

# ansible



## Ansible® 355 February 2017

From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website [news.ansible.uk](http://news.ansible.uk). ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE, fanfots or an admonitory hippopotamus.

### The Radishes of Doom

**Iain Banks**, together with Doris Lessing and Colin Wilson, was added to the *Dictionary of National Biography* in its 11 January 2017 update—the first to admit notables who died as recently as 2013. [DH]

**Harold Bloom** opined: 'Computers have as much to do with literature as space travel, perhaps much less.' (*Paris Review*, 1991) [MMW]

**Arthur C. Clarke's** estate is one of several suing literary entrepreneur Fredrik Colting, whose Moppet Books publishes unauthorized rewrites of 'classic' novels—including *2001: A Space Odyssey*—thinly disguised as study guides for schoolchildren. All allegedly 'in complete disregard of copyright law.' (*Hollywood Reporter*, 19 January) [AIP]

**Jeffrey Dwight & Steve Ratzlaff** announced that their 20-year-old Internet community at SFF.net—hosting many sf forums and authors' websites—will close at the end of March. (SFF.net, 18 January) The private SFWA forums had already moved away from SFF.net in 2014.

**George Orwell** has for some reason been frequently invoked when discussing the current US administration. In BBC Radio 4's *Today*, a pundit alluded to that of sf classic whose tormented hero's ultimate perception is that  $2 + 2 = 5$  ... 'Brave New World'. (30 January) [SFC]

**Charles Stross's** January book release had problems at Amazon: 'I've been panicking a bit—Amazon indicating the book is undesirable a week before launch doesn't give me the warm fuzzies—but they finally sorted it out today ... Except for the author bio. Apparently I am 26 years old, Female, and live in London. Who knew?' (19 January) Charlie has since had a substantial biographical makeover.

### Contemplamen

3-5 Feb • **Quoi de Neuf** (filk), Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester. £38 reg/£27 unwaged; under-18s £1/year of age; under-5s free. Cheques to UK Filk Convention, 20 Glynbridge Gardens, Cheltenham, GL51 0BZ. See [www.contabile.org.uk/quoideneuf](http://www.contabile.org.uk/quoideneuf).

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

5 Feb • **Sci-Feb** (superheroes), Humber Royal Hotel, Little Coates Road, Grimsby. £4 reg. See [www.daydreamevents.uk/sci-feb.html](http://www.daydreamevents.uk/sci-feb.html).

10-12 Feb • **Conrunner 4** (conrunning), Park Inn, Nottingham. Now £50 reg (Sat/Sun day rate £30). Contact 56 Jackmans Place, Leitchworth Garden City, Herts, SG6 1RH. See [www.conrunner.co.uk](http://www.conrunner.co.uk).

18 Feb • **Picocon**, Beit Quadrangle, South Kensington Campus, Imperial College, London. £12 reg; £10 concessions; £8 ICSF members; past GoHs free. See [www.union.ic.ac.uk/scc/icsf/picocon/](http://www.union.ic.ac.uk/scc/icsf/picocon/).

22 Feb • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. Guest to be announced. Free.

24-26 Feb • **Redemption '17** (multimedia), Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield. £70 reg (day £40); advance booking closes on 11 February; £75 (day £45) at door. Other rates remain unchanged at the door: under-18s £25 (day £15); under-3s free. Contact 61 Chaucer Road, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 8SP. See also [redemptioncon.org.uk](http://redemptioncon.org.uk).

25-26 Feb • **Digi-Con 3** (sf/comics/anime), Doncaster Deaf Trust, Leger Way, Doncaster. From £25 reg; see [www.digi-fest.co.uk](http://www.digi-fest.co.uk).

14-17 Apr • **Innominate** (Eastercon), NEC, Birmingham. Now £80 reg (£90 at door); YA/concessions £55 (£60); under-16s £20 (£25); under-6s £1 (£5). Adult day rates £20 Fri, £30 Sat or Sun, £10 Mon. Advance booking closes 7 April. See [www.eastercon2017.uk](http://www.eastercon2017.uk) for more.

