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Ansible® 403 February 2021

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: Ulrika O'Brien. Available for SAE, Geistzones, or the flight of a bird into an unknown region.

The Bone Forest

Brian Aldiss has been added to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Mainstream recognition at last! (*Oxford Mail*, 14 January) [DD] Wendy Aldiss's photobook *My Father's Things* has now been published.

Andy Cox of TTA Press has stepped down as editor of *Interzone*, which he took over from David Pringle in 2004. The new owner is Peter Crowther's PS Publishing, with Ian Whates as editor. PS has announced an August relaunch with issue 290, moving to a quarterly rather than bimonthly schedule and (to the horror of some) digital-only publication.

William Gibson had a prophetic vision back in the 1990s: 'The Bomb, so long awaited, is gone. In its place came these plagues, the slowest of cataclysms.' (*Virtual Light*, 1993) [NWW]

Ursula K. Le Guin is to appear (with a scene from *The Left Hand of Darkness*) on a coming US postage stamp. (USPS, 15 January) [JDN]

Andy Sawyer, who selected the essays reprinted in Routledge's massive *Science Fiction: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies* (in four volumes, special introductory price £680), was horrified to find that the publisher's promise to arrange all permissions had not been kept. Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, John Clute, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Paul Kincaid, Farah Mendlesohn, Gillian Polack, Adam Roberts and no doubt others learned of their inclusion only after publication, from a badly proofread contents list online. [PK] Complicating matters, it emerged that the *Science Fiction Studies* managing editor had given blanket permission for use of *SFS* material without consulting or informing the contributors. Routledge have reportedly been responding to complaints with an initial brush-off and then, if pressed, an offer of modest compensation.

Conglobation

ONLINE. 4 Feb • **Virtual First Thursday**, 6-10pm, replacing the usual London pub meeting. See tinyurl.com/uow6hqn.

ONLINE. 5-7 Feb • **Long Play**, '33 (and 1/3)rd UK Filk Convention'. Free on Zoom. Further information at www.contabile.org.uk.

ONLINE. 13 Feb • **Tolkien Society Seminar**. Details at www.tolkienesociety.org/events/tolkien-society-seminar-2021-no-1/.

ONLINE. 5-7 Mar • **Frightfest** (film) – UK access only. Tickets £9.99 per film from www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsevents.html.

MOVING ONLINE. 19 Mar • **Futurefest** (futuurology), Tobacco Dock, London. Virtual event details still awaited at www.futurefest.org.

ONLINE. 9-11 April • **Compulsion** (gaming). £5 'early bird' reg, rising to £8 at some time not currently specified at compulsion.org.

POSTPONED AGAIN. 10 Apr • **Bedford Who Charity Con** (*Doctor Who*), The King's House, Ampthill Road, Bedford, MK42 9AZ. Now 16 October 2021. More at bedfordwhocharitycon.co.uk.

2-5 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society). Announced, with details to follow, at www.tolkienesociety.org/events/oxonmoot-online/.

15-17 Oct • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. Further details awaited at www.comicartfestival.com.

21-31 Oct • **Edinburgh Horror Festival**, with expected venues (Banshee Labyrinth, Edinburgh Dungeon and Lauriston Castle as usual) still to be confirmed. See www.edhorrorfest.co.uk.

Rumblings. *Hugo Nominations* opened in January at discon3.org and will close on 19 March. • *International Comic Expo* (Birmingham, September) continues to hope for a physical 2021 event: date and other details to follow at internationlcomicexpo.wordpress.com.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Astrophysicist Adam Frank has new hopes for SETI: 'If the trend continues, the search for intelligence in the universe may finally escape the giggle-factor that for so long left it associated with bad sci-fi shows and generic UFO nuttiness.' (*Washington Post*, 31 December)

Awards. *Costa Book of the Year* £30,000 award: *The Mermaid of Black Conch* by Monique Roffey. • *Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award*: Ben Bova, Rachel Caine and Jarvis Sheffield. • *Philip K. Dick* shortlist: *Failed State* by Christopher Brown; *The Book of Koli* by M.R. Carey; *Dance on Saturday* by Elwin Cotman; *Bone Silence* by Alastair Reynolds; *Road Out*

of Winter by Alison Stine; *The Doors of Eden* by Adrian Tchaikovsky.

