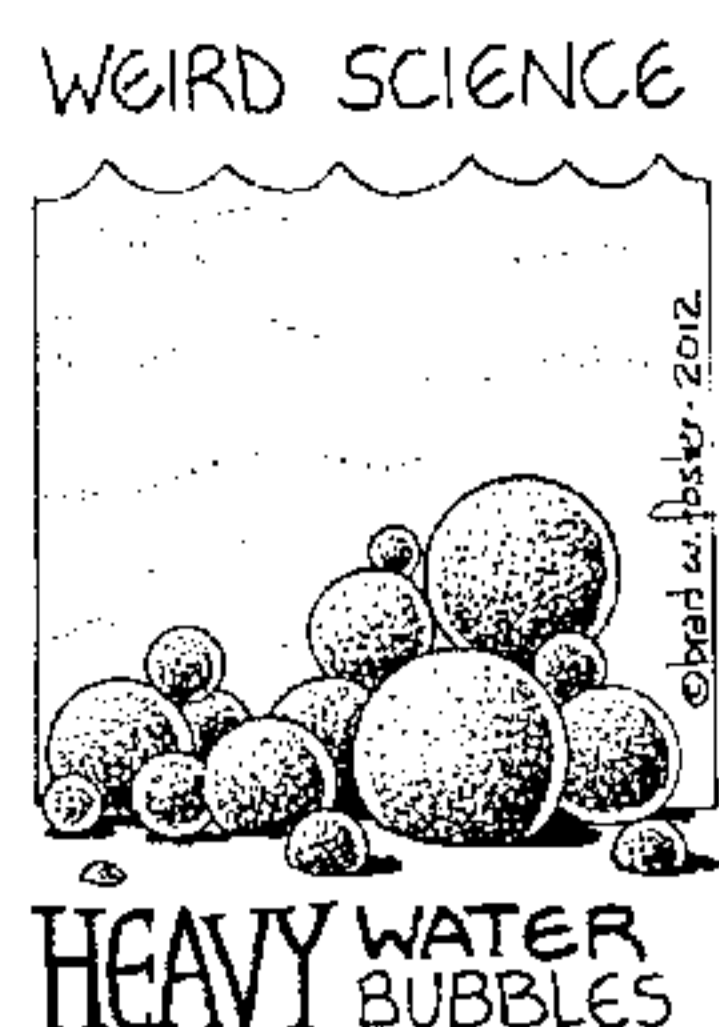


ansible



Editorial. Should we get all excited about the coming *Ansible* 300? Should there be a colossal online supplement of wit, wisdom, anecdotes and lawsuit threats from *Ansible's* glory years (1979-1987) and period of sad decline (1991-2012)? Will readers rally round with contributions to make *A300* the hugest and most glittering issue ever? I have no idea.

Standing on the Brink of Infinity

Robert Harris, best known for the alternate-history or counterfactual *Fatherland*, stated severely that all his work was factually based: 'I've no taste at all for fantasy.' (*Guardian*, 20 April) [IM]

Peter James, the crime novelist who's ventured into sf, explains his retaliation for being snubbed by Martin Amis. 'I told [*Ian Rankin*] I was going to get my revenge by writing Amis into the next book and giving him a very small penis. Rankin bet me a hundred quid I wouldn't. He's going to have to pay up.' In James's *Not Dead Yet*, 'Amis Smallbone is ridiculed by a prostitute, who compares his manhood to a stubby pencil. The gangster he is staying with says, "You've always traded on being your dad's son, but you was never half the man he was."' James adds: 'I was rather pleased with that.' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 27 May)

Steven Moffat received a special BAFTA Award for *Doctor Who*: 'Blimey! A Special Award! I didn't even know I was ill!' [MPJ] But he complained about certain reactions to *Who* and *Sherlock*: 'There's been a weird backlash among, I presume, fairly stupid people about the fact the shows are complicated and clever ...' (*Radio Times*, 21 May)

Terry Pratchett won the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for Comic Fiction with *Snuff*, after three previous shortlistings without a win. Part of the coveted reward is that some hapless Gloucestershire Old Spot pig will now be named Snuff. (BBC, 30 May) [MPJ]

J.R.R. Tolkien blew the gaff in a 1967 letter to be included in a vast Berlin literary auction this month: 'I am afraid I cannot help you in the matter of children's books, one, because after a long absence, my own affairs take all of my present limited strength and secondly, because I have never been a lover of books for children and have seldom read any since my childhood.' (*Independent*, 27 May) [MPJ]

Condoke

Until 30 Jun • **'It's Life Jimmy, but Not As We Know It'**: SF in Scotland (exhibition), National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1EW. Free. 10am-8pm; to 5pm Sat; 2-5pm Sun.

