

ansible



Ansible 298 May 2012

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 Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE, Whuffie, or an oyster shell inside a skull.

Olympus 2012. It was a big Eastercon. With 1400 members crowding the Heathrow Radisson hotel's fire limit, advance registration closed early and there were no at-door memberships—an Eastercon first. The *Guardian* report (9 April, with a photo of GoH George R.R. Martin looking cuddly) was summed up thus at Making Light: 'Iron law of universe violated—SF convention receives positive, level-headed coverage from local press'. Everyone, and especially GRRM himself, was photographed on his Iron Throne—conveniently placed in the hotel lobby.

Future Eastercons. GoH Paul Cornell's call for panel gender parity ('If I'm on, at any convention this year, a panel that doesn't have a 50/50 gender split (I'll settle for two out of five), I'll hop off that panel, and find a woman to take my place.') was hotly debated at Olympus and especially in Eastercon bidding, despite a lack of opposing bids. EightSquaredCon (Bradford 2013) went for a gender parity policy; Satellite 4 (Glasgow 2014) wanted the best panellists irrespective of gender; controversy happened; both bids were voted in. Details below.

Namedrops. Also seen doing things highly characteristic of themselves were GOHs Cory Doctorow, Tricia Sullivan, Margaret Austin and Martin Easterbrook, plus Jacq Monahan (TAFF) and Kylie Ding (GUFF).

BSFA Awards. This presentation also included the James White Award for an unpublished short—being Colum Paget's 'Invocation of the Lurker'—and MC John Meaney's 40-minute attempt on the Audience Endurance Marathon, channelling (as Marion Pitman put it) his inner Bernard Manning to a silently tweeted chorus of 'hideous trainwreck', 'Walkout now in progress', etc. NOVEL Christopher Priest, *The Islanders*. Priest to audience of voters: 'I suppose you all have to resign now.' SHORT Paul Cornell, 'The Copenhagen Interpretation'. ARTWORK Dominic Harman. NONFICTION John Clute, David Langford, Peter Nicholls and Graham Sleight, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, Third Edition*. (Peter being in far-off Melbourne and John in abyssal Camden Town, the remaining chief editors were left to grab the glory.) Another first: the BSFA Award has never before taken the form of a cut-out plastic ray-gun on a base made from old sf paperbacks bolted together.

The Hugo Shortlist was announced on Saturday night; a record 1101 ballots had been cast. • NOVEL (932 ballots) Jo Walton, *Among Others*; George R.R. Martin, *A Dance With Dragons*; Mira Grant, *Deadline*; China Miéville, *Embassytown*; James S.A. Corey, *Leviathan Wakes*. • NOVELLA (473) Mira Grant, *Countdown*; Carolyn Ives Gilman, 'The Ice Owl' (*F&SF* 11/11); Mary Robinette Kowal, 'Kiss Me Twice' (*Asimov's* 6/11); Kij Johnson, 'The Man Who Bridged the Mist' (*Asimov's* 9/11); Ken Liu, 'The Man Who Ended History: A Documentary' (*Panverse* 3); Catherynne M. Valente, *Silently and Very Fast* (*WSFA*). • NOVELETTE (499) Paul Cornell, 'The Copenhagen Interpretation' (*Asimov's* 7/11); Rachel Swirsky, 'Fields of Gold' (*Eclipse Four*); Brad R. Torgersen, 'Ray of Light' (*Analog* 12/11); CharlieJane Anders, 'Six Months, Three Days' (*Tor.com*); 'What We Found' by Geoff Ryman (*F&SF* 3/11). • SHORT STORY (593) E. Lily Yu, 'The Cartographer Wasps and the Anarchist Bees' (*Clarkesworld* 4/11); Mike Resnick, 'The Homecoming' (*Asimov's* 4/11); Nancy Fulda, 'Movement' (*Asimov's* 3/11); Ken Liu, 'The Paper Menagerie' by (*F&SF* 3/11); John Scalzi, 'Shadow War of the Night Dragons: Book One: The Dead City: Prologue'. • RELATED WORK (461) John Clute, David Langford, Peter Nicholls and Graham Sleight, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, Third Edition*; Daniel M. Kimmel, *Jar Jar Binks Must Die ... and Other Observations about Science Fiction Movies*; Jeff VanderMeer and S. J. Chambers, *The Steampunk Bible: An Illustrated Guide to the World of Imaginary Airships, Corsets and Goggles, Mad Scientists, and Strange Literature*; Seanan McGuire, *Wicked Girls*; Brandon Sanderson, Dan Wells, Howard Tayler, Mary Robinette Kowal and Jordan Sanderson, *Writing Excuses, Season 6*. • GRAPHIC STORY (339) Ursula Vernon, *Digger*; Bill Willingham and Mark Buckingham, *Fables Vol 15: Rose Red*; Joe Hill and Gabriel Rodriguez, *Locke & Key Volume 4, Keys to the Kingdom*; Howard Tayler and Travis Walton, *Schlock Mercenary: Force Multiplication*; Mike Carey and Peter Gross, *The Unwritten (Volume 4): Leviathan*. • DRAMATIC—LONG (592) *Captain America: The First Avenger*, *Game of Thrones* (Season 1), *Harry Potter*

