

Ansible



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The Deplorable Word

Sir Ken Dodd, who was 'highly tickled' at being knighted in the UK New Year Honours, is not best known for his genre roles in *Red Riding Hood* (1955), *Doctor Who* (1987) and *Alice in Wonderland* (1999).

Stephen Gallagher: Frank Belknap Long's KFC protest at the 1976 World Fantasy Con [see A353] was echoed at 2015's Fantasycon in Nottingham, where con-goers showed up to find the hotel's rather attractive brasserie menu withdrawn and replaced by a small selection of burger-van options. Said hotel being part of a campus conference centre and miles from any other eatery, fans responded by ordering-in from Domino's and piling up the empty pizza boxes in the foyer.

George R.R. Martin, who reacted to the US election result with deep despair—'Winter is coming. I told you so.'—may be struggling to forget that the first UK hardback of *A Game of Thrones* proudly declares on the copyright page that it's 'Set in Trump Medieval'. [PD]

Robert Sawyer adds further gloom: 'Truth is, there's very little ambitious science fiction left; most of what little is still published is fungible military SF or space opera, with no intellectual or emotional heft. The genre that was once rich with speculation and social comment has shrunk to a tiny puddle of escapism.' (Facebook, 30 Dec) [PDF]

Henry Wessells persuaded the London Times Nature Notebook to run three paragraphs on the sf significance of W.H. Hudson (*A Crystal Age*) and Richard Jeffries (*After London*): 'These two English nature writers now take their place along with Arthur C Clarke and Isaac Asimov as some of our most influential science fiction authors in a new book and exhibition mounted by Mr Wessells.' (23 December) [RR]

Philip Wylie was seemingly the first sf author to name and shame 2017 in the title of a book, blurbled as 'What will happen when man's poisoned atmosphere drives him underground? ... The startling novel of men and women trapped in *Los Angeles: A.D. 2017*'. (1971)

Coniacian

15 Jan • **British Fantasy Society Pubmeet**, The Falcon Tap, 94 Micklegate, York, YO1 6JX. 4:30pm-8pm(ish). With Joanne Harris. All welcome, but please book a free ticket via tinyurl.com/hlzjcy.

25 Jan • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Leslie McMurtry and Edward Gomez on the science of *Doctor Who*. Free; all welcome.

25 Jan • **Future Histories and Forecasting**, British Interplanetary Society HQ, 27/29 South Lambeth Road, London, SW8 1SZ. 10am-4:30pm. £55; BIS members £45; students £25. Book at www.bispace.com/2016/09/07/17764/future-histories-and-forecasting.

28 Jan • **DurhamCon**, DSU, Dunelm House, New Elvet, Durham. GoH Parah Mendlesohn, Charles Stross. From 11am. £5; students £4.

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.contable.org.uk/quoideneuf.

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

4 Feb • **Birmingham HorrorCon**, Edgbaston Stadium, Birmingham. 9am £15, 10am £10. See www.horrorfan.co.uk.

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

10-12 Feb • **Conrunner 4** (conrunning), Park Inn, Nottingham. £45 reg (day rate £25 for Saturday or Sunday); £8 ICSF members; past GoHs free. See www.union.ic.ac.uk/scf/icsf/picocon/.

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.

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

14-17 Apr • **Innominate** (Eastercon), Hilton Metropole, NEC, Birmingham. £60 reg; £45 unwaged; £40 YA (under 26); £20 child (under 16); £1 infant (under 6). Cheques to Eastercon 2017 c/o 3 Devener Rd, Halfway, Sheffield, S20 8GE. See www.eastercon2017.uk.

4 Jul • **Twentieth-Century British Periodicals** (conference), Museum of English Rural Life, Redlands Rd, Reading. Call for papers deadline 31 January. Fans with sf magazine expertise are welcome. See blogs.reading.ac.uk/english-at-reading/2016/11/16/call-for-papers/.

9-13 Aug • **Worldcon 75**, Helsinki, Finland. €145 reg; €95 first-timers (no past Worldcon membership); €90 youth (16-25); €60 child (6-15); accompanied under-6s free; €35 supp. See www.worldcon.fi.

27-31 Aug • **Edinburgh Horror Festival**, various city venues and programme to be announced. See www.edhorrorfest.co.uk.

