



Ansible 306 January 2013

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 evidence of mutual cake violating.

Happy New Year to All. It is an *Ansible* tradition that this sentiment is usually delivered days too late, but I do mean it all the same. Thanks for all the Christmas cards. As usual, I failed badly in this area.

After Doomsday

Hans Christian Andersen's unpublished MS 'The Tallow Candle', apparently written in the 1820s, was found in a box at Denmark's National Archives of Funen last October. (BBC, 13 December) [MPJ]

Angela Carter (1940-1992) was honoured with the one-off James Tait Black Award 'best of best' selection: her fantasy *Nights at the Circus* was judged best fiction winner since the award began in 1919. [PDF]

Peter David announced on his blog (30 December) that he had had a stroke and 'lost control of the right side of my body'. Further reports from Kathleen David indicate that he's mentally in good shape and 'doing better every day' in hospital. Wishing him all luck.... [DKMK]

Malcolm Edwards appeared in *The Bookseller's* list of the '100 most influential people in the book industry', which describes him as 'The brainy fixer behind the scenes at Orion since 1998' and mentions the Gollancz SF Gateway. Also on the list is his wife Jacks Thomas. [RF]

George R.R. Martin may or may not find it strangely heart-warming that *Game of Thrones* was the internet's most-pirated tv show of 2012: 'one episode of the series had racked up 4,280,000 illegal global downloads—slightly more than than its estimated US television audience.' (Torrentfreak via BBC News, 24 December) [AIP]

Herman Melville inspired a new US beer: 'White Whale Ale is infused with the sea-faring spirit of Moby-Dick.' A rich bouquet of whale oil, blubber or other lovingly described cetacean by-products? No, it's a conceptual collaboration between Powell's Books and Rogue Ales and Spirits (both of Oregon), who reverently ripped pages from a copy of *Moby-Dick* and shoved them in the brewing kettle. What a swiz. [MMW] I imagine a far-off voice as the Saul Zaentz Company gives warning to the world: 'Don't even *think* of enhancing your home-brewed Shire Ale or Halfling's Ruin with tasty pages torn from *The Hobbit*.'

Leo Szilard, physicist and sf author, is still highly valued. In a December auction in Los Angeles, a Szilard-signed letter about the 'sensational new development' of nuclear fission went for \$240,000, while autographed letters from Karl Marx, Ludwig von Beethoven and George Washington raised only \$114,000 to \$132,000 apiece. [GVG]

Mary and Bryan Talbot won the Costa Book Awards biography prize with their graphic novel *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes*; the BBC website didn't consider this headline news but briefly mentioned it after nine paragraphs about novel winner Hilary Mantel. (2 January) [AD]

Gene Wolfe is the 2012 SFWA Grand Master (Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award) for lifetime sf/fantasy achievement. In a burst of modesty he wrote: 'You'd better watch your step, folks; you're raising me to a height I would never have imagined. If you keep this up I'll start thinking I'm a good writer.' (www.sfw.org, 13 December)

Condie

Until 27 Jan • **Hollywood Costume** exhibition, V&A Museum, London. 10am-5:30pm (9:30pm Fri). £14 + fee: see www.vam.ac.uk. Includes Oz, Darth Vader, Terminator, Matrix, Indiana Jones, etc.

22-26 Jan • **Dodger** (Pratchett-based play), Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon. 7:30pm; Sat matinee 2:30pm. £8.50: cheque (to STC) + SAE to STC (Dodger), PO Box 1486, Oxford, OX4 9DQ. *Sat night sold out.*

23 Jan • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Argyle pub, Leather Lane, London. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Dave Hutchinson. Free; all welcome.

1-3 Feb • **Quarter Tone** (filk), Ramada Grantham Hotel. £40 reg; £27 unwaged; under-18s £1/year; under-6 free. Cheques: UK Filk Con, 15 St. Catherine's Cross, Bletchingley, Surrey, RH1 4PX.

