

Ansible



Ansible® 399 October 2020

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 or despicable secrets whispered by masked heresiarchs.

The Twelve Figures of the World

John Clute celebrated his eightieth birthday on 12 September, and as a special treat did not write any *SF Encyclopedia* entries that day.

Jenny Colgan, author in various genres, revealed one of the pitfalls of *Doctor Who* novelizations: ‘... there is a very strict list of things you’re not allowed to do. For Matt Smith’s Doctor I wrote a scene where he pulled off his shoes and trousers, and it came back with: “The Doctor does not remove his trousers.”’ (i, 12 September) What, never?

Mark Hamill tweeted: ‘That debate was the worst thing I’ve ever seen & I was in The Star Wars Holiday Special.’ (Twitter, 30 September)

Howard V. Hendrix, a volunteer firefighter as well as an sf author, sadly lost his home in Pine Ridge, California, to the Creek Fire in mid-September. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 September) [PN]

George R.R. Martin’s failure to get planning permission for a ‘medieval’ castle on his Santa Fe property had substantial UK newspaper coverage. (i, 12 September) Intended to house a great many books and collectibles, with ‘a roof deck and a lift tower’, this edifice would have been four feet higher than allowed by local building regulations. Whether the specs included resistance to dragon fire is not known.

Rhianna Pratchett noticed a subtle omission in an Instagram post by Simon Allen thanking many people involved with his new production: ‘This is the show-runner of *The Watch*, failing to thank MY FATHER. This should tell you everything you need to know.’ (Twitter, 14 September)

David Redd reports on the ‘Welsh Book of the Year 2020 (Welsh-language section). The steampunk novel *Babel* by Ifan Morgan Jones was an unusual triple winner, collecting the main prize, the fiction award and the people’s choice. The book features a crusading female journalist amid Victorian heavy industry and heavy crime, and being Welsh includes airships to Patagonia. (Steampunk is so new to Welsh that the author had to create the equivalent term himself, rather neatly as “agerstalwm”.)’ (4 September)

Consubsistency

ONLINE. 1 Oct ● **Virtual First Thursday**, 6-10pm, replacing the usual London pub meeting. See tinyurl.com/uow6hqn.

ONLINE. 2-4 Oct ● **Futuricon** (Rikon/Eurocon); original venue was Rijeka, Croatia. €10 reg; €5 supp; under-14s free. See futuricon.eu.

ONLINE. 7-11 Oct ● **Grimmfest** (horror/cult films); original venue was Odeon Manchester Great Northern. See grimmfest.com.

ONLINE. 9-11 Oct ● **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. Free virtual event. See www.comicartfestival.com.

CANCELLED. 10-11 Oct ● **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Epsom. More at bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivial.

ONLINE. 16-18 Oct ● **The Ineffable Con 2** (*Good Omens*). Guests include Neil Gaiman, Rob Wilkins. £25 reg. See theineffablecon.org.uk.

SOLD OUT. 22-25 Oct ● **Celluloid Screams** (horror films), Showroom Cinema, Sheffield. £90 reg. Still on, ‘with reduced capacity and social distancing measures in place’. See celluloidscreams.co.uk.

22 Oct - 1 Nov ● **Edinburgh Horror Festival**, now ‘to be about 95% digital’ but including ‘a socially distanced walking tour and access to the Edinburgh Dungeon combo’. See www.edhorrorfest.co.uk.

ONLINE. 22-25 Oct ● **Frightfest** (film); was to be held at Cineworld, Leicester Square, London. See www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsevents.html.

CANCELLED? 2-8 Nov ● **Talos IV**: SF Theatre Festival of London, The Cockpit, London. *No longer visible in the Cockpit theatre events list*.

POSTPONED AGAIN. 6-8 Nov ● **Dead by Dawn** (horror film festival), Filmhouse Cinema One, 88 Lothian Rd, Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ. *New dates 22-25 April 2021*. Tickets £80 from www.deadbydawn.co.uk.

CANCELLED. 13-15 Nov ● **Destination Star Trek**, ExCel, London. *Next event 12-14 November 2021*. See destinationstartrek.com.

