

Ansible



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The Darling Bots of May

Octavia E. Butler is now commemorated by Butler Mons, a mountain on Pluto's moon Charon. Other hilly features there have been named by NASA for Clarke and Kubrick, and craters for fictional characters including L. Frank Baum's Dorothy, Stanislaw Lem's Pirx (the Pilot) and Jules Verne's Nemo. (NASA New Horizons, 11 April) [SHS/SFS]

Mark Z. Danielewski announced a pause in publication of his vast fantastic sequence *The Familiar* (27 fat volumes planned, five published 2015-2017), having sadly agreed with his New York publisher Pantheon Books that for now the number of readers is not sufficient to justify the cost of continuing. (Instagram, February) [GF]

Rodrigo Fresán's just-translated *The Bottom of the Sky* (*El fondo del cielo*, 2009) may involve nonlinear time and alien observers, but the publicity reassures us that 'This is high-concept literature at its best. A novel that, in Fresán's own words [*sic*], "is not a novel of science fiction. It is—and it will be—a novel with science fiction."' [RF]

China Miéville is one of the 175 recipients of Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowships for 2018, in—as you might expect—the category Creative Arts/Fiction (Artforum.com, 5 April) [FM]

Mike Moorcock on A369 and the Brian Aldiss memorial event: 'Mention of George Hay reminds me that he started off as a recruiter for Scientology and it was from him, after he became disillusioned, that I started to hear the kind of scams they ran. Sladek and I went to him first when we planned an expose. Nice bloke. Sorry you didn't mention that, while I couldn't be at Brian's memo, I did send a piece which Wendy liked, read by Marcus Gipps. P. Pullman must have gone to one of those media conventions. I'm going to one in San José this weekend. Authors very low on totem pole. D. Tennant's the big draw. I won't charge for autographs or photos and the organisers aren't happy since they get a percentage of all charges!' (3 April)

Conicle

Until 7 May • **Sci-Fi London** (film festival), various London venues. For more details see sci-fi-london.com/festival.

3 May • **Sci-Fi London Charity Pub Quiz**, Pitch, Bridge Rd, London, E15 3PA. 7pm-11pm. £10 plus booking fee: tinyurl.com/y9lck7bj

5-6 May • **EM-Con** (media), Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham. Various priced tickets and extras available at www.em-con.co.uk.

10 May - 30 Sep • **Asterix in Britain** (exhibition), Jewish Museum, 129-131 Albert Street, London, NW1 7NB. 10am-5pm (closes 2pm Fridays). See www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/asterix.

23 May • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. Speaker to be announced. Free. 25-27 May • **Satellite 6**, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. GoH Paul McAuley. Advance booking closes on 18 May £70 reg (£80 at the door); £60 YA 18-24; under-18s £20; accompanied under-12s £5 and under-5s £2. See six.satellitex.org.uk.

26 May • **LawGiver 4** (Judge Dredd), Hilton Doubletree Hotel, Bristol. £26.50 reg; under-16s free. See lawgiver.co.uk.

1 Jun - 28 Oct • **Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth** (exhibition), Weston Library, Oxford: www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/news/2017/mar-17.

8-10 Jun • **Lavecon** (sf/fantasy/gaming), Sedgebrook Hall Hotel, Northants. Tickets at various prices: www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-1

8-11 Jun • **To See the Invisible** (opera based on story by Robert Silverberg), Britten Studio, Snape Maltings, Snape, Suffolk. Tickets £5-£25. See snapmaltings.co.uk/whats-on/to-see-the-invisible/.

23 Jun • **BSFA/SF Foundation AGMs** and mini-con, Bread & Roses Theatre, 68 Clapham Manor St, Clapham, London, SW4 6DZ.

29 Jun - 1 Jul • **Two Centuries of Frankenstein: 1818-2018** (course), ICE, Cambridge. With Professor Edward James. £280. See www.ice.cam.ac.uk/course/two-centuries-frankenstein-1818-2018.

