

Ansible



Ansible 337 August 2015

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: Steve Stiles. Available for SAE, nudged-quantum storage units or sophons.

It's a Con! Another Langford ebook from Ansible Editions: *Don't Try This At Home: Selected Convention Reports*, an occasionally esoteric compilation ranging from Mancon 5 in 1976 to Loncon 3 in 2014. £1 goes to TAFF for each copy sold. See ae.ansible.uk/?t=dontrythis.

The Night's Plutonian Shore

George Lucas is one of those receiving 2015 lifetime honours from the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts. The ceremony, hosted by some chap called Obama, will be in December. (BBC, 15 July) [MPJ]

George R.R. Martin, as homage to his characters' gory deaths in *Game of Thrones*, makes a cameo appearance in an already much circulated clip from the aptly titled *Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No!* 'as a moviegoer who gets brutally attacked by a shark that somehow jumps out of the movie screen and into his face.' (Cnet.com, 23 July)

Michael Moorcock's profile/interview (*New Statesman*, 24 July) had a subhead saying he 'revolutionised science fiction with symbolism, sex and psychoactive drugs. Now, at 75, he has invented another genre.' Also included was the mandatory MM quotation 'I think Tolkien was a crypto-fascist'. Mike has since issued a disclaimer: 'He was a nice bloke and it's a generous, well-meant, piece but I'm afraid I read it saying "no I didn't" and "I never said that" so many times that it was a relief to get to the last, more accurate, para. My fault, maybe, for talking too fast and modifying too frequently. I've never claimed the authority of being working class! I'm from the class most artists come from, the hated petite bourgeoisie, though I had a variety of relatives who didn't. I have spent half my life saying that Jerry Cornelius is not a "secret agent". Feel like I've just taken a turn on the same old roundabout. But I'll do a lot for four good pork pies. / Oh, and I absolutely LOVE hobbits. I'm just looking for the best recipe.' (www.multiverse.org, 24 July) [JL]

F.W. Murnau, director of the classic vampire film *Nosferatu* (1922), was in the news again in July with reports that his skull was stolen from his grave in Stahnsdorf cemetery near Berlin. (BBC, 15 July) [MPJ] If this were a Tim Powers novel there would be excellent magical reasons for this theft, and others too would lose random body parts.

Charles Platt and his long-time partner Erico Narita were married on 2 July in Arizona: 'please, no wedding presents.'

Amy Schumer, US comedian, annoyed the galactic overlords of *Star Wars* by appearing dressed as Princess Leia in a naughty GQ magazine photo feature: in bed with ardent robots C-3PO and R2-D2, in a high-kicking chorus line with Imperial Stormtroopers, and so on. 'Lucasfilm & Disney didn't approve, participate in or condone the inappropriate use of our characters in this manner,' thundered the official *Star Wars* Twitter feed. (BBC, 17 July) [MPJ]

Benjanun Sriduangkaew, Thai author identified in 2014 as the former abusive blogger *Requires Hate* or *Winterfox*, has been further outed by a stalker who posted details of her 'true identity and her extremely privileged extended family'. All online, but let's not link to it.

J.R.R. Tolkien is now commemorated on maps of Saturn's moon Titan, where by IAU convention the mountains are named for those of Middle-earth and the hills for its characters: hence Mountains of Moria (Moria Montes) and Gandalf Hills (Gandalf Colles). [BH] Freta, straits or channels, get the names of characters in Asimov's *Foundation* series. The IAU has yet to approve the *New Horizons* team's name Cthulhu for a dark region on Pluto, where underworld connotations predominate—though 'Writers associated with Pluto' could give a chance to Disney.

Conceptaculum

7-9 Aug • **Nine Worlds Geekfest** (multimedia), Heathrow. £110; child (5-15) £55. Day rates £47.50, £23.75. Advance booking online only at nineworlds.co.uk. Rates rise on 1 August and at the door.

12 Aug • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Blackett Lecture Theatre 1, Blackett Laboratory Building, Imperial College, London—note venue and 2nd (not 4th) Wednesday of month. 7pm. With Peter F. Hamilton. Free.