Four Legs Good, Three Legs Bad. The Royal Mint's H.G. Wells commemorative £2 coin depicts the little-known Martian tetrapod from *The War of the Worlds*, and an Internet-sourced quotation – 'Good books are warehouses of ideas.' – that according to Wells scholars should be 'Good books are the warehouses of ideals.' (*Guardian*, 8 January) There was also much mockery of the Invisible Man's topper, a little unfair since Wells himself once sketched his antihero wearing just such a hat.

As Others Cite Us. Paul Davis, the Texas lawyer who lost his job after taking part in the 6 January Capitol riot, filed an impressively daft lawsuit claiming that every vote cast in the 2020 election was illegal and that Congress must be dissolved. Instead he's 'proposing a restructuring of the United States government in the fashion of Gondor, a mythical realm from The Lord of The Rings.' (Salon.com, 22 January) Presumably a wise steward called Paul Davis would take on the Denethor role and govern the USA until the return of the one true heir to George III.

R.I.P. **Michael Apted** (1941-2021), UK director and producer whose credits include *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), *The World Is Not Enough* (1999) and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (2010), died on 8 January aged 79. [MMW] • **Richard Arnold**, Canadian assistant to Gene Roddenberry and archivist of *Star Trek* (with cameos in two films), died on 26 January aged 66. • **Dale Baer** (1950-2021), Disney animator whose many films since 1971 include *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), died on 15 January aged 70. [PDF] • **Walter Bernstein** (1919-2021), US screenwriter for *Fail Safe* (1964; remake 2000), died on 22 January aged 101. [MMW] • **Perry Botkin Jr.** (1933-2021), US composer with genre credits for *Mork & Mindy* (1978-1982) and *Dance of the Dwarfs* (1983), died on 18 January aged 87. [AIP] • **Jackie Cassada**, US role-playing games designer and fantasy author whose novels include the *Immortal Eyes* trilogy (1995-1996), died on 29 December aged 71. [MR] • **Storm Constantine** (1956-2021), UK author whose career began with the gender-bending *Wraeththu* trilogy opening with *The Enchantments of Flesh and Spirit* (1987), died on 14 January. She had been a cheerily flamboyant presence at conventions, and in 2003 founded Immanion Press to publish her own work and that of authors she admired, in particular Tanith Lee. • **Charlotte Cornwell** (1949-2021), UK actress in *Ghosts of Mars* (2001), *Dante's Inferno* (2010) and *Dead Space: Aftermath* (2011), died on 16 January aged 71. [SG] • **Kellam de Forest** (1926-2021), uncredited continuity adviser to the original *Star Trek* and inventor of 'stardates', died on 19 January aged 94. [MMW] • **Nathalie Delon** (1941-2021), French actress in *The Monk* (1972) and *A Whisper in the Dark* (1976), died on 21 January aged 79. [SJ] • **Aiki Flinthart**, Australian author whose 'Ruadhan Sidhe' urban fantasies began with *Shadows Wake* (2018), died on 31 January. [PDF] • **Mira Furlan** (1955-2021), Croatia-born actress who played Ambassador DeLenn in *Babylon 5* (1995-1998) and spinoff films, died on 20 January aged 65; other genre credits include *Lost* (2004-2010) and *Space Command* (2020). [SG] • **George Gerdes** (1948-2021), US actor in *Attack of the 50 Ft. Woman* (1993) and *Bats* (1999), died on 1 January aged 72. [SJ] • **Kathleen Ann Goonan** (1952-2021), US author whose first novel *Queen City Jazz* (1994) opened her well-received 'Nanotech Quartet', and who was shortlisted for three Nebulas and a Clarke Award and won the Campbell Memorial Award for *In War Times* (2007), died on 28 January aged 68. [F770] • **Lail Finlay Hernandez**, daughter of US genre artist Virgil Finlay, who contributed memoirs to Finlay collections and helped publish *The Collectors' Book of Virgil Finlay* (2019), died on 13 January aged 71. [SJ] • **Jael** (Jael Ashton, 1937-2020), US sf/fantasy artist and art teacher active since the 1980s and nominated for eight Chesley awards 1985-2002, died on 17 November aged 83. [L] • **Rémy Julienne** (1930-2021), French stuntman and stunt co-ordinator whose credits include *Who?* (1974), *Sheena* (1984), *Solarbabies* (1986), *A Witch's Way of Love* (1997) and various Bond films, died on 21 January aged 90. [SJ] • **Bruce Kirby** (1925-2021), US actor in *Holmes and Yoyo* (1976-1977), *The Muppet Movie* (1979), *Turnabout* (1979) and others, died on 23 January aged 95. [SJ] • **Vladimir Korenev** (1940-2021), Russian actor who starred in *Amphibian Man* (1962), died on 2 January aged 80. [SJ] • **Tim Lane** (1951-2021),

