



Ansible 286 May 2011

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: Ian Gunn. Available for SAE, gleepsites or the country you have never seen.

Illustrious. The 2011 Eastercon was, as expected, a pleasant weekend in a painfully pricy venue: the NEC Hilton Metropole. I enjoyed myself but deafly failed to attend the programme. Old fogeys who remember UK convention dealers' rooms closing for the Guest of Honour speech remain bemused by the new tradition whereby all sorts of stuff is programmed against the guests (David Weber, Peter F. Hamilton, David A. Hardy, Vince Docherty, Roz Kaveney) but nothing can be allowed to clash with *Doctor Who*. • **Awards** were presented. **BSFA:** NOVEL Ian McDonald, *The Dervish House*. **SHORT** Aliette de Bodard, 'The Shipmaker' (*Interzone* 231). **ART** Joey Hi-Fi, cover of *Zoo City*. **NONFICTION** Paul Kincaid, 'Blogging the Hugos: Decline' (*Big Other*). • **Doc Weir:** Mark Young. • **DnA** (*Daves'n'Anarchy*) or **Gamma Award** for deeply weird sf in any medium: K.W. Jeter, *Dr Adder* (1984). This was the first presentation; future DnAs will honour work from the previous year. See 'Magazine Scene' below. • **2013 Eastercon.** No one seemed interested in holding this; the decision was postponed to next Easter. • Good parties and daily newsletters. Who knew the NEC had woods full of bluebells?

Extra(ordinary) People

Eoin Colfer reckons the secret of his villainous boy protagonist Artemis Fowl's success lay in being not the next Harry Potter (as so many others tried) but 'the anti-Harry Potter. If J.K. was the Beatles, I was the Rolling Stones or something.' (*Independent*, 10 April) [MPJ]

David Gestetner, developer of one of the duplicator brands once central to fanzine fandom, is commemorated with an English Heritage blue plaque at 124 Highbury New Park, Islington, where he lived from 1898 until his death in 1939. The plaque was unveiled by English Heritage and two of DG's great-great grandchildren on 15 March. [JMcN]

Stephen Hunt's petition protesting the invisibility of sf, fantasy and horror in the BBC World Book Night special on popular fiction was signed by 85 genre authors. The BBC's ingenious response was that they had too mentioned that doyenne of space opera, Margaret Atwood.

George R.R. Martin has a high media profile thanks to the tv *A Game of Thrones*, and appears in the 2011 'Time 100' list of the world's most influential people. An *Independent* interview feature, after likening him to 'a very friendly hobbit', confirmed that some bitchy fan comments still rankle (the annotations are the *Indy's*): 'There's nothing wrong with fans speculating about what's going to happen, but it's annoying when they suggest that I won't finish it, or say there's no chance of the new book coming out,' he says. 'I find it downright offensive when people say things like, "I hope he doesn't pull a Jordan" [a reference to fantasy writer Robert Jordan, who died before finishing his *World of Time* (*sic*) series, now being completed by Brandon Sanderson]. I was friends with Jim [Jordan's real name] ... no one wants to die before finishing their work. Anyone who uses that phrase "pull a Jordan" is an asshole.' (Sarah Hughes, *Independent*, 17 April) [MPJ] He has since completed book 5 of the planned 7, *A Dance with Dragons*.

Dr. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, reminisced in his Easter sermon: 'Some of you might just remember an episode of *Doctor Who* a couple of decades ago called "The Happiness Patrol" where the Doctor arrives on a planet in which unhappiness is a capital crime, and blues musicians lead a dangerous underground existence.' [MMW]

Contrasto

4 May • **Alan Moore's Dodgem Logic**, Round Chapel, London. 7pm. £10. With AM, Steve Aylett. See www.londonwordfestival.com.

11 May • **Heffers SFF Evening**, Heffers, 20 Trinity St, Cambridge, CB2 1TY. 6.30pm. Many guests. £5; under-17s £2.50. 01223 568568.

