

# ansible



## Ansible 334 May 2015

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, 5 eggs, dangerous flags or a Cephalotron.

**Dysprosium & Puppygate.** The 2015 Eastercon at the Park Inn, Heathrow, was a lot of fun: I'm not much of a programme-goer these days but among other things appreciated the newsletter (*Plokra* team), real ale/cider bar (wrangled by Martin Hoare) and Hugo Horrors panel. The last discussed the Hugo shortlist, which as heavily foreshadowed had been successfully gamed by slate votes organized by groups calling themselves Sad Puppies and Rabid Puppies. This is made possible by the huge spread of Hugo preferences: a relatively small percentage of voters following a party-line slate covering all five available slots in each category can swamp the usual unorganized vote. SP/RP candidates duly filled the entire initial ballot for Related Work, Short Story, Novelette and Novella, with just two non-slate options for Best Novel—at least one freed by a declined slate nomination. Two slate choices were then removed as ineligible; two more unprecedentedly withdrew after the shortlist announcement, Marko Kloos (novel) and Annie Bellet (short); later withdrawals, too late to affect the printed ballot, were *Black Gate* (fanzine) and Edmund R. Schubert of *Orson Scott Card's Intergalactic Medicine Show* (editor, short form). Novel finalists are now *Ancillary Sword* by Ann Leckie, *The Dark Between the Stars* by Kevin J. Anderson, *The Goblin Emperor* by Katherine Addison (Sarah Monette), *Skin Game* by Jim Butcher and *The Three Body Problem* by Liu Cixin, trans Ken Liu. Anderson and Butcher were slate choices; Cixin just missed nomination and moved up when Kloos withdrew. The online indignation level has been high since Easter. George R.R. Martin himself took time off writing for several long, sane blog posts on 'Puppygate'. I mostly burnt out on listing links at [news.ansible.uk/mise/link15.html#hugonoms](http://news.ansible.uk/mise/link15.html#hugonoms), but continue to link to Mike Glycer's heroic *Fite 770* coverage. Since I consider slate voting a thoroughly bad thing, I expect to make judicious—though not indiscriminate—use of the No Award option on the final Hugo ballot. Meanwhile, all sympathy to John Lorentz's hard-pressed Sasquan Hugo committee; to Kevin Standee and others who'll be running a perhaps overcrowded and fraught Worldcon business meeting at which anti-slate rules changes will be proposed; and to slate nominees who were unaware either that they'd been included or that this placed them in an exposed position on a new battlefield of the US culture wars.

## The Puppies of Terra

**Romsey Campbell** will receive an honorary fellowship from Liverpool John Moores University in July 'for his outstanding contribution to literature'. ([news.cision.com](http://news.cision.com) announcement, 16 April)

**Malcolm Edwards** is to step down as Orion's deputy CEO and publisher at the end of the year, becoming chair of Gollancz and consultant publisher for Orion; he's glad to have found this 'way of stepping off the management roundabout'. (*Bookseller*, 29 April) [AIP]

**H.R. Giger's** name has been bestowed on a carnivorous *Nepenthes* pitcher-plant hybrid of 'nightmarish appearance' which in close-up looks like 'a frightening alien landscape'. (*Telegraph*, 10 April) [MPJ]

**Jeet Heer** on how the Hugos used to be: 'The nomination process works on the wisdom of crowds, which the final vote winnows to a winner. Slate voting undermines'. (Twitter, 18 April)

**K.J. Parker**, after much speculation (and a period of disinformation when this uncomic fantasy author was said to be female), has been revealed as the pseudonym of Tom Holt. (*Pornokitsch*, 21 April)

**Lavie Tidhar** summed up a great deal with his Hugo shortlist tweet: 'Truly it's an honour just to not be nominated.' (6 April)

## Concepts

6 May • **Arthur C. Clarke Award** presentation, Foyles, 107 Charing Cross Road, London. See [clarkeaward.com](http://clarkeaward.com) and 'Awards' below. Tickets £12.50: [www.foyles.co.uk/Public/Events/Detail.aspx?eventId=2521](http://www.foyles.co.uk/Public/Events/Detail.aspx?eventId=2521).