8-10 Feb 2013 • **SF Ball** (media), Carrington House Hotel, Bournemouth. Tickets from £104; £35/day Sat/Sun. See sfbevents.com/sfball.

15-17 Feb • **Fantasy February** (residential workshop), Dove Valley Centre, near Buxton, Derbyshire. £150 including shared accommodation. Contact alexdavisevents at hotmail dot co dot uk.

16-17 Feb 2013 • **Picocon 30**, Imperial College Union, London. Registration cost still apparently TBA. Contact ICSF, Beit Quad, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BB; picocon at icsf co uk.

22-24 Feb 2013 • **Redemption '13** (multimedia sf), Britannia Hotel, Fairfax St, Coventry, CV1 5RP. £70 reg or £40/day (concessions £50, £35); £15 supp and under-18s; under-3s free. *Advance booking closes 11 February*; £75 or £45/day at door (concessions £55, £40). Contact 61 Chaucer Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 8SP.

23-24 Feb 2013 • **Microcon 2013**, Exeter University. Various guest speakers. £10.00 reg: cheques payable to Exeter University Sci Fi Society, 17 Eldertree Gardens, Exeter, EX4 4DE.

3-4 Mar • **P-Con X**, Irish Writers' Centre, Parnell Square, Dublin 1. CANCELLED or indefinitely postponed owing to organizer Pádraig Ó Méalóid's health and other problems. See www.pcon.ie.

29 Mar - 1 Apr • **EightSquaredCon** (Eastercon), Cedar Court Hotel, Bradford. £60 reg and £25 supporting, *rising to £75 and £35 on 1 February*. Other membership rates unchanged: £25 junior (12-17); £10 child (5-11); £1 infant. Contact 19 Uphall Road, Cambridge, CB1 3HX; more at www.eightsquaredcon.org.

11-14 Apr • **Eurocon 2013**, Expo Plaza, Kiev, Ukraine. £25 reg (sterling cheque to 'D J Lally No 6 a/c' or cash in person) to UK agent Dave Lally, 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX, by 1 April; then cash at door. *The UK agent cannot process travel/accommodation costs.*

29 Aug - 2 Sep • **LoneStarCon 3** (71st Worldcon), San Antonio, Texas. *Now \$200 reg; family \$520; adult supp-to-attending conversion \$140.* Unchanged: YA/military \$110; child \$75; \$60 supp. See www.LoneStarCon3.org. PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755, USA. Note that Hugo nominations are now open, closing on 10 March.

Rumblings. *Worldcon 2015* bids and proposed dates are: Helsinki, 6-10 August; Orlando, 2-6 September; Spokane, 19-23 August.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See *The Hobbit*. A film critique possibly not based on close textual study of the book: 'Cate Blanchett has five solitary lines in *The Hobbit*, playing some sort of pretty princess, during one scene and has been placed there for matters of fluff and making film premieres actually worth photographing. / There are oak trees in *The Hobbit* with more input than Cate Blanchett has. Give me one bloody wisecracking woman Hobbit with a sword and a sense of derring-do!' (Grace Dent, *Independent*, 11 December) [MPJ] The Jackson film trilogy *Rose Cotton, Barbarian Swordsperson* remains far in the future.

More Awards. *New York Film Critics Circle*: best animated feature was Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie*. [MPJ] • *Delta Film Award* (amateur film): *Quedaté Conmigo* directed by Zoe Berriatúa (Spain). • *Locus All-Time Poll, 20th Century*: NOVEL Frank Herbert, *Dune*. NOVELLA Ted Chiang, 'Story of Your Life'. NOVELETTE Daniel Keyes, 'Flowers for Algernon'. SHORT Arthur C. Clarke, 'The Nine Billion Names of God'. *21st Century*: NOVEL John Scalzi, *Old Man's War*. NOVELLA Kelly Link, 'Magic for Beginners'. NOVELETTE Ted Chiang, 'Hell Is the Absence of God'. SHORT Ted Chiang, 'Exhalation'. • *A.E. van Vogt Award* (Western Canada only; first presentation): Brian J. Clarke, *Alphanauts*.

