

# ansible



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From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Web news.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Stefan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE, Glotzenglubber or a manus module.

## The Toppers' Club

**Lou Anders**, editorial/art director of the Prometheus Books sf imprint Pyr since its 2005 launch, is leaving to 'devote his professional energy to being a full-time author.' (*PW*, 19 September) Pyr may be in trouble, with 'flagging sales' and 'a long-standing reputation of failing to pay authors and artists on time.' (*Staffersbookreview.com*, 25 September)

**Greg Bear** needed emergency open-heart surgery on 23 September (aorta repair and installation of a mechanical aortic valve); he came through this well and is recovering with pleasing speed. [AB]

**Charles Bolden**, NASA chief and former space shuttle commander, remembers his roots. *Interviewer*: 'Astronauts weren't around when you were a kid. So what did you want to be when you grew up?' *Bolden*: 'Yes, they were! Astronauts were very prominent because there was Buck Rogers. And I saw people going to Mars every weekend at the theater in Columbia, South Carolina.' (*Washington Post*, 11 May) [PL]

**Roger Dean's** lawsuit against James Cameron for alleged theft of his imagery (floating islands, etc) in *Avatar* was dismissed by a New York judge on 17 September. 'The judge also noted that images from the film were cropped, rotated and otherwise taken "out of context" in an attempt to make them look similar to Dean's paintings, which were in turn also manipulated by the artist.' Several other *Avatar* plagiarism suits had already failed. (*The Hollywood Reporter*, 17 September)

**Jack Kirby's** Marvel Comics characters have been the focus of many rights lawsuits, now apparently over. Official joint statement: 'Marvel and the family of Jack Kirby have amicably resolved their legal disputes, and are looking forward to advancing their shared goal of honoring Mr. Kirby's significant role in Marvel's history.' (*The Bear*, 26 September)

**Ursula K. Le Guin** will be the 2014 recipient of the US National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, a high honour indeed—presentation on 19 November. [Mk]

**David Mitchell's** novelistic success, most recently with *The Bone Clocks*, is explained by US academic Sarah Dillon (editor of a book of essays on his writing): 'This is why his work is so addictive—he's creating his own universe.' (*New York Times*, 24 August) [DR] If only some science fiction or fantasy author had thought of that!

**Albert Uderzo**, co-creator of Asterix the Gaul, and his daughter Sylvie are now reconciled after long litigation over the mighty cartoon franchise: he's dropping his lawsuit against her and her husband, while her counter-suit was recently thrown out. (BBC, 26 September) [MPJ]

## Conquish

Until 31 Dec • **Days of Fear and Wonder**: BFI celebration of sf film, nationwide. See [www.bfi.org.uk/sci-fi-days-fear-wonder](http://www.bfi.org.uk/sci-fi-days-fear-wonder) and links.

3 Oct–20 Jan • **Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination** (exhibition), British Library, London. 'Two hundred rare objects ... 250 years of the Gothic tradition': [www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/gothic/](http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/gothic/)

4–5 Oct • **Fahrenheit 451** performance, Southbank Centre, London. 7:45pm Saturday; 2pm and 5pm Sunday. £20 plus booking fee. See [www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whatson/fahrenheit-451-85820](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whatson/fahrenheit-451-85820).

4 Oct • **What is the Lure of the Dystopia?** (Cheltenham Lit Fest panel), The Inkpot, Imperial Square, Cheltenham. 5:30–6:30pm. £8.

6 Oct • **SF: Home of the Literary Activist?** discussion, Southbank as above. £8 plus fee. See [www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whatson/](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whatson/)

10 Oct • **SF & Fantasy: A Celebration** (Cheltenham Lit Fest panel), cost and venue as for 4 October panel above. 8:30–9:30pm.

17–19 Oct • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. Some parts free, including Comics Clock Tower venue. Tickets per item, most £7 plus booking fee. See [www.comicartfestival.com](http://www.comicartfestival.com).