16-20 Aug 2018 • **Worldcon 76** (Worldcon), San José, CA, USA. \$160 reg, to rise on 1 February 2017; \$90 YA (15-21) and military; under-15s \$60; \$50 supp; under-6s free; the usual discounts for pre-supporters and site voters apply. See worldcon76.org for details.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. A letter from Peter Steinfeld in the *New York Times Book Review* deplores this paper's scanty coverage of religion and mentions a few more privileged genres: 'The Book Review does publish regular roundup columns on self-help, science fiction and fantasy, and crime. Some of my friends believe that those categories already address religion sufficiently. I hope the editors disagree.' (23 December) [JB]

Awards. *Rotster Award* for life achievement in sf of zine art: Ditmar (Dick Jenssen). • *BSFA Awards*: the first round of nominations closed on 31 December and the second should be announced shortly.

JFeminism Masterclass. 'And he was suddenly a very different man. A man! That was it. He was so excessively masculine. / How could she have blundered around so, looking for a *mind* that was superior to hers, completely overlooking the fact that a woman's most important function in life begins with physical domination?' (Anne McCaffrey, 'A Meeting of Minds', 1969; collected in *Get Off the Unicorn*, 1977)

R.I.P. *Richard Adams* (1920-2016), UK author most famous for the epic rabbit quest *Watership Down* (1972, a Carnegie Medal winner that was filmed in 1978), died on 24 December; he was 96. Further works of genre interest—though none received quite the same level of international acclaim as his debut—include *Shardik* (1974), *The Plague Dogs* (1977; filmed 1982) and *The Girl in a Swing* (1980; filmed 1989). [MJE] • *Gillon Aitken* (1938-2016), UK literary agent at Aitken Alexander and Associates, whose clients included the Orwell estate and Salman Rushdie, died on 28 October aged 78. [MMW] • *Don Calfa* (1939-2016), US actor in such horror comedies as *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985), *Chopper Chicks in Zombietown* (1989) and *Corpses Are Forever* (2004), died on 1 December aged 76. [PDF] • *Billy Chapin* (1943-2016), US child actor in numerous 1950s productions including the sf thriller *Tobor the Great* (1954), died on 2 December aged 72. [PDF] • *Alice Drummond* (1928-2016), US character actress whose genre credits include *Dark Shadows* (1967), *Ghostbusters* (1984), *Tales from the Darkside* (1990) and *Synecdoche, New York* (2008), died on 30 November aged 88. [DKMK] • *Don 'Duck' Edwing* (1934-2016), US cartoonist and gag writer who contributed to *Mad* magazine from 1962 to 2012, died on 26 December aged 82. • *Carrie Fisher* (1956-2016), US actress, writer and script doctor whose most famous role was as Princess Leia in the original *Star Wars* trilogy (1977-1983) plus related productions including *The Force Awakens* (2015) and its coming sequel, died on 27 December; she was 60. Remembering George Lucas's insistence that Leia couldn't wear a bra—because in the weightlessness of space 'your body expands but your bra doesn't, so you get strangled by your own underwear'—she wrote: 'I think that this would make for a fantastic

