

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: Steve Stiles. Available for SAE or the awful mystery of Gordelopus.

The Now Traditional Ebook Plug. *The Silence of the Langford*, my 1996 collection of funny nonfiction mostly written for fanzines (plus a very few stories), was a Hugo finalist in its day. At last there's an ebook version, with some corrections and five more 1980s articles for which there wasn't room in the book. See ae.ansible.uk/titles/silence.htm.

The Cupboard of the Yesterdays

David V. Barrett, two years after finding his *Sects, Cults and Alternative Religions* (1996, 1998) extensively plagiarized in Bristol University academic Stephen J. Hunt's *Alternative Religions: A Sociological Introduction* (2003), was rewarded with a quarter-page grovel in *The Bookseller*: 'Professor Hunt and Ashgate Publishing apologise unreservedly to Dr Barrett for this infringement, and Ashgate Publishing confirm that their book has been withdrawn from sale and that all remaining copies including electronic versions have been destroyed.'

Ted Chiang acquired a surprise collaborator in an *Independent* snippet about the forthcoming Paramount film *Story of Your Life*: 'Adapted from a short story by Nebula and Ted Chiang ...' (15 March)

Kazuo Ishiguro, having written in public about whether his *The Buried Giant* would suffer the stigma of genre ('Will readers follow me into this? Will they understand what I'm trying to do, or will they be prejudiced against the surface elements? Are they going to say this is fantasy?')—*New York Times*, 19 February) and received a ticking-off from Ursula K. Le Guin ('Well, yes, they probably will. Why not? It appears that the author takes the word for an insult.'—*Bookviewcafe.com*, 2 March), retorted that Le Guin is 'entitled to like my book or not like my book, but as far as I am concerned, she's got the wrong person. I am on the side of the pixies and the dragons.' (*Guardian*, 8 March)

Holly Lisle posted an 'Open Letter to SFWA Upon My Resignation'. As a fervent opposer of all taxation, she cannot be doing with SFWA's reincorporation in California as a US 501c(3) organization which is hideously complicit with the tax system—e.g. donations to SFWA by US citizens are tax-deductible. It took a little while for this libertarian outrage to register; SFWA reincorporated in 2013 after its members voted to do so in 2011. (Hollylisle.com, 18 March) [JN]

Farah Mendlesohn sadly reports that the ebook of *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature*, planned as an Orangutan Foundation fundraiser, has had to be cancelled owing to those microbusiness-hostile European VAT changes. See euavationtation.org and ae.ansible.uk/?id=vatmoss.

Larry Niven is to receive the SFWA Grand Master honour for 2015.

W. Heath Robinson has been saved for the nation. A large collection of several hundred of his drawings was in danger of being broken up for sale but has been rescued with National Heritage Memorial Fund and Art Fund grants. The cartoons, including characteristically eccentric 'Heath Robinson contraptions' from World Wars I and II, will be shown in the William Heath Robinson Trust's coming Heath Robinson Museum, which is to open in London next year. (*Independent*, 23 March) [MPJ]

John Wyndham will be commemorated on 24 May by the naming of a presently nameless London NW3 passageway as Triffid Alley (see events list below). The idea came from local resident and Wyndham biographer David Ketterer, who identifies this wheelee-bin repository as the very alley used by the hero to escape vegetable horror in chapter 8 of *The Day of the Triffids*, and adds: 'This tribute to John Wyndham will be the only public recognition he has received in England.'

Contraremonstrant

3-6 Apr • **Dysprosium** (Eastercon), Park Inn, London Heathrow. £80 reg; £25 supp/under-18s, £15 under-12s, £5 infants under 6. Contact 101 Ninian Rd, Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP2 6NB. Advance booking has now closed. The convention website confirms that no memberships will be available at the door. See www.dysprosium.org.uk

14 Apr • **Yesterday's Tomorrow** (Eagle/Dan Dare), 27/29 South Lambeth Rd, Vauxhall, London, SW8 1SZ. £50 reg (£40 BIS/Eagle Soc). See www.bis-space.com/2015/02/12/14260/yesterdaystomorrow

22 Apr • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row,

London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Den Patrick. Free.