16-20 Aug • **Worldcon 76** (Worldcon), San José, CA, USA. \$230 reg, \$115 YA (15-21) and military; under-15s \$75; under-6s free; \$50 supp. Hugo voting should begin soon. See worldcon76.org.

1 Sep • **Whooverville** (Doctor Who), QUAD Centre, Derby, DE1 3AS. £48; £33 concessions; under-12s £10. See whooverville.org.

15 Sep • **Sublime Cognition: SF and Metaphysics** (conference), Birkbeck School of Arts, London. See <http://tinyurl.com/y73kvj6d>.

20-23 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), St Antony's College, Oxford. Now £75 reg or £65 for members, rising to £85/£75 in August. See www.tolkienociety.org/events/oxonmoot-2018/.

22-23 Sep • **Comic Con**, Leeds Town Hall. Part of Thought Bubble, the Leeds Comic Art Festival, running 17-23 September. £29 68 week-end pass or £18.02/day including fees. See thoughtbubblefestival.com.

5-7 Oct • **SFW in the City** (Sci-Fi Weekender spinoff), O₂ Academy, Sheffield. Weekend passes from £40. See www.sfwinthecity.com.

19-21 Oct • **FantasyCon**, Queen Hotel, City Rd, Chester, CH1 3AH. Rates rise today, but the website still shows pre-May figures (£51 adult reg etc) as *Ansible* goes to press. See www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-2.

9-11 Nov • **Novacon 48**, Park Inn, Nottingham. Now £52 reg, until 8 November; under-17s £12; under-13s free. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. See www.novacon.org.uk.

1-3 Feb 2019 • **31-ET** (filk), Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester. £38 reg/£28 unwaged plus booking fees; under-18s £1/year of age; under-5s free. Further details at www.contable.org.uk/31et/

5 Feb 2019 • **Sci-Feb** (media), Humber Royal Hotel, Little Coates Rd, Grimsby. £4 reg. See www.daydreamevents.uk/sci-feb.html.

29 Mar - 1 Apr 2019 • **Irish Diseworld Convention**, Cork International Hotel, Cork Airport, Ireland. €55 reg and €45 concessions, rising to €60/€55 on 1 October 2018; under-13s €1. See idwcon.org.

7-11 Aug 2019 • **Tolkien 2019** (Tolkien Society), Macdonald Burlington Hotel, Birmingham. £95 reg. See www.tolkien2019.com.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. 'For anyone under 40, Gollancz is merely a science fiction imprint—"the oldest specialist sci-fi and fantasy (SFF) publisher in the UK." Gollancz indeed published many award-winning and successful SFF authors, J G Ballard and Terry Pratchett among them, but Gollancz is far more important than that, which makes the story of its last two decades a tragedy.' (Liz Thomson, *Bookseller*, April) [JJ]

Awards. *Compton Crook/Stephen Tall* (debut sf, fantasy or horror novel); Nicky Drayden, *The Prey of Gods*. [J] • *Kitschies*: NOVEL Nina Allan, *The Rift*. DEBUT Alex 'Acks' Wells, *Hunger Makes the Wolf*. COVER ART Jack Smyth for *The History of Bees* by Maja Lund.

In Typo Veritas. 'The other man's skin was black as tar and he wore but a small cloth that covered his lions.' (Isaac D. Hardman, *The Black Viking*, 2013) [DA]