27-28 May • **Birmingham FearFest** (horror), Gunmakers Arms, Bath St, Birmingham. More at [www.birmingham-fearfest.co.uk](http://www.birmingham-fearfest.co.uk).

30 Mar - 2 Apr 2018 • **Follycon** (Eastercon), Majestic Hotel, Harrogate. 2016 rates still good until Easter: £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](http://www.follycon.org.uk).

**Rumblings. 2017 Hugo Nominations** opened in January and close on 17 or 18 March depending on time zone. Worldcon 75 members are being sent personalized links rather than login-with-PIN details. Further information on voting dates appears at [www.worldcon.fi/wsf5/hugo/](http://www.worldcon.fi/wsf5/hugo/).

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others Deny Us**. Neil Cross insists that his coming pre-apocalyptic tv police procedural shouldn't get an *SF Encyclopedia* entry: 'Imagine the world you see when you look out your window ... except it's been given a death sentence. This isn't science fiction. This is the real world. There's no hero to come save us; no contingency plan. We've got five years. This is the world of *Hard Sun* ...' (i09, 6 January) [LT]

**Outrage Dept**. PETA UK has sternly instructed the CEO of Games Workshop to ban the fictional game characters in *Warhammer 40,000* from wearing fictional fur cruelly taken from poor, suffering fictional animals. (30 January) Strangely enough, this is not an Onion spoof. By the year 40,000 AD, isn't it all vat-grown synthifur anyway?

**Awards**. Golden Globes animated film category: *Zootopia*. • Oscars: Arrival has 8 nominations including Best Picture. • Philip K. Dick shortlist: Kristy Acevedo, *Consider*; Eleanor Arnason, *Hwarhath Stories: Transgressive Tales by Aliens*; Claudia Casper, *The Mercy Journals*; Matt Hill, *Graft*; Susan diRende, *Unpronounceable*; Yoss (trans David Frye), *Super Extra Grande*. [GVC] • SF & Fantasy Hall of Fame (a bumper intake for the twentieth anniversary): Douglas Adams, Margaret Atwood, Keith David, Guillermo del Toro, Terry Gilliam, Jim Henson, Jack Kirby, Madeleine L'Engle, C.S. Lewis, H.P. Lovecraft, Leonard Nimoy, George Orwell, Terry Pratchett, Rumiko Takahashi, John Williams. Plus works: *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Blade Runner*, *Dungeons & Dragons*, *The Matrix*, *Myst*, *The Princess Bride*, *Star Trek*, *Wonder Woman*, *The X-Files*. [F770] • SFWA Solstice Award: Peggy Rae Sapienza (1944-2015).

**Thog's Mathematical Masterclass**. BBC *Weatherman*: 'I'm not going to try to tell you how much snow you'll have: it might be zero, it might be twice that.' (12 January) [DAH]