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

7 May • **London First Thursday** pub meeting. Upstairs bar, The Castle, 34-35 Cowcross St, London, EC1M 6DB, from 6pm—a temporary move while the Melton Mowbray is being refurbished in May and June.

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

9 May • **BFS/BSFA Pubmeet**, Brigantes Bar, 114 Micklegate, York. 4:30pm on. Free. With K.T. Davies, Mark Morris readings/Q&A.

13 May • **In Conversation**: Penelope Lively and Philip Pullman, Waterstones Piccadilly. 6:30-8:30pm. £20 online or £22 offline; £15/£17 for Society of Authors members. See [tinyurl.com/qgma7ja](http://tinyurl.com/qgma7ja).

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/k6zxyer](http://tinyurl.com/k6zxyer).

17 May • **Paul 'Gamma' Gamble** wake, The Enterprise, 2 Haverstock Hill, London, NW3 2BL. 6-11pm. All friends of Gamma welcome.

24 May • **Triffid Alley**, named in honour of John Wyndham (see A333): unveiling 11:30am-12:15pm. 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.'

27 May • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Sarah Pinborough. Free.

28 May - 6 Jun • **Sci-Fi-London** (genre film festival), London, various venues. See [www.sci-fi-london.com/festival](http://www.sci-fi-london.com/festival).

30 May • **Conan Doyle Con**, City Tavern, 38 Bishopsgate Street, Birmingham, B15 1EJ. Noon-8:30pm. £15. See [tinyurl.com/pzwmpl7](http://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](http://www.wonderlands.org.uk) for more.

4 Jun • **London First Thursday** at The Castle: see 7 May above.

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

5 Jun • **BFS Open Night**, The Blacksmith & Toffemaker pub, 292-294 Saint John St, London, EC1V 4PA. 7pm-11pm. Free; all welcome.

26 Sep • **BristolCon**, Doubletree Hotel, Bristol. Now £25 reg; £30 at the door. Cheques to 18 High Leaze Road, Patchway, Bristol BS34 5AF. See also [www.bristolcon.org](http://www.bristolcon.org).

26 Sep • **TitanCon**, Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast. £25 reg; £5 supporting. See [titancon.com](http://titancon.com).

16 Oct • **Gollancz Festival**, Waterstones Deansgate, Manchester. 6pm-9pm. Also online activity all day. More TBA at [gollanczfest.com](http://gollanczfest.com).

17 Oct • **Gollancz Festival**, Waterstones Piccadilly, London. 2pm-5pm. Also online activity all day. Again, more TBA at [gollanczfest.com](http://gollanczfest.com).

23-25 Oct • **Fantasycon**, East Midlands Conference Centre & Orchard Hotel, Nottingham. GoH (so far) John Connolly, Jo Fletcher, Brandon Sanderson. £65 reg; couples £110; under-16s £30; under-5s free. Rates rise 1 July. See [fantasycon2015.org](http://fantasycon2015.org).

25-28 Mar 2016 • **Mancunicon** (Eastercon), Manchester. GoH Alette de Bodard, David L. Clements, Ian McDonald, Sarah Pinborough. £60 reg; 13-17s £45; 4-12s £30; under-4s free. See [mancunicon.org.uk](http://mancunicon.org.uk).

28-29 May 2016 • **Satellite 5**, Marriott Hotel, Glasgow. Now £55 reg; 12-17s £20; 5-11s £5; under-5s £2. Rates good to 18 November. Membership forms and online registration at [satellite5.org.uk](http://satellite5.org.uk).

14-17 Apr 2017 • **Pasgon** (Eastercon), Cardiff. GoH Jo Walton, Lyn Evans, David 'DC' Carlisle, Judith Clute. See [www.pasgon.org.uk](http://www.pasgon.org.uk).