6 May • **Telefantasy and Society** (symposium), University of Lincoln, from 9am. £45 reg; students £25. See tinyurl.com/njbbw4z.

8-10 May • **Fantastiq** (genre film festival), QUAD art centre, Market Place, Derby, DE22 3PN. £50 reg. See fantastiq.co.uk.

9 May • **BFS/BSFA York Pubmeet**, Brigantes Bar & Brasserie, 114 Micklegate, York. 5pm-late. Free. With readings, Q&A, raffle.

13 May • **Third Annual Tolkien Lecture**, Pichette Auditorium, Pembroke College, Oxford. With Lev Grossman. 6:30pm. Free, but you are asked to sign up in advance: see tinyurl.com/k6zxe9r.

24 May • **Triffid Alley** (see John Wyndham note above), official unveiling. Gather 11:30am at the drinking fountain, South End Green, London NW3 2DG. Then: '... speeches; walk over to the Alley to unveil the plaque; maybe a band or costumes.' Bring your triffid costume.

30 May • **Conan Doyle Con**, City Tavern, 38 Bishopsgate Street, Birmingham, B15 1EJ. Noon-8:30pm. £15. See tinyurl.com/pzwmpl7.

30 May • **Wonderlands**: The U.K. Graphic Novel Expo, Cityspace, Chester Road, Sunderland, SR1 3SD. Free entry to Publishers' Hall and all panels and talks. See www.wonderlands.org.uk for more.

4 Jun • **Sci-Fi and the Future** (Cheltenham Festival sf panel), Winton Crucible, Cheltenham. 8-9pm. £10. See tinyurl.com/nbeb313.

26 Sep • **BristolCon**, Doubletree Hotel, Bristol. £20 reg, rising to £25 on 1 May; £30 at the door. Cheques to 18 High Leaze Road, Patchway, Bristol BS34 5AF. See also www.bristolcon.org.

13-15 Nov • **Armadacon 27**, Future Inn, Plymouth. £35 or £20 per day (concessions £30 or £15); £5 evening from 6pm. Contact 18 Wadhams Rd, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 3BD; www.armadacon.org.

4-6 Nov 2016 • **BCon** (Eurocon), Barcelona, Spain. €30 reg until 27 April 2015; under-25s €10; under-16s free. Further information and online registration at www.eurocon2016.org.

Rumblings. *Arthur C. Clarke Award*: the presentation for 2014 work will be on 6 May. Full submissions list at sci-fi-london.com/acca. • *British Fantasy Society*: the next London Open Night is on 5 June, venue to follow. See links at news.ansible.uk/london.html.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. David Mitchell added his tuppence-worth on genre and Kazuo Ishiguro: "Fantasy plus literary fiction can achieve things that frank blank realism can't," said Mr. Mitchell, who added that he hoped "The Buried Giant" would help to "de-stigmatize" fantasy. "Bending the laws of what we call reality in a novel doesn't necessarily lead to elves saying 'Make haste! These woods will be swarming with orcs by nightfall.'" (*New York Times*, 19 February) As bad as having fairies spout stuff like 'I'll met by moonlight, proud Titania.'

Awards. *The Bookseller YA Book Prize* (first presentation), Louise O'Neill, *Only Ever Yours*. • **FAAN Awards**: PAST PRESIDENT FWA Graham Charnock. WEBSITE efanzines.com (Bill Burns). SINGLE ISSUE *Trap Door* 31 ed. Robert Lichtman. CORRESPONDENT Paul Skelton. ARTIST Dan Steffan. WRITER Mark Plummer. COVER D. West, *Banana Wings* 56. PERSONALZINE *Vibrator* ed. Graham Charnock. GENZINE *Banana Wings* ed. Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer. #1 FAN FACE Steve Stiles. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT (not a FAAN Award) Peter Weston. [GS] • **Horror Writers Association**: Jack Ketchum and Tanith Lee are both honoured for lifetime achievement; ChiZine Publications is best speciality press. [L] • **Kitschies**: NOVEL Andrew Smith, *Grasshopper Jungle*. DEBUT Hermione Eyre, *Viper Wine*. COVER ART Glenn O'Neill, for Nick Harkaway's *Tigerman*. DIGITAL Cardboard Computer, *Kentucky Route Zero: Act III*. • **Prometheus** (libertarian): special Lifetime Achievement, F. Paul Wilson.