obituary. I tell my younger friends that no matter how I go, I want it reported that I drowned in moonlight, strangled by my own bra.' • **Bernard Fox** (1927-2016), Welsh character actor seen in *Bewitched* (1966-1972) and its spinoff *Tabitha* (1977-1978), *The Bamboo Saucer* (1968) and *The Mummy* (1999), died on 14 December aged 89. • **Zsa Zsa Gabor** (1917-2016), Hungarian-born US actress who starred in *Queen of Outer Space* (1958), died on 18 December aged 99. Further genre credits include *Frankenstein's Great Aunt Tillie* (1984) and *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3* (1987). [PDF] • **Gottlieb** (Marcel Gottlieb, 1934-2016), French comics writer, artist and publisher who in his own magazine *Fluide Glacial* co-created the beret-wearing French superhero Superdupont, died on 10 December aged 82. • **Alex Hamilton** (1930-2016), author and journalist who wrote many horror/macabre stories—his first solo collection being *Beam of Malice* (1966)—and compiled several such anthologies, died on 2 November aged 85. • **Gordon Hunt** (1929-2016), sound/recording director of many Hanna-Barbera animated series including *The Flintstones Comedy Show* (1980-1981), *The Smurfs* (1981-1989), *The Jetsons* (1985-1987), *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventures* (1990) and *The Addams Family* (1992-1993), died on 17 December; he was 87. [SFS] • **George S. Irving** (1922-2016), US actor whose voice work includes *The Year Without a Santa Claus* (1974), *Pinocchio's Christmas* (1980) and *A Miser Brothers' Christmas* (2008), died on 26 December aged 94. [PDF] • **Richard Kyle**, comics fan, dealer and publisher (in particular of *Graphic Story World*, later *Wonderworld*) who in 1964 coined the term 'graphic novel', died on 10 December; he was 87. [AB] • **Robert C. Lee** (1931-2016), US author of YA and children's sf novels beginning with *The Iron Arm of Michael Glenn* (1965), died on 31 August 2016; he was 84. [DB] • **Roger Leiner** (1955-2016), prolific Luxembourg cartoonist who with Lucien Czuga in 1988 created Superjehmp—their country's humorous/satirical equivalent of Superman—died on 29 December aged 61. [PDF] • **Tricia McCauley**, US actress seen in the short fantasy *Never Dream: The Beginning* (2012), was found dead in her car on 27 December; she was 46. • **Kathleen Meyer** (1948-2016), Chicago-area US fan who chaired several conventions including the 1991 Chicago Worldcon, died on December 13. [SHS] • **Paul Peter Porges** (1927-2016), Vienna-born writer and cartoonist who wrote and drew for *Mad* magazine from 1966 to issue #500 in 2009, died on 20 December; he was 89. [PDF] • **Debbie Reynolds** (1932-2016), long-time US star actress whose few genre credits include *Charlotte's Web* (1973), *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1998) and the *Halloweentown* series (from 1998), died at the age of 84 on 28 December—a day after her daughter Carrie Fisher. [F770] • **John Calvin 'Rez' Rezmerski**, US academic and poet whose sf poems included the Rhysling-winning 'A Dream of Heredity' (1986), died on 5 November; he was 74. [DL] • **Patricia Robins** (1921-2016), UK romance author whose early work included such children's fantasies as *Tree Fairies* (1945) and *Sea Magic* (1946), died on 4 December aged 95. • **Andrew Sachs** (1930-2016), German-born actor best loved for *Fawlty Towers*, whose genre credits include *Monkey* (1978-1980 voice), *Doctor Who 'Shada'* (2003) and *Going Postal* (2010), died on 23 November aged 86. • **Philip Saville** (1930-2016), UK film/tv director whose productions included *Count Dracula* (1977) and *The Cloning of Joanna May* (1991), died on 22 December aged 86. [PDF] • **Robert E. Scholes** (1929-2016), US academic and sf/fantasy critic whose nonfiction books include *Science Fiction: History—Science—Vision* (1977) with Eric S. Rabkin, died on 9 December; he was 87. [PDF] • **Liz Smith** (1921-2016), UK actress whose genre credits include *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1999), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005) and *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (2005), died on 24 December aged 95. [PC] • **Robert Stiller** (1928-2016), Polish writer and editor whose many translations include Anthony Burgess, Lewis Carroll, Ian Fleming, Edward Lear, Vladimir Nabokov and Ayn Rand, died on 10 December; he was 88. • **Jeremy Summers** (1931-2016), UK film/tv director whose credits include *The Vengeance of Fu Manchu* (1967) and *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)* (1969-1970), died on 14 December aged 85. [KN] • **Nila Thompson** (1954-2016), US *Star Trek*, convention and local (St. Louis) club fan, wife of David K.M. Klaus, died on 10 December; she was 62. [DKMK] • **Rochelle Marie Uhlenkott** (1960-2016), US writer whose story 'The Gift' as by Rochelle Marie was in Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Sword and Sorcery XI* (1994), died shortly before Christmas. [F770] • **Peter Vaughan** (1923-2016), UK actor seen in *Village of the Damned* (1960), *Time Bandits* (1981), *Brazil* (1985), *Fatherland* (1994) and *Game of Thrones*, died on 6 December; he was 93. • **Van Williams** (1934-2016), US actor who starred in *The Green Hornet* (1966-1967 tv), with crossover appearances in the Adam West *Batman*, died on 28 November aged 82. [F770] • **Tyrus Wong** (1910-2016), Chinese-

born US artist who created the distinctive backgrounds of Disney's *Bambi* (1942), died on 30 December aged 106. (New York Times)

New Year Language Lesson: Frisian. rûgelje, 'to drop needles all over the floor, as a Christmas tree in January.' (Julie Phillips) [JDB]