**Rumblings**. 2017 *Worldcon Site Selection* is open, with contenders Helsinki, Montréal, Nippon and Washington DC. Ballots, though not as yet online payment, at [sasquan.org/site-selection/](http://sasquan.org/site-selection/). • **Hugo Voting** (member number and PIN required): [sasquan.org/hugo-awards/voting/](http://sasquan.org/hugo-awards/voting/).

## Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us.** 'If you haven't seen any of Game of Thrones so far, you might be wondering if it's worth ploughing through 40 hours of fantasy hokum to get you up to speed. It certainly looks, at first glance, like a load of old nonsense comprising braeasts, fighting, dragons and not much else.' (Charlotte Runcie, *Telegraph*, 12 April) [MPJ] But after this cunning narrative hook, the article becomes a rave review.

**Awards.** A. Bertram Chandler (Australia; life achievement): Donna Maree Hanson. • **Arthur C. Clarke** shortlist: M.R. Carey, *The Girl with*

*All the Gifts*; Michel Faber, *The Book of Strange New Things*; Dave Hutchinson, *Europe in Autumn*; Emmi Itäranta, *Memory of Water*; Claire North, *The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August*; Emily St John Mandel, *Station Eleven*. ● **BSFA: NOVEL** Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Sword*. **SHORT** Ruth E.J. Booth, 'The Honey Trap' (*La Femme*). **NONFICTION** Edward James, *SF and Fantasy Writers and the First World War* (fantastic-writers-and-the-great-war.com). **ARTWORK** Teresa Farmer, *The Wasp Factory* (sculpture). ● **Ditmar** (Australia) novel category, a tie: Glenda Larke, *The Lascar's Dagger*; Trudi Canavan, *Thief's Magic*. ● **Doc Weir**: Martin Hoare. ● **Edgars** (mystery) novel winner: Stephen King, *Mr. Mercedes*. ● **ESFS Hall of Fame**: AUTHOR China Miéville; ARTIST Manchu (France); **MAGAZINE Fantastica Almanac** (Bulgaria); **PUBLISHER** Gallancz; **PROMOTER** Mihaela Marija Perković (Croatia); **TRANSLATOR** Ekaterina Dobrohotova-Majkova (Russia). ● **James Herbert** (horror; (inaugural award): Craig Davidson as Nick Cutter, *The Troop*. ● **James Tiptree Jr** for gender-bending fiction (tie): Monica Byrne, *The Girl in the Road*; Jo Walton, *My Real Children*. ● **Norma K Hemming** (Australia); sf race, gender, sexuality, class and disability): Paddy O'Reilly, *The Wonders*. ● **Philip K. Dick**: Meg Elison, *The Book of the Unnamed Midwife*. ● **Prometheus** (libertarian) shortlist: Liu Cixin, *The Three-Body Problem* (trans Ken Liu); Terry Pratchett, *Raising Steam*; Marcus Sakey, *A Better World*; Daniel Suarez, *Influx*. **Hall of Fame**: Harlan Ellison, "Repent, Harlequin!" Said the Ticktockman" (December 1965 Galaxy). ● **Pulitzer Prize**: the shortlist of five includes Jordan Harrison's sf play *Marjorie Prime*. [AIP] ● **Solstice** (SFWA life achievement award): Joanna Russ, Stanley Schmidt.

● **The Wildest Link**. **Bradley Walsh**: 'Who was famously imprisoned in cell C33 in Reading Gaol?' Contestant: 'Nelson Mandela.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE] ● **Bradley Walsh** again? "The fictional land of Fantippo features in books about which doctor?" *Beth Tweedle*, excusably: 'Who.' (ITV, *The Chase: Celebrity Special*, 5 April) [MPJ]