Deep Literary Insight Dept. 'If you give Frodo Baggins a mobile phone, *The Lord of the Rings* becomes a considerably shorter book.' (Paul Mason, *New Humanist*, January 2015) [MMW] Not unless you give someone else a mobile phone too. (See also: palantr.r.)

R.I.P. *Ted Ball* (1942-2015), long-time proprietor of London's much-loved fs bookshop Fantasy Centre (1969-2009, initially in partnership with Dave Gibson and later with Erik Arthur), died on 18 March. He

was 72. 'One of life's true gentlemen is no more,' writes Erik. For funeral/wake details, contact erik at dreamcountry dot org. ● **Dennis Barker** (1929-2015), UK journalist and author whose future-dystopian novel is *Winston Three Three Three* (1987), died on 2 March aged 85. [JC] ● **Harve Bennett** (1930-2015), US producer of four Star Trek films—II: *The Wrath of Khan* (1982), III: *The Search for Spock* (1984), IV: *The Voyage Home* (1986) and V: *The Final Frontier* (1989)—died on 25 February aged 84. [AW] TV series credits include *The Six Million Dollar Man* (1974-1978), *The Invisible Man* (1976), *The Bionic Woman* (1976-1977), *Time Trax* (1993-1994) and *Invasion America* (1998). ● **Richard Clear** (1943-2015), US books/comics dealer involved with Pulpcom in its early years, died on 21 March aged 71. [AIP] ● **Inge Eriksen** (1935-2015), noted Danish mainstream feminist author who published much highly regarded sf from 1980 to 1991—beginning with the stage play *The Wind is Not for Sale* and continuing with several novels—died on 13 March; she was 79. [J-HH] ● **Fred Fredericks** (1929-2015), US newspaper strip artist who drew (and later scripted) *Mandrake the Magician* from 1965 until he retired in 2013, died on 10 March aged 85. [PDF] ● **Pete Gilligan**, UK fan and con-goer active in the Hatfield Poly SF society (PSIFA, founded 1978) and its early Shoestringcos, died on 14 March. [JC] ● **Irvin Hasen** (1918-2015), US comics and newspaper-strip artist, with DC in the 1940s and early 1950s, died on 13 March aged 96. He worked on *The Flash*, *Green Lantern* and others, and co-created the character Wildcat. [PDF] ● **Norman Lee**, Marvel and DC comics artist who worked on *Avengers*, *Supergirl* and *X-Men*, was lost while snorkelling off Grand Cayman on 5 March; he was 46. [SFS] ● **Tom Loback**, US artist and sculptor known for Tolkien-related artwork and gaming figures (including the popular Dragontooth Miniatures fantasy line), died on 5 March aged 66. [F77] ● **Roy McKie**, US cartoonist and illustrator best known for a number of children's-book collaborations with Dr Seuss, died on 8 January; he was 93. [PDF] ● **Ib Melchior** (1917-2015), Danish-born actor, screenwriter and director who scripted or co-scripted *The Angry Red Planet* (1959), *Reptilicus* (1961), *Journey to the Seventh Planet* (1962), *Robinson Crusoe on Mars* (1964) and others (some also directed or co-directed by him), died on 13 March aged 97. *Death Race 2000* (1975), remade as *Death Race* (2008), is based on his 1956 story 'The Racer'. ● **Mal Peet** (1947-2015), UK author whose YA fiction won the Carnegie Medal and *Guardian* Prize, died on 2 March aged 67. [AIP] *Cloud Tea Monkeys* (1999 with his wife Elspeth Graham) is a children's fairytale; the adult *The Murdstone Trilogy* (2014) sends up the heroic-fantasy industry. ● **Terry Pratt-hett** (1948-2015), who as the creator of the stupendously popular Discworld comic fantasies and many other bestselling novels needs no introduction, died on 12 March and was mourned worldwide. He was 66 and had been knighted in 2009; genre honours included a 2010 World Fantasy Award for life achievement. Terry carried on determinedly in the wake of his 2007 diagnosis with a rare form of Alzheimer's, but had to cease public appearances in 2010. I loved almost all his work, am proud of my small editorial involvement with Discworld, and have many reasons to be grateful to Terry. ● **Dave Rike** (1935-2014), long-time US fan and member of First Fandom, died on 1 November 2014. [RL] His 1950s-1990s fanzines included *Califan*, *Fandom Dispatch*, *Innuendo* 1-4 with Terry Carr (thereafter the sole editor), *Limbo* and *Reflects*. ● **Peggy Rae Sapienza** (1944-2015), long-time US fanzine fan and con-runner who as Peggy Rae Pavlat chaired the 1998 Baltimore Worldcon, died on 22 March. [SFS] She was fan guest of honour at the 2012 Worldcon in Chicago. ● **Sam Simon** (1955-2015), US producer and screenwriter who was a co-creator of *The Simpsons* and co-wrote more than a dozen of its episodes before leaving the show, died on 8 March; he was 59. [PDF] ● **Yoshihiro Tatsumi** (1935-2015), Japanese manga artist who pioneered the more adult 'gekiga' comics/graphic novel style and won multiple awards worldwide, died on 7 March aged 79. [PDF] ● **Gregory Walcott** (1928-2015), US actor who appeared in many films besides the one for which he was unfortunately best known—Ed Wood's *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1959)—died on 20 March aged 87. [MPJ] 'Ed Wood has etched my name forever in the annals of film history.'

