



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 weird mythos writings of Ralph Wollstonecraft Hedge.

The Straggler from the Moon Pit

David Drake announced his retirement from novel-writing, owing to health and concentration problems, in his digital *Newsletter #123 – the last one* (17 November). Some better news from the same bulletin is that 'I'm still able to write stories and I think they're pretty good.'

Neil Gaiman was a guest on *Desert Island Discs* (BBC Radio 4, November) and must have been the first ever to choose as his castaway reading matter *The Book of the New Sun* by Gene Wolfe. [MJE]

Mercedes Lackey is to be the 38th recipient of the SFWA Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master award, presented with the 2022 Nebulas.

Ursula K. Le Guin's 1972 novella *The Word for World Is Forest* is referenced and homaged as the title of a current Glasgow exhibition with more of a climate-change than an sf theme: see events list below. [JD]

Consanguineal

Until 11 Dec • **The Word for World Is Forest** (exhibition), CCA, 350 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3JD. 11am-6pm. Free. See www.cca-glasgow.com/programme/the-word-for-world-is-forest.

Until 20 Feb 2022 • **Ray Harryhausen: Titan of Cinema** (exhibition), Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh. 10am-5pm. £12-£14; £10-£12 concessions and children. Full details at www.nationalgalleries.org/exhibition/ray-harryhausen-titan-cinema.

3-5 Dec • **Steampunk Christmas**, Nothe Fort, Weymouth. £6 Fri, £12 Fri+Sat, Sun free. See www.asylumsteampunk.co.uk/christmas/.

4 Dec • **Dragonmeet** (gaming), Novotel Hammersmith, London. 9am-11pm. £12; child £5. Group rates at www.dragonmeet.co.uk.

POSTPONED TO 2022. 4-5 Dec • **For the Love of Sci-Fi** (media), BEC Arena, Stretford, Manchester. New dates TBA at forthe loveofsci-fi.com.

HYBRID. 4 Dec • **Tolkien Society Yulemoot**, Bacchus Bar, Birmingham, and online. Free? See www.tolkienociety.org/events/.

15-19 Dec • **DisCon III** (Worldcon), Washington DC, USA. \$275 reg; first-time Worldcon members \$220; YA \$140; virtual \$90; supp \$50; child and other rates at discon3.org. Hugo voting closed in November.

16 Dec • **London Xmas Meeting** (additional to First Thursdays), The Bishop's Finger, 9-10 West Smithfield, EC1A 9JR. All evening.

10-12 Mar 2022 • **Frightfest** (film), GFT, Glasgow. Tickets at www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents.html from 'early January'.

9-10 Apr 2022 • **Sci-Fi Scarborough** (multimedia), The Spa, Scarborough. Tickets not yet available. See scifiscarborough.co.uk.

5-8 Aug 2022 • **Continuum** (RPG), John Foster Hall, Manor Road, Leicester University, Oadby. More soon at continuumconvention.co.uk.

30 Sep-1 Oct 2022 • **Destination Star Trek**, ExCel, London. Day tickets £29; 2 days £44; 3 days £54; more at destinationstartrek.com.

14-16 Oct 2022 • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. Ticket bookings awaited at www.comicartfestival.com.

22-23 Oct 2022 • **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivial.

28-29 Oct 2022 • **15th Starfleet/Klingon Banquet**, Peterborough Marriott Hotel. £65 reg; £45 Saturday only; 10% discount if booked before 1 January. See www.starbase24.co.uk/Banquet.html.

11-13 Nov 2022 • **Novacon 51**, venue TBC. GoH Gareth L. Powell. £51 reg; under-17s £12; under-13s free. More awaited at novacon.uk.