18 Oct • **BristolCon**, Ramada Hotel, Bristol. GoH Jon Courtenay Grimwood, Emma Newman. £25 reg; £30 at the door. Cheques to 18 High Leaze Road, Patchway, Bristol BS34 5AF.

20–25 Oct • **Arvon SF Course**, Totleigh Barton, Devon. £700 single room; £650 shared. See [www.arvon.org/course/science-fiction/](http://www.arvon.org/course/science-fiction/).

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

London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. With David Bradley of *SFX*. Free.

22 Oct • **The Science of Fiction: Future** (panel), Cambridge Science Centre. 7–9pm. £3. See [www.cambridgesciencecentre.org](http://www.cambridgesciencecentre.org).

23–27 Oct • **Bram Stoker International Film Festival**, Whitby. £120 plus optional extras. See [www.bramstokerfilmfestival.com](http://www.bramstokerfilmfestival.com).

24–26 Oct • **Celluloid Screams** (horror film festival), Showroom Cinema, Sheffield. See [celluloidscreams.co.uk](http://celluloidscreams.co.uk). 0114 275 7727.

31 Oct–2 Nov • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Manchester Conference Centre, Sackville St. £25 reg; day rate £25. Contact 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN. See [fantastic-films.com](http://fantastic-films.com).

15–16 Nov • **Thought Bubble** (comics), various halls, Armouries Square, Leeds; part of the Leeds Comic Art Festival, running 9–16 November. £24 or £15/day. See [thoughtbubblefestival.com](http://thoughtbubblefestival.com).

14–16 Nov • **Armadacon 26**, Future Inn, Plymouth. £30 reg; day rates £15 Sat, £10 Sun ('concessions' £25, £12, £8); £5 each evening from 6pm. Contact 18 Wadhman Rd, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 3BD.

14–16 Nov • **Novacon 44**, Park Inn, Mansfield Road, Nottingham. £45 reg. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

18 Nov • **Tolkien in Oxford** (symposium), Merton College, Oxford. £10: see [www.merton.ox.ac.uk/event/tolkien-oxford-symposium](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/event/tolkien-oxford-symposium).

## Infinitely Improbable

**We Are Everywhere**. Alex Salmond made a subtle literary allusion after the Scottish independence referendum: 'The wrath of Khan will be as nothing to the wrath of a No voter who has been gulled by the Westminster leadership.' (*Independent*, 23 September) [MPJ]

**As Others Fear Us**. Fifty 1.5-metre statues of Paddington Bear are to be dotted around London as a November film tie-in, and auctioned for charity some weeks later. In posh Primrose Hill, the threat of even one temporary bear is viewed with horror. Phil Cowan: 'a direct attack on the concept of what a neutral public space was designed for ... Primrose Hill Park is a cherished public space that offers a sanctuary from the world of commerce.' Karen Ross calls it an 'unwelcome precedent' and very probably 'a target for vandals.' (*Independent*, 31 August) [MPJ]

**High Camp**. The autumn 'Campfire' literary weekend held by Jeff Bezos of Amazon—where it seems the first rule of Campfire is 'You do not talk about Campfire'—developed rifts after current Amazon/Hachette feuding, with avowedly pro-Hachette authors no longer invited or 'having second thoughts about going'. Hugh Howey, a staunch Amazon man, was apparently there in September though 'I asked not to be invited back this year, as I want to be able to speak my mind and not have any hint of a quid pro quo.' Some authors seem too intimidated even to say whether they attend. (*New York Times*, 20 September) [LW]