R.I.P. Harry Anderson (1952-2018), US actor in *The Absent-Minded Professor* (1988 remake), *It* (1990 tv) and *Harvey* (1996 remake), died on 16 April aged 65. [MMW] • Alex Beckett (1982-2018), Welsh actor seen in *Space Ark* (2014) and *The Aliens* (2016), died on 12 April aged 35. [SG] • Gil Brealey (1932-2018), Australian media creator who directed his country's first tv series *The Stranger* (1964-1965), died on 1 April aged 85. [GC] • R. Lee Ermye (1944-2018), US actor whose genre credits include *Deathstone* (1990), *The Terror Within II* (1991), *Body Snatchers* (1993) and the *Toy Story* franchise, died on 15 April aged 74. [MMW] • Late report: Cyril Frankel (1921-2017), UK film/tv director whose credits include *The Witches* (1966) and episodes of *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)* (1969-1970), died on 7 June 2017 aged 95. [GC] • Livia Gollancz (1920-2018), Governing Director (CEO) of Gollancz from 1967 to 1990, died on 29 March aged 97. [MJE] • Regina Gottesman (1948-2018), US *Star Trek* fan writer and fanzine publisher (co-editing issues of *Time Warp* 1979-1980), died on 17 or 18 April aged 69. [AIP] • Juraj Herz (1934-2018), Czech film-maker whose titles include *Beauty and the Beast* (1978), *The Ninth Heart* (1979) and *Ferac Vampire* (1982), died on 8 April aged 83. [AB] • Palle Juul Holm (1931-2018), Danish sf critic and author whose *Syzygy og den sorte stjerne* (1975) was the first Danish educational text on the genre, and who wrote short sf as Bernhard Ribbeck, died on 7 April aged 86. [KÆM] •

Chuck McCann (1934-2018), US actor whose many genre credits include *Far Out Space Nuts* (1975), *DuckTales the Movie* (1990), *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* (1991), *Fantastic Four* (1994-1995, voicing The Thing) and *Dracula: Dead and Loving It* (1995), died on 8 April aged 83. [PDF] ● **Tim O'Connor** (1927-2018), US actor in *Ssssss* (1973), *The Man with the Power* (1977) and *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* (1979 film; 1979-1980 tv), died on 5 April aged 90. [PDF] ● **Gianfranco Parolini** (1930-2018), Italian director and screenwriter often billed as Frank Kramer, reportedly died on 26 April aged 88. Genre credits include *The Fury of Hercules* (1962), *The Three Fantastic Supermen* (1967) and the Yeti film *Giant of the 20th Century* (1977). [SG] ● **Tony Plank** (1940-2018), UK-born author who published stories in Australian genre magazines and anthologies from 1994 to 2017, died on 21 March. [EH] ● **William Prochnau** (1937-2018), US author and journalist whose novel *Trinity's Child* (1983)—in the tradition of *Fail-Safe* and *Dr Strangelove*—was filmed as *By Dawn's Early Light* (1990), died on 28 March aged 80. [MMW] ● **Alice Provensen** (1918-2018), US artist who—with her husband Martin until his death in 1987, and then solo—wrote and/or illustrated many children's books including classic myths, folk-tales and fairy-tales, died in late April aged 99. [PDF] ● **Isao Takahata** (1935-2018), Japanese anime director who co-founded Studio Ghibli and whose productions included *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988) and the Oscar-shortlisted *Tale of the Princess Kaguya* (2013), died on 5 April aged 82. [GW] ● **Ahmed Khaled Tewfik** (1962-2018; also spell Tawfiq), Egyptian author whose many genre titles include *Utopia* (2008; trans 2011), died on 2 April aged 55. [SS-F] ● **Verne Troyer** (1969-2018): US actor best known as Mini-Me in *The Spy Who Shagged Me* (1999) and *Goldmember* (2002), died on 21 April aged 49. Further credits include *Pinocchio's Revenge* (1996), *Jingle All the Way* (1996), *Men in Black* (1997), *Wishmaster* (1997), *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (2000), *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001), *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* (2009) and *Gnome Alone* (2015). [SG] ● **Ralph Woolsey** (1914-2018), US cinematographer whose genre credits include *Batman* (1956 tv) and *Oh, God! Book II* (1980), died on 23 March aged 104. [GC]

The Weakest Link. *Sounds A Bit Like Quist Dept.* 'I am, no doubt showing my age but, amid all the excitement about plastic-devoiding enzymes (April 18), I seem to remember an episode of *Quatermass* about bugs that ate plastic, and that didn't end so well ...' (Reader's letter in the *Financial Times*, April)