Rumblings. *Dead by Dawn*, the Edinburgh horror film festival, will have no 2022 event. • **Eurocon 2024**: the bid for the first Dutch Eurocon (Rotterdam, August) is now Erasmuscon. See www.erasmuscon.nl.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Reviewing Neal Stephenson's *Termination Shock*: 'Stephenson may write science fiction, but his novels always feel timely and relevant.' (Bethanne Patrick, *Washington Post*, 3 November) [MMW]

Awards. *Ditmar* (Australia) best novel: *The Left-Handed Booksellers of London* by Garth Nix. [CS] • **Goldsmiths Prize** (£10,000): *Sterling Karat Gold* by Isabel Waidner. [F770] • **World Fantasy**. NOVEL *Trouble the Saints* by Alaya Dawn Johnson. NOVELLA *Riot Baby* by Tochi Onyebuchi. SHORT 'Glass Bottle Dancer' by Celeste Rita Baker (*Lightspeed*). ANTHOLOGY *The*

Big Book of Modern Fantasy ed. Ann and Jeff VanderMeer. COLLECTION *Where the Wild Ladies Are* by Aoka Matsuda, trans Polly Barton. ARTIST Rovina Cai. SPECIAL – PROFESSIONAL C.C. Finlay for *F&SF*. SPECIAL – NON-PROFESSIONAL Brian Attebery for *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*.

As Others Compare Us. On a nonfiction pandemic tome by Matt Ridley and Alina Chan: 'Much of *Viral* will leave most readers exhausted. In places the effect is rather like being seated at a wedding next to a distant relative breathlessly explaining the details of their *Game of Thrones* fan fiction.' (*Washington Post*, 14 November) [MMW]

New Award. Faber announced sf prizes for YA novels or collections that 'offer hope and spark', with the top three entries winning £15,000, £8,000 and £5,000 contracts respectively. 'The Imagined Futures Prize aims to spotlight the power and value of the natural world, and imagine the collective outcome the planet faces, at a time when science fiction remains popular in the market, boosted during the pandemic.' Now open for submissions, closing on 9 September 2022. See www.faber.co.uk/journal/imagined-futures-prize/. (*The Bookseller*, 5 November) [JF]

Yo-Ho-Ho! In early November the news reached sf circles: the National Library of New Zealand is for space and cost reasons dumping over 428,000 books from its overseas holdings, and donating them to the Internet Archive to be digitized and made available online. For the very many works still in copyright, the permission of rights holders was taken for granted unless they actively opted out by emailing NLNZ with titles and unique ID numbers listed in a vast spreadsheet downloadable from natlib.govt.nz/about-us/strategy-and-policy/collections-policy/overseas-published-collection-management#opt-out-process-for-rights-holders. The opt-out deadline was 1 December 2021, after which disgruntled authors would have to ask the Internet Archive to remove their works. [SL] In late November, though, NLNZ responded to much strong criticism by putting all these plans on hold for reconsideration. (Stuff.co.nz, 29 November)

As Others Are Inspired. One wonders exactly which bits of the cited film shaped the 'extravagant wedding of oil heiress' Ivy Getty in San Francisco: 'The designer's inspiration for the first night of festivities was the 1968 sci-fi film *Barbarella*.' (*Washington Post*, 10 November) [PL]