Headline-Fu. 'The Hobbit dwarfs box office rivals' (BBC News, 24 December) • 'Man Somehow Eats Entire Denny's Hobbit Menu Without Dying' (Uproxx.com/gammasquad, 3 January) [BT]

R.I.P. *Michael Alexander*, Clarion West graduate whose 2012 *F&SF* story debut was followed by at least 8 magazine and anthology sales, died on 4 December. [SFS] • *Gerry Anderson* (1929-2012), UK creator with his then wife Sylvia of a string of much-loved children's tv series using their 'SuperMarionation' puppet technique, died on 26 December; he was 83. A generation of British kids imprinted on such Anderson highlights as the 1960s *Supercar*, *Fireball XL5*, *Stingray*, *Thunderbirds*, *Captain Scarlet* and *Joe 90*—all featured on a 2011 set of Royal Mail commemorative stamps. Early puppet series, also fondly remembered, were the 1950s *Twizzle* and *Torchy the Battery Boy*; later ventures into live-action sf drama included *UFO* (1970s), *Space: 1999* (1970s) and

Space Precinct (1990s). ● **Charles Chilton** (1917-2013), UK author and radio presenter famed for his 1950s BBC Radio serial *Journey into Space* (the first three storylines of which he also novelized), died on 2 January. He was 95. For many long-time fans of *Journey*, his surprise appearance was the highlight of the British Library sf exhibition's launch party in May 2011. [DP/SH] ● **Charles Durning** (1923-2012), US actor whose film credits include *Twilight's Last Gleaming* (1977), *The Muppet Movie* (1980), *The Final Countdown* (1980), *The Land Before Time IV* (1986) and *Mother Ghost* (2002), died on 24 December aged 89. [MMW] ● **Michael Hopkins** (1959-2012), multiple Oscar-winning sound editor whose film work included the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and the 2005 *King Kong* remake, died in a New Zealand rafting accident on 30 December; he was 53. [MPJ] ● **Kenneth Kendall** (1924-2012) BBC radio announcer and newsreader (the first to appear on BBC television) who featured as a newsreader in *Doctor Who*: 'The War Machines' (1966) and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), died in November aged 88. [GD/CM] ● **Jack Klugman** (1922-2012), US character actor seen in *The Twilight Zone* (multiple appearances 1960-1963), *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965) and *The Outer Limits* (2000), died on 24 December aged 90. [CM] ● **Alberto Lisiero** (1964-2013), Italian fan, editor, comics writer and convention-runner who in 1982 founded Italy's largest sf organization, the Star Trek Italian Club, died on 2 January aged 48. [PDF] ● **Huw Lloyd-Langton** (1951-2012), who as a guitarist with Hawkwind during most of the 1980s played at the UK conventions Seacon '84 and Conspiracy, and with Michael Moorcock for Hawkwind albums and live gigs, died on 6 December aged 61. [PC] ● **Don Medford** (1917-2012), US tv director of 30+ episodes of *Tales of Tomorrow* and five of *The Twilight Zone*, died on 12 December; he was 95. [SFS] ● **Rusty Mills**, Emmy-winning US animator and director of various Warner Bros animated series including the sf *Pinky and the Brain* (1995-1998), died on 7 December; he was 49. [PDF] ● **Dolores Mantez** (1936/1938-2012), UK actress who played Lt Nina Barry in Gerry Anderson's *UFO*, died on 30 November; she was also in *The Avengers* (1961) and *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)* (1969). [MPJ] ● **Krsto Mazuranic**, Croatian fan, convention organizer, editor (of *Futura* magazine) and translator, reportedly died in December. He brought sf fandom to Croatia and the rest of former Yugoslavia. [GH] ● **Patrick Moore** (1923-2012), UK astronomer, author and tv personality who had presented the BBC's *The Sky at Night* since April 1957, died on 9 December; he was 89. His more than 20 novels for young readers were all sf; nonfiction works of genre interest include his sf survey *Science and Fiction* (1957), the spoof *How Britain Won the Space Race* (1972 with Desmond Leslie), and the odd-ball science round-up *Can You Speak Venusian?* (1972). He made a cameo appearance as himself in the *Doctor Who* episode 'The Eleventh Hour' (2010). ● **Eileen Moran** (1952-2012), digital effects editor at Weta who worked on *The Lord of the Rings*, *X-Men*, *Fantastic Four*, *The Hobbit* and other major films, died on 3 December aged 60. [SFS] ● **Harry Oakes**, special effects cameraman who worked with Gerry Anderson from *Fireball XL5* to *Space: 1999* (also *Space Precinct*), died on 11 December. Hollywood credits include *Superman* (1978), *Flash Gordon* (1980), *Superman III* (1983) and *Aliens* (1986). [CM] ● **Rick Olney** (1954-2012), US comics publisher and con promoter who seems most famous for not paying his artists (and suing them for going public with their woes), died on 28 December aged 58. [PDF] ● **Archie Roy** (1924-2012), Scots astronomer, academic and paranormal researcher whose six sf/horror novels include the 'Hitler Wins' alternate history *All Evil Shed Away* (1970), died on 27 December. He was 88. [JS]