9 Jun • **Iain Banks & Kim Stanley Robinson** in conversation, Conference Centre, British Library, 5:30-7pm. £7.50; £5 concessions. See www.bl.uk/whatson/events/event131555.html. A signing follows.

16 Jun • **British Fantasy Society Open Day**, The Mug House pub, London Bridge, London, SE1 2PF. 1pm to late. All welcome.

18 Jun • **CRSF** (academic), University of Liverpool. £30 reg inc lunch, snacks. See currentresearchinspeculativefiction.blogspot.co.uk.

27 Jun • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Melton Mowbray pub, 18 Holborn, London, EC1N 2LE. 6pm for 7pm. With Paul McAuley.

14 Jul • **Edge-Lit** (sf/fantasy/horror), QUAD centre, Market Place, Derby, DE22 3PN. 10am-midnight. £25 reg. Box office 01332 290 606.

20-23 Jul • **Continuum 2012** (RPG), John Foster Hall, Leicester University. £35 reg (day: Fri £10, Sat or Sun £15) or £30+room charges. *Room booking deadline is 2 July*. See www.continuum.uk.net.

21 Sep • **The Hobbit at 75**, British Library, 6:30pm-8pm. £7.50, £5 unwaged. Final event in the current (June-September) BL exhibition: 'From William Blake to the 21st-century suburban hinterlands of J G Ballard, Writing Britain examines how the landscapes of Britain permeate great literary works.' Details and bookings at www.bl.uk.

27-30 Sept • **Fantasycon 2012**, Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton. Another GoH added: Muriel Gray. *Now £65 reg (BFS members £60)*. Payment via PayPal at fantasycon2012.org/join.php, or to 10 Haycroft Gardens, Mastin Moor, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S43 3FE.

20 Oct • **BristolCon**, Ramada Hotel, Bristol. *Now £20 reg*, until 19 October when advance booking closes; £25 at the door. Cheques to 18 High Leaze Road, Patchway, Bristol BS34 5AF.

Ansible 299 June 2012

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 or the dusty secret of Ookil' karabin.

1-3 Mar 2013 • **Sci-Fi Weekender** (was *SFX Weekender*; the magazine is no longer involved), Hafan y Mor Holiday Park, Pwllheli, North Wales. Booking by accommodation from £199/person or shares; day passes £49, Friday and Saturday only: see www.scifiweekender.com.

18-21 Apr 2014 • **Satellite 4** (Eastercon), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. *Now £55 reg and £45 unwaged*; other rates unchanged. £20 supp/junior (12-17); £5 child (5-11); £1 infant. Contact c/o Flat 2/1, 691 Shields Rd, Pollokshields, Glasgow, G41 4QL.

Rumblings. After some technical difficulties with large document downloads, the full Hugo Voter Packet sampler became available in late May to 2012 Worldcon members only: see chicon.org/hugo-packet.php.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Remember Us. *Dale Winton*: 'Which 1960s TV series had characters called Mr Chekov and Mr Sulu?' *Contestant* (after long deliberation): '*Are You Being Served?*' (BBC1, *In It To Win It*) [PE]

Awards. *Arthur C. Clarke Award*: Jane Rogers, *The Testament of Jessie Lamb*. • *Compton Crook Award* (first novel): T.C. McCarthy, *Germline*. • *Heinlein Award*: Stanley Schmidt. • *Independent Book Blogger Awards* (inaugural presentation), Publishing News category: Victoria Strauss for *Writer Beware*. • *Nebulas*: NOVEL Jo Walton, *Among Others* (the first ever Nebula winner to contain a plug for *Ansible?*). NOVELLA Kij Johnson, 'The Man Who Bridged the Mist' (*Asimov's* 10/11). NOVELETTE Geoff Ryman, 'What We Found' (*F&SF* 9/11). SHORT Ken Liu, 'The Paper Menagerie' (*F&SF* 3/11). RAY BRADBURY (dramatic) Neil Gaiman for *Doctor Who*: 'The Doctor's Wife'. ANDRE NORTON (young adult) Delia Sherman, *The Freedom Maze*.