US fan under whose editorship and co-editorship *Fosfax* had seven fanzine Hugo nominations (1988-1996), died on 12 January aged 69. [MMW] ● *David Larkin* (1936-2020), UK art director at Panther, Granada, Picador and Pan Books, and from 1980 publisher at David Larkin Books (USA) including such titles as *Fantastic Art*, *Faeries* and *Giants*, died on 2 December aged 84. [AIP/DP] ● *Cloris Leachman* (1926-2021), Oscar- and Emmy-winning US actress whose many credits include *Young Frankenstein* (1974), *High Anxiety* (1977), *The Muppet Movie* (1979) and *American Gods* (2017-2019), died on 26 January aged 94. [PDF] ● *Steve Lightle* (1959-2021), US comics artist for DC (*Doom Patrol* revival, *Legion of Super-Heroes*) and Marvel (*Classic X-Men* covers), died on 8 January aged 61. [PDF] ● *Christopher Little*, UK literary agent who sold J.K. Rowling's first, much-rejected Harry Potter novel and whose agency represented her until 2011, died on 7 January aged 79. [AIP] ● *Philip Martin* (1938-2020), UK writer and actor who scripted the *Doctor Who* serials 'Vengeance on Varos' (1985) and 'Trial of a Time Lord' (4 of 8 parts, 1986), died on 13 December aged 83. [FM] ● *Diana Millay* (1935-2021), US actress in *Dark Shadows* (1966-1969) and the spinoff film *Night of Dark Shadows*, died on 8 January aged 85. [SJ] ● *Ivo Niederle* (1929-2021), Czech actor in *Howling II* (1985), died on 8 January aged 91. [SJ] ● *Darroll Pardoe* (1943-2021), UK fan who published many fanzines from the 1960s to the late 1990s – including single issues of *Dark Horizons* and *Vector*, and 16 of *Ansible's* predecessor *Checkpoint* – died on 28 January aged 77. He is survived by his wife Rosemary (Ro) Pardoe, to whom all sympathy. [AS] ● *John 'Grandad' Philpott* (1944-2020), UK fan who was a former committee member of ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha and various general sf and media cons, died on 9 December aged 76. [CB] ● *Marion Ramsey* (1947-2021), US *Police Academy* actress in the animated *Addams Family* (1992-1993) and *Lavalantula* (2015; also sequel), died on 7 January aged 73. [LP] ● *John Richardson* (1934-2021), UK actor whose genre films include *She* (1965), *One Million Years B.C.* (1966), and *War of the Planets* (1977), died on 6 January aged 86. [SG] ● *Peter Mark Richman* (1927-2021), US actor in *Friday the 13th Part VIII* (1989), *After the Wizard* (2011) and many genre tv series, died on 14 January aged 93. [AIP] ● *Tanya Roberts* (1955-2021), US actress in *The Beastmaster* (1982), *Sheena* (1984) and *A View to a Kill* (1985), died on 4 January aged 65. [RH] ● *Antonio Sabàto Sr* (1943-2021), Italian-US actor in *Barbarella* (1968) and *War of the Robots* (1978), died on 10 January aged 77. [AIP] ● *Olle Sahlin* (1956-2021), Swedish fan since the early 1980s and translator of Donaldson, Pratchett and Pullman, died on 9 January aged 64. [J-HH] ● *Gregory Sierra* (1937-2021), US actor whose films include *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1970), *Honey, I Blew Up the Kid* (1992) and *Vampires* (1998), died on 4 January aged 83. [SJ] ● *Julie Strain* (1962-2021), US actress ('queen of the B movies') and film-maker whose many star credits include *Heavy Metal 2000* (2000) and *Battle Queen 2020* (2001), died on 11 January aged 58. ● Late report: *Patrick Tilley* (1928-2020), UK artist and author whose first sf novel was *Fade-Out* (1975) and who wrote the post-holocaust 'Amtrak Wars' sequence opening with *Cloud Warrior* (1983), died on 25 May 2020 aged 91. [A/MA] ● *Stacy Title* (1964-2021), US filmmaker who directed *Hood of Horror* (2006) and *The Bye Bye Man* (2017), died on 11 January aged 56. [AIP] ● *Cicely Tyson* (1924-2021), noted US actress whose genre credits include *Duplicates* (1992), *Ms. Scrooge* (1997), *The Haunting in Connecticut 2* (2013) and guest roles in various tv series, died on 28 January aged 96. [PDF/LP] ● *Peter Vere-Jones* (1939-2021), UK-born NZ actor in *Bad Taste* (1987), *Meet the Feebles* (1989), *Dead Alive* (1992, aka *Braindead*) and *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* (2013), died on 26 January aged 81. [SJ] ● *Woody Welch*, US sf, fantasy and horror artist who created covers for *Space Monster* magazine and worked on *Halloween: Resurrection* (2002), died on 15 January aged 68. [SJ]