Outraged Letters. *Simon R. Green:* 'It's a shame what happened to Michael Fleisher; a man pretty much driven from the comics writing game because of his badly-advised legal action. His run on the Spectre was truly disturbing, his Jonah Hex was ground-breaking, and one of the last things he did for DC, the *Haywire* mini series, was glorious fun. (High concept, what if someone gave Ironsach Iron Man's armour.) All right, the stuff he did for *2000AD* was forgettable, to put it kindly. But I think he should be remembered for the good work he did, and not one infamous lack of judgement.' (26 April)

Infinity War Spoilers! Iron Man, Black Panther, Thor, Hulk, Maybot, Black Widow, Hawkeye, Captain America, Sweep from *Sooty* and *Sweep*, Vision, Spiderman, Heimdall, Drax the Destroyer, Tinky Winky, Nebula, Rocket Raccoon, Rocket Ronnie O'Sullivan, Scarlet Witch, Groot, Toilet Duck, Star-Lord, Winter Soldier, Pepper Potts, Dr Strange, Dr Pepper ... if I have imagined some of the above and missed out others who do appear, the deluge made it almost impossible to keep track.' (Matthew Nonman, *Evening Standard*, 26 April)

Magazine Scene. *Amazing Stories* opened for general submissions on 23 April. See amazingstoriesmag.com and editor Steve Davidson's specific post, linking to guidelines etc, at tinyurl.com/y7lh5czj.

The Critical Heritage. Edward Gorey laid down the law about a film subgenre: '*Bowanga! Bowanga!* is the definitive jungle movie—unless you care to make a case for *Wild Women of Wongo*.' (Quoted by Alexander Theroux in *The Strange Case of Edward Gorey*, 2010)

Award Shortlists. *Gemmill* (heroic fantasy): NOVEL Miles Cameron, *The Fall of Dragons*; Robin Hobb, *Assassin's Fate*; Mark Lawrence, *Red Sister*; Steve McHugh, *Scorched Shadows*; Brandon Sanderson, *Oathbringer*. DEBUT NOVEL RJ Barker, *Age of Assassins*; Melissa Caruso, *The Tethered Mage*; Nicholas Eames, *Kings of the Wyld*; Ed McDonald, *Blackwing*; Anna Smith-Spark, *The Court of Broken Knives*. COVER Richard Anderson, *Kings of the Wyld* by Nicholas Eames; Kerom Beyit, *The Fall of Dragons* by Miles Cameron; Sam Green, *Oathbringer* as above; Jackie Morris and Stephen Raw, *Assassin's Fate* as above; Kerby Rosanes, *Godsgrave* by Jay Kristoff. ● *Locus:* too long for *Ansible*, but see locusmag.com/2018/04/2018-locus-awards-finalists/ ... fifty nominees in the five novel categories, plus much more. ● *Sciun* (books translated

into Japanese): Christopher Priest, *The Adjacent* trans Yoshimichi Furusawa & Yoko Miki; Roman Arbilman writing as Rustam Katz, *The History of Soviet Fantastika* trans Hiroaki Umemura; Sylvain Neuvel, *Sleeping Giants* trans Chiori Sada; Kim Stanley Robinson, *Blue Mars* trans Yutaka Oshima; Jack Vance, *Space Opera* trans Hisashi Asakura & Ro Shiraishi; Jo Walton, *My Real Children* trans Takeshi Mogi; Gene Wolfe, *A Borrowed Man* trans Akinobu Sakai. (Europa SF, 23 April)

Bulburbismo. Sarah Silverman rose to the challenge of Sean Penn's *Bob Honey Who Just Do Stuff* (see A369): 'Before I started reading, I glanced over the table of contents. The first chapter is called "Seeking Homeostasis in Inherent Hypocrisy." I rolled my eyes and said aloud to no one, "fuuuuck you." Then, I read it, and it turns out it's a goddamned novel for the ages. A straight-up masterwork, more relevant to this very moment than anything I've seen. Tom Robbins, Mark Twain, E.E. Cummings and Billy Bragg all just came in Charles Bukowski's pants.' [MMW]

