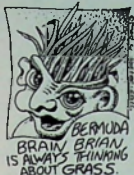


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From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website news.ansible.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE or the radiant car thy sparrows drew.

Axed! No champagne corks will pop for the 21st anniversary of my *SFX* magazine column (in every issue since the June 1995 launch). The next one, in *SFX* 274, is my last. Austere overlords counting beans at Future Publishing HQ have imposed a budget cut, and editor Richard Edwards can no longer afford what he kindly calls 'star writers and illustrations'; column illustrator Andy Watt also gets the push. • Free from the four-weekly *SFX* deadlines, I'll be turning more of my backlog into ebooks. *Up Through an Empty House of Stars: Reviews and Essays 1980-2002* now has its first digital edition—see ansible.uk. Also in preparation is a book of the 91 still uncollected *SFX* columns—plus extras to make the count up to 100—all tentatively titled *The Last SFX Visions*.

Fool's Gold

Pintér Bence cries 'J'accuse!' (though in Hungarian) with a post at sci-fi.mandiner.hu stating that almost all translated foreign content in the Hungarian magazine *Galaktika* is pirated from such online sources as *Clarkesworld*, *Lightspeed*, *Strange Horizons* and *Tor.com*, without rights-holders' permission and of course without payment. (23 March) [SFS]

Arthur Krystal explains the literary Catch-22 that has so long perplexed the tiny minds of genre-lovers: 'Literary work is not a genre. You can't have bad literary writing in the way that you can have bad mysteries or bad science fiction, because then it wouldn't be literary.' (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 6 March) [MMW]

Jack McDevitt officially has a heavenly body: the IAU-approved name of Asteroid 328305, discovered in 2006, is Jackmcdevitt. [L]

Sharyn November's senior editorial position at Viking Children's Books was 'eliminated' in a reorganization. She began at Puffin in 1990 and had been editorial director of Firebird from its 2002 launch.

Conk-Singleton

9-10 Apr • **Sci Fi Scarborough** (comics, media), The Spa Complex, Scarborough. Tickets £27.50 (day £16.50); 6-16s £11 (day £5.50); under-6s free. See www.scifiscarborough.co.uk.

11 Apr - 20 Jun • **Doctor Who** (11-week Monday evening class), Aquinas College, Stockport. Contact Sheila Lahan, 0161 419 9163.

21-24 Apr • **Dead by Dawn** (horror film festival), Filmhouse Cinema One, 88 Lothian Rd, Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ. £75 reg. Box office 0131 228 2688. Online booking via www.deadbydawn.co.uk.

27 Apr - 6 May • **Sci-Fi London** (film), various London venues. Clarke shortlist to be announced at opening. See sci-fi-london.com.

30 Apr - 1 May • **EM-Con** (media), Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham. £160 reg with extras (2 photoshoots, 1 autograph); £10 day (11am); £15 day (10am); £115 day (10am) with extras. See www.em-con.co.uk.

27-30 May • **Supernova** sf film festival, Odeon Printworks, Manchester. Tickets £50. See grimmfest.com/grimmupnorth/.

28-29 May • **Satellite 5**, Marriott Hotel, Glasgow. £55 reg; 12-17s £20; 5-11s £5; under-5s £2. *Rates rise on 4 April*. Contact c/o Flat 2/1, 691 Shields Rd, Pollokshields, Glasgow, G41 4QL. Membership forms and online registration at satellite5.org.uk.

12-14 Aug • **Nine Worlds Geekfest** (multimedia), Novotel London West, Hammersmith, London. Now £100 reg, rising to £115 on 1 July; 5-15s £33; under-5s free. Book online at ninenworlds.co.uk.

3-4 Sep • **Middle-earth Festival**, Sarehole Mill, Cole Bank Rd, Hall Green, Birmingham, B13 0BD. Free. See middleearthfestival.co.uk.

17-18 Sep • **Futurefest** (futurology), Tobacco Dock, London. 'Early bird' tickets £70, rising to £80 on 1 May; day tickets to be available in June. See futurefest.org for 2016 'themes and curators'.

