

Ansible



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From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website news.ansible.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Sue Mason. Available for SAE or the strangling fruit from the hand of the sinner.

HARD TIMES. The London Book Fair (10-12 March) was cancelled at six days' notice after major publishers pulled out for fear of coronavirus. Also cancelled/postponed were Futurefest (London, 20 March), Leicester Horror (28 March) and many coming events below; see news.ansible.uk for some overseas cancellations. Owing to New Zealand's closed borders and ban on indoor events with more than 100 people, the NZ Worldcon is to be online only; likewise the Nebulas. Keep watching the websites.

The UK government clampdown on pub gatherings (from 21 March) affects many regular fan events including London First Thursdays. The Birmingham SF Group had already cancelled all meetings *sine die*, and the BSFA was about to discontinue its London open meetings. The ban extends to hotel restaurants and bars, forcing the cancellation of the Eastercon – whose hotel had felt obliged to stick to its contract until the last – the postponement of StokerCon, and so on as below.

The Satan Bug

Iain M. Banks inspired the undersea record-setter Victor Vescovo, who visited the deepest points of every ocean in the sub *Limiting Factor* and other vessels named for Banks spaceships or drones. (BBC, 10 February)

William Gibson is disappointed: 'He thought the Internet would be a mysterious and sexy place. "Cyberspace, as described in *Neuromancer*, is nothing at all like the Internet that we live with, which consists mostly of utterly banal and silly stuff.'" (www.npr.org, 19 March) [PDF]

John Jakes's and Barrington J. Bayley's 1970 Ace Double paperback *Mask of Chaos/The Star Virus* was frowned on by Amazon: 'Banned as being a medical device.' (AbeBooks forum, 27 March) [BA]

Stephen King told the panic-stricken world: 'No, coronavirus is NOT like *The Stand*. It's not anywhere near as serious. It's eminently survivable. Keep calm and take all reasonable precautions.' This being a social media post, the rapid reply was of course: 'And how the hell would you know?! Did you even read that book?' (Twitter, 8 March)

Confection

ONLINE. 2 Apr • **Virtual First Thursday**, 6-10pm, replacing the London pub meeting at the Bishop's Finger. See tinyurl.com/uow6hqn.

POSTPONED. 3 Apr • **H.G. Wells & the Spiders From Mars** (play-in-progress; part staged, part readthrough), Cockpit Theatre, London. £5. See www.thecockpit.org.uk/show/hg_wells_the_spiders_from_mars.

POSTPONED TO AUTUMN. 4 Apr • **Bedford Who Charity Con** (*Doctor Who*), Bedford. See bedfordwhocharitycon.co.uk.

CANCELLED. 4-5 Apr • **Sci-Fi Scarborough** (multimedia), The Spa, Scarborough. Tickets valid for 2021. See scifiscarborough.co.uk.

CANCELLED. 10-13 Apr • **Concentric** (Eastercon), Birmingham NEC. See www.concentric2020.uk. *The BSFA Awards will be announced online.*

POSTPONED TO AUGUST. 16-19 Apr • **StokerCon**, Scarborough.

POSTPONED TO 2021. 17-19 Apr • **Springmoot** (Tolkien Soc). For online AGM see tolkiensociety.org/events/springmoot-and-agm-2020/.

POSTPONED. 23-26 Apr • **Dead by Dawn** (horror film festival), Edinburgh. See www.deadbydawn.co.uk.

POSTPONED. 23-26 Apr • **Sci-Fi Weekender**, Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth. See www.scifiweekender.com.

POSTPONED. 26 Apr • London Vintage Paperback & Pulp Fair, Royal National Hotel – this event is now also looking for a new venue.

POSTPONED TO JULY. 2-3 May • **EM-Con** (media), Nottingham.

POSTPONED. 12-20 May • **Sci-Fi London** (film festival), Prince Charles Cinema and Stratford Picturehouse. See sci-fi-london.com.

CANCELLED. 16 May • **Lawless** (UK comics), Hilton Doubletree, Bristol. More at www.facebook.com/groups/1417073338854565/.

21 May • **Ballard's Londons** (talk), Goldfinger's, 2 Willow Rd, Hampstead, London, NW3. 7pm. With Roger Luckhurst. £15 (including a glass of prosecco) from acuriousinvitation.com/jgballard.html.