The Weakest Link. *Bradley Walsh*: 'Which of these pairs is named after a French theologian and an English philosopher? Is it (a) Calvin and Hobbes, (b) Wallace and Gromit, or (c) Dastardly and Muttley?' *Contestant*: 'Dastardly and Muttley.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE] ● **Mark Williams**: 'What's the link between Scott, Lee, Griffith, Anderson, Coen, Wilder, Welles, Kubrick ...?' *Contestant*: 'Is it the 1966 England World Cup team?' (BBC1, *The Link*) [PE]

More Pottery. That Dumbledore thing still bothers some fans, one of whom quizzed J.K. Rowling via Twitter: 'I wonder why you said that

Dumbledore is a gay because I can't see him that way?' Rowling's much retweeted reply: 'Maybe because gay people just look like ... people?' (*Daily Telegraph*, 25 March) [AIP] The *FutureMag* website coverage of this story rapidly spawned a bigot-infested comment thread.

Awards Shortlists. *Lambda* (LRGT) sf/fantasy/horror category: Daryl Gregory, *Afterparty*; Chaz Brenchley, *Bitter Waters*; Lee Thomas, *Butcher's Road*; A.M. Dellamonica, *Child of a Hidden Sea*; Max Gladstone, *Full Fathom Five*; Dale Lahey, *FutureDyke*; Craig Laurence Gidney, *Skin Deep Magic*. *Lambda* winners are to be announced on 1 June.

Outraged Letters. *Simon R. Green*: 'And now Spock is gone. I think my favourite story about him arose during an interview with William Shatner. The topic of Mr Nimoy came up, and Shatner asked "What's he doing these days?" The answer: publishing books of photos of nude women. Shatner considered this for a moment and then said, "Why didn't I think of that?"' ● *Andrew Stephenson* muses: 'Have been wondering about a manual about the virtues of various designs of one-horse carriage and harnesses and whips best employed, tentatively titled *Fifty Grades of Shay*.' ● *Bryan Talbot* on another death reported in *A332*: 'Re: Demis Roussos—I do believe he was also on one track of the *Blade Runner* soundtrack album, donating a high-pitched wail.'