R.I.P. **Peter Aykroyd** (1955-2021), Canadian screenwriter and actor seen in *Coneheads* (1993) and *Kids of the Round Table* (1995), who co-created the sf drama series *Psi Factor: Chronicles of the Paranormal* (1996-2000), died on 20 November aged 66. [AIP] • **Bob Baker** (1939-2021), UK writer of many 1970s *Doctor Who* serials with Dave Martin – including 'The Invisible Enemy' (1977), introducing K9 – died in early November aged 82. He also co-wrote four Wallace & Gromit films from *The Wrong Trousers* (1993) to *A Matter of Loaf and Death* (2008). [SC] • **Miquel Barceló** (1948-2021), Spanish sf author, editor, critic and translator who ran the Ediciones B 'Nova' sf imprint from its launch in 1986, died on 22 November. His fanzine was the 1980-1984 *Kadama*. [PDF] • **Bart the Bear II** (2000-2021), Alaskan brown bear in *Dr. Dolittle 2* (2001), *Pete's Dragon* (2016) and a 2013 *Game of Thrones* episode, died on 14 November aged 21. [SJ] • **Alexander Beshler** (1951-2020), China-born US author best known for the virtual-reality trilogy comprising *Rim* (1994), *Mir* (1998) and *Chi* (1999), died on 8 October 2020 aged 69. This seems not to have been reported in sf circles. [WM] • **Jeremy G. Byrne** (1964-2021), Australian fan and editor who co-edited *Eidolon* (1990-2000) and *Year's Best Australian Science Fiction and Fantasy* (1997-1998), died on 24 November aged 57. [IN] • **Linda Carlson** (1945-2021), US actress in *Honey, I Blew Up the Kid* (1992), died on 26 October aged 76. [AIP] • **Marietta Chudakova** (1937-2021), Russian literary critic and author whose Inspector Kraft sf stories are collected in *Mirnyie dosugi inspektora Krafta* (2005; revised 2018), died on 21 November aged 84. [AM] • **Mary Collinson** (1952-2021), Maltese-UK model and actress in *She'll Follow You Anywhere* (1971) and *Twins of Evil* (1971) – both with her identical twin Madeleine (1952-2014) – died on 23 November aged 69. [SG] • **Joe Cornelius** (1928-2021), UK wrestler and actor who played the titular apeman in *Trog* (1970), died on 30 October aged 93. [SJ] • **Ian Curteis** (1935-2021), UK director of *The Projected Man* (1966), died on 24 November aged 86. [SJ] • **Lou Cutell** (1930-2021), US actor in *Frankenstein Meets the Space-monster* (1965), *Rhinoceros* (1974), *Frankenstein General Hospital* (1988),

