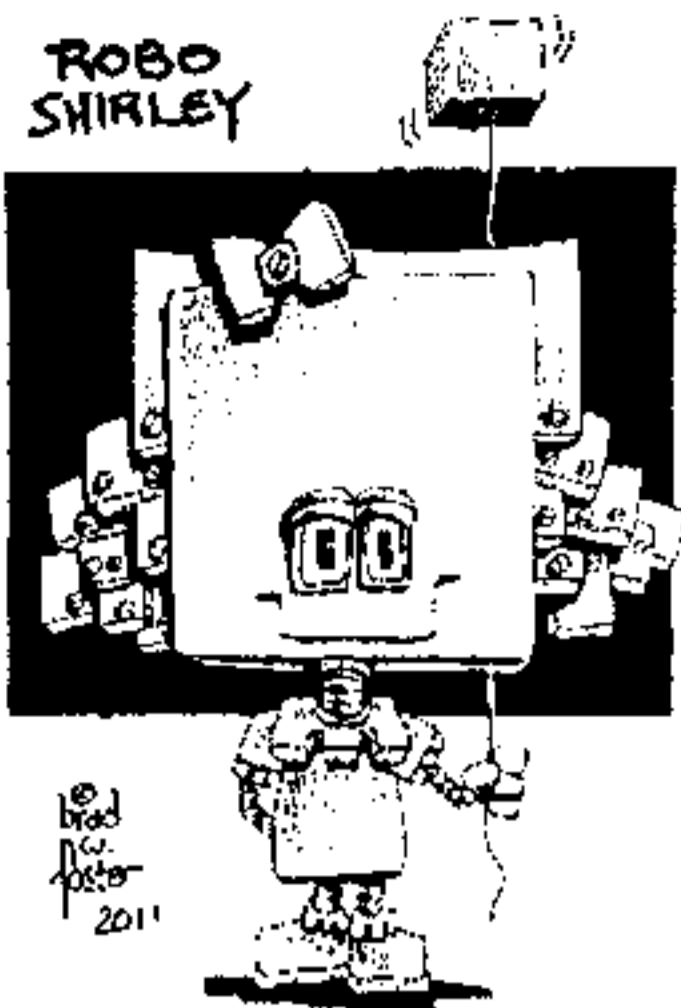


ansible



Ansible 288 July 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: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE or the winning strategy for Arky-malarkey.

SF Encyclopedia. Recent developments have been so thrilling as to reduce John Clute to widely separated monosyllables, but the official announcement isn't quite ready. Keep watching the skies at sfe3.org.

The Snowball Effect

Douglas Adams gets an approving nod in a feature on books for teenage boys, although he has one serious drawback: 'He's a big fan of Douglas Adams, whose work I suggest trying despite its being somewhat sci-fi.' ('Book Lover', *Wall Street Journal*, 27 June) [DJH]

Bernard Cribbins, UK actor whose genre roles include *The Mouse on the Moon* (1963), *Daleks Invasion Earth: 2150 AD* (1966), *The Wombles* (1973-1975 as narrator) and several recent *Doctor Who* episodes, received an OBE in the Queen's Birthday honours in June. [JY] So did Tim Brooke-Taylor and Graeme Garden, whose best-known sf parts were in *The Goodies* and bits of *I'm Sorry, I'll Read That Again*. Who could forget 'Professor Prune and the Electric Time-Trousers'?

Harlan Ellison couldn't make it to his SF Hall of Fame induction in June, owing to illness: he darkly announced that he was in the 'last stages of something ... And I don't have a cold.' (CNN, 22 June) [AIP]

Robert Holdstock's memorial fund has achieved its goal. By arrangement with the Woodland Trust, three acres of Victory Wood near Canterbury—between the ancient Blean and Ellenden woodlands—are 'permanently and exclusively dedicated to Rob, and we also have a bench and oak sapling there in his memory.' [SB] As Rob said in 1993, 'The slap of a wet oak leaf is one of the things I love most.' His *Avilion* has won the 2010 Czech Academy of SF, Fantasy and Horror Award.

William Shatner, 80, received an honorary doctorate of letters from McGill University in his home town Montreal. (CBC, 2 June) [BM]

Condrin

16 Jul • **Other Worlds 2** (Alt.Fiction), Central Library, Nottingham. 10:30am-4pm £10.54 www.writingeastmidlands.co.uk/events/238954.

20 Jul • **Imagination and Interpretation:** Writing science into fiction. Discussion on 'representing scientists and science in contemporary fiction.' Royal Society, 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London. 5:30pm for 6-7:30pm. Free; first come, first served.

23 Jul • **Beer & Blake's 7**, Knight's Templar, Unit 1 Temple Sq, Temple Quay, Bristol, Avon, BS1 6DG. From 12:15pm. All welcome.

25-26 Jul • **Creative Science**—'Science Fiction Prototyping for Technology Innovation' (workshop), Nottingham. £180 reg; no concessions. See www.creative-science.org. It's ... interdisciplinary!

27 Jul • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 7pm. Free. With Sophia McDougall.

29 Jul - 27 Aug • **Bruce Pennington** art exhibition, Atlantis Bookshop, Museum St, London, WC1A 1LY. 10:30am-6pm, Mon-Sat.

30 Jul • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, Bar Convent, York. £18; members £15. Booking closes 16 July. Contact c/o 20 York Rd, Stony Stratford, Bucks, MK11 1BJ. See www.tolkiensociety.org/seminar/.

17-21 Aug • **Renovation** (69th Worldcon), Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, NV, USA. \$195 reg; \$480 family (2 adults + n under-17s); \$100 under-21s—rising on 18 July to \$220, \$500 and £120. Unchanged: \$75 under-17s; under-7s free; \$50 supp. For day rates, varying with day and age, see www.renovationsf.org. Contact PO Box 13278, Portland, OR 97213-0278, USA; or info at renovationsf.org.

19-21 Aug • **Festival in the Shire:** Tolkien art/book exhibition, 'mini-festival'. 10am-6pm, Wynnstay Hotel, Machynlleth.

14-15 September • **Opera Siam: Mae Naak** (the UK première of Somtow Sucharitkul's ghost opera), Bloomsbury Theatre, London. 7:30pm. £24; £17 concessions. Box office 020 7388 8822; for details and online booking see www.theblossbury.com/event/run/1593.

30 Sep - 2 Oct • **Fantasycon 2011**, Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton. Now £65 reg (BFS members £60) or £40/day, Saturday only. Cheques to 10 Haycroft Gdns, Mastin Moor, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S43 3FE.

2-4 Feb 2012 • **SFX Weekender 3**, Prestatyn Sands, Holiday Park, North Wales. Charged by accommodation, from £250 for 2 (£545 for

5) 'basic' up to £400 for 2 'VIP'. Online booking (£6 booking fee) at www.sfxweekender.com. Contact & children's bookings: 08700 110034.

24-27 Aug 2012 • **Discworld Convention**, Hilton Metropole, Birmingham NEC. Now £53 reg, £36 concessions, rising again on 1 November 2011 to £58 and £39. £25 supporting; under-13s free. PO Box 4101, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 9AJ.

30 Aug - 3 Sep 2012 • **Chicon 7** (70th Worldcon), Hyatt Regency, Chicago. \$175 reg, \$100 YA (17-21), \$50 child (5-16), under-5s free—until 30 September. Contact PO Box 13, Skokie, IL 60076, USA.

25-27 Feb 2013 • **Redemption '13** (multimedia sf), Britannia Hotel, Coventry, CV1 