14-15 May • **Bristol International Comic Expo**, Ramada City & Mercure hotels, Bristol. £16 reg; £9 per day; child £6/£4. Tickets from www.fantasyevents.org/bristolcomicexpo (PayPal only).

20 May • **BSFA Extra Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 7pm. Free. With Trudi Canavan.

20-22 May • **Alt.Fiction Writing Weekend**, Legacy Chesterfield Hotel, Malkin St, Chesterfield, S41 7UA. With Tony Ballantyne, Simon

Clark. £180 inc food, 2 nights' residence. Enquiries: alt dot fiction at writingeastmidlands dot co dot uk. Bookings: Aimee, 01159 597932.

25 May • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 7pm. Free. With Sarah Pinborough.

20 May - 25 Sep • **Out of This World** (sf exhibition), PACCAR Gallery, British Library, London. Free. Andy Sawyer is guest curator; Mike Ashley wrote the book. For associated sf/science talks and panels (£7.50, £5 concessions) May-September, see each month's BL events page, starting at www.bl.uk/whatson/events/date/may11/may11.html.

21-22 May • **Middle-earth Weekend**, Sarehole Mill, Cole Bank Rd, Hall Green, Birmingham. Free. See middleearthweekend.org.uk.

28 May • **Write Fantastic** event, St Hilda's College, Oxford. £15 reg; £12 concessions (£18/£15 at door). Cheques: The Write Fantastic, c/o 41 Wheatsheaf Rd, Alconbury Weston, Cambs, PE28 4LF.

4 Jun • **BSFA/SF Foundation** mini-convention and AGMs. GoH Mike Ashley (SFF), Tricia Sullivan (BSFA). 10am-5pm. Free. Royal Astronomical Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BQ.

17 Jun • **David Gemmell/Legend** fantasy awards, Magic Circle HQ, 12 Stephenson Way, Euston, London, NW1 2HD. 7:30pm. 'Fan tickets' £20. Contact christineharrson_007@hotmail.com.

17-18 Sep • **From Imagination to Reality** (British Interplanetary Soc space/sf event), Berrill Lecture Theatre, Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA. £80 or £45/day, to end of June. Online booking only, at www.bis-space.com/products-page/symposia/.

24-27 Aug 2012 • **Discworld Convention**, Hilton Metropole, Birmingham. £48 reg, £33 concessions until 1 July 2011. £25 supp; under-13s free. PO Box 4101, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 9AJ.

31 Oct - 3 Nov 2013 • **World Fantasy Convention**, Hilton Brighton Metropole, Brighton. £75 reg until 30 October 2011; £50 supp; no at-door or day memberships. Cheques to 130 Park View, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 6JU; PayPal payments at www.wfc2013.org.

Rumblings. *Satellite 4* (18-21 April 2014) is a UK Eastercon bid from the Satellite sf/science conventions team, aiming for a Glasgow venue—possibly even the fabled Central Hotel. See satellite4.org.uk. • *Year 2018!* A 2018 New Orleans Worldcon bid has been announced.

Infinitely Improbable

More Awards. *Arthur C. Clarke:* Lauren Beukes, *Zoo City*. • *Philip K Dick:* Mark Hodder, *The Strange Affair of Spring Heeled Jack*. • *SF Hall of Fame:* Vincent Di Fate, Gardner Dozois, Harlan Ellison, Moebius.

As Others See Us. Better to be forgotten than remembered in the wrong way by entirely the wrong sort of people: 'Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin must be so proud: The anniversary of his embarking on the first human space flight on April 12, 1961, is celebrated by sci-fi lovers the world over with alt-astro costumes, drink specials, funk bands, and burlesque shows.' (*Washington Post*, 8 April) [MMW]

Magazine Scene. *New Worlds* is to relaunch as *Michael Moorcock's New Worlds* this autumn under the aegis of the Daves Dream Company (Dick Jude, David Hodson, others) created to run the DnA award inaugurated at Eastercon in memory of Paul 'Gamma' Gamble. Writers and artists needed; enquiries, for now, to hodson798@btinternet.com.