R.I.P. **Hilary Bailey** (1936-2017), UK author whose early work included 'The Fall of Frenchy Steiner' (1964 *New Worlds*), who co-edited *New Worlds Quarterly* #7-#10, and whose later literary fiction often included fantastic elements, died on 18 January. Her former husband Michael Moorcock wrote: 'She was greatly loved by her family and will be sadly missed by them. She was a successful novelist, critic, editor and writer of non-fiction.' • **Ivo Brešan** (1936-2017), Croatian author and playwright whose novels include the Faustian *Astaroth* (2001), died on 3 January; he was 80. [PDF] • **James C. Christensen** (1942-2017), US artist who produced many sf and fantasy covers and interiors, died on 8 January; he was 74 and had won three Chesley Awards, two for sculpture. [PDF] • **William Christopher** (1932-2016), US actor with voice parts in *The Smurfs* (as Angel Smurf, 1984-1988) and *The Little Troll Prince* (1987), died on 31 December aged 84. [MMW] • **Babette Cole** (1949-2017), US children's author and illustrator whose books include the 2010-2011 *Fetlocks Hall* saga of magic and ponies, died on 15 January aged 67. [PDF] • **Mike Connors** (1925-2017), US actor whose films include *Day the World Ended* (1955), *Voodoo Woman* (1957) and *Earthlings* (1984), died on 21 January aged 91. • **Paula Dell** (1926-2017), acrobat and Hollywood stuntwoman (usually uncredited) whose genre films include *Son of Flubber* (1963), *Camelot* (1967), *Death Race 2000* (1975), *Logan's Run* (1976), *Freaky Friday* (1977) and *Mystery Men* (1999), died on 9 January aged 80. [AIP] • **Mike Dickinson** (1947-2017), UK fan who co-chaired the 1979 Leeds Eastercon and was toastmaster at its 1981 sequel, died on 20 January aged 69. His fanzines included the 1970s *Bar Trek* with Lee Montgomerie and the 1980s *Spaghetti Junction* with Jackie Gresham. [RK/DP] • **Buchi Emecheta**, (1944-2017) Nigerian-born UK writer whose genre work includes the sf *The Rape of Shavi* (1983), died on 25 January aged 72. [JC] • **Mark Fisher** (1968-2017) alias K-Punk, UK writer on music and politics whose *The Weird and the Eerie*—a study of fantastic authors and films—appeared in December, died on 14 January aged 48. [PDF] • **Pascal Garray** (1965-2017), Belgian illustrator who drew 17 *Smurfs* albums, died on 17 January aged 51. [PDF] • **Dick Gautier** (1931-2017), US actor whose genre credits included *Get Smart* (1966-1968, as Hymie the Robot), *Mr. Terrific* (1967), *When Things Were Rotten* (1975, as Robin