**R.I.P. Jane Baker**, who with her husband Pip scripted four 1980s *Doctor Who* storylines—including the first appearance of that villainous renegade Time Lord, the Rani—died on 8 September. [MPJ] • **Donatas Banionis** (1924–2014), Lithuanian actor who played the lead role in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972), died on 4 September aged 90. [GF] • **Vanna Bonta** (1958–2014), US actress best known for *The Beastmaster* (1982), whose 'quantum fiction' sf novel is *Flight* (1995), died in July. [SS] • **Deodato Borges**, Brazilian comics writer/artist who created his country's wildly popular superhero Flame (radio from 1960, comic from 1963), died on 25 August; he was 80. [PDF] • **Theodore J. Flicker** (1930–2014), US writer and film-maker who wrote and directed the spoof *The President's Analyst* (1967), died on 12 September aged 84. [TF] • **Eugie Foster** (1971–2014), US author and editor who won a 2009 Nebula award for 'Sinner, Baker, Fabulist, Priest; Red Mask, Black Mask, Gentleman, Beast', died on 27 September; she was only 42. Her stories are collected in *Returning My Sister's Face* (2009) and other volumes. [JV] • **Don Keefer** (1916–2014), US character actor best remembered for the *Twilight Zone* segment based on Jerome Bixby's 'It's a Good Life' died on 7 September aged 98. Other genre appearances included *Sleeper* (1973) and *Liar Liar* (1997). [CH] • **Graham Joyce** (1954–2014), UK author of distinguished fantasy, dark fantasy and horror novels which won him six British Fantasy Awards and a World



Fantasy Award, died on 9 September; he was 59. [MJE] Five of his books are currently in development as feature films. [CPJ] Graham was a frequent highlight of UK conventions, where his cheering presence will be sadly missed. ● *Bill Kerr* (1922-2014), Australian character actor whose genre credits include *Adam Adamant Lives!* (1967), *Doctor Who: 'The Enemy of the World'* (1967-1968) and *Peter Pan* (2003), died on 29 August aged 92. [PA] ● *Richard Kiel* (1939-2014), 7' 2" US actor who played Jaws in two James Bond films, died on 10 September aged 74. He was also in the 1962 *Twilight Zone* segment 'To Serve Man'. ● *Angus Lennie* (1930-2014), Scots actor who came to sticky ends in the *Doctor Who* storylines 'Terror of the Zygons' (1967) and 'The Ice Warriors' (1975) and played Mr Tumns in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (BBC 1969), died on 14 September aged 84. [MPJ] ● *Kirby McCauley* (1941-2014), major US literary agent during the 1980s—clients included Stephen King, George R.R. Martin, Robert Silverberg and Peter Straub—died on 30 August; he was 72. [GRAM] He chaired the first World Fantasy Convention in 1975 and edited the landmark horror anthology *Dark Forces* (1980). Charles Platt writes: 'At Avon Books in the early 1970s, I received manuscripts from an insurance salesman in Minneapolis who described himself as a literary agent. During a phone call, he asked if I thought he could succeed in New York. Thus did I meet the unfailingly enterprising and amiable Kirby McCauley, a dear friend who earned his success the hard way.' ● *Denny Miller* (1934-2014), US actor who starred in *Tarzan, the Ape Man* (1959)—then regarded as the worst *Tarzan* film—died on 9 September aged 80. [MPJ] Another genre credit was *The Six Million Dollar Man*. ● *Donald Sinden* (1923-2014), noted UK actor whose occasional genre credits include *The Prisoner* (1967), *The Island at the Top of the World* (1974), *The Canterville Ghost* (1996, 1997) and *Alice in Wonderland* (1999), died on 11 September aged 90. ● *Stanley C. Skirvin* (1927-2014), US fan who edited the programme and memory books for the 1949 Cincinnati Worldcon (Cinvention) died on 28 March aged 86. [BH]

**The Weakest Link.** Host: 'Who wrote "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" after his incarceration there?' Contestant: 'Gary Glitter.' (BBC2 *Two Tribes*) ● Host: 'On what day of the week did Robinson Crusoe find his companion?' Contestant: 'Tuesday.' (ITV *The Chase*) ● Host: 'The Abominable Snowman is said to live in what mountain range?' Contestant: 'The Alps.' (BBC2 *Two Tribes*) [PE]

**Man Booker Prize.** Of the four longlisted titles of genre interest (see A325), two have reached the six-book shortlist: Karen Joy Fowler's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* and Howard Jacobson's *J*.