● **R.I.P. Patrick H Adkins** 1948-2015) US author, editor, publisher and fan who wrote the Titan mythological fantasy trilogy (1997-1990) and the sf/horror *The Third Beast* (2000), died on 7 April aged 67. [GHL] ● **Karl Alexander** (1944-2015), US film worker and author whose novel *Time after Time* (1979) appeared in the same year as the film based on his story, reportedly died in late March at age 70. [SFS] ● **James Best** (1926-2015), US character actor seen in many sf productions from *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953); *Riders to the Stars* (1954); *Forbidden Planet* (1956) and *The Killer Shrews* (1959) to *Return of the Killer Shrews* (2012), died on 6 April aged 88. [SG] ● **Claire Gordon** (1941-2015), UK actress seen in *Konga* (1961); aka *I Was a Teenage Gorilla*, died on 13 April aged 74. [MPJ] ● **Günter Grass** (1927-2015), Polish-born German author who received the Nobel Prize in 1999, died on 13 April aged 87. Fantastic elements appear in some of his novels, in particular the famous *The Tin Drum* (1959; filmed 1979) and the animal fantasies *The Flounder* (1977) and *The Rat* (1986). ● **Andrew Leslie** (1956-2015), Australian cinematographer whose films include *Babe* (1995), the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001-2003), *King Kong* (2005), *The Last Airbender* (2010), *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011) and the *Hobbit* trilogy (2011-2014), died on 27 April, he was 59. [MPJ] ● **Miroslav Ondricek** (1934-2015), Czech cinematographer who filmed *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1972), died on 28 March aged 80. [MPJ] ● **Rex Robinson** (1926-2015), UK actor seen in three *Doctor Who* serials (*The Three Doctors*, 1973; *The Monster of Peladon*, 1974; *The Hand of Fear*, 1975) and *Superman IV: The Quest for Peace* (1987), died in April; he was 89. [SFS] ● **Herb Trimpe** (1939-2015) US comics artist who during his long stint at Marvel drew *The Incredible Hulk* from 1968 to 1975 and co-created Wolverine, died on 13 April aged 75. [PDF] ● **Art Widner** (1917-2015), long-time US fan who was a 1940 founder member of Boston's first SF group *The Stranger Club* and published over 160 fanzines, died on 17 April; he was 97. [AR/AIP] *The Stranger Club*, including Art, was collective Fan Guest of Honour at the 1989 Boston Worldcon. Other honours included the 1989 Big Heart Award, a 1991 DUFF win and entrance to the First Fandom Hall of Fame. He was widely loved and will be very much missed.

● **Magazine Scene**. Neil Clarke reported the most popular story titles from the *Clarkesworld* slushpile (50,000+ submissions to date). Top of the list was 'Dust' (18 stories); then 'The Gift', 'Home', 'Hunger', and 'Homecoming' (all 16); 'The Box' (15); 'Monsters' (14); 'Lost and Found' (13)... (neil-clark.com, 9 April) Now I need to think up a new title for my current work in progress, 'A Homecoming Gift of Lost and Found Hunger-Monsters in a Box of Dust'.

● **We Are Everywhere**. Madeleine L'Engle was big news in *The Wall Street Journal* when her granddaughter found three pages cut from the draft of *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962). "The excerpt is the most direct

discussion of politics in her writing, the scholars said, offering a richer explanation of the author's political views. / They agreed [...] that cutting it was the right decision, one which strengthened the narrative. The section was too didactic, and would have dated the book, some said.' (*Galleycat*, 21 April) [PB] Will there soon be an Uncut Edition?

● **Random Fandom**. *Fancy That*: At the St Petersburg Eurocon in April, the programme book listed all the Russian nominations for ESFS awards but none from any other country. ● *Hugo Finalists for Best Fan Artist* (the one and only unpuppied category): Ninni Aalto, Brad W. Foster, Elizabeth Leggett, Spring Schoenhuth, Steve Stiles.

● **Outraged Letters**. *David Redd* on Terry Pratchett: 'In Charles Platt's front room, 1965, I heard Terry observe sadly that he didn't want to be known as "the thirteen-year-old author" all his life. Well, I think he cracked that one. RIP.' ● *Andrew Stephenson* misses nothing: 'During a recent (in UK) episode of TV's *CSI*, a dead man is revealed as having worked for accountants "Baker, Smith, Capaldi".'