1 Oct • **TitanCon**, Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast. £25 reg; £5 supporting, tickets available from 9 April. See titancon.com.

7-9 Oct • **Destination Star Trek**, NEC, Birmingham. Day £29; 2 days £39; 3 days £49; VIP £145 to £2999! See destinationstartrek.com.

28-30 Oct • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Pendulum Hotel, Manchester. £75 reg; day £30 Fri or Sun, £40 Sat. Contact 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN. See also fantastic-films.com.

28 Nov - 3 Dec • **Arvon SF Course**, The Hurst, Shropshire. £750

per single room. See www.arvon.org/course/speculative-fiction/.

3-5 Feb 2017 • **Quoi de Neuf** (filk), Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester. Now £36 reg, £25 unwaged. Cheques to UK Filk Convention, c/o 20 Glynbridge Gardens, Cheltenham, GL51 0BZ. See www.contabile.org.uk/quoideneuf/; email quoideneuf@hewett.org.

3-5 Feb 2017 • **SF Ball** (media), Grand Harbour Hotel, Southampton. £132 reg; child £66; other options. See sfevents.com/sfball.

10-12 Feb 2017 • **Conrunner 4** (conrunning), Park Inn, Nottingham. £35 reg until 31 May. Contact 56 Glynbridge Place, Letchworth Garden City, Herts, SG6 1RH. See also www.conrunner.co.uk. (First announced for 3-5 February; moved to avoid clash with filk con.)

24-26 Feb 2017 • **Redemption '17** (multimedia), Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield. £55 reg rising to £65 on 12 April (day £40); under-18s £25 (day £15); under-3s free; £15 supp. Contact 61 Chaucer Rd, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 8SP. See www.redemption-convention.org.uk.

30 Mar - 1 Apr • **Sci-Fi Weekender**, Hafan y Mor Holiday Park, near Pwllheli, Gwynedd, North Wales. Booking by accommodation from £520 for two; Fri+Sat day pass TBA? See www.scifiweekender.com.

CANCELLED. 14-17 Apr 2017 • **Pasgon** (Eastercon), Mercure Holland House Hotel, Cardiff. Cancellation announced at www.pasgon.org.uk on 10 March, owing to 'location issues' believed to be unfeasible hotel facilities charges. Refunds are planned; members who didn't receive email about this should contact membership at pasgon.org.uk.

14-17 Apr 2017 • **Innominate** (Eastercon), Hilton Metropole, NEC, Birmingham—replacing Pasgon. GoH Pat Cadigan, Judith Clute, Colin Harris. £55 reg; £40 YA/unwaged; £20 child; £1 infants—rising on 1 May to £60 reg, £45 YA/unwaged. Cheques to Eastercon 2017 c/o 3 Deveron Rd, Halfway, Sheffield, S20 8GE. See www.eastercon2017.uk.

30 Mar - 2 Apr 2018 • **Follycon** (Eastercon), Majestic Hotel, Harrogate. GoH Kieron Gillen, Christina Lake, Nnedi Okorafor, Kim Stanley Robinson. £60 reg; £45 YA/unwaged; £30 supp. Cheques to Eastercon 2018 c/o 19 Uphall Rd, Cambridge, CB3 1HX. Credit cards (*preferred*) via www.follycon.org.uk. Email: info@follycon.org.uk.

Rumbings. *London First Thursdays*: still moving to The Bishop's Finger as of the 7 April meeting. See news.ansible.uk/london.hunt.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Abuse Us. 'No self-respecting adult should buy comics or watch superhero movies'. (*Daily Telegraph* headline, 28 March) • 'Like most science fiction, this is a pack of lies meant for babies.' (Sam Biddle, *Gawker.com*, 4 January) [TM]