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids (1989) and episodes of many genre tv series, died on 21 November aged 91. [AIP] ● **Arlene Dahl** (1925-2021), US actress in *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1959), died on 29 November aged 96. [LP] ● **Gene D'Angelo** (1924-2021), US comics colorist at King Features and from 1977 at DC – working on *Action Comics*, *Justice League*, *Superman*, *World's Finest* and others – died in early November aged 97. [PDF] ● **Jerry Douglas** (1932-2021), US actor in *The Stranger* (1973), *The Dead Don't Die* (1975) and episodes of various genre tv series, died on 9 November aged 88. [LP] ● **Bernie Drummond**, UK video-game artist who created the 3D isometric *Batman* (1986) for the ZX Spectrum and Amstrad PCW, has reportedly died. (*The Register*, 17 November) ● **James (Jim) Fiscus** (1944-2021), US author, photographer, SFWA worker (earning him the Kevin O'Donnell Jr. service award) and Endeavour Award administrator, died on 7 November aged 76. [F770] ● **David Gulpilil** (1953-2021), Australian actor in *The Last Wave* (1977) and *Until the End of the World* (1991), died on 29 November aged 68. [AIP] ● **Victor (Vic) Hallett**, UK fan (in BSFA *Vector* 1964-1972, coediting #48) and dealer as Books Unlimited in Prestatyn, North Wales, died on 28 April aged 79. [CP] ● **Geir Vegar Hoel** (1973-2021), Norwegian actor in *Dead Snow* (2009, plus sequel which he co-wrote), *Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters* (2013), *What Happened to Monday* (2017) and *Heirs of the Night* (2019-2020), died on 8 November aged 47. [SJ] ● **Bernard Holley** (1940-2021), UK actor in *Doctor Who* ('The Tomb of the Cybermen' 1967; 'The Claws of Axos' 1971) and *The Tripods* (1985), died on 22 November aged 80. [SS] ● **Geoffrey Johnson** (1930-2021), US casting director whose film credits include *The Swan Princess* (1994), died on 26 November aged 91. [AIP] ● **Jyrki Kasvi** (1964-2021), Finnish fan, Trekker and author whose fiction is collected in *Porcelain and other Fantastic Stories* (2021) died on 16 November aged 57. [J-HH] ● **Art LaFleur** (1943-2021), US actor in *Jekyll and Hyde... Together Again* (1982), *The Invisible Woman* (1983), *WarGames* (1983), *The Blob* (1988), *Field of Dreams* (1989) and others, died on 17 November aged 78. [SJ] ● **Bjørn Olav Listog** (1957-2021), Norwegian fan active since the late 1980s, died on 11 November aged 63. [J-HH] ● **William Lucking** (1941-2021), US actor in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (1995-1997) and *Slipstream* (2007), died on 18 October aged 80. [LP] ● **Doug MacLeod** (1959-2021), Australian screenwriter for *Dogstar* (2007-2011 plus 2016 film), died on November aged 62. [PDF] ● **Simon Marshall-Jones**, UK author, editor and publisher who created Spectral Press (2011-2016), died on 9 November aged 58. His story collection is *Biblia Longcrofta* (2015). [SJ] ● **Joey Morgan** (1993-2021), US actor in *Scouts Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse* (2015), *Critters: A New Binge* (2019) and *Max Reload and the Nether Blasters* (2020), died on 21 November aged 28. [PDF] ● **Chance (Catherine M.) Morrison** (1969-2021), US Clarion workshop graduate living in the UK who published several stories from 2003 and wrote for *Strange Horizons*, died on 25 September aged 52. [LJC] ● **Gavan O'Herlihy** (1951-2021), Irish actor in *Superman III* (1983), *Willow* (1988) and *The Descent II* (2009), died on 15 September aged 70. [LP] ● **John Pearson** (1930-2021), UK biographer of Ian Fleming (1966), James Bond (1973) and Biggles (1978), died on 13 November aged 91. [PDF] ● **Paolo Pietrangeli** (1945-2021), Italian assistant director of *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1973) and *Blood for Dracula* (1974), died on 22 November aged 76. [SJ] ● **Al Pugliese** (1946-2021), US actor in *Annihilator* (1986), *Philadelphia Experiment II* (1993) and various genre tv series, died on 24 July aged 74. [SHS] ● **Jonathan Reynolds** (1942-2021), US playwright and screenwriter who scripted *My Stepmother Is an Alien* (1988), died on 27 October aged 79. [AIP] ● **Clifford Rose** (1929-2021), UK RSC actor in *Doctor Who*: 'Warriors' Gate' (1981) and *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* (2011), died on 6 November aged 92. [AIP] ● **Will Ryan** (1949-2021), US voice actor and singer with many credits – mostly Disney – from *Welcome to Pooh Corner* (1983), *An American Tail* (1986), *The Land Before Time* (Universal 1988), *The Little Mermaid* (1990) and so on to 2021, died on 19 November aged 72. [AIP] ● **Wilbur Smith** (1933-2021), South African historical novelist whose *The Sunbird* (1972) is a lost-race story and whose Ancient Egypt sequence opening with *River God* (1993) has fantasy elements throughout, died on 13 November aged 88. [PDF] ● **Stephen Sondheim** (1930-2021), famed US composer/lyricist whose musicals include *Evening Primrose* (1966, from John Collier's story), *The Frogs* (1974) and *Into the Woods* (1986), died on 26 November aged 91. [MS] ● **Dean Stockwell** (1936-2021), US actor in *The Boy with Green Hair* (1948), *Dune* (1984), *Quantum Leap* (1989-1993), *Battlestar Galactica* (2006-2009) and others, died on 7 November aged 85. [JB] ● **Robert Thurston** (1936-2021), US author who attended the first Clarion workshop in 1968 and whose sf novel debut was *Alicia II* (1978), died on 20 October aged 84. [FS] He published many *Battlestar Galactica* (first series) novelizations with Glen A. Larson, and several solo *Battletech* ties. ● **Marie Versini** (1940-2021),

French actress in *The Brides of Fu Manchu* (1966), died on 22 November aged 81. [SJ] ● **Peter Watson-Wood** (1929-2021), UK producer whose films include *Dream Demon* (1988) and *Tales of the Riverbank* (2008), died on 1 November aged 92. [AIP] ● **Bergen Williams** (1959-2021), US actress in *Mom and Dad Save the World* (1992), *Wishman* (1992), *Lord of Illusions* (1995) and others, died on 20 July aged 62. [AIP] ● **Henry Woolf** (1930-2021), UK actor who played the sinister Collector in *Doctor Who*: 'The Sun Makers' (1977) and Dr Cornelius in two BBC Narnia adaptations (1989, 1990), died on 12 November aged 91. [SS] Films include *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) and *Superman III* (1983).