● **The Dead Past**. *50 Years Ago*, Hugo controversy was not unknown: 'The London Worldcon Committee, which originally followed the lead of last year's Pacificon in dropping the drama award, have bowed before the general feeling prevalent in fandom and have heeded what has been a significant number of write-in nominations regarding this category. The Committee is undoubtedly to be congratulated, not only upon the reversal of its original decision, but upon the admirable manner in which it has conducted itself in the entire matter.' (*Skyrack* 79, May 1965) The reinstated Dramatic Presentation Hugo had just two nominees, *The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao* and *Dr. Strangelove* (which won). ● *30 Years Ago* there was a backlash in favour of good old-fashioned sf: "'Do You Remember when humans were heroes, androids didn't have social hang-ups and the only good alien was a dead one?'" Thus the flyer for Hamlyn's VENTURE SF line, edited by Andromeda Bookshop stalwarts Rog Peyton and Rog Milner.' (Anisble 43, May/June 1985) ● *20 Years Ago*, Stephen Baxter had a narrow escape: 'I've come to an agreement with the H.G. Wells estate over approval for my *Time Machine* sequel *The Time Ships*. The estate approved publication in return for a modest share of the proceeds, and so the huge pulping machines have been turned back from HarperCollins's Glasgow warehouse.' (Anisble 94, May 1995) ● *Hugos*: 'Meanwhile, spies inform me that Shoemaker-Levy 9 was not ruled ineligible for Best Dramatic Presentation but merely failed to get enough votes.' (*Ibid*)

● **Fanfunder**. *TAFF*: the 2015 European winner of the TransAtlantic Fan Fund is Nina Horvath, with 48 first-round votes to Wolf von Witting's 40 (Hold Over Funds 1; No Preference 18). Nina will attend Sasquan, the Spokane Worldcon. ● *DUFF*: there will be no 2015 race. Julian Warner and Justin Ackroyd are assisting Australasian administrator Bill Wright with the Down Under Fan Fund. Lucy Huntzinger is now acting as North American DUFF administrator, since the most recent NA winner Juanita Coulson is unable to handle the work.

● **Media Munchness**. *BAFTA TV Craft*: special visual/graphic effects, *Doctor Who* (BBC); original music, production design and make-up & hair, *Penny Dreadful* (Sky Atlantic). ● *Empire Film Awards*: best film was *Interstellar*, with Christopher Nolan as best director. Other winners included *Game of Thrones* ('Hero'), *Paddington* (comedy), *The Babadook* (horror) and *X-Men: Days of Future Past* (sf/fantasy). [MPJ]

● **Cljog's Mastertclass**. *Missing Link Dept*. 'He was wearing a grey cap, grey jacket, white shirt, navy-blue striped tie and white socks, which he'd pulled up almost to his pink knecaps.' (Claire North, *The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August*, 2014) [AS] ● *Dept of Fractal Physics*. 'The fact is that such [black] holes can be very small, as small as the size of their constituent particles...' (David A. Kyle, *Lensman from Rigel*, 1982) [BA] ● *Hothead Dept*. 'The human's brain began to function once more; he could almost feel it sweating.' (Poul Anderson and Gordon R. Dickson, 'In Hoka Signo Vinces', June 1953 *Other Worlds*) [CG] ● *Dept of Interplanetary Phenology*. 'I was somewhat startled, then, in looking at the head and center of the great military system of Mars, to find in his appearance a striking confirmation of the speculations of our terrestrial phenologists. His broad, misshapen head bulged in those parts where they had located the so-called organs of combativeness, destructiveness, etc.' (Garrett P. Serviss, *Edison's Conquest of Mars*, 1898) [JN] ● *Running Off at the Mouth Dept*. 'Dolusi let a smile drip toward the scientist.' (Curtis W. Casewit, *The Peacemakers*, 1960) [CG]

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