ONLINE. 14-15 Nov ● **Punctuation**, UK, via Discord, Zoom and other platforms. £5 reg; see punctuationcon.uk. Bring your own semicolons.

CANCELLED. 5-6 Dec ● **For the Love of Sci-Fi** (comics), BEC Arena, Manchester. *Next event 4-5 December 2021*. See fortheloveofsci-fi.com.

CANCELLED. 5-7 Feb 2021 ● **Long Play**, ‘33 (and 1/3)rd UK Filk

Convention’, Grantham. Details awaited at www.contabile.org.uk. [RR]

Rumblings. *Whitby Goth Weekend* for October is cancelled: see www.whitbygothweekend.co.uk. Hoped 2021 dates are 23-25 April and 29-31 October. ● *Into the Unknown: A Journey through SF*, the London Barbican exhibition (see A359) that visited Athens, Odense and Rotterdam, has ceased touring for pandemic reasons. [BT] ● *Lawless*, the UK comics con, feels it’s ‘not looking bright for May 2021’ and may postpone to 2022. (Facebook, 8 September) ● *Sci-Fi London* still expects to run ‘sometime in 2020’ according to sci-fi-london.com, but I doubt it.

Infinitely Improbable

The Critical Heritage. A review of Stephen Baxter’s latest *World Engines* novel casts a new light on the sf concept of the multiverse which may surprise Michael Moorcock. Its multiversal recommendations sidebar includes: ‘*The Number of the Beast*. Robert A. Heinlein’s is the first and best in this genre.’ (Sally Adee, *New Scientist*, 22 August) [PDF]

As Others See Us. On B. Johnson’s *Operation Moonshot*: ‘But some public health officials are dubious. Some say the plan is not a moonshot, but a Jules Verne fantasy.’ (*Washington Post*, 13 September) [MMW]

Awards. *American Book Award* winners include *The Memory Palace* by Yoko Ogawa. [L] ● *Arthur C. Clarke: The Old Drift* by Namwali Serpell.

● *Ditmar* (Australia) best novel: *The Year of the Fruit Cake* by Gillian Polack. ● *Dwarf Stars* (short poems): ‘Standing Up’ by John C. Mannone (*Nadwah: Poetry in Translation*, 12/19) ● *Elgin* (poetry collection): *Soft Science* by Franny Choi. CHAPBOOK *The Book of Fly* by John Philip Johnson. [F770] ● *National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters*: Walter Mosley. ● *Norma K. Hemming* (Australia): LONG (tie) *From Here On, Monsters* by Elizabeth Bryer; *Ghost Bird* by Lisa Fuller. SHORT *Winter’s Tale* by Nike Sulway & Shauna O’Meara.

● *Primetime Emmy*: ‘best limited series’ was *Watchmen*, with several other wins. ● *SF Poetry Association*: LONG ‘Which is Which’ by F.J. Bergmann. SHORT ‘Skylarking’ by F.J. Bergmann. DWARF ‘Where Do We Go From Here?’ by Ojo Taiye ● *Sidewise* (alt-history): awards for 2019 work will be presented at the 2021 Worldcon together with those for 2020.

Iä! Iä! Academia! ‘Inhabiting the Chthulucene: Forging Tentacular Intimacies at the End of the World’ (*Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, Autumn 2019) says and indeed gibbers it all. [PE]

Publishers and Sinners. Eagle-eyed fans complained that the cover art for Gollancz’s new audiobooks of Anne McCaffrey’s *Pern* series used some inappropriate dragon silhouettes, including Smaug and the dragon from *Shrek*. These were soon traced to a Shutterstock clip-art package which presumably costs money. Gollancz: ‘We apologise for the use of copyright images in our recent *PERN* covers. These were provided by a 3rd party and we’ve informed them they’re hosting copyright material. We’ll be redesigning them and thanks to everyone who raised this. The incorrect ones will soon be sent *between*’. (Twitter, 2 September)

As Others Savour Us. ‘Ridley Scott and sci-fi go together like peanut butter and jelly.’ (Forbes.com, 2 September) [MMW]