Magazine Scene. With the appearance of the all-sf issue of *The New Yorker* (4/11 June), many fans muttered about the End Times and looked nervously overhead for V-formations of winged Gloucester Old Spots. • *Weird Tales* (under new management; see *A290*) is again open to submissions: see weirdtalesmagazine.com/submission-guidelines/.

R.I.P. *David Bowman* (1957-2012), US novelist whose *Bunny Modern* (1998) is a satirical sf dystopia, died on 27 February at the age of 54. [PDF] • *Ernie Chan* (1940-2012; also as Ernie Chua). Filipino/US comics artist who worked at length on Batman and Conan, died on 16 May at the age of 71. [PDF] • *Hal E. Chester* (1921-2012), US actor and film producer whose genre productions included *The Beast from Twenty Thousand Fathoms* (1953) and *Night of the Demon* (1957), died on 25 March; he was 91. [MPJ] • *Tony DeZuniga* (1932-2012), Filipino/US comics artist and letterer who co-created Jonah Hex and The Black Orchid, died on 11 May aged 71. [PDF] • *Leo Dillon* (1933-2012), US artist/illustrator who with his wife and collaborator Diane Dillon won many awards including the 1971 Hugo and Locus Awards for best professional artist and two Caldecott Medals, died on 26 May. He was 79. The Dillons' work for the original *Dangerous Visions* and the Ace SF Specials is fondly remembered; other genre awards include a 1982 Balrog and a 2008 World Fantasy Award, both for life achievement. • *Carlos Fuentes* (1928-2012), celebrated Mexican magic-realist author whose work frequently included fantastic and/or futuristic elements, died on 15 May aged 83. [JC] He received a state funeral in Mexico City. • *Joel Goldsmith* (1957-2012), US composer who scored various genre films (*Laserblast*, *The Man With Two Brains*, *Moon 44*, *Kull the Conqueror* etc) and almost the whole of the *Stargate* tv franchise—for which music he was best known—died on 29 April. He was 54. [KW] • *Jay Kay Klein* (1931-2012), long-time US fan and tireless photographer of sf people and events, died on 15 May aged 80. He was the 1974 Worldcon's fan guest of honour, and entered the First Fandom Hall of Fame in 2011. (*File 770*) • *Hilary Rubinstein* (1926-2012), UK publisher and literary agent who discovered Kingsley Amis for Gollancz, started the Gollancz sf list in 1961, and in his years at A.P. Watt (1965-1992) represented many sf authors, died on 22 May; he was 86. • *Maurice Sendak* (1928-2012), major US children's book artist and storyteller whose best-known works include *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963, Caldecott Medal winner, live-action film 2009) and *In the Night Kitchen*

(1970), died on 8 May. He was 83. [RC] Further honours include the Hans Christian Andersen Award, US Congress National Medal of Arts and Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. • *Kaneto Shindo* (1912-2012), noted Japanese film-maker and screenwriter who wrote and directed the horror classic *Onibaba* (1964), died on 29 May at the age of 100. His very long career included several films about nuclear weapons (he was born in Hiroshima) and their aftermath. [MPJ] • *Late notice*, missed by both *Ansible* and the *SFE*: *Lindsay Gutteridge* (1923-2007), UK author of the miniaturized-men thriller *Cold War in a Country Garden* (1971) and its two sequels, died in June 2007 aged 84. [DPB]

As Others See Some of Us. ‘The best thing about *Comic-Con Episode IV: A Fan’s Hope*, the new Morgan Spurlock film, is that it will save you from going to Comic-Con. If you have, like me, felt a secret spasm of curiosity about this event—a vast annual splurge of pop culture, held in San Diego—then Spurlock’s documentary will tell you how, and whether, you should join the pilgrimage. Because I have never watched “Battlestar Galactica,” and because of my absurd reluctance to dress up like Wonder Woman, I wouldn’t last five minutes.’ (Anthony Lane, *The New Yorker*, 23 April) [MMW]