Astronomy Masterclass. *Anne Robinson:* 'Which scientist first discovered the four moons of Jupiter?' *Male contestant:* 'Amadeus.' (*The Weakest Link*, 26 April) [MPJ]

Hugo Shortlist. NOVEL Connie Willis, *Blackout/All Clear*; Lois McMaster Bujold, *Cryoburn*; Ian McDonald, *The Dervish House*; Mira Grant, *Feed*; N.K. Jemisin, *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*. • NOVELLA Rachel Swirsky, 'The Lady Who Plucked Red Flowers beneath the Queen's Window' (*Subterranean*, Summer 2010); Ted Chiang, *The Lifecycle of Software Objects*; Elizabeth Hand, 'The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon' (*Stories*); Geoffrey A. Landis, 'The Sultan of the Clouds' (*Asimov's* 9/10); Alastair Reynolds, 'Troika' (*Godlike Machines*). • NOVELLETTE Sean McMullen, 'Eight Miles' by (*Analog* 9/10); Allen M. Steele, 'The Emperor of Mars' (*Asimov's* 6/10); Aliette de Bodard, 'The Jaguar House, in Shadow' (*Asimov's* 7/10); James Patrick Kelly, 'Plus or

Minus' (*Asimov's* 12/10); Eric James Stone, 'That Leviathan, Whom Thou Hast Made' by (*Analog*, 9/10). • SHORT Carrie Vaughn, 'Amaryllis' by (*Lightspeed*, 6/10); Mary Robinette Kowal, 'For Want of a Nail' by (*Asimov's* 9/10); Kij Johnson, 'Ponies' (*Tor.com* 17/11/10); Peter Watts, 'The Things' (*Clarkesworld* 1/10). • RELATED WORK Gary K. Wolfe, *Bearings*; Mike Resnick & Barry N. Malzberg, *The Business of Science Fiction*; Lynne M. Thomas & Tara O'Shea, ed., *Chicks Dig Time Lords*; William H. Patterson, Jr., *Robert A. Heinlein: In Dialogue with His Century, Vol 1*; Brandon Sanderson, Jordan Sanderson, Howard Tayler & Dan Wells, *Writing Excuses, Season 4*. • GRAPHIC Bill Willingham ill. Mark Buckingham, *Fables: Witches*; Phil & Kaja Foglio, colours Cheyenne Wright, *Agatha Heterodyne and the Guardian Muse*; Bryan Talbot, *Grandville Mon Amour*; Howard Tayler, colours HT & Travis Walton, *Schlock Mercenary: Massively Parallel*; Mike Carey ill. Peter Gross, *The Unwritten, Vol 2: Inside Man*. • DRAMATIC, LONG *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1, How to Train Your Dragon, Inception, Scott Pilgrim vs. the World, Toy Story 3*. • DRAMATIC, SHORT *Doctor Who: 'A Christmas Carol'; Doctor Who: 'The Pandorica Opens/The Big Bang'; Doctor Who: 'Vincent and the Doctor'; F*ck Me, Ray Bradbury; The Lost Thing*. • EDITOR, SHORT John Joseph Adams, Stanley Schmidt, Jonathan Strahan, Gordon Van Gelder, Sheila Williams. • EDITOR, LONG Lou Anders, Ginjer Buchanan, Moshe Feder, Liz Gorinsky, Nick Mamatas, Beth Meacham, Juliet Ulman. • PRO ARTIST Daniel Dos Santos, Bob Eggleton, Stephan Martiniere, John Picacio, Shaun Tan. • SEMIPROZINE *Clarkesworld, Interzone, Lightspeed, Locus, Weird Tales*. • FANZINE *Banana Wings, Challenger, The Drink Tank, File 770, StarShipSofa*. • FAN WRITER James Bacon, Claire Brialey, Christopher J. Garcia, James Nicoll, Steven H Silver. • Fan Artist Brad W. Foster, Randall Munroe, Maurine Starkey, Steve Stiles, Taral Wayne. • JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD Saladin Ahmed, Lauren Beukes, Larry Correia, Lev Grossman, Dan Wells. • 1006 ballots counted: 992 electronic, 14 paper.