Awards. A. Bertram Chandler (Australia): James (Jocko) Allen. • **BSFA**: NOVEL Alette de Bodard, *The House of Shattered Wings*. SHORT Alette de Bodard, 'Three Cups of Grief, by Starlight' (*Clarkesworld* 100). NONFICTION Adam Roberts, *Rave and Let Die: The SF and Fantasy of 2014*. ARTWORK Jim Burns, cover for *Pelquin's Comet*. • **Ditmar** (Australia), best novel: Lisa L. Hannett, *Lament for the Afterlife*. • **Doc Weir** (unsung UK fan heroes): Kathy Westhead. [BB] • **James White** (unpublished short): David Cleden, 'Rock, Paper, Incisors'. • **Kitschies**: NOVEL Margaret Atwood, *The Heart Goes Last*. DEBUT Tade Thompson, *Making Wolf*. COVER Jet Purdie, *The Door That Led to Where* by Sally Gardner. NATIVELY DIGITAL FICTION *Life Is Strange*. SPECIAL Patrick Ness's refugee-crisis Save the Children fundraiser. • **Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award** (SFWA; formerly just Solstice Award) for career achievement: Sir Terry Pratchett. • **Lambda Awards** (LGBT) sl/f/horror shortlist: John Inman, *The Boys on the Mountain*; Fletcher DeLancey, *The Caphenon*; Ally Blue, *Down*; Robert Levy, *The Glittering World*; Kirsty Logan, *The Gracekeepers*; J.A. Rock, *Minotaur*; Kate Sherwood, *Sacragri*; Jude McLaughlin, *Wonder City Stories*. • **Norma K. Hemming Award** (Australia): Louise Katz, *The Orchid Nursery*. • **Philip K. Dick Award**: Ramez Naam, *Apex*.

Future Chic. 'The 21st-century man will abandon tie, shirt, and trousers. Instead he will be outfitted in the masculine version of the one-piece stretch moonsuit for travelling, and will strip down to long tights and a short toga, reminiscent of the free-swinging styles of the Roman charioteer.' (*Saturday Evening Post*, 17 October 1964) [MMW]