Award Shortlists. *British Fantasy Awards* (novel only): Joe Abercrombie, *The Heroes*; Stephen King, *11.22.63*; Kim Lakin-Smith, *Cyber Circus*; George R.R. Martin, *A Dance with Dragons*; Adam Nevill, *The Ritual*; Jo Walton, *Among Others*. Two winners to be chosen, one fantasy (Holdstock Award) and one horror (Derleth); it seems odd that there aren’t separate shortlists. • *John W. Campbell Memorial*: Ernest Cline, *Ready Player One*; Kathleen Ann Goonan, *This Shared Dream*; Will McIntosh, *Soft Apocalypse*; China Miéville, *Embassytown*; Christopher Priest, *The Islanders*; Joan Slonczewski, *The Highest Frontier*; Michael Swanwick, *Dancing with Bears*; Lavie Tidhar, *Osama*; Daniel H. Wilson, *Robocalypse*; Gene Wolfe, *Home Fires*; Rob Ziegler, *Seed*. • *Locus* (selected): SF NOVEL James S.A. Corey, *Leviathan Wakes*; Stephen King, *11/22/63*; China Miéville, *Embassytown*; Charles Stross, *Rule 34*; Vernor Vinge, *The Children of the Sky*. FANTASY NOVEL George R.R. Martin, *A Dance with Dragons*; Terry Pratchett, *Snuff*; Patrick Rothfuss, *The Wise Man’s Fear*; Catherynne M. Valente, *Deathless*; Jo Walton, *Among Others*. • *Mythopoeic* (fantasy): ADULT LITERATURE Lisa Goldstein, *The Uncertain Places*; Erin Morgenstern, *The Night Circus*; Richard Parks, *The Heavenly Fox*; Catherynne M. Valente, *Deathless*; Jo Walton, *Among Others*. CHILDREN’S Lisa Mantchev, *Théâtre Illuminata* series (*Eyes Like Stars*, *Perchance to Dream*, *So Silver Bright*; Tamora Pierce, *Beka Cooper* series (*Terrier*, *Bloodhound*, *Mastiff*); Delia Sherman, *The Freedom Maze*; Maggie Stiefvater, *The Scorpio Races*; Catherynne M. Valente, *The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making*. SCHOLARSHIP: INKLINGS Jason Fisher, ed., *Tolkien and the Study of His Sources: Critical Essays*; Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, *The Art of the Hobbit*; Carl Phelpstead, *Tolkien and Wales: Language, Literature and Identity*; Sanford Schwartz, *C.S. Lewis on the Final Frontier: Science and the Supernatural in the Space Trilogy*; Steve Walker, *The Power of Tolkien’s Prose: Middle-earth’s Magical Style*. SCHOLARSHIP: OTHER Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales: A New History*; Bonnie Gaarden, *The Christian Goddess: Archetype and Theology in the Fantasies of George MacDonald*; Ursula K. Le Guin, *Cheek by Jowl*; Darrell Schweitzer, *The Fantastic Horizon: Essays and Reviews*; Jack Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films*.

As Others See Us. In a blog post arrestingly titled ‘genre fiction fans are becoming like the Tea Party’, Freddie deBoer opines: ‘When I look at the broad culture of “fandom”—sci-fi fans, video game fans, comic book fans, etc.—I see a disturbing familiarity with the Tea Party. Both groups enjoy great power and cultural prominence; both commonly make complaints about oppression that simply cannot withstand scrutiny; and crucially, both seem far more invested in being recognized as marginalized and oppressed than in being freed from their supposed marginalization and oppression.’ (*Balloon Juice*, 2 May) [RB]

Who Goes There? A hacked electronic road sign in Boulder, Colorado, alarmed motorists with ‘WARNING DALEKS AHEAD’. [MPJ]

Outraged Letters. *Simon R. Green* watched tv: ‘A certain Mr William Shatner appeared as guest host on *Have I Got News For You* [25 May]. There was a certain sense of My God, He’s Not Dead Yet ... but there was also a definite warmth and affection for the old Captain from audience and team members. Good to see.’ • *Margaret Hoyt* on *John Carter*: ‘My favorite explanation of why the film of *A Princess of Mars* didn’t get to keep the original title was on some feminist site I stumbled across before the picture came out. They were—shocked!—that Disney would change the title to cater to crass commercial interests, namely that teenage boys, the most esteemed target audience, wouldn’t pay up

to see anything with “princess” in the title, and teenage girls, also known to have some spending money, couldn’t be expected to turn out for anything with “Mars” in its title.’ Logical, Captain.