The Weakest Link. *Ben Shephard*: 'In his epic poems, Homer often refers to nectar as the drink of the gods, and which other substance as their food?' *Contestant*: 'I know he likes doughnuts. I think I'll go with doughnuts please, Ben.' (*Tipping Point*, ITV) [PE]

Court Circular. As anticipated in *Ansible* 410, the Tolkien estate disapproved of the 'JRR Token' cryptocurrency advertised with *LOTR* imagery, and asked the World Intellectual Property Organization to arbitrate. Result: the JRRToken.com domain was ceded to the estate and the US cryptocoiner had to pay all legal costs. (*Guardian*, 23 November)

Ethnic Physiognomy Masterclass. 'She was reminded that [he] was Chinese by the fact that his face, open so recently, had gone completely unreadable to Martha.' 'It was not an English smile, but a Chinese smile.' 'A smile crept across his lean features: not a Chinese smile, but a very English smile.' 'He threw back his head and laughed – a laugh neither English nor Chinese.' '... he laughed as I think only the Chinese can laugh.' (all R.A. MacAvoy, *Tea with the Black Dragon*, 1983) [FM]

Genre Avoidance Strategy. 'Our key tool for remaining anchored to reality, and not drifting away into science fiction, is to spot the crucial distinction between form and function.' (Arik Kersshenbaum, *The Zoologist's Guide to the Galaxy*, 2020) [KM]

I Read Battlefield Earth! 52% of those polled in a recent *Radio Times* survey confessed to lying about having watched tv programmes that they hadn't seen – the most fibbed-about shows being *Stranger Things* and *Game of Thrones*. (Radiotimes.com, 14 November) [SF°C]

The Dead Past. *50 Years Ago*, following his resignation from Ace Books, Donald A. Wollheim's new venture was announced: 'DAW Books will publish four titles per month, beginning in April 1972 – all science fiction or fantasy.' (*Luna Monthly* 31, December 1971).

Diagram Prize. Strongly tipped to win this award for oddest book title of the year: *Is Superman Circumcised?* by Roy Schwartz, a study of the superhero's Jewish origins – or rather, those of his creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. (*Guardian*, 5 November) [AIP]

As Others ... *New York Times* crossword clue, 31 October: 'Fluent speaker of Elvish, say.' The answer was 'nerd'. [LM] ● More fan-friendly is 'Scores a pair in answer to ultimate question (5-3)'. (i, 20 November)

Random Fandom. *Sandra Bond's* name was pulled from the hat as egalitarianly chosen Fan Guest of Honour at Corflu (Bristol, November). She was also elected Past President of fwa (Fan Writers of America).

The Footballship of the Ring. 'And if Tolkien were writing the script of football, he would most certainly have introduced oases of stability amid the mayhem – places such as Rivendell, Lothlorien and the Grey Havens – domains where people are (as much as this is possible in football) at peace with each other. Jurgen Klopp is, in this sense, the Elrond of Merseyside, one of the custodians of the three elven rings ...' (Matthew Syed, *The Times*, 3 November) [PE]

Fanfunderly. *TransAtlantic Fan Fund*: the next TAFF race runs from Europe to Chicon 8 (the Chicago Worldcon) in September 2022. Nominations are still open, closing on 10 December; voting will continue to 18 April. See taff.org.uk for more. ● Rob Hansen's latest fanhistorical work for the TAFF ebook library is *Bixelstrasse: The SF Fan Community of 1940s Los Angeles* – another huge compilation from original fanzine sources, with many famous names dropped. See taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Bixel. Freely downloadable, though donations to TAFF are as always welcomed.

Thog's Masterclass. *Spacetime Dept.* 'They're so far away now that their watches are timed by light-years.' (Tennessee Williams, 'The Knightly Quest', 1967) [ECL] ● *Dangerous Locks.* 'Her hair was like a sheet of glass, falling over her eyes.' (R.A. MacAvoy, *Tea with the Black Dragon*, 1983) [FM] ● *What I Tell You Three Times Is True.* 'Aro laughed. "Ha ha ha," he giggled.' (Stephanie Meyer, *New Moon*, 2006) [AR]

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