19-23 Aug • **Sasquan** (Worldcon), Spokane Convention Center, Spokane, WA, USA. \$210 reg; \$105 YA/military; \$90 child; \$40 supp.

Advance registration closes 2 August: \$240 at the door. See sasquan.org.

21 Aug - 20 Sep • **Extra-Terrestrial**: Floating Cinema films and events at various Regent's Canal moorings, London. On board £5-£12; open-air free. See floatingcinema.info/events/2015/extra-terrestrial.

21-23 Aug • **Wadfest** (Discworld camp con), Wood Green, Animal Shelter, King's Bush Farm, London Road, Godmanchester, Cambs, PE29 2NH. Campers £35, visitors £17.50, rising 1 August to £40 and £20. See www.wadfest.co.uk; contact waddy at wadfest dot co dot uk.

27-31 Aug • **Frightfest** (horror film festival), Glasgow Film Theatre. Bookings: www.frightfest.co.uk or 0141 332 6535.

28-31 Aug • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. Tickets £35 (day £13), under-17s £18 (£6.50), plus fees. See steampunk.synthasite.com.

23-25 Oct • **Fantasycon**, Orchard Hotel, Nottingham. Now £75 reg; couples £130; under-16s £35; under-5s free. Rates rise 1 September. There are discounts for BFS members: see fantasycon2015.org.

21 Nov • **Sledge-Lit** (Edge-Lit extra), QUAD Centre, Derby. Tickets £25. Book online at www.derbyquad.co.uk/special-event/sledge-lit

Rumblings. *Worldcon 2015*: Sasquan had over 10,000 members as of 15 July. Nearly 3,000 Hugo ballots were cast by 24 July. *Worldcon 2017*: mailed/mailed site selection ballots (Helsinki, Nippon, Montreal or Washington DC) must be received by 24:00 PDT on 10 August. See sasquan.org. *Worldcon 2022*: a bid for Doha, Qatar—challenging the Chicago bid—has appeared at worldcon.org/bids. No further details.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Invoke Us. Charles Bukowski on Henry Miller: 'Star Trek contemplation sperm-jizz babble'. (C. Bukowski, *On Writing*, 2015)

Awards. *Prometheus* (libertarian): Daniel Suarez, *Influx*. • *Rhysling* (poetry): SHORT Marge Simon, 'Shutdown' (*Qualia Nous* ed. Michael Bailey). LONG F.J. Bergmann, '100 Reasons to Have Sex with an Alien' (2014 SFPA Poetry Contest). • *SF Poetry Association Grand Master*: Marge Simon, Steve Sneyd. • *World Fantasy Life Achievement*: Ramsey Campbell, Sheri S. Tepper. • *Shirley Jackson* (suspense/horror): NOVEL Jeff VanderMeer, *Annihilation*. NOVELLA Daryl Gregory, *We Are All Completely Fine*. SHORT Alison Littlewood, 'The Dogs Home' (*Spectral Book of Horror Stories*). COLLECTION Helen Marshall, *Gifts for the One Who Comes After*. ANTHOLOGY Ellen Datlow, ed., *Fearful Symmetries*.

As We See Us. Stephen Baxter explains Wellsian sf in a *Guardian* interview: 'So it's like therapy, you're telling a story because you're frightened of the future.' (25 July)

Career Advice to fugitives from US justice: don't star in even a low-budget horror film under your own name, as did bank robber Jason Stange in *Marla Mae* (forthcoming 2016). Police relentlessly noticed him in advance-publicity photos, and pounced. (BBC, 29 July) [MPJ]