The Class System, Explained. ‘There was a club on campus called AOKP, or the Artorian Order of the Knights of Pendragon, which was a closed-doors sort of group, except for late nights, when members would take over the grassy quad near the language building and spar with foam swords while wearing tunics. I’d walk by them after playing the video game *007: Agent Under Fire* for five hours and think, “Wow, what a bunch of nerds.” / It was an unjust criticism, sure. But there has always been a hierarchy to uncoolness, and video-gamers such as myself weren’t at the bottom of the food chain—we were strongly in the middle even then, before smartphones and tablets gave everyone the portability and connectivity to play anywhere. But people who dressed up as medieval royals and spoke in Old English were most assuredly near the bottom.’ (George Gonzalez, *Washington Post*, 6 May) [MMW]

Space Opera. After its worst-film poll (A298), *The Register* invited votes for the worst *unmade* movie. The clear winner was *The Phantom Menace: The Musical* (with Eddie Murphy as Jar-Jar Binks), beating *Diana—The 3D Movie!!!* and *The C Programming Language*. (25 May)

The Dead Past. *50 Years Ago*, Eastercon had good press coverage: ‘THE HARROGATE CONVENTION was first reported in the Yorkshire Evening Post for Easter Monday. For once the “green monster walking down the street” element was happily absent and the report was a straightforward account quoting seven Germans attending the con, 150 attending in all, Brian Burgess the owner of one of the biggest SF libraries in Britain and the first conference of “the organisation” taking place in Leeds 35 years ago. Ah, well....’ (*Skyrack* 43, 2 June 1962) • *60 Years Ago* an anonymous postcard (Bob Shaw or Walt Willis?) showed how to plug a friend’s work: ‘I have been writing to fanzines for 75 years now, and yet I have never read one before. But something drove me to read James White’s story in the current *SFN*. I was profoundly stirred, as if I had swallowed an egg-beater ...’ (*Science Fantasy News* 2:4, June 1952) • *30 Years Ago*, the fan gutter press reported Maxim Jakubowski’s surprise confession in *New Musical Express*: ‘This is the first time I’ve told anyone: I masturbated to Robert A. Heinlein!’ (*Ansible* 26, June 1982)

Fewmets! On swearing and BBFC film ratings: ‘Perhaps it was to avoid such disapproval that 12A blockbuster *Avengers Assemble* (2012) looked to the past for its single instance of swearing, with a word so long out of service in spoken English that it’s actually more shocking to hear: the evil Norse god Loki insults female super-agent Black Widow, calling her a “mewling quim”.’ (*Independent*, 24 May) [MPJ] • Old BBFC records now reveal that *Alien* was given its X (18) certificate in 1979 because one board member felt it ‘uses sexual imagery in a horror context. [...] presents a perverse view of the reproductive function. / I don’t want to flash [*sic*] ideas like this to teenagers who might not have come to terms with the normal sexual functions.’ A fate so much worse than mere hideous death. The BBFC chief added that if released today, *Alien* would be granted a 15 certificate. (*Telegraph*, 29 May) [MPJ]

Editorial II. The *SF Encyclopedia* (www.sf-encyclopedia.com) passed a couple of interim landmarks in May: 3½ million words and 13,000 entries. The fifth of my too-short *Sunday Telegraph* magazine sf review columns appeared on 27 May and was widely unremarked.

Long Dark Teatime. No more episodes of the Douglas Adams-based series *Dirk Gently* will be made. A BBC spokeswoman blamed UK government austerity: ‘We’ve loved having Dirk on the channel but the licence-fee freeze means less British drama on BBC4.’ (BBC, 29 May)

Thog’s Masterclass. *Dept of Circular Breathing*. ‘Then Smithson screamed! His open mouth poured out a steady, unwavering screaming, while his lungs panted in and out ...’ (Lester del Rey, ‘For I Am A Jealous People!’, *Star Short Novels*, 1954) [BA] • *Singularity Dept.* ‘Status quo! That is not a word one hears nowadays ...’ (Jessamyn West, ‘Little Men’, *ibid*) [BA] • *Dept of Science Awareness*. ‘“One more question, Miss Ames. You can do laboratory tests, can’t you?” “Yes, Doctor, the simple ones.” “Very good. I don’t expect you to be Eve Curie.”’ (Helen Wells, *Cherry Ames: Ski Nurse Mystery*, 1968) [PL] • *Supererogation Dept.* ‘Cherry hurried along, hoping Bertha would have set a match to the blazing logs in the fireplace of their small room behind the make-shift clinic.’ (*ibid*) • *Neat Tricks Dept.* ‘Invisible man casts shadow over US-China talks’ (Associated Press news headline, 2012) [PM]

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