Random Fandom. *Cardinal Cox* is to be the Poet-in-Residence of the Dracula Society. ● *The Nova Awards* for fanzine work have ceased owing to voter apathy; the occasional Nova 'Special Award for Special Fans' continues. (*Novacon 45 PR1*) ● *Michael Z. Williamson*, heedless of the usual request to keep it confidential until the official (Easter) announcement, tweeted on 20 March: 'Guess Who's A Hugo Nominee?'

The Dead Past. *50 Years Ago*, the name of Discworld's creator-to-be was already one to conjure with in the fan press: *The BSFA Convention* will be held over the forthcoming [Easter] weekend at the Midland Hotel, New Street, Birmingham [...] Ted Tubb, Brian Aldiss, Terry Pratchett and James White are expected to attend the conclave.' (*Skyrack* 77, April 1965) ● *40 Years Ago*, a news item that gave me a terrible flashback: 'MANCON FIVE the 1976 Easter convention, will be held on a university campus, a new experiment for such occasions. The site is Owens Park, Manchester, and they quote a rate of £5.50 a person, full board.' (*Checkpoint* 61, April 1975) Never again: it's been hotels ever since. ● *20 Years Ago*: 'Samuel R. Delany's tongue-in-cheek ploy to improve the political correctness of his reissued porno epic *Equinox* (aka *The Tides of Lust*) is to make all its characters 100 years older. No one could possibly complain about explicit underage sex scenes involving a boy and girl aged, respectively, 113 and 115...' (*Ansible* 93, April 1995) 'SFX is a new magazine about sf ("mainly films and TV, but also books, comics, models, toys ...")—out soon from Future Publishing in Bath, best known for their computer titles. Editor Matt Bielby; deputy editor Dave Golder. The usual suspects Barnett, Langford and Stableford are leaping aboard.' (*Ibid*) Langford is somehow still there after two decades of writing a column for every issue.

R.I.P. II: Late Reports. *Nancy Carrigan* (1933-2014), who with husband Richard Carrigan wrote *The Siren Stars* (1971) and *Minotaur in a Mushroom Maze* (1976 *Analog*), died on 18 July 2014 aged 81. [JS] **Fanfundry.** *TAFF 2015 final reminder*: voting in the current Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund race continues until 7 April. More at taff.org.uk.

Ulog's Masterclass. *Displaced Organ Dept.* 'His heart didn't have the strength to do much of anything, except pound, and beat, and maybe squat in his mouth ...' (Gordon Eklund 'with E.E. Smith', *Space Pirates*, 1979) [BA] ● *Neat Tricks*. "You look tired, Ted," she said as he sat down and stretched his long feet before him. (Vin Packer, *Spring Fire*, 1952) [PB] ● *Supervillain Angst*. 'If his present endeavours failed, he would surely be dead, and if they succeeded, the universe would be doomed. He had nothing left to look forward to—nothing at all.' (Gordon Eklund as E.E. Smith, *Lord Tedric: Alien Realms*, 1980) [BA] ● *Secrets of the Illuminati*. 'Then he looked thoughtful, and slowly a crimson flush spread around his ears. Eventually his earlobes, unusually large and awkward, were illuminated like traffic lights.' (Anne Holt, *Death of the Demon*, 1995; trans Anne Bruce 2013) [PB] ● 'He literally shone and, if he'd been hung from the ceiling, he'd have looked like another lamp.' (Alicia Gimenez-Bartlett, *Death Rites*, 1996; trans Jonathan Dunne 2008) [PB] ● *Hot Potato Dept.* 'They stared at me, squinting as if I were holding a supernova.' (Catherine Asaro, *Undercity*, 2014) [JMB]

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