R.I.P. *Renee Alper* (1957-2015), US filker and playwright long active in Tolkien fandom (she founded the American Hobbit Association in 1977) and the Mythopoeic Society, died on 27 July aged 58. [CC] • *Theodore Bikel* (1924-2015), Austrian-born actor whose long career included genre tv roles in *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *The Return of the King* (1980, as Aragorn), *Beauty and the Beast*, *Star Trek: TNG*, *Babylon 5* and others, died on 21 July; he was 91. [DL] • *Edward Burnham* (1916-2015), UK actor whose credits include *Quatermass and the Pit* (1959), *Doctor Who* (1968, 1974-1975), and *The Abominable Dr. Phibes* (1971), died on 30 June aged 98. [MPJ] • *George Coe* (1929-2015), US actor seen in *The Stepford Wives* (1975), *The Entity* (1982), *Max Headroom* (1987-1988 tv) and *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* (2009 tv), died on 18 July aged 86. [PDF] • *Douglas Cook*, US screenwriter best known for *The Rock* (1996), whose coming *Criminal* (2016) is an sf thriller involving identity transfer, died on 19 July; he was 56. [PDF] • *E.L. Doctorow* (1931-2015), noted US author of historical fiction who used fantastic themes in *Big as Life* (1966) and the steampunkish *The Waterworks* (1994), died on 21 July; he was 84. [JC] • *Blaine Gibson* (1918-2015), US animator whose Disney credits include *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *Peter Pan* (1953), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and *101 Dalmatians* (1961), died on 5 July aged 97. As a sculptor he also

created many statues and characters for Disneyland. [PDF] • *Fred Hemmings*, UK fan active in the 1960s and 1970s, publishing the fanzine *Mescific* (later *Viewpoint*) and involved with the BSFA, died on 6 May; he was 71. [ME via GC] • *Steve Kennedy* (1945-2015), US art dealer who specialized in pulp and represented various artists (or their estates) including Hannes Bok, Rafael DeSoto and J. Allen St. John, died on 4 July aged 70. [CP/AIP] • *Alan Kupperberg* (1953-2015), US comics artist who worked on several titles for Marvel (*Defenders*, *Invaders*, *Punisher*, *Spider-Man*, *Thor*, *X-Men* etc) and later DC (including *Justice League of America*), died on 17 July aged 62. [PDF] • *Aubrey Morris* (1926-2015), UK character actor whose genre credits include *The Prisoner* (1967 tv), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *The Wicker Man* (1973), *Lifeforce* (1985) and *Necessary Evil* (2008), died on 15 July aged 89. [PDF] • *Tom Piccirilli* (1965-2015), prolific US horror, crime and sf author who won several Bram Stoker awards, died on 11 July; he was 50. • *Olaf Pooley* (1914-2015), UK actor seen in *Doctor Who* (1970), *Doomwatch* (1971), *Beastmaster III: The Eye of Braxus* (1996) and *Star Trek: Voyager* (2000), died on 14 July. He was 101. [MPJ] • *Roger Rees* (1944-2015), UK actor whose credits include *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (1993), *The Scorpion King* (2002), *The Prestige* (2006) and *Warehouse 13* (2009-2013 tv), died on 10 July aged 71. [MMW] • *Jeff Rice* (1944-2015), best known as creator of the tv series *Kolchak: The Night Stalker* (1974-1975), died on 1 July aged 71. The series pilot was *The Night Stalker* (1972), adapted by Richard Matheson from Rice's then-unpublished novel of the same title which appeared in 1973. [F770] • *Alex Rocco* (1936-2015), US actor whose credits include *The Entity* (1982), *A Bug's Life* (1998) and *The Country Bears* (2002), died on 18 July aged 79. [MMW] • *Leonard Starr* (1925-2015), US cartoonist who drew *Annie* from 1979 to 2000 and developed and wrote the animated *ThunderCats* (1985-1989) for Rankin/Bass (but had to sue for his share of merchandise profits), died on 30 June aged 89. [PDF] • *Jerry Weintraub* (1937-2015), US film/tv producer whose genre work includes *Oh, God!* (1977), *My Stepmother Is an Alien* (1988), *The Avengers* (1998) and forthcoming *Tarzan* and *Westworld* tv series, died on 6 July; he was 77. [MMW] • *John A. Williams* (1925-2015), US writer and poet whose sf novels—beginning with *The Man Who Cried I Am* (1967)—focused on America's racial conflicts, died on 3 July; he was 89. [JC] • *George 'Foghorn' Winslow* (1946-2015), erstwhile US child actor who starred in the sf comedy *The Rocket Man* (1954), died on 13 June aged 69. [MPJ] • *Markus Wolfson* (pseudonym of Mark McCann, 1945-2015), UK author of *The Magonia Stone* (2015) and a number of short stories, died of cancer on 30 June; he was 69. [GC]