The Weakest Link. Q. 'Which planet takes 88 days to orbit the Sun?' A. 'The Earth.' Q. 'Which is the only celestial body apart from Earth upon which man has set foot?' A. 'The Sun.' (ITV, *Tipping Point* New Year special) [PE] ● Q. 'King Gidorah, Megalon and Mothra are among the creatures to have fought which enduring film character in films made between 1964 and 1992?' A. 'Lassie.' (BBC2, *University Challenge*) [PE]

Back to the Wordmill. The *Oxford English Dictionary* sf citations website that fuelled Jeff Prucher's *Brave New Words* was relaunched in January by its creator Jesse Sheidlower, as the Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction (no longer affiliated to the OED). This is an ongoing project at sfdictionary.com – with mentions of me and even *Ansible*!

As Others Sub Us. A *Guardian* 'Prove Me Wrong' feature sub-headed 'Science fiction is just a bunch of loud noises, special effects and unbelievable plotlines, argues Alison Rourke.' was notable for Rourke's conspicuous failure to mention either loud noises or unbelievable plotlines in her 'sci-fi movies are a waste of time' polemic. (3 January)

Woo-Woo Up North. Who would have thought that Blackpool's greatest need was for a £300m theme complex promoting the long discredited 'ancient astronaut' claims of Erich von Däniken? The council plans to use compulsory purchase powers to seize land for its Chariots of the Gods Entertainment Park. (*Manchester Evening News*, 23 January)

Random Fandom. *Brian Ameringen* announced the end of another era: his February 2021 Porcupine Books mail-order catalogue is the last ever, though sales will continue online at porcupinebooks.co.uk. ● *Benford Day* was celebrated on 30 January as the twins Gregory and (ten minutes older) Jim attained a combined age of 160. ● *Paul Dormer* was hospitalized for over two weeks following a heart attack and stroke on 11 January, but is now recovering at home. [RR] ● *FAAn Awards*: efanzines.com/TIR/Incompleteat2020.pdf includes the voting form and a rough eligibility guide; the deadline is 12 March. ● *David Speakman*, long-time member of the US National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F) who had just been awarded a rare life membership, broke his ties with the N3F after nearly 40 years when 'I discovered the group has decided to recruit membership from the ranks of Parler and Gab – both havens for extreme alt-right fanatics, including those who attacked and planned assassinations in Congress on Jan. 6.' (*File 770*, 27 January) [NF] Bill Burns will no longer announce and link to N3F zines at eFanzines.com.