Without Comment. A 'Sci-Fi and Fantasy Friendly Church Service' near Melbourne, encouraging fans to come in costume and hear moral lessons drawn from *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, *Doctor Who*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Star Wars*, was frowned on by a rival pastor: "I don't have a problem with people enjoying sci-fi, but church isn't the place to encourage escapism and fancy dress," Mentone Baptist minister Murray Campbell said.' (*Herald Sun*, Australia, 6 April) [PB]

R.I.P. *Bill Blackbeard* (1926-2011), major US comics scholar and collector who saved vast numbers of newspaper strips from destruction by libraries converting their archives to microfilm, died on 10 March aged 84. [PDF] • *Doug Chaffee* (1926-2011), US sf and space artist who worked with NASA and many games franchises including *BattleTech* and *Magic: The Gathering*, died on 26 April; he was 75. [AIP] • *Osamu Dezaki* (1943-2011), Japanese animator and animé director best known in the West for directing *Golgo 13: The Professional* (1983), died on 17 April; he was 67. [JC] • *Dave Lamb*, UK comics fan and early member of the Prime Amateur Press Association (later the British Amateur Press Association), died on 4 April following a lengthy illness. [SG] • *Sidney Lumet* (1924-2011), noted US director whose films included *Fail-Safe* (1964) and *The Wiz* (1978), died on 9 April aged 86. [SG] • *Yolande Palfrey* (1957-2011), UK actress with genre appearances in *Blake's Seven*, *Dragonslayer* (1981), *Doctor Who (Terror of the Vervoids, 1986)* and *The Ghosts of Motley Hall*, died on 9 April; she was 54. [JP] • *Jim Roslof* (1945-2011), US graphic artist who as TSR's 1980s art director took *Dungeons & Dragons* illustration from black-and-white scrawls to full-colour paintings by professionals, died on 19 March aged 65. He also wrote D&D game scenarios. [MPJ] • *Joanna Russ* (1937-2011), US academic, author and critic renowned for passionate, clear-sighted and often very funny feminist writing (both fiction, notably her 1975 *The Female Man*, and nonfiction), died on 29 April; she was 74. She won a Nebula for her *Again, Dangerous Visions* story 'When It Changed' (1972), Hugo and *Locus* awards for 'Souls' (1982), two retro-Tiptrees, and the 1988 Pilgrim award for sf criticism. • *Sol Saks* (1910-2011), US radio/tv writer who created *Bewitched* (1964-1972), though he wrote only the pilot script, died on 16 April at the age of 100. [GW] • *Elisabeth Sladen* (1948-2011), UK actress most famed and loved as Sarah Jane Smith in the Jon Pertwee/Tom Baker era of *Doctor Who* (1973-1976)—a role reprised in her own spinoff series *The Sarah Jane Adventures* (2007-2010)—died from cancer on 19 April. She was 63. • *Craig Thomas* (1942-2011), Welsh author of 18 novels who was best known for such near-sf technothrillers as *Firefox* (1977, filmed 1982) and *Firefox Down* (1983), died on 4 April; he was 69. [MPJ]

Cross-Disciplinary Masterclass. *Optical Economics Dept:* 'Today's competitive markets, whether we seek to recognise it or not, are driven

by an international version of Adam Smith's "invisible hand" that is unredeemably opaque.' (Alan Greenspan, *Financial Times*, 30 March) [HF]

Random Fandom. *Dave Hicks* revealed the result of last year's poll of Novacon members to choose The Best SF Book Since 1971 (when Novacon began). The most popular nominee, Iain Banks with five titles, was wiped out by ruthless competition from himself; the winner, listed on five ballots and just edging out Chris Priest's *The Prestige*, was *Stars in My Eyes* by Peter Weston. (*Novacon 41 PR1*)