R.I.P. *Sei Ashina* (1983-2020), Japanese actress in the superhero series *Kamen Rider Hibiki* (2005) and the film *Nanase: The Psychic Wanderers* (2010), committed suicide on 14 September; she was 36. [AIP] ● *Michael Bernander* (1959-2020), Swedish fan who in the 1980s co-edited the noted sercon fanzine *Ziméria*, died on 1 September aged 61. [J-HH]

● *Althea Braithwaite* (1940-2020), UK author, illustrator and publisher best known for ‘Desmond the Dinosaur’ children’s books such as *Desmond and the Monsters* (1975) – some adapted for tv – died on 27 August aged 80. [AIP] ● *Kevin Burns* (1955-2020), US producer of many genre-related documentaries and the rebooted *Lost in Space* (2018-2019), died on 27 September aged 65. [DKMK] ● *Bart Bush*, US comics fan, collector, con-runner (OAFcon), publisher of fanzines including the 1970s *Comic Detective* and compiler of *The Art of Lou Fine #4* (1987), died in early September. [PDF] ● *Michael Chapman* (1935-2020), US cinematographer for *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978), *The Man with Two Brains* (1983), *The Lost Boys* (1987), *Scrooged* (1988), *Ghostbusters II* (1989), *Evolution* (2001) and others, died on 20 September aged 84; director credits include *Annihilator* (1986) and *The Clan of the Cave Bear* (1986).