**Court Circular.** Yet another plagiarism suit against a hugely profitable film: US author Isabella Tanikuni claims that far from being loosely based on Hans Christian Andersen, Disney's *Frozen* is stolen from her self-published autobiography *Yearnings of the Heart*, about growing up in the Peruvian Andes and learning to live in the USA. This terrible violation can only be healed by \$250 million in damages. Similarities would appear to be deeply metaphorical, or imaginary, but of course it's great publicity. (Sydney Morning Herald, 25 September)

**As Others Research Us.** Morning Tyldum is to direct *Pattern Recognition*: 'Based on the novel *Neuromancer* by William Gibson, it centres on [thumbnail synopsis of Gibson's novel *Pattern Recognition* follows] ...' (Independent, 13 September) ● On urban-dystopia sf: 'We see a similar portrait of the urban future in John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar*, about an overcrowded off-world colony.' (Slate, September; since amended) [AL] Did Zanzibar seem an exotic off-world name?

**British Fantasy Awards.** FANTASY NOVEL: Sofia Samatar, *A Stranger in Olandria*. HORROR NOVEL: Lauren Beukes, *The Shining Girls*. NOVELLA: Sarah Pinborough, *Beauty*. SHORT CAROL: Johnstone, 'Signs of the Times' (*Black Static* #33). ANTHOLOGY: Jonathan Oliver, ed., *End of the Road*. COLLECTION: Stephen Volk, *Monsters in the Heart*. SMALL PRESS: *The Alchemy Press*. COMIC/GRAPHIC NOVEL: Becky Cloonan, *Demeter*. ARTIST: Joey Hi-Fi. NONFICTION: Justin Landon & Jared Shurin, eds., *Speculative Fiction 2012*. MAGAZINE/PERIODICAL: *Clarkesworld*. FILM/TV EPISODE: *Game of Thrones: 'The Rains of Castamere'*. NEWCOMER: Ann Leckie for *Ancillary Justice*. SPECIAL: Farah Mendlesohn.

**Outraged Letters.** *Carl Glover* found the Loncon 3 photo album link: 'Not only were they not inep, but they were ept enough to bring to mind Stephen King's famous question about con attendees: "Why are they all so fat?"' ● *Martyn P. Jackson* reports a Scottish Time Lord restraining himself from pontification on the now-past referendum: "As I chose to leave Scotland many years ago, I forfeited my right to tell Scottish residents how to run the country." David Tennant drolly informs *The Sunday Times*. / Well said sir. / One could point out that he left his home planet in a stolen Tardis even longer ago, and that never

stopped him interfering in Gallifrey's time war against the Daleks, but that might verge on the pedantic.' (Matthew Norman, *Independent*, 18 August) ● *Peter Mabey* remembers Loncon 3: 'I had a pretty good time, in spite of missing at least 75% of what was going on. I was sad that Dave Kyle couldn't make it, especially as his Dinosaurs of Fandom would likely have given me the opportunity to meet other veterans of Loncon1. After the event, I realised I should have suggested to the committee that it would have been nice for anyone from that one to be able to display some sort of identification. As it was, I only had a few words with Bob Silverberg, but not with Brian Aldiss who I only saw on the far side of the hall on his birthday. / I think that at The Hague there was a meeting of fans who had been to all six of the European Worldcons up to then, but I don't recall any subsequently, and I don't know of anyone else with the complete set of nine now.' ● *Robert Silverberg* adds a note on his personal Worldcon attendance record: 'I have an unbroken streak myself from 1955 on, which I reckon as 60 in a row, but I missed the earliest ones because my mama wouldn't let me go when I was of single-digit age.'