22 May - 3 Jan • **Fantastic Beasts: The Wonder of Nature** (exhibition), Natural History Museum, London. £18. See www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/exhibitions/fantastic-beasts-the-wonder-of-nature.html. *Note that the museum is now closed, with hopes of reopening in 'early summer'.*

POSTPONED TO 2021. 22-24 May • **Satellite 7**, Glasgow.

POSTPONED. 30 May • **Orwell Day** (talks), 17 High St, Rothesay, Isle of Bute. With Anne Charnock, Ken MacLeod, Chris Priest and others. 11am-5pm. See www.facebook.com/events/230880794748821.

CANCELLED. 2-6 Jun • **Outlander Conference**, Glasgow University. See www.outlanderconferenceglasgow.com.

CANCELLED. 5-7 Jun • **Cymera**: Scotland's Festival of SF, Fantasy & Horror Writing, Edinburgh. See www.cymerafestival.co.uk.

CANCELLED 1-2 Jul • **Science for Fiction**, Imperial College, London. ONLINE ONLY. 4 Jul • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, now to be held online. See www.tolkiensociety.org/events/seminar-2020/.

18-19 Jul • **EM-Con** (media), Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham. *New date.* Weekend tickets £30, or £40 early entry; see www.em-con.co.uk.

ONLINE ONLY. 29 Jul - 2 Aug • **ConZealand** (Worldcon 78), New Zealand. *New sign-up rates expected by 15 April.* See conzealand.nz and conzealand.nz/blog/2020/03/25/conzealand-special-announcement.

6-9 Aug • **StokerCon** (horror), Grand and Royal Hotels, Scarborough. See stokercon-uk.com. *These new dates remain tentative.*

21-23 Aug • **Reunicon 2020** (celebrating ConFiction 1990), The Hague. With Joe Haldeman. €50 reg, €25 supp. See confiction1990.com.

28-31 Aug • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. Admission wristbands on sale at various prices from www.asylumsteampunk.co.uk.

POSTPONED TO 2021. 28-31 Aug • **Redemption** (multimedia), Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield. See redemptioncon.org.uk.

REGISTRATION SUSPENDED. 25-27 Sep • **Fantasycon 2020**, Resource for London, 356 Holloway Road, London, N7 6PA. GoH Liz Williams; others TBA. £75 reg (BFS members £65) at www.fantasycon.org.

9-11 Oct • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. *Rates were to rise on 1 April* but 'early bird' weekend passes are still £30; students/under-16s £20. See www.comicartfestival.com.

31 Oct - 1 Nov • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Pendulum Hotel, Manchester. *Now £99 reg.* More at fantastic-films.com/festival/.

5-7 Feb 2021 • **Long Play**, '33 (and 1/3)rd UK Filk Convention', Union Hotel, Grantham. GoH Leslie Hudson (overseas), Chris O'Shea (UK). £40 reg; £30 concessions; under-18s £1 per year of age; under-5s free. Further information at www.contabile.org.uk.

19-21 February 2021 • **Satellite 7**, Glasgow. *New date.* £70 reg (£80 at the door); under-25s £60; under-18s £20; under-12s £5; under-5s £2. Day: £20 Fri, £35 Sat or Sun. See seven.satellitex.org.uk.

18-21 Mar 2021 • **Sci-Fi Weekender**, Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth. Basic weekend pass £99; for camping and accommodation packages see www.scifiweekender.com.

26-28 Mar 2021 • **Corflu 38**, Mercure Holland Hotel, Bristol. £50/\$60 reg (£40/\$50 to 31 May for Corflu 37 members). See corflu.org.