[SJ] ● **Ron Cobb** (1937-2020), US-born (though long resident in Australia) cartoonist, animator and film designer who worked on *Dark Star* (1974), *Star Wars* (1977), *Alien* (1979), *Back to the Future* (1985), *Total Recall* (1990) and others, died on 21 September aged 83. [PDF] ● **Mac Davis** (1942-2020), US composer/songwriter with genre film credits for *Next* (2007) and *Passengers* (2016), died on 29 September aged 78. [A-TC] ● **Bob Fujitani** (1921-2020), US comics artist of Japanese/Irish descent whose career ran from 1940 to the 2000s and included a long stint on *Flash Gordon*, died on 6 September aged 98. [PDF] ● **Terry Goodkind** (1948-2020), bestselling US author of the lengthy 'Sword of Truth' epic-fantasy sequence that began with *Wizard's First Rule* (1994), died on 17 September aged 72. [AIP] ● **Ronald Harwood** (1934-2020), South African playwright and screenwriter who scripted a dozen episodes of Roald Dahl's *Tales of the Unexpected* (1979-1981), died on 8 September aged 85. [SJ] ● **Jim Janes**, US comics artist whose many credits since 1972 include DC's *House of Mystery* and *Legion of Super-Heroes*, and the animated *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1988), died in early September. [PDF] ● **Randall Kenan** (1963-2020), US author who used supernatural themes ambiguously in *A Visitation of Spirits* (1989) and overtly in his collection *Let the Dead Bury Their Dead* (1993), died on 28 August aged 57. [AIP] ● **Shiro Kishibe** (1949-2020), Japanese actor who played Sandy in the tv series *Monkey* (1978-1980), died on 28 August aged 71. ● **Stevie Lee**, US wrestler (as Puppet the Psycho Dwarf) and actor in *American Horror Story* (various iterations), *Oz the Great and Powerful* (2013) and *The True Tale of Ole Splitfoot vs. The Lesbian Warrior Nuns of the Great White North* (forthcoming), died on 9 September aged 54. [AIP] ● **Michael Lonsdale** (1931-2020), Anglo-French actor whose films include *Hibernatus* (1969), *Moonraker* (1979, as Bond villain Sir Hugo Drax), *Chronopolis* (1982) and *Kaena: The Prophecy* (2003), died on 21 September aged 89. [MMW] ● **Sam McBratney** (1943-2020), Northern Irish author whose works – mostly for younger readers – include the sf novel *The Final Correction* (1978) and the supernatural *The Ghosts of Hungryhouse Lane* (1988), died on 18 September aged 77. [AIP] ● **Sue Nichols Maciorowski** (1965-2020), US animation visual development and story artist best known for her work on Disney films from *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) and *Aladdin* (1992) to *Moana* (2016), died on 1 September aged 55. [F770] ● **John J. Myers** (1941-2020), former archbishop of Newark (New Jersey) who collaborated with his lifelong friend Gary K. Wolf on a 2006 sf story (pseudonymously) and the 2008 novel *Space Vulture*, died on 24 September aged 79. [SHS] ● **Ernie F. Orsatti** (1940-2020), US stuntman and stunt co-ordinator whose films include *The Swarm* (1978), *The Entity* (1982), *Phantasm II* (1988), *Tremors II: Aftershocks* (1996) and *Doctor Dolittle* (1998), died on 12 September aged 80. [AIP] ● **Helen Reddy** (1941-2020), Australian singer and actress with a genre film credit for *Pete's Dragon* (1977), died on 29 September aged 78. [A-TC] ● **Franco Maria Ricci** (1937-2020), Italian publisher, editor and collector whose arts magazine *FMR* featured Borges, Calvino, Eco, Barthes and others, and who also published slim anthologies of fantastika selected and introduced by Borges, died on 10 September aged 82. [PDF/RB] ● **Chandler Rice**, US comics fan, dealer and convention runner who owned Desert Wind Comics in Las Vegas, died on 29 September. [PDF] ● **Dame Diana Rigg** (1938-2020), noted and beloved UK actress whose genre credits include *The Avengers* (1965-1968), *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1969), *The Great Muppet Caper* (1981), *The Worst Witch* (1986), *Snow White* (1987) and *Game of Thrones* (2013-2017), died on 10 September aged 82. [MJE] ● **Cecilia Romo** (1945-2020), Mexican actress who began her career as an extra in *Dune* (1984), died on 31 August aged 74. [AIP] ● **Lizzie Sanders** (1950-2020), noted UK botanical artist who also illustrated and painted covers for books including such children's fairytales as *Princess Stories* (1998) by Geraldine McCaughrean, died in July aged 70. [AIP] ● **Charles R. Saunders** (1946-2020), US author of much African-rooted fantasy since 1974, including the 'Imaro' and 'Dossouye' series, reportedly died in May aged 73. He edited *Stardock* (1977-1978) and *Dragonbane/Dragonfields* (1978-1983, latterly with Charles de Lint). [GVG] ● Late report: **Charles Schlessiger** (1933-2019), US literary agent who represented Joan Aiken and Kate Wilhelm, died on 3 December aged 86. [GVG] ● **Norm Spencer** (1958-2020), Canadian actor best known for voice work in such Marvel-based productions as *X-Men: The Animated Series* (1992-1997, as Cyclops) and *Silver Surfer* (1998), died on 31 August aged 62. [PDF] ● **Bo Stenfors** (1928-2020), Swedish fan and author active from the 1950s beginnings of fandom in Sweden until about 2015, died on 30 August aged 92. Fanzines included *Sexy Venus*, *Candy Fantasy* and *Drunken Saturnus*; he edited *SF Forum* 1962-1963 for the Stockholm fan club SFSF, which he co-founded. [J-HH] ● **Yūko Takeuchi** (1980-2020), Japanese actress in *Ringo* (1998), *Flashforward*

(2009-2010) and others, committed suicide on 27 September aged 40. [PDF] ● **Tony Tanner** (1932-2020), UK director of the original Broadway *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1982), whose actor credits include *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (1993), *Exorcism* (2003) and *Return to the Batcave* (2003), died on 8 September aged 88. [AIP] ● **Carl-Henning Wijkmark** (1934-2020), award-winning mainstream Swedish author who used such sf tropes as dystopia in *Den svarta väggen* (*The Black Wall*, 2002) and timeslip in *Vi ses igen i nästa dröm* (*See You Again in the Next Dream*, 2013), died on 4 September aged 85. [J-HH] ● **Jimmy Winston** (1945-2020), UK actor and Small Faces musician whose credits include *No Blade of Grass* (1970), *Tam Lin* (1970) and *Doctor Who*: 'Day of the Daleks' (1972), died on 26 September aged 75. [GC] ● **Arthur Wooster** (1929-2020), UK assistant director and cinematographer whose many credits include *Warlords of the Deep* (1978), *Arabian Adventure* (1979), *Highlander II* (1991), *The Avengers* (1998) and several Bond films, died on 1 September aged 91. [SJ] ● **Jerome M. Zeitman** (1930-2020), Hollywood agent and producer of *The Starlost* (1973-1974) and *Damnation Alley* (1977), died on 17 September aged 90. [AIP]