Court Circular. Tracy Hickman and Margaret Weis dropped their \$10m lawsuit against Wizards of the Coast (see A400) for cancelling their new *Dragonlance* trilogy; details of the presumed settlement were not revealed. (Polygon.com, 11 January) The trilogy is now in progress. (Tor.com, 25 January) I still shudderingly remember the first one.

The Dead Past. *60 Years Ago*, a familiar note in a review of *Vector* 10: 'George Locke shows how sf has been ingrowing into a rut.' (*Skyrack* 29, February 1961) ● *80 Years Ago*, the important war news: 'During the City of London "Fire-blitz" last month, British publishers suffered badly. About half of London's famous book publishers had their premises or warehouses destroyed, so that repercussions on the fantasy book field will no doubt be great. One estimate says that about 6,000,000 books total went up in flames.' (*Futurian War Digest* 5, February 1941)

Editorial. In January I was cheered to find *Ansible* Editions in the BSFA Awards nonfiction longlist – for Chris Priest's introduction to *The Jonbar Point* by Brian Aldiss, and again for my own unserious collection *Beachcombing*. Thanks, voters! See bsfa.co.uk/awards-longlist/. ● TAFF ebook library news: *A Budrys Miscellany* (Budrys), *Challenging Moskowitz* (ed. Rob Hansen), *TAFF Tales* (Bulmer), *Then Again* (ed. Hansen) and especially *Temple at the Bar* (Bill Temple) were all expanded in January. For the most recently updated titles, see taff.org.uk/eupdates.php.

Last Orders. The Lamb and Flag pub in Oxford, famously frequented by C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien and their circle, has closed down after more than 450 years because of financial problems caused by the pandemic. (*Evening Standard*, 26 January)

C.o.A. *Mike & Pat Meara*, 29 Rue de Godineau, 79200 Parthenay, France. (Far from new, but not widely publicized until now.) *Pete Young*, 375 Walton Lane, Walton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L4 5RL.

Hugos There? DisCon III (Worldcon 2021) opened its Hugo policy announcement with: 'Presenting the #HugoAwards is one of the most joyful parts of every #Worldcon, so we understand the desire to share the glory with as many people as possible.' The plan was to ration the glory for teams with five or more members, by listing no more than four names on the final ballot and trophy plaque, and by implication presenting a maximum of four Hugo rockets per team. (Twitter, 11 January) Much tweeted outrage ensued, and the limit was abolished next day.

Thog's Masterclass. *Blindsight Dept.* 'The veil prevented him from seeing it, but he knew that she was smiling. Somewhere, he thought, I have seen that smile before.' (Bernard King, *Vargr-Moon*, 1986) ● *Dept of Delicate Euphemism.* '... no male may enter the School House. As the girls there were much valued for their ephemera they were much protected against its premature bestowal.' (Sheri S. Tepper, *Wizard's Eleven*, 1984) [BA] ● *Up to One's Neck.* '... an out-of-depth feeling lapped at Markriss's chin.' (Courtia Newland, *A River Called Time*, 2021) [AR via KS] ● *Sexy Dept.* 'The woman's legs stretched gantry high.' (*Ibid*) ● *The Tell-Tale Twitch.* 'He still wanted her, I by now could see it and she uneasily fascinated as she was could not, with every hourly twitch of his testicles.' (Jane Gaskell, *Some Summer Lands*, 1977)

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1 February 2021