9-11 Apr 2021 • **Springmoot/AGM** (Tolkien Society), Exeter. See www.tolkiensociety.org/events/springmoot-and-agm-2021/

Infinitely Improbable

As We See Us. 'I never really cared for science fiction. I guess I just didn't get it.' (Admiral Jean-Luc Picard in *Picard*, episode 2) [JM]

Awards. *Astrid Lindgren Memorial*: artist Baek Heena. [F770] • *British Book Awards* fiction shortlist includes *The Testaments* by Margaret Atwood; *The Book of Dust: The Secret Commonwealth* by Philip Pullman. [L] • *Fanzine Activity Achievement* (FAAn): OVERALL *Banana Wings*. GENZINE (tie) *Banana Wings*, *Chunga*. PERSONAL ZINE *This Here*. WHAT-CHAMACALIT ZINE (tie) *Ansible* (thanks, everyone!), *Lofgeornost*. SPECIAL PUBLICATION *Thy Life's a Miracle*. FAN WRITER Mark Plummer. LETTERHACK Stephen Jeffery. ONLINE ACHIEVEMENT Fanac.org. FAN ARTIST Ulrika O'Brien. COVER ART Ulrika O'Brien for *Thy Life's a Miracle*. fwa LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT Robert Lichtman. fwa PAST PRESIDENT, 2019: Rob Jackson. • *Kitschies* novel shortlists: *Always North* by Vicki Jarrett; *From the Wreck* by Jane Rawson; *The Fire Starters* by Jan Carson; *The Memory Police* by Yoko Ogawa; *This Is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El Mohtar & Max Gladstone. DEBUT *Jelly* by Clare Rees; *My Name Is Monster* by Katie Hale; *She Would Be King* by Wayétu Moore; *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* by Alix E. Harrow; *Wilder Girls* by Rory Power. • SFWA *Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award*: John Picacio, David Gaughran.