The Weakest But Very Topical Link. *Richard Osman*: 'What is the title of the third book in the *Hunger Games* trilogy?' *Contestant*: 'To Kill a Mockingbird.' (BBC2, *Two Tribes*) [PE]

Awards Shortlists. *British Fantasy*, novels: FANTASY K.T. Davies, *Breed*; Robert Jackson Bennett, *City of Stairs*; Frances Hardinge, *Cuckoo Song*; Lavie Tidhar, *A Man Lies Dreaming*; Neil Williamson, *The Moon King*; Edward Cox, *The Relic Guild*. HORROR Gary McMahon, *The End*; M.R. Carey, *The Girl with All the Gifts*; Rich Hawkins, *The Last Plague*; Adam Nevill, *No One Gets Out Alive*; Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven*; Alison Littlewood, *The Unquiet House*. • *Man Booker Prize* longlist of 13: one book of sf/fantasy interest, *The Chimes* by Anna Smail. [L] • *Sidewise* (alt-history): LONG Alexander M. Grace, Sr, *Second Front: The Allied Invasion of France, 1942-1943: An Alternative History*; Kristine Kathryn Rusch, *The Enemy Within*; Tony Schumacher, *The Darkest Hour*; Allen Steele, *V-S Day: A Novel of Alternate History*; Jo Walton, *My Real Children*. SHORT Ken Liu, 'The Long Haul: From the Annals of Transportation, The Pacific Monthly, May 2009' (11/14 *Clarkesworld*); Igor Ljubuncic, 'The Girl with the Flaxen Hair' (*Wars to End All Wars: Alternate Tales from the Trenches*); Robert Reed, 'The Principles' (4/14 *Asimov's*); Aaron Rosenberg, 'Let No Man Put Asunder' (*Europa Universalis IV: What If? The Anthology of Alternate History*); Lewis Shiner, 'The Black Sun' (Summer 2014 *Subterranean*); Harry Turtledove, 'The More It Changes' (*Europa Universalis IV* as above). • *World Fantasy*: NOVEL Katherine Addison, *The Goblin Emperor*; Robert Jackson Bennett, *City of Stairs*; David Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks*; Jeff VanderMeer, *Area X: The Southern Reach Trilogy*; Jo Walton, *My Real Children*. For further World Fantasy categories see worldfantasy.org/awards/2015.html.

Court Circular. The iron jackboot of Disney came down hard on the British 'Joker's Masquerade' fancy-dress retailer, which had long used starwars.co.uk and related domains for relevant themed costumes. Disney duly complained to Nominet, which ruled in its favour—'Star Wars cannot sensibly refer to anyone else other than the complainant'—and described the registration as 'abusive'. (BBC, 9 July) [MPJ]

As Others See Us. Joshua Rothman tackles the genre rather as Julius Caesar dealt with Gaul: 'Sci-fi stories divide roughly into three categories. First, there are stories about regular people who just happen to live in the future, like "Star Trek" and "Star Wars." Second, there are transhumanist stories, such as "Dune" and "Sense8," in which human nature is somehow altered. And third, there are robot stories, in which human nature is, for the most part, fixed, the better to be inherited by our technological replacements—the Cylons in "Battlestar Galactica," say, or Ava, the robot in Alex Garland's recent film, "Ex Machina.'" (*The New Yorker*, 14 July) [SM] That should help us pare down the interminable list of *SF Encyclopedia* theme entries to, say, three.

Magazine Scene. A new Edinburgh-based sf magazine, *Shoreline of Infinity*, launched on 2 July with its Summer 2015 issue (both print and digital). Read all about it at www.shorelineofinfinity.com.