We Are Everywhere. Ken Livingstone's love of sf is never forgotten: 'The Boris v Ken battle for London is really a fight about who gets to be Batman. Ken Livingstone was the original Batman, although his relationship with the Commissioner wasn't great, particularly in his GLC days. In fact, the Commissioner (Baroness Thatcher) repossessed the Batmobile and smashed the Batsignal, stopping Ken from swooping from the skies wherever pensioners were in danger. / Now Boris Johnson is Batman—and a columnist for this newspaper [the *Telegraph*]—and this is agony for Ken.' Later: 'So it is no surprise to hear the only fiction he has ever re-read, he says, is the Frank Herbert saga *Dune*, in which a messiah fuses with a sandworm and saves the world.' Newts are mentioned. And tadpoles. (Tanya Gold, *Telegraph*, 15 April) [JW]

Outraged Letters. *Jamie Barras:* 'Some Western news outlets have picked up on Mainland China banning films and tv shows about, among other things, time travel.' UK papers mostly opted for 'easy Western-centric jokes—no more *Doctor Who*, *Star Trek* etc. These outlets haven't appreciated, or chose to ignore, the fact that this ban comes weeks after the conclusion of the smash-hit homegrown time travel show *Gong*, about a modern woman who goes back to Qing Dynasty China and gets caught up in palace politics. Just a coincidence that *Gong* was a smash hit not for the state-owned CCTV, but for its main rival, Hunan TV?' • *Steven E. McDonald* had a me-too moment: 'The note about Peter Watts pictorially logging his bout of necrotizing fasciitis sounds like a wonderful way to cause involuntary weight loss via vomiting. It never occurred to me that I should similarly chronicle my various battles with MRSA (and lately with pseudomonas something-or-other—I wasn't told the exact strain) which promise an equally upchuck-worthy experience. I do have photos from the first bout, which took a chunk out of my right thigh [...] I have none at all from the bout that began last year and ate away chunks of both right and left ankles. My Doctor, examining the damage, cheerfully noted that "well, we should be able to save the legs ... maybe." Then she got all flustered and dropped things. [...] On the bright side, if there is such, the wounds are finally healing and I'm not leaking CSI-worthy goo much now.' (1 April)

Blurbismo. Bookseller's description of the film *Phantom From Space* (1953): 'Nobody takes much notice when an asteroid crashes off the coast of Santa Monica. That is, until two people turn up dead ...' [DL]

Fanfundery. *Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund:* John Coxon takes the trip to the Reno Worldcon despite placing third in raw voting figures. All other candidates were eliminated by the 20% rule introduced in 1986 to ensure winners have support on both sides of the Atlantic. Liam Proven would have won by a large margin but fell one vote short of 20% in N. America; next came Graham 'Don't Vote For Me!' Charnock, who didn't reach the European quota. 189 ballots cast. More in Steve Green's *Taffline 2* at taff.org.uk. • *Down Under Fan Fund.* Candidates for this year's race from Australasia to Renovation are David Cake and Paula McGrath. Voting deadline 31 May. PDF ballot at taff.org.uk/duff.html.

The Dead Past. *As a Communications Guru Saw Us:* 'Instead of tending towards a vast Alexandrian library the world has become a computer, an electronic brain, exactly as in a piece of infantile science fiction.' (Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 1962) [MMW]

C.o.A. *Soren and Velma deSelby-Bowen*, 4119 Interlake Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98103, USA.

Thog's Masterclass. *Hirsute Dept.* 'In the center was a quiet commanding man whose brown beard was only slightly gray at the temples ...' (Gerald Morris, *The Legend of the King*, 2010) [SG] • *Eyeballs in the Sky.* 'The Tapper's eyes were burning brighter than ever—they illuminated his pale, cadaverous face like twin stars.' '[His] eyes were burning like lanterns.' (R.L. Fanthorpe, 'The Devil from the Depths', 1961) [BH] 'His huge eyes always looked as if they were about to rip somebody apart ...' (Jack Chalker, *Gods of the Well of Souls*, 1994) [BA]

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