R.I.P. *Ulrich Bettermann*, German fan and convention organizer, died on 11 February. [KvT] ● *Rolf Bingenheimer* (1946-2020), German fan who owned the bookshop Transgalaxis, died on 26 February aged 73. [KvT] ● *Brian Blume* (1950-2020), US game designer who was once a business partner of Gary Gygax in the *Dungeons & Dragons* publisher TSR (and co-wrote the 1976 game supplement *Eldritch Wizardry* with Gygax), died on 31 March aged 70. [PDF] ● *R.D. Call* (1950-2020), US actor in *Waterworld* (1995) and episodes of some genre tv series, died on 27 February aged 70. [LP] ● *Grace Chan*, Canadian author and cover designer whose space opera sequence opening with *The Empire* (2010) appeared as by Elizabeth Lang, died on 27 February. [BJM] ● *David Collings* (1940-2020), UK actor in *Scrooge* (1970), three *Doctor Who* serials (1975-1983), *Monkey* (1978-1980 UK), *Dark Towers* (1981) and *Sapphire & Steel* (1981-1982) died on 23 March aged 79. [SG] ● *Tomie dePaola* (1934-2020), US children's author and artist best known for his tales of the Italian witch Strega Nona (1975 onward), died on 30 March aged 85. [PDF] ● *William Dufries/Dufries* (1958-2020), US voice actor in English versions of *Space Adventure Cobra* (1982), *Patlabor: The Movie* (1989), *Venus Wars* (1989) and others, died on 24 March aged 62. [JS] ● *Dan Goodman* (1943-2020), US fan active in New York, LA and most recently Minneapolis fandom – also in several APAs – died on 25 March. [F770] ● *Stuart Gordon* (1947-2020), US film-maker who directed *Re-Animator* (1985), *From Beyond* (1986), *The Dolls* (1987), *Space Truckers* (1996) and others, died on 24 March aged 72. [RC] ● *Roy Hudd* (1936-2020), UK comedian and actor in *The Blood Beast Terror* (1968), *Hitchhiker's Guide* (1978 radio), *Cold Lazarus* (1996) and *Robot Overlords* (2014), died on 15 March aged 83. [SG] ● *Andrew Jack* (1944-2020), UK dialect coach and actor in *The Force Awakens* (2016), *The Last Jedi* (2017) and others, died on 31 March aged 76. [LP] ● *Earl Kemp* (1929-2020), US fan, editor and publisher who co-founded *Adventure:Publishers* (which printed much important sf criticism) in 1956, won a fanzine Hugo for his symposium *Who Killed Science Fiction?* (1960) and chaired the 1962 Worldcon, died on 6 February aged 90. [EJK] His online fanzine *eI* ran for 60 issues, 2002-2011 (see *eFanzines.com*); to the last he made a point of commenting on every issue of *Ansible*. ● *Gary B. Kibbe* (1941-2020), US cinematographer whose credits include *They Live* (1988), *RoboCop 3* (1993), *Village of the Damned* (1995) and *Ghosts of Mars* (2001), died on 9 March aged 79. [AIP] ● *Eduard Limonov* (1943-2020), Russian author whose novels include the dystopian *316 punkt V* (*Section 316V*, 1998), died on 17 March aged 77. [PDF] ● *James Lipton* (1926-2020), US academic, actor, tv presenter (etc., etc.) with genre credits in *Bewitched* (2005) and *Bolt* (2008), died on 2 March aged 93. [PDF] ● *Frank Lunney* (1952-2020), US fan who published the fanzines *BeABohemia* 1968-1971 and *Syndrome* 1972-1994, and was a valued member of the Corflu and Inthebar communities, died on 28 February aged 67. [GS] ● *Frank McLaughlin* (1935-2020), US comics artist and inker with Charlton (*Blue Beetle*, *Captain Atom* and others), Marvel (*Captain America*, *Defenders* ...) and DC (*Flash*, *Wonder Woman*, *Green Arrow* ...), died on 4 March aged 84. [PDF] ● *Detto Mariano* (1937-2020), Italian composer of music for anime including *Gundam* and *Astro Boy*, and films including *The Exterminators of the Year 3000* (1983) and *Miami Golem* (1985), died on 25 March aged 82. [LP] ● *Vincent Marzello*, US actor in *Superman* (1978) and *The Witches* (1990), died on 31 March aged 78. [PDF] ● *Claudette Nevins* (1937-2020), US actress in *The Mask* (1961), *Return to the Planet of the Apes* (1975), *The Possessed* (1977) and *Star Trek: Insurrection* (1998), died on 20 February aged 82. [AIP] ● *Krzysztof Penderecki* (1933-2020), Polish composer whose music features in *The Exorcist* (1973), *The Shining* (1980), *Children of Men* (2006), *Inland Empire* (2006), *Twin Peaks* (2017) and others, died on 29 March aged 86. [AIP] ● Late report: *William Spencer* (1925-2018), contributor to *New Worlds* (as Bill Spencer) and *New Writings in SF* in the 1960s and to *Interzone* in the 1990s, died on 16 November 2018 aged 93. [DP/MA] ● *Michael Svensson*, Swedish fan, conrunner, publisher of fanzines including *Ziméria*, and an executive of the SF-bokhandeln sf bookshops, has died in his late 50s. [J-HH] ● *Nicholas Tucci* (1981-2020), US actor whose credits include *Chilling Visions: 5 Senses of Fear* (2013) and voice work for *Wolfenstein* games, died on 3 March aged 38. [F770] ● *Albert Uderzo* (1927-2020), French comics artist who created *Astérix* with René Goscinny (1926-1977) – writing as well as drawing the stories from 1977 until he retired in 2011 – died on 24 March aged 92. [FM] ● *Max von Sydow* (1929-2020), Swedish actor whose genre credits include *The Seventh Seal* (1957), *The Exorcist* (1973), *Flash Gordon* (1980), *Dune* (1984), *Judge Dredd* (1995), *The Force Awakens* (2015) and *Game of Thrones* (2016), died on 8 March aged 90. [AW] ● *Lyle Waggoner* (1935-2020), US actor in *Journey to the Center of Time* (1967), *Wonder Woman* (1975-1979), *Wizards of the Demon Sword* (1991) and others, died on

17 March aged 84. [LP/MR] ● *Stuart Whitman* (1928-2020), US actor in *City Beneath the Sea* (1971), *Night of the Lepus* (1972), *The Cat Creature* (1973) and others including *Superboy* (1988-1992), died on 16 March aged 92. [PDF] ● *David Wise* (1955-2020), US Clarion graduate and animation writer who sold to *The Last Dangerous Visions* and whose many credits include *Transformers* (1985-1987), *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1987-1997, as writer/co-creator) and *Beastmaster III: The Eye of Braxus* (1996, as writer/producer), died on 3 March aged 65. [PDF/LT]

The Weakest Link. *Alexander Armstrong*: 'Who was the author of the 1949 novel *Love in a Cold Climate*, who was one of six aristocratic sisters?' Contestant: 'George Orwell.' (BBC1, *Pointless*) [PE]