I Say It's Spinach. 'Popeye is very, very similar to these medieval sculptures. You have a sense of transcendence taking place here. Here with Popeye it's transcendence of male energy. He eats that spinach and he transcends into the strength. And I think, you know, that's the art; the spinach is art.' (Jeff Koons in *Imagine ... Jeff Koons: Diary of a Seducer*, BBC1, as featured in *Private Eye's* 'Pseud's Corner', 24 July)

Random Fandom. 'Bill Burns is currently indisposed. There will be no updates until further notice.' Thus Bill's efanzines.com (host site to innumerable fanzines) in late July; he's recovering well from a bug picked up while in hospital for a routine minor op. • *Gary Farber* is also not having fun: 'I crushed my foot, fracturing the calcaneus bone into at least five fragments, which will be requiring surgery.' • *James Nicoll* posted 'my 109th review of a book by a woman this year, which means I can now say I have reviewed more books by women in 2015 than Tor.com, *Romantic Times* (spec fic only), *SFX*, *Strange Horizons*, *Interzone*, io9, *F&SF*, *Vector*, *Analog*, *Asimov's*, *NYRSF*, *Science Fiction Studies*, *Foundation*, *CSZ*, and *LARB* did in 2014. / On track to exceed *Locus'* numbers in this matter on or around the 7th of August.' (29 July)

The Dead Past. *60 Years Ago*, a touch of politics in UK fandom: 'European May '55 featured a 11 page article on s-f by one Gerald Hooley; an enthusiast's article one would never expect to see published in a prozine, mentioning over a 100 *Astounding* stories (man's an enthusiast) and others, plus a fairly well-balanced survey. Only drawback is, *European* is the leading Fascist organ in this country. Do we want to know Hooley or not?' (*Science Fantasy News* 13, August 1955) • *50 Years Ago*, the second London Worldcon was imminent with Brian Aldiss as guest of honour: 'The largest ever conclave of sf writers, editors, readers and fans will gather this weekend, 27th-30th August, at the Mount Royal Hotel, Marble Arch, London. Come along and join the fun. Better early than late. Many conventioners are already in attendance, expectant with baited breath!' (*Skyrack* 82, August 1965)

C.o.A. *Jordin & Mary Kay Kare*, 1567 Keesling Avenue, San Jose, CA 95125, USA. *Ian Watson & Cristina Macía*, Avda de la Constitucion 15, 4 derecha, 33208 Gijon, Spain. *Sarah Mooring* (née Dibb): C/ San Ignacio de Loyola 9, 5 izda, 03013 Alicante, Spain.

Fanfundery. *GUFF 2016* voting is open: Jukka Halme is contending against Hold Over Funds. See rantalica.com/guff/guff-voting-ballot/.

Miscellaneous Media Minutiae. *Curt Siodmak Award* (German): SF FILM *Guardians of the Galaxy*; SF TV *Doctor Who*. [SFS]

Thog's Masterclass. *Pluto Revealed!* 'Originally it revolved around another sun, some star which was light-years away. How it tore loose from that star we'll probably never know—the star might have simply become too dim, their planet might have been on a shaky orbit, an experiment of theirs might have jarred it loose, many things could have happened.' (Donald A. Wollheim, *The Secret of the Ninth Planet*, 1959) [JN] • *Neat Tricks*. "Why, yes, Simon," she said, looking up at him through her eyelashes.' (Susan Elia MacNeal, *Mr. Churchill's Secretary*, 2012) [PB] • *Dept of Rocks and Hard Places*. 'We are between the wild thout of certainty and the mad zitar of fact—we can escape neither.' (Edgar Rice Burroughs, *The Gods of Mars*, 1918) • *Mot Juste Dept*. 'Rugolo glanced at the greenness carpeting the plain, which he had taken to be a variety of grass or moss, forms of verbiage common on many worlds ...' (Barrington J. Bayley, *Eye of Terror*, 1999) [BA] • *Dept of Baleful Dessert*. '... a face pink and stern as frozen strawberry custard.' (Ayn Rand, *Ideal*, written 1934; published 2015) [PB]

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