Court Circular. ComicMix, the publisher sued by Dr. Seuss estate for its proposed *Seuss/Star Trek* mashup *Oh, The Places You'll Boldly Go!* (written by David Gerrold), has asked a US federal judge to dismiss the case on the ground that the book is a parody protected by 'fair use' exceptions to copyright. (GeekNation.com, 22 December)

Outraged Letters. David V. Barrett on Rog Peyton's A353 request for fewer obituaries (especially of media folk): 'Leave them how they are, Dave. It's right that we should read obits of people we've never heard of (but are significant to SF) alongside people we do know of—and sometimes sadly know.' • Ramsey Campbell: 'The obituaries are sad (what else would they be?) but I don't think you should truncate them.' • Simon R. Green: 'I think hearing about Carrie Fisher hit me hardest, because it was so unexpected. I like to think she's meeting Peter Cushing in the Hereafter, and saying "I still can't believe you made us do our big dramatic scene together with you wearing carpet slippers."'

Talking Squid Dept. Catherine Aboard reassures anyone nervous of lurking skiffiness in *Arrival*: 'Yes, it's set among space beasties, but it is a movie absolutely about the human condition, about how we choose who to love and how to love them.' (Guardian, 14 December)

Random Fandom. *FAAN Awards*: nominations are open but only to last year's 41 voters and administrator, whose choices will fill four of five slots for each category (the fifth being left blank for a write-in) on the final ballot to be released after 28 February. Anyone interested can then vote. [MM] • *Rob Hansen's* famous workplace, the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, is closing; the listed building has already been sold. If this 500-year-old business can't relocate to somewhere cheaper than London, Rob anticipates early retirement at the end of April.

The Dead Past. 20 Years Ago, Jon Langford wrote about his visit to William Burroughs: 'The garage door was pocked with shotgun pellets, and there were all these bits of wood that had been blown apart ... I asked Burroughs what he thought about gun control, and he rasped, "I am a member of the NRA. But I don't pay any dues.'" Snapshot from the great meeting show a priceless cultural artefact in the Burroughs garden: his very own orgone box. (Anisble 114, Jan 1997)

C.O.A. Lou Antonelli, 1100 West Jackson St, Clarksville, TX 75426, USA. • Edward James & Farah Mendlesohn (together with Vor Lord casts), *The Hollies*, 67 James St, Penkhull, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 5HR.

Fanfundersy. *TAFF*: Voting is open for the 2017 eastbound race, with candidates Sarah Gulde, Alissa McKersie and John Purcell contending for the trip to Worldcon 75 in Helsinki. See tafftrip.com for the ballot with their platforms; if voting online via PayPal, click the 'TAFf voting using PayPal' tab for advice. Voting ends on 4 March. • *GUFF*: The 2017 ballot is online at ozfanfunds.com/?page_id=63. Candidates are Donna Maree Hanson, Sam Hawke, Belle McQuattie and (jointly) Alexandra Pierce and Alisa Krasnostein. Voting ends on 1 April. • *DUFF*: nominations for the 2017 southbound race (NA-Australia) are open, closing on 22 January. See downunderfanfund.wordpress.com.

Thog's Mastertclass, Sartorial Niceties Dept. 'The protesters had come prepared. With khaki flak jackets and backpacks, and their socks tucked into their trousers ...' (Christopher Fowler, *Bryant & May: The Burning Man*, 2015) [CH] • *Dept of Sensitive Observation*: 'She laughed so hard her breasts jiggled.' (Camilla Lackberg, *The Stonecutter*, 2005; trans Steven T. Murray 2010) [PB] • *Neat Tricks*: 'Justin kicked off the wall and rode his roller chair across the floor, fetched up at the front counter and went adroitly erect.' (James Sallis, *Driven*, 2012) [PB] • *Cruel and Unusual Anatomy Dept.* 'The sword opened his chest and he fell to the street, his intestines heaving from his body like a spill of gashly streamers.' (Charles de Lint, *Svaha*, 1989) [BA] • *Dept of Esoteric Nomenclature*: 'Emerson took a deep breath to steady himself and closed his eyes, reciting the formulae, making the proper gestures and invoking the names of nameless gods.' (Nancy A. Collins, *The Land of the Reflected Ones' in Avenue X and Other Dark Streets*, 1995) [BA] • *Count the Tentacles Dept.* 'His penis looked naked and sad, hanging between his legs like a dead squid.' ('Furies in Black Leather', *ibid*) [BA]

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