**Random Fandom.** *Nova Awards.* The Novacon 44 website should now (1 October) have online and downloadable voting forms for the Nova fanzine awards at novacon.org.uk/nova\_awards.php. ● *Whoops!* Traditional post-con lurgi after Loncon 3 included reported diagnoses of whooping-cough; Farah Mendlesohn and I both suspect we had this.

**The Dead Past.** 40 Years Ago, the mould was broken: 'The first British *Star Trek* convention was held September 28/9 in Leicester. Some fans who turned up and tried to register were told that the convention was full, and no more registrations were being taken. Imagine that happening at a SF convention!' (*Checkpoint* 54, October 1974) ● 30 Years Ago: 'A MARVELLOUS FEAR FOR NAMES is one of the things that just about everyone grants Tolkien. Which is why I think it's a bit mean of Unwin to publish [in *The Book Of Lost Tales II*] the fact that in callow 1917 he perpetrated, inter alia, an elf called Tinfang Warble ... BOB SHAW's *Fire Pattern* has roused speculation; the hero rings an aging John Sladek to ask about spontaneous combustion in people, and can only extract flip, joky, content-free answers. Is Shaw needing Sladek, I was asked? Bob confesses: "John wrote all his own dialogue for that scene." (*Ansible* 40, October 1984)

C.O.A. *Doreen Rogers* (a change of care home), Cotton Hill House, Berwick Road, Shrewsbury, SY1 2PG.

**Stamp Out Crime.** According to *Linn's Stamp News*—though not confirmed by the USPS—there's to be a US Batman stamp this month to mark the Caped Crusader's 75th anniversary. [F770]

**Fanfundery.** TAFF: 2015 TransAtlantic Fan Fund nominations will open at Novacon (14-16 November), with voting to start on 1 January: a westbound race, sending a Euro-delegate to the Spokane Worldcon.

**Media Awards.** UK TV Choice: Best International Show was won by the all-conquering *Game of Thrones* (BBC, 9 September). [MPJ] ● *Classic FM Poll* for all-time best film soundtrack: Howard Shore's *Lord of the Rings* score was the winner, with John Williams in second place for the original 1977 *Star Wars* film music. (BBC, 26 August) [MPJ]

**Chog's Masterclass.** *Dept of The Return Trip Was Much Shorter.* 'At the full fruitful measure of that velocity the super-ship literally annihilated distance ...' (E.E. Smith, *Triplanetary*, 1948) [DD] ● *Feline Psychology Dept.* 'Like a cat scenting an approaching storm, she had left with a pair of suitcases ...' (Chris Fowler, *Soho Black*, 1998) [BA] ● *Eyeballs in the Sky.* 'Raven's eyes, watching the uneven ground, touched the girl's quick feet and stayed there.' (Poul Anderson, *Let the Spacemen Beware!* (1963) [TS]) ● 'He has kind eyes, the sort of eyes that haven't gotten used to handing out bad news.' (Michael C. White, *A Brother's Blood*, 1996) [PB] ● 'Yet Salim's eye snagged on the pointed ears that sprang up to either side of the close-shorn, wiry hair.' (James L. Sutter, *The Redemption Engine*, 2014) [PM] ● *Dept of Personal Idiosyncrasy.* 'Salim had no particular desire to explode.' (*Ibid*) ● *Reaction Shot Dept.* 'Norlander dropped his gun. He had never felt so disarmed.' (Arne Dahl, *Misterioso*, 1999; trans Tiina Nunnally 2011) [PB] ● *Dept of Doublethink.* 'Who is this man?' he stopped himself from thinking, yet the thought stayed with him.' (*Ibid*) ● *Neat Tricks Dept.* 'Under his beard, Torin frowned.' (Keith R.A. DeCandido, *Dragon Precinct*, 2004) [BT]

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