As Others Praise Us. 'If you want to see TV and film truly explore morally compromised women complicit in corporate greed and government surveillance and outright murder, your best bet is science fiction. Try *Westworld*.' (Sonia Saraiya, *Vanity Fair*, July/August) [DMK]

The Dead Past. *20 Years Ago*, there was traditional viewing with alarm: 'Geoffrey Wheatcroft on the late Kingsley Amis: "He became a science-fiction fan, rarely a good sign ..."' (*Ansible* 159, October 2000)

● *50 Years Ago*, Terry Carr admired a neologism by Harry Warner Jr: 'the term "prohh" to serve as a kind of analogy of "faaan" as spake by Tucker, i.e. to indicate obnoxiousness. The prohh is the guy who harangues everyone with tales of everything he writes or sells, or plans to write or sell ...' (*Focal Point* 2:15, October 1970) He is now on Facebook.

● *81 Years Ago*, an early and tasty *As Others See Us* example: 'Thus the science pulps. What's to be made of them? It is easy enough to classify these exhibits in paranoid phantasies connected to trivial fiction for the titillation of tired, dull, or weak minds.' (Bernard De Voto, 'Doom Beyond Jupiter', *Harper's Magazine*, October 1939) [PDF]

Outraged Letters. Gregory Feeley sends a stern warning: 'According to the *New York Times*, the Booker prize nominees include "Diane Cook's *The New Wilderness*, set in a dystopian future in which almost all of the natural world has been destroyed." I hope that you lot over at *Ansible* are not going to take advantage of this and claim this distinguished novel for science fiction.' (email, 15 September)

Editorial. Four years after registering *Ansible*® as a UK trademark (with much help from fan friends), I felt a shudder of nameless dread on learning that sf critic Sean Guynes was to launch an online *Ansible Review of Books* and had already set up a website. Before I could send my tactful email mentioning trademarks, Hugos and 40-odd years of publication, others had alerted him and his co-editors to the clash and the title had been changed. Of course I have no problem with *Ancillary Review of Books* (ancillaryreviewofbooks.org) and hope it does well.

Random Fandom. *Europa SF* has shut down, perhaps for good. They said goodbye last December, mentioning that the sciportal.eu domain would expire in August 2020; fannish support led to a January relaunch, but presumably the domain registration was never renewed.

Thog's Masterclass. *Neat Tricks for Mask-Wearers.* 'The bookdealer at the other end of the wire actually smiled audibly.' (Harry Stephen Keeler, *The 16 Beans*, 1945) [RGJ] 'His brownish-gray hair rustled in the breeze, and he smoothed it with an irritated glance at the sky.' (Erik Henry Vick, *Claw & Warder 1: Seduction*, 2020) [JLG] ● *Belly Flop Dept.* 'For his stomach hung out like a great flabby breast – and he held on to it with both hands like a woman guarding her breasts from an invader.' (Harry Stephen Keeler, *The Search for X-Y-Z*, 1943) [RGJ] ● *Dept of Watching Too Much Anime.* 'The boy's wide eyes were impossible moons in his unstabbed face.' (Frank Herbert & Bill Ransom, *The Lazarus Effect*, 1983) [BA/CM] ● *Logistics Dept.* 'The tower was instantly forced, and a thousand swords were plunged at once into the bosom of the unfortunate Probus.' (Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1776-1789) ● *Pantone Number Needed.* "Then what, pray tell, good officer, can I do for you?" Wirth's eyes had turned a deadly shade of brown.' (W. Michael Gear, *Abandoned*, 2018) [AK]

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1 October 2020