Random Fandom. *Samuel Montgomery-Blinn of Bull Spec* was bemused to receive carefully targeted email from a cybersquatter offering to sell him, for an undisclosed huge sum, the coveted web domain *ianwhates.com*. Ian Whates of NewCon Press, while neither confirming nor denying having been offered samuelmontgomeryblinn.com, told *Ansible* that (until misled by a careless webmaster) *ianwhates.com* had once been his. ● *Jim Mowatt* announced the publication of his 2013 TAFF report, *Wherever I Lay My Hat!*—see taff.org.uk for details. ● *TAFF Site Free Ebooks:* I'm trying to muster the energy to assemble an ebook of *Ansible's* 1970s predecessor *Checkpoint* (variously edited by Peter Roberts, Darroll Pardoe and Ian Maule). But don't hold your breath. ● *Writers of the Future* and its Scientology connection once again became sf talking points. Past *WoTF* winner Jim C. Hines considers the issues here: www.jimclines.com/2018/04/wotf-and-scientology-2/. (24April)

The Dead Past. *50 Years Ago:* 'Due to hit the presses later this year is a book titled *Pop-Corn*, written by James Sallis and Michael Moorcock. *Pop-Corn* has been described as "a fierce attack on the world of pop culture and the cults that surround it." Tolkien, James Bond and Alfred Hitchcock are just three targets of the way of life some of us hold dear. The book, not yet quite complete, is already scheduled for joint publication by Gollancz and Penguin.' (*Skyrack* 95, May 1968) ● *10 Years Ago*, the *Sunday Herald* ran a generally positive article on the presence of sf (and Ken MacLeod) at the Glasgow Science Festival. 'The whole basis of the internet was famously inspired by William Gibson's book *Neuromancer* and Isaac Asimov, who recently died, "invented" earth-orbiting satellites in one of his tales.' (*Ansible* 250, May 2008)

C.o.A. *Bruce Gillespie's* old pacific.net.au address went away on 30 April; he can now be reached only via gandc001@bigpond dot com.

Court Circular. Obscure author Jon Del Arroz—better known for online trolling—did indeed file suit against Worldcon 76 for its committee decision that, just like SFWA before it, the con didn't want him as a member. Details at *File 770:* file770.com/?p=41778.

Fanfunding. *GUFF:* Marcin Klak won with 47 votes to 38 for Alice & Steve Lawson and 5 no-preference; 90 ballots in all. ● *TAFF:* Johan Anglemark won with 100 final-round votes to 87 for Pia Karlsson; 214 ballots were cast, with Helena McCallum eliminated in the first round. See taff.org.uk for details and the full breakdown in *TAFF News* #6.

Thog's Masterclass. *Freudian Dept.* 'It was a sword fashioned from matter so rare and ethereal that no mortal or even ordinary immortal could hope to wield it. Only when the favoured hero gripped its elusive shaft would its billions of atoms solidify into a firm and erect mass ...' (Michael Butterworth, *Queens of Deliria*, 1977) [BA] ● *Dept of Understatement.* 'She looked up, and the silence stopped. The carbonized sky howled as the Milky Way cracked its sternum, exposing its galactic heart.' (Bryn Chancellor, *Sycamore*, 2017) [PB] ● *Blindsight Dept.* 'Her eyes were closed. [...] She was staring up at the ceiling, her eyes closed.' (Alastair Reynolds, *On the Steel Breeze*, 2013) [JA] ● *Fundamentalism and the Sands of Time.* 'Hope was a classic, a classic barmaid, one whose broad behind led away an imprint on the pages of history.' (Robert Leckie, *Helmet for My Pillow*, 1957) [MMW] ● *Dept of Easy Interplanetary Communication.* 'We have, of course, had radio for a long time, and by that means know your languages: indeed we adopted them as our own.' (Vargo Statten (John Russell Fearn), *Earth* 2, 1955) [BA]

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