and the *Deathly Hallows Part 2*, *Hugo*, *Source Code*. • DRAMATIC—SHORT (512) *Doctor Who*: 'The Doctor's Wife'; *The Drink Tank's* Hugo Acceptance Speech'; *Doctor Who*: 'The Girl Who Waited'; *Doctor Who*: 'A Good Man Goes to War'; *Community*: 'Remedial Chaos Theory'. • SEMIPROZINE (357) *Apex Magazine*, *Interzone*, *Lightspeed*, *Locus*, *New York Review of Science Fiction*. • FANZINE (322) *Banana Wings*, *The Drink Tank*, *File 770*, *Journey Planet*, *SF Signal*. • FANCAST (326) *The Coode Street Podcast*, *Galactic Suburbia Podcast*, *SF Signal Podcast*, *SF Squeecast*, *StarShipSofa*. • PRO EDITOR—LONG (358) Lou Anders, Liz Gorinsky, Anne Lesley Groell, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Betsy Wollheim. • PRO EDITOR—SHORT (512) John Joseph Adams, Neil Clarke, Stanley Schmidt, Jonathan Strahan, Sheila Williams. • PRO ARTIST (399) Dan dos Santos, Bob Eggleton, Michael Komarck, Stephan Martiniere, John Picacio. • FAN ARTIST (216) Brad W. Foster, Randall Munroe, Spring Schoenhuth, Maurine Starkey, Steve Stiles, Taral Wayne. • FAN WRITER (360) James Bacon, Claire Brialey, Christopher J Garcia, Jim C. Hines, Steven H Silver. • JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD (396) Mur Lafferty, Stina Leicht, Karen Lord, Brad R. Torgersen, E. Lily Yu. • Several palpitating nominees attended the Olympus announcement. Graham Sleight introduced himself to George R.R. Martin, 'and he very benignly asked who I was. I said I was one of the editors of the *SF Encyclopedia*. He paused, cogitated, and then said: "But you don't look like Peter Nicholls."'

The Inexorability of the Specious

Philip K. Dick reacts to a tv piece on *Blade Runner*: 'This indeed is not science fiction; it is not fantasy; it is exactly what Harrison [Ford] said: futurism.' (letter, 11 October 1981, now at www.philipkdick.com) [DB]

Malcolm Edwards was described as 'deceptively vicar-like' in a 20 April *Private Eye* squib about Orion's timely 'saucy stunt' of reissuing George R.R. Martin's 1983 thriller *The Armageddon Rag* with a design just slightly reminiscent of the UK HarperCollins *A Dance with Dragons*.

Iain Gray, the former Scots Labour leader who presided over his party's humiliating defeat in Scotland's last parliamentary election, confesses in *The Scotsman* that he loves Iain M. Banks but wasn't then allowed to say so: 'those around me felt that admitting to enjoying science fiction would be political suicide.' (*Scotsman.com*, 18 April) The triumph of the SNP's Alex Salmond, a long-uncloseted *Star Trek* fan, suggests that honesty may have advantages even in politics. [DJH/ARe]

Rob Holdstock is remembered in the revamped British Fantasy Awards rules. Best Novel has been split in two: the August Derleth Award for horror and the Robert Holdstock Award for fantasy. [RK]

Confind

Until 7 May • **Sci-Fi London** film festival at Apollo Piccadilly Circus, BFI Southbank, other London venues. See www.sci-fi-london.com.