R.I.P. Sir Ken Adam (1921-2016), German-born UK production designer whose sets included the villain's HQ in *Dr No* (1962) and the War Room in *Dr Strangelove* (1964), died on 10 March aged 95. He worked on seven Bond films in all, and designed the car for *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968). ● **Sylvia Anderson** (1927-2016), UK tv/film producer, writer and voice actress, co-creator with her husband Gerry of the much-loved *Thunderbirds* (in which she famously voiced Lady Penelope) and other sf tv series using their trademark 'Supermarionation' puppets, died on 15 March; she was 88. [AW] ● **Ken Barr** (1933-2016), Scotland-born US artist whose magazine work appeared in *Nebula SF*, various DC and Marvel titles, *Eerie* and *Vampirella*, and who later painted hundreds of book covers beginning with Zelazny's *The Guns of Avalon* (1974), died on 25 March aged 83. [SOP] ● **Howard Berk** (1925-2016), US screenwriter and novelist whose one sf title was *The Sun Grows Cold* (1971) and who wrote a few 1969-1972 episodes of *Mission: Impossible*, died on 27 March aged 91. [PDF] ● **Terry Brain**, UK animator who created the children's tv series *The Trap Door* (1984, 1986) and worked on Aardman productions including *Chicken Run* (2000), *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (2005) and *Shaun the Sheep Movie* (2015), died on 25 March; he was 60. ● **Tony Burton** (1937-2016), US heavyweight boxer turned character actor seen in *The Shining* (1980), *Exorcism* (2003) and several genre tv series from *The Invisible Man* (1975) to *Poltergeist: The Legacy* (1996), died on 25 February. [MMW] ● **Adrienne Corri** (1931-2016), UK actress whose genre credits include *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *Vampire Circus* (1972) and other horror films, and *Doctor Who: 'The Leisure Hive'* (1980) died on 13 March aged 84. ● **Richard Davalos** (1930-2016), US actor seen in *Battle Beyond the Stars* (1980) and *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1983), died on 18 March aged 85. [PDF] ● **Patty Duke** (1946-2016), US actress whose genre credits include *The Daydreamer* (voice, 1966), *She Waits* (1972), *The Sixth Sense* (1972), *Look What's Happened to Rosemary's Baby* (1976), *Curse of the Black Widow* (1977), *The Swarm* (1978) and *Grave Secrets: The Legacy of Hilltop Drive* (1992), died on 2 March; she was 69. [PDF] ● **Tony Dyson** (1947-2016), UK special effects creator who built eight R2-D2 droid models for the first *Star Wars* films and also worked on *Moonraker* (1979), *Altered States* (1980), *Superman II* (1980) and *Dragonslayer* (1981), died on or before 4 March; he was 68. [PDF] ● **Earl Hamner, Jr.** (1923-2016), US screenwriter/producer who scripted eight *Twilight Zone* episodes (1962-1964) and the film of *Charlotte's Web* (1973), died on 24 March aged 92. [F770] ● **Barry Hines** (1939-2016), UK author and screenwriter who scripted the BAFTA-winning docudrama *Threads* (1984)—about a nuclear strike on Sheffield and its aftermath—died on 18 March aged 76. (BBC) ● **Ken Howard** (1944-2016), US actor with tv credits for *Batman: The Animated Series* (voice, 1993), *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* (voice, 1994), *Ghost Whisperer* (2006) and *Eli Stone* (2008), died on 23 March aged 71. [MMW] ● **Gary Hutzel** (1955-2016), multiple Emmy-winning US visual effects artist whose credits include *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and the rebooted *Battlestar Galactica*, died on 3 March aged 60. [PDF] ● **Morris Keenan**, long-time US fan and active participant at the *File 770* blog, died on 30 March; he was 63. [AIP] ● **Justin Leibler** (1938-2016), US academic and author—Fritz Leibler's son—whose work on the philosophy of the mind was dramatized in his sf novel *Beyond Rejection* (1980) and its thematic sequels, died on 22 March; he was 77. [MD] ● **Eric Medalle** (1973-2016), US Pokémon artist and designer, died in a storm accident on 13 March when a tree fell on his car, he was 42. ● **Peggy Ranson** (1948-2016), Hugo-winning US fan artist who created small-press book covers and much interior art (including cover and interiors for George Alec Effinger's *Maureen Birnbaum, Barbarian Swordsperon*), died on 19 March aged 67. [GHL] ● **Nancy Reagan** (1921-2016), former US First Lady and actress who starred in *Donovan's Brain* (1953), died on 6 March aged 94. [PDF] ● **Paul Ryan** (1949-2016), US comics artist who worked for Marvel (*Spider-Man*, *Avengers*, *Iron Man*, *Fantastic Four*) and DC (*Superman*, *Flash*, *Batman*) and drew many coloured Sunday instalments of the newspaper-syndicated *Phantom* strip, died on 6 March aged 66. [PDF] ● **Augie Scotta** (1927-2016), US comics artist and cartoonist who worked for Will Eisner's *PS* magazine, Marvel Comics and DC Comics, died on 15 March aged 88. [PDF] ● **Garry Shandling** (1949-2016), US comedian whose film credits include *What Planet Are You From?* (2000) as writer/producer and *Iron Man 2* (2010) and *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (2014) as actor, died on 24 March aged 66. [DL] ● **James Sheldon** (1920-2016), US director whose genre credits include episodes of *The Twilight Zone* (1961-1962), *Batman* (1966) and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (1967), died on 12 March aged

95. [PDF] ● **Pauline Whitby** (1928-2015), UK author who wrote as Paul Ash, Paul Ashwell and Pauline Ashwell—under which name her debut was the Hugo-shortlisted 'Unwillingly to School' (1958 *Astounding*)—died on 23 November 2015. 'The Lost Kafoozalum' (1960 *Analogue*) was also a Hugo finalist; both form part of her *Unwillingly to Earth* (1993). ● **Michael White** (1936-2016), UK theatre and film producer whose credits include *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973 London stage premiere), *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975) and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), died on 7 March; he was 80. [F770]

As Others See That Thing of Wonder Woman's. 'What are we to make of the gender codes in Batman v Superman? Is it confused or certain, modern or prehistoric? To reach a clear conclusion, I might have to tell you the end, or at least flesh out my analysis that the lasso in the final battle is a metaphor for the omnipotent but non-lethal vagina.' (Zoe Williams, *The Guardian*, 23 March) [JCQ]