Court Circular. A 'mockbuster' film parody of *The Hobbit*, titled *Age of Hobbits* and timed for release three days before the Tolkien/Jackson epic, was blocked by a temporary restraining order from a US federal judge. The defendants, Global Asylum Ltd, claimed that their title referred only to the nickname given by scientists to an ancient Indonesian humanoid subspecies: this wasn't taken terribly seriously. 'The judge asserted that Warner Bros. and other plaintiffs [MGM and the Saul Zaentz Co] were likely to prevail in their claim that the parody infringes on their trademarks.' (*Variety* Film News, 10 December) [MPJ]

New Year Honours. Quentin Blake, illustrator of many children's fantasies including J.P. Martin's *Uncle* books and most of Roald Dahl, was knighted. Ewan McGregor, Obi-Wan Kenobi in the *Star Wars* prequels, has an OBE; so does scriptwriter Jeremy Lloyd, best known for tv sitcoms other than his sf *Come Back Mrs Noah* (1977-1978). [CM]

Outraged Letters. *Simon R. Green* mourns a hero: 'And now Gerry Anderson's gone. A major part of my childhood, I watched his shows from the beginning. *Twizzle*; his arms stretched. That was it, the plot, the character, everything. *Torchy the Battery Boy*; stick a battery up his

arse and his eyes lit up; but then, so would yours. *Four Feather Falls* and *Supercar* were fun; but then came *Fireball XL5*, and I loved that. And while I enjoyed the shows that came afterward, *XL5* was the show that really got to me. I want more like that, I said, and went looking for it in books and comics and television. And I suppose part of me still is.'

● **Wendell Wagner** looks on the bright side: 'Since every month in *Ansible* you tell us how literary people insult science fiction, it would be nice if you pointed out that a prominent literary institution has now made it clear that science fiction is a legitimate part of the literary scene. The nonprofit publishing company The Library of America puts out nice-looking hardback editions of classic American literature that stay permanently in print. They just put out a boxed two-volume set, *American Science Fiction: Four Classic Novels 1953-1956* and *American Science Fiction: Five Classic Novels 1956-1958*. The novels in the first volume are *The Space Merchants*, *More Than Human*, *The Long Tomorrow*, and *The Shrinking Man*. The novels in the second volume are *Double Star*, *The Stars My Destination*, *A Case of Conscience*, *Who?*, and *The Big Time*. [...] So here's a significant part of the American literary establishment saying that science fiction deserves to be taken seriously.'

Stamping Ground. For *Doctor Who*'s 50th anniversary year, the Royal Mail has a set of 11 first-class stamps—one for each Doctor—plus a miniature sheet with a first-class Tardis and four second-class villains: Dalek, Cyberman, Weeping Angel and Ood. As *Doctor Who* fans everywhere have rapturously cried, 'Why the bloody Ood?' Out 26 March.