Hood) and *The Transformers* (1986-1987), died on 13 January aged 85. [SFS] • **Barbara Hale** (1922-2017), US actress seen in *Science Fiction Theatre* (1955 tv), and *The Giant Spider Invasion* (1975), died on 26 January aged 94. • **Bob Holiday** (1932-2017), US actor who starred in the Broadway musical *It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's Superman!* (1966), died on 27 January aged 84. [PDF] • **John Hurt** (1940-2017), UK actor whose genre work includes *Alien* (1979), 1984 (1984), *Frankenstein Unbound* (1990), *Harry Potter* and the *Sorcerer's Stone* (2001), *Hellboy* (2004), *V for Vendetta* (2005) and *Doctor Who* (2013), died on 27 January; he was 77. [MR] • **George Kosana** (1935-2017), US actor best remembered as the Sheriff in *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), died on 2 January aged 81. [PDF] • **Harry Mathews** (1930-2017), US author whose novels—beginning with the Pynchonesque *The Conversations* (1962), *Tlooth* (1966) and *The Sinking of the Odradek Stadium* (1975)—are intricately surreal if not quite fantastic, died on 25 January aged 86. [JC] • **David Meltzer** (1937-2016) US jazz guitarist, poet and novelist whose erotic sf written for Essex House included the 1968-1969 *Agency* trilogy, died on 31 December; he was 79. [JC] • **Jack Mendelsohn** (1926-2017), US comics writer and artist who wrote for DC Comics and EC, co-wrote the Beatles' Hugo-shortlisted *Yellow Submarine* (1968), scripted many tv series including *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1990-1993) and received a Lifetime Achievement Award in Animation from the Writers Guild, died on 25 January aged 90. [AL] • **Masaya Nakamura** (1925-2017), Japanese founder of the arcade-game company Namco which gave us *Galaxian* (1979), *Pac-Man* (1980), *Tekken* (1994) and others, died on 22 January; he was 91. [MR] • **Linn Prentis** (1944-2016), US literary agent whose authors included Kage Baker, Patricia Briggs, Rick Bowes, A.M. Dellamonica and James Morrow, died on 24 December aged 72. [PDF/L] • **Sarah Prince** (1954-2017), US fan once active in fanzines and convention-running, who stood for TAFF in 1999, died in late January. [TG] • **Om Puri** (1950-2017), Indian actor whose genre films include *Code 46* (2003) and *Time Traveller* (2013), died on 6 January aged 66. He received an honorary OBE in 2004. [SFS] • **Larry Smith** (1946-2017), well-known US fan and bookseller who ran the dealers' room at many conventions including Worldcons, died on 20 January aged 70. • **Dan Spigle** (1920-2017), US comics artist best known for film/tv adaptations including *Space Family Robinson/Lost in Space*, *The Green Hornet*, *The Invaders* and *Scooby-Do*, died on 28 January; he was 96. [PDF] • **Vicky Stock** (1979-2017), UK fan who worked on the committees of past Fantasycons and the Birmingham SF Group, died on 11 January; she was 37. • **Emma Tennant** (1937-2017), UK author whose first acknowledged novel was the sf *The Time of the Crack* (1973) and who often returned to fantastic themes, died on 20 January aged 79. She founded the magazine *Bananas* and was a close friend of Hilary Bailey (above). [JC] • **Annemarie van Ewijk** (1943-2017), Dutch fan, translator and editor of the semiprozine *Holland SF* for 19 years, a mainstay of the national fan club and of Dutch conventions, died on 15 January aged 73. Her favourite author to translate was Jack Vance. [KvT/J-HH] • **Igor Volk** (1937-2017), former USSR cosmonaut and Hero of the Soviet Union who with Valery Anisimov co-wrote the sf thriller *Kosmicheskii kolpak* (1990), died on 3 January aged 79. [MA] • **John Watkiss** (1961-2017), UK artist whose credits include Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*, Disney's animated *Tarzan* (1999) and *Treasure Planet* (2002), and *The Walking Dead* (tv), died on 20 January aged 55. [PDF] • **Peter Weston** (1943-2017), leading UK fan since the 1960s, who co-founded the Birmingham SF Group and Novacon, ran the Speculation sf conferences, edited the three *Andromeda* original anthologies, was the 1974 TAFF winner, chaired the 1979 UK Worldcon and was fan GoH at the 2004 Boston Worldcon, died on 11 January aged 73. His fanzines included *Zenith/Speculation*, a forum for sf criticism, and *Prolapse/Relapse*, whose focus was UK fan history; his autobiographical *With Stars in My Eyes: My Adventures in British Fandom* (2004) was a Hugo finalist. Tom Shippey's funeral eulogy for him fills *Ansible* 355½: see news.ansible.uk/pdf/a355x.pdf. • **Francine York** (1936-2017), US actress whose genre films include *Space Probe Taurus* (1965) and *Curse of the Swamp Creature* (1966), died on 6 January aged 80. [SFS]

**The Weakest Link.** *Host:* 'What is the only planet in our solar system capable of supporting life?' *Contestant:* 'Mars.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE]

**Court Circular.** *The Star Trek vs Axanar* lawsuit was settled in January, with plaintiffs CBS and Paramount agreeing that the *Trek*-based film can go ahead with substantial changes in accordance with (most of) the fan-film guidelines belatedly announced in mid-2016. Going after the \$1.4 million crowdfunding for *Axanar* production was apparently not feasible, since the project's prime mover Alec Peters had spent it all on studio construction and 'personal expenses'. [F770]

**As Others See Us II.** Not content to state that 'A literary high-point, well beyond the reach of genre fiction, was reached with Kashuo [sic] Ishiguro's highly acclaimed novel, *Never Let Me Go*.' John Sutherland shoots down such predecessors as *Frankenstein* and *The Reefs of Space*: 'These scenarios, however, were fantasy, since medicine had not at that time developed the techniques by which body parts could be successfully transplanted.' (in *Literary Wonderlands: A Journey Through the Greatest Fictional Worlds Ever Created*, ed. Laura Miller) [PL]

**Magazine Scene.** Warren Lapine announced that *Fantastic Stories of the Imagination* is closing after its January 2017 issue. [F770]