Outraged Letters. Steve Sneyd: 'In upronting US election difficulties in A344, you exercised extraordinary self-restraint, as a mega Sladekist, in not pointing out that Trump himself is clearly influenced by sf for his tentpole policy, viz. John Sladek's "The Great Wall of Mexico" (1973; reprinted in *Keep the Giraffe Burning*), a terrifying prophecy of a Trump presidency!' John's earlier masterpiece of political satire, in *The Muller-Fokker Effect* (1970), was President Ronald Reagan.

The Weakest Link. *Bradley Walsh*: 'In *Julius Caesar*, which character said "Cry Havoc! and let slip the dogs of war?" Contestant: 'Macbeth.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [FE]

The Dead Past. 50 Years Ago: 'LAFAYETTE RON HUBBARD and his dear old Sussex based Scientology were cut to ribbons in a long feature in the 14th February *Daily Mail* which pointed out that "Doctor" Hubbard's Ph.D degree was awarded by the non-existent Sequoia University. In *The Times* of 8th March Hubbard ran a 15 guinea advert to renounce his bogus doctorate because of "the damage being done in our society with nuclear physics and psychiatry by persons calling themselves "doctor." 'Hey ho.' (*Skyrack* 87, April 1966) ● 40 Years Ago, another strange and powerful cult was born: *The Astral League* is a new group hoping to promote peace and understanding should extraterrestrials land on Earth. High Priest is Don West... (Checkpoint 68, April 1976)

Harlan Is Everywhere. On the tortured aspect of the US politician required to stand mutely behind Donald Trump at the latter's 1 March press conference and elsewhere: 'Chris Christie has no mouth, but he must conform.' (Alexandra Petri, *Washington Post*, 2 March) [LW]

Fanfundery. TAFF 2016 result: Anna Raftery 94 votes (69 Europe/25 NA), Wolf von Witting 82 (56/26), No Preference 14 (4/10), 190 ballots cast. Anna Raftery wins and travels to MidAmeriCon II in August. Details and newsletter at taff.org.uk. ● DUFF 2016. The race from Australasia to MidAmeriCon has only one candidate, Clare McDonald-Sims: ozfanfunds.com/duff/DUFF_onlineballot2016.html. Deadline 16 May. ● GUFF: another trip report! Gillian Polack's *Gillian's Book of Lists* (2014 trip) can now be bought online: see taff.org.uk/guff.html for the link. ● *Fan Funds Auction Bonanza*: £866 was raised at Mancunicon, to be split equally between TAFF and GUFF. A further \$700A was raised at the Australian Natcon in Brisbane, mostly for GUFF.

Group Gropes. *AZZ SF Group* meets on the third Thursday each month at The United Brethren Pub, New Writtle Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0LF. 8pm onward. 'All SF fans welcome.'

Thog's Masterclass. *Out of Context Dept.* 'But when she took the warm shaft in her hands, she found that she did not know how to call upon its strength.' (Stephen Donaldson, *The Runes of the Earth*, 2004) [JaC] ● *Dept of Musical Quakes.* '... for several minutes he went on quaking and hyperventilating. He sounded like a Brazilian musical instrument.' (Jean-Patrick Manchette, *3 to Kill*, 1976; trans Donald Nicholson-Smith 2002) [PB] ● *Eyeballs in the Sky.* 'Her eyes have the puckered-smooth of day-old ripe olives.' Perhaps this is why '... fifty percent of his eye contact is below her collar bone.' (Ed Bryant, 'Their Thousandth Season', *Clarion II*, 1972) [BA] ● *Back of an Envelope Dept.* Scientist: '... we will start the rocket off [from Earth] at a moderate speed.' Reporter: 'What do you consider a moderate speed?' Scientist, twinkling: 'Oh, perhaps two miles a second.' Reporter, after rapid calculation: 'Then the rocket will reach the moon in about thirty-five seconds, Doctor?' (John Blaine, *The Rocket's Shadow*, 1947) [RR]

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