Random Fandom. *From online chat*: 'Are you really telling me that it's easier and quicker to destroy the civil liberties of every country in the world than to amend the WSFS constitution?' [AS] ● *Nic Farey* studied the FAAn voting figures and noted that in Online Achievement, 'TAFF eBooks' and 'Ansible Free Books' placed equal third but would have won if recognized as being the same thing. Oops. (*This Here* 27, 28 March)

As Others See Us. On Amber Sparks's *And I Do Not Forgive You*: 'Set during a time when "the rain is heavy and endless with sludge" and featuring an apocalyptic cult, "We Destroy The Moon" might, like a few of the other stories, be termed science fiction. Yet unlike a lot of sci-fi, the piece is all about feelings ...' (*Washington Post*, 26 February) [MMW]

The Dead Past. *40 Years Ago*, 'Brian Aldiss soared to fame in *Private Eye*'s "Pseudos Corner" when he wrote of James Joyce: "this Torquemada of tale-telling began as an insipid poet: *Lean out of the window / Golden-hair, / I heard you singing / A merry air*. Whether or not the first word was a misprint for 'leap' has been disputed.'" (*Ansible* 25, April 1980) ● *60 Years Ago*: 'The 1960 National Convention which was held in London from Good Friday, 15th April to Easter Monday, 18th April will take its place in fannish history as a gathering of surprises. [...] The first surprise was the shattering announcement by the management of the Sandringham Hotel, the advertised meeting place, cancelling the convention ...' (*Skyrack* 17, 25 April 1960) Loncon was hastily moved to another hotel.

Outraged Letters. *Stephen Gallagher* on A392: 'The obit notice for Ron Haddrick, "Australian actor in *The Stranger* (1964-1965)", triggered the memory of a letter to *Junior Points of View* in which a young girl suggested that having repeated the series a number of times, the BBC should retitle it *The Acquaintance*.' (2 March)

Editorial. *Beyond the Outposts*, that fat Ansible Editions collection of Algis Budrys essays, is now available with a final count of 378 pages, 211,000 words, and 97 footnotes: see ae.ansible.uk/?t=budrys4. Use Lulu.com discount code LULU20 for 20% off the paperback until 2 April.

Fanfundery. *TAFF*: 2020 delegate Michael Lowrey reluctantly cancelled his European trip as conventions and borders closed; he hopes to travel at some less troubled time, possibly to Novacon in November. ● Jeanne Gommel has published her 1987 TAFF trip report as *TAFForensic Report: A Cold-Case Investigation*. Lulu.com print and PDF editions are available via tinyurl.com/JGTAFF, with all proceeds to TAFF. ● *GUFF* 2020 final reminder: the voting deadline is 13 April. Candidates and ballot at ozfanfunds.com/?page_id=152. ● *DUFF* 2020: Erin Underwood won with a first-round majority from the 60 ballots cast. [PW] Both DUFF and GUFF had the New Zealand Worldcon as their major destination; as with TAFF it's hard to decide what form the trip should take, and when.

Thog's Masterclass. *Meteorology Dept.* 'Vivid flashes of lightning, preceded by rumbling bursts of thunder, illuminated the small, unprepossessing village ...' (N. Wesley Firth, *Terror Stalks by Night*, 1946) [DR] 'The sun like an uncooked pancake hung low in the sky.' (Dianne Neral Ell, 'Such Good Friends', *Sherlock Holmes Mystery Magazine* 27, 2019) [DL] ● *Neat Tricks*. 'It seemed to them as if every feature of the girl's face had leapt into her eyes ...' (Hall Caine, *The Scapegoat*, 1891) [MP] 'Annie accelerates, long legs exploding out of her willow body.' (Jackson Ford, *The Girl Who Could Move Sh*t With Her Mind*, 2018) [AR] ● *Bad Language Dept* (or, *Another Government Announcement*). 'Those words emitted the stench of decomposed bodies and the greasy smoke of cremation fires and echoes of alarm bells and the howl of manual sirens.' (Dmitry Glukhovskiy, *Metro 2033*, trans Natasha Randall, 2010) [SS] ● *Dept of Mutant Poultry*. '... during which they must have eaten nothing but chicken to judge by the feathers, heads, and hooves scattered around.' (Glen Cook, *Bitter Gold Hearts*, 1988) [BA]

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