**Insert Name Here.** The <blank> Award for Best Young Adult Book' is the new, as yet unnamed, Worldcon not-a-Hugo. Do you prefer Anansi, Lodestar, Ouroboros, Spellicaster, Tesseract or Worldcon? The WSFS survey at tinyurl.com/hse9ttxm closes on 15 March. [AIP]

**As Others Research Us.** Several people (hello, Whitley Strieber!) unwisely believed every word of my 1979 UFO spoof *An Account of a Meeting with Denizens of Another World, 1871*; but Eddie Brazil in *Secret High Wycombe* (2017) is the first to attribute it to 'science journalist and sci-fi writer David Frankland'. Who is this man and is he getting my royalties? One side-effect of *An Account* may have been the naming of a High Wycombe pub after my local 'contactee' William Robert Loosley. This recently closed [MC] but has reopened under new management.

**C.O.A.** *Chris Priest & Nina Allan* are now in Rothesay, Isle of Bute.

**The Dead Past.** 40 Years Ago, a fandom was born: David Barrie, an enthusiastic follower of the British tv series, *The Prisoner*, managed to get his name and address on the small screen after a recent episode (apparently it's still being repeated in some ITV areas ten years after it was first shown). Within a couple of hours he had his first visitors and within a couple of days he had his first 400 letters. Once he recovers he intends organising some kind of appreciation society.' (*Checkpoint* 79, February 1977) • 30 Years Ago we reported the end of Bruce Sterling's pseudonymous fanzine of invective and cyberpunk, which ran its own obituary: 'Node Zero, the global info-nexus of the *Cheap Truth* publishing empire, has been reduced to smouldering wreckage in a poorly-realized action-sequence right out of the worst tradition of macho adventure fiction. A dead Hollywood stunt dummy, with several burst squibs of chicken-blood attached to its head and torso, was discovered by hard-boiled investigators [and] identified as that of *Cheap Truth* editor Vincent Omniaveritas...' (*Ansible* 48, February 1987)

**Random Fandom.** Leigh Edmonds is working on a history of Australian fandom 1956-1975: more details at efanzines.com/iOTA/.

**Editorial.** Peter Weston knew what was coming, made preparations and enjoyed life to the end. In early December I noticed and told him that his *With Stars In My Eyes* is one of the few books on fandom cited in *Brave New Worlds: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction* (Oxford University Press 2007). He wrote: 'That's nice to know, though I'll dispute your point that egoboo never comes too late. Without wishing to be dramatic, or a bit premature like Clive James, another couple of months might be sufficient.' Only one month, alas. Peter was a good friend who encouraged my early sf career; I can't believe he's gone.

**Fanfundery.** *DUFF:* Paul Weimer is the only candidate for the 2017 trip from NA to Australia (Continuum, Melbourne, 9-12 June). The ballot is at ozfanfunds.com/?page\_id=77; voting closes on 10 March. • *Reminder:* TAFF voting ends on 4 March and GUFF voting on 1 April.

*Thog's Masterclass. Provocative Clothing Dept.* '... a young lady's garment, with a bustle that rustled and, as Billie walked, made passes at the air behind her as if it had its own appetites and interests.' (Elizabeth Knox, *Billie's Kiss*, 2002) [PB] • *Neat Tricks.* 'Rader jumped up, then caught himself in the almost absent gravity.' (William Rotler, *The Far Frontier*, 1980) [BA] 'Felicity sits up so quickly I can still feel the warmth of her next to me, trailing behind her by seconds.' (Libba Bray, *A Great and Terrible Beauty*, 2003) [PB] • *Something Fishy Dept.* 'His feet, in black socks, were long and limp as dead salmon.' (Jack Vance, 'Parapsyche', August 1958 *Amazing*) [BA] • *Dept of Alpine Allure.* 'Time had refined her so that now, in her forties, she had the spare beauty of a mountaintop blown clean of snow.' (Julia Spencer-Fleming, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, 2002) [PB] • *Don't Try This At Home.* 'Russ cleared his throat. Officer Durkee fell in.' (*Ibid*)

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