Random Fandom. *Rob Hansen* has begun an online archive of the 1939-1942 fanzine *The Fantast* published by Sam Youd ('John Christopher'): see tinyurl.com/bjumlx. ● **Roger Robinson** confirmed booking of the Melton Mowbray on Holborn (cellar bar) for London First Thursday evening meetings throughout 2013, with a Christmas extra on 19 December. All welcome; more at news.ansible.co.uk/london.html.

C.o.A. *Dan Goodman* (as of 1 January), 1720 Como Ave SE, #A, Minneapolis, MN 55414, USA. *Robert Silverberg* has a new how-to-contact-me page at sites.google.com/site/robertsilverbergwebsite.

The Dead Past. *20 Years Ago*, 'Chris Priest got an unsolicited plug when the *Observer* looked back at the Best Young British Writers promotion he featured in long ago, and famous Julian Barnes explained: "Priest always was a chippy bugger."' (*Ansible* 66, January 1993)

Aeon Award for unpublished story: contest now open; €7.50 fee; various rounds to 30 November; see www.albedo1.com/?page_id=723.

Editorial. 2012 was the Year of Blur—in my right eye, that is, since retina-saving surgery in January. I managed to meet my usual deadlines (13 columns for *SFX*, 12 *Ansbles*, 8 *Sunday Telegraph* review features and 6 *Interzone* news digests), to format and edit over 600,000 words of *SF Encyclopedia* additions (total word count now 3.95 million) and to co-publish a new collection of Algis Budrys's *F&SF* reviews ... but wrote no fiction at all. After an interesting talk with the eye specialist this week, I have hopes of becoming less blurry in 2013. We shall see.

Fanfunder. *GUFF reminder*: voting in this year's southbound race closes at midnight GMT on Monday 7 January. The winner travels to Conflux, the 2013 Australian National Convention. For candidates, platforms and the online voting form, see guff.lostcarpark.com/vote.

Thog's Masterclass. *Bear Bones Dept.* 'The Mainland was in the first, heady months of the Great Change, and the federal government was being surgically dismembered, like a monstrous corpse undergoing a grizzly autopsy.' (Robert Rosell, *Civitas Island*, 2012) [PL] ● *Dept of Romantic Metaphor.* 'Steven's hand, firmly anchored to Sue's breast, inspired its twin which, like a five-fingered butterfly emerging from its chrysalis and taking flight for the first time, clumsily fluttered into the air.' (*Ibid*) ● *Eyeballs in the Sky.* 'Finally Garth took Tia's French-tipped fingers, gazed deeply into her dreamy, drunk eyes, and offered to get them a room.' (*Ibid*) ● *Euclidean Perkins Dept.* 'Natalie, with her angular face and gazelle legs and size-B boobs that shot perky parallel lines into the sunglasses of men and women who muttered, "Here comes trouble," in differing tones ...' (David Gilbert, 'Member/Guest', *The New Yorker*, 12 November 2012) [MMW] ● *Dept of Artful Pronoun Placement.* "'You've seen it?' / "Once." She fixed her eyes on the deck. "With my mother and brother. Long ago." / "What did they look like?" / "Fearsome. Spines of poison and teeth as long and sharp as katana."' (Jay Kristoff, *Stormdancer*, 2012) [SG]

Ansible 306 © David Langford, 2013. Thanks to Peter Cohen, Gordon Davie, Paul Di Filippo, Alan Dorey, Richard Fidczuk, Stephanie Griffin, Gay Haldeman, Steve Holland, Martyn P. Jackson, David K.M. Klaus, Petrea Mitchell, Chryse Moore, Andrew I. Porter, David Pringle, SF Site, Jim Steel, Bruce Townley, Gordon Van Gelder, Martin Morse Wooster, and our Hero Distributors: Dave Corby (BSFG), SCIS/Prophecy, Alan Stewart (*Australian*) 2013