4-6 May • **Star Wars: May the 4th Be With You**, Fullcircle Gallery, Leeds. £3; £2 concessions; films £5/£4. See tinyurl.com/6qspang.

12-13 May • **Bristol Comic Expo**—see www.bristolexpo.co.uk.

12-13 May • **The Greatest Show in the Galaxy** (media), Peterborough Arena. From £11/day to silly prices. See tinyurl.com/8ykqvzz.

CANCELLED: 18-20 May • **Discover Festival**, Snibston Discovery Museum, Coalville, Leicestershire. See www.discoverfestival.co.uk.

18-20 May • **Waltz on the Wye** (steampunk), Chepstow. £40 including ball, £25 without, £10 day. 3% booking fee at wyewaltz.org.

19-20 May • **Kapow!** (comics), Business Design Centre, Islington, London. Tickets £35 ('VIP' £175) or £20/day, in advance only from www.kapowcomiccon.com with a £1.50 booking fee.

19-20 May • **Middle-earth Weekend**, Sarehole Mill, Cole Bank Rd, Hall Green, Birmingham. Free. See middleearthweekend.org.uk.

23 May • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Melton Mowbray (new venue), 18 Holborn, London, EC1N 2LE. 6pm for 7pm. With C.J. Lines.

27-30 Sep • **Fantasycon 2012**, Brighton. £55 reg (BFS members £50) until 31 May. Payment via PayPal at fantasycon2012.org, or to 10 Haycroft Gardens, Mastin Moor, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S43 3FE.

13-14 Oct • **Octocon**, Camden Court Hotel, Camden St, Dublin.

GoH Liz Williams. €20 reg; students/under-18s/unwaged €20; supp €10; accompanied under-12s free. Contact: Apt 9, Parliament Bldg, 38-40 Parliament St, Dublin 22, Ireland; info at octocon dot com.

20 Oct • **BristolCon**, Ramada Hotel, Bristol. £15, rising to £20 on 1 June. Cheques to 18 High Leaze Road, Patchway, Bristol, BS34 5AF.

29 Mar - 1 Apr 2013 • **EightSquaredCon** (Eastercon), Cedar Court Hotel, Bradford. GoH Walter Jon Williams, Fred Warrington, Anne Sudworth, Edward James. £50 reg; £25 supp/junior (12-17); £10 child (5-11); £1 infant. Contact 19 Uphall Road, Cambridge, CB1 3HX.

18-21 Apr 2014 • **Satellite 4** (Eastercon), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. GoH John Meaney, Juliet E. McKenna, Jim Burns, Alice & Steve Lawson, Terry Pratchett. £45 reg and £40 unwaged, rising to £55 and £45 on 1 June; £20 supp/junior (12-17); £5 child (5-11); £1 infant. Contact c/o Flat 2/1, 691 Shields Rd, Pollokshields, Glasgow, G41 4QL.

Rumblings • *Eurocon 2014*. Dublin won the bidding against Romania by a large margin: 22-24 August 2014 is Shamrokon, Burlington Hotel, Dublin. GoH (so far) Seanan McGuire, Jim Fitzpatrick. €25 reg, held to September 2012. Details to follow at www.shamrokon.ie.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See China. In a bookshop. *Customer* (pointing at *Perdido Street Station* by China Miéville): 'Excuse me, how do you pronounce this writer's name?' *Bookseller*: 'Well, I've heard people say Mee-ville, but I think because of the accent, it's Me-eh-ville.' *Customer*: 'No, I mean his first name.' *Bookseller*: 'Well, it's China—like the country.' *Customer*: 'The country?' (Jen Campbell, *Financial Times*, 7 April) [RD]

More Awards. *Philip K. Dick*: Simon Morden, the Samuil Petrovitch trilogy (*Equations of Life* etc). [GVG] • *European SF Awards* include ... Website: Concatenation.org. Magazine: *Galaxies*. Promoter: *The Encyclopedia of SF, Third Edition*. Author: Ian McDonald. Grand Master: Brian Aldiss. [CM] • *Pilgrim Award* for sf studies: Pamela Sargent. • *SF Hall of Fame*: Joe Haldeman, James Tiptree Jr., James Cameron and Virgil Finlay. • *Prometheus* (libertarian) finalists: Vernor Vinge, *The Children of the Sky*; Delia Sherman, *The Freedom Maze*; Thomas L. James and Carl C. Carlsson, *In the Shadow of Ares*; Ernest Cline, *Ready Player One*; Ken MacLeod, *The Restoration Game*; Terry Pratchett, *Snuff*. • *FAAn Awards* (fan activity). Website: efanzines.com. Letterhack: Robert Lichtman. Per[sonal]zine: *A Meara for Observers*. Single Issue or Anthology: *Alternative Pants*. Artist: Steve Stiles. Writer: Mark Plummer. Genzine or Collaboration: *Banana Wings*. #1 Fan Face: Mark Plummer. • *Shirley Jackson Awards* (suspense/horror) novel shortlist: Michael Cisco, *The Great Lover*; Glen Duncan, *The Last Werewolf*; Sheri Holman, *Witch on the Road Tonight*; S.P. Miskowski, *Knock Knock*; Reggie Oliver, *The Dracula Papers*; Donald Ray Pollock, *The Devil All the Time*.

Publishers & Sinners. Tom Doherty Associates announced on 24 April that by early July, ebooks from all its imprints (Tor, Forge, Orb etc) would be free of DRM protection. Tor UK followed suit next day. This, Baen Books smirked, has been Baen policy for over ten years.

As Others See Us. The real problem with *John Carter*: 'I wouldn't trust the sanity of any critic who claimed to understand what goes on in this movie. I should add, though, that I haven't any idea of how Burroughs's gibberish should have been adapted. The Therns, the Tharks, Dejah Thoris? You can't speak the names aloud without sounding like Daffy Duck.' (David Denby, *New Yorker*, 26 March) [MMW]

R.I.P. *Ray E. Beam* (1932-2012), long-time US fan and member of First Fandom who received the 1993 First Fandom Hall of Fame Award, died on 8 April aged 79. [SFS/SHS] • *Ernest Callenbach* (1929-2012), author of the high-selling sf *Ecotopia* (1975) and related fiction and nonfiction urging sustainable development, died on 16 April; he was 83. [JC] • *Jonathan Frid* (1924-2012), Canadian actor who played the vampire Barnabas Collins in the tv series *Dark Shadows* (1966-1971), died on 14 April; he was 87. [DL] • *Richard Harter* (1935-2012), US fan, stalwart of the New England SF Association and publisher of the fanzine *Personal Notes*, died on 20 April. [CH] • *Nick Webb* (1949-2012), UK editor and publisher who among many other achievements commissioned Douglas Adams's first *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* novelization and (a quarter of a century later) wrote the official Adams biography *Wish You Were Here*, died on 10 April. He will be much missed. [CW] • *K.D. (Kathy Diane) Wentworth* (1951-2012), US author whose first of several solo sf novels was *Moon Speaker* (1994), died on 18 April aged 61. [SFS/SHS] She also collaborated twice with Eric Flint.

As Others Research Us. 'Disney has admitted that John Carter, based on the books of Conan the Barbarian author Edgar Rice Burroughs, will end up as a \$200m (£126m) hole in its pocket.' (Kev Geoghegan, bbc.co.uk, 3 April; since amended to 'Tarzan author') [PB]

Court Circular. The Philip K. Dick estate's suit against Media Rights Capital regarding *Adjustment Bureau* fees (based on a dodgy-looking copyright claim; see A292) was dropped when a federal court judge 'dismissed key claims' but re-filed in state court, while MRC has a federal-court countersuit asking for a ruling that Dick's original story is indeed in the public domain. (*Hollywood Reporter*, 24 April) [SHS]

Outraged Letters. *Richard E. Geis* has left the building: 'I've had cataract surgery on both eyes and new glasses but my ability to read is still marginal. So please stop sending *Ansible*. Thanks and all best ...' • *Sam J Lundwall*: 'As of next month, my wife Ingrid Olofsdotter and I will be living in a home for the elderly founded 150 years ago. No forwarding address, but our daughter Karin Lundwall will be taking over our house with her husband, so messages can reach me through them (and I will hold on to my e-mail address). [...] I will continue doing esseff, not in writing, but in music. I have a solid background in music and am happily returning to it as a composer. My eyes are failing, but music can still be handled.' (17 April) A week later someone reported Sam's death to the *SF Encyclopedia*, but he feels this rumour is exaggerated: 'I am pleased to report I am not yet dead, and I'm slowly getting back to being as mean as ever. Someone jumped the gun, or maybe a typical stupid fannish hoax. I remember many years ago rumours had it Brian Aldiss had died of a heart attack in the tender arms of some willing femmefan. This seemed rather plausible so no one dared call him and ask; I finally did it and he was doing fine ...'

Food Science Masterclass. 'I always use aluminum-free baking powder because I don't like the idea of eating metal.' (Kay Stepkin, *Chicago Tribune*, 21 March) [PL] Don't tell her about the sodium.

The Dead Past. *70 Years Ago*, UK fans learned of 'Ron Bradbury's interesting hobby of making fantaster [*sic*] models and drawings and then photographing them. [...] He enclosed a photo of a drawing of an "Atomic Power Plant" (sic) in a letter to U.S.A. only to have it returned by censor with a sternly worded admonition that photos of buildings, plants, and machinery were not allowed to be sent out of the country. Tell it to Campbell, somebody.' (*Futurian War Digest* 20, May 1942)

In Typo Veritas. On Ursula Le Guin: 'It is known as the Earthsea Trilogy, and concerns the rise of God, a magician, from obscurity to great knowledge and fame.' (Baird Searles, Martin Last, Beth Meacham & Michael Franklin, *A Reader's Guide to Science Fiction*, 1979) [PL]

Magazine Scene. *New Worlds* email: submissions at newworlds dot co dot uk. (Not the former hodson798 address; David Hodson has left the NW collective.) Dick Jude reassures me that the launch issue is still imminent. Since November 2011 the website has timelessly announced: 'The first issue of *New Worlds* will be available later this month.'

As Others Recall Us. *Customer*: 'Do you have a copy of Nineteen Eighty-Six?' *Bookseller*: 'Nineteen Eighty-Six?' *Customer*: 'Yeah, Orwell.' *Bookseller*: 'Oh—Nineteen Eighty-Four.' *Customer*: 'No, I'm sure it's Nineteen Eighty-Six; I've always remembered it because it's the year I was born.' (Jen Campbell, *Weird Things Customers Say in Bookshops*, 2012)

Media Awards. *The Register's* unofficial straw poll for Worst Movie Ever heaped its ultimate dishonour on *Battlefield Earth* (1454 votes), followed by *The Phantom Menace* (1022) and *Twilight* (998). [DKMK]

Super-Irony. The original cheque for \$130, with which Detective Comics (later DC) bought all rights to Superman from his creators Siegel and Shuster, sold at auction for \$160,000. (BBC, 17 April) [MPJ]

C.o.A. *Sam J Lundwall*: see Letters above. *Craig Smith*, 1033 Sunset Blvd NE, Apt. 19, Renton, WA 98056-2994, USA.

Thog's Masterclass. *Music of the Spheres Dept.* 'Felix had said that a sonata could be written on the room's tempo, whose finale should be a demonstration of relativity.' (Mary Butts, *Death of Felicity Taverner*, 1932) [JA] • *Eyeballs in the Sky*. 'The man's eyes worked their way around the main room all the way up the carved beams that reached high over-head.' (Anton Strout, 'Hooked', in *The Modern Fae's Guide to Surviving Humanity* ed. Patricia Bray & Joshua Palmatier, 2012) [KM] • *Manipulatory Dept.* 'He tore his hands off her hips and shoved them between their bodies, forcing her up by her shoulders.' (*Ibid.*) • *Dept of Runaway Metaphor.* 'England was such a little place. It would take so short a time to fan the poison out all over her lovely petite body.' (Margery Allingham, *Traitor's Purse*, 1941) [PN]

Ansible 298 © David Langford, 2012. Thanks to James Agate, Daniel Barlow, Paul Barnett, John Clute, Robert Day, David J. Haddock, Chip Hitchcock, Martyn P. Jackson, Roy Kettle, David K.M. Klaus, Hazel Langford as always, Denny Lien, Pamela Love, Kari Maund, Cheryl Morgan, Peter Nicholls, Alistair Rennie, Adam Roberts, SF Site, Steven H Silver, Gordon Van Gelder, Cat Webb, Martin Morse Wooster, and our Hero Distributors: Dave Corby (BSFG), SCIS/Prophecy, Alan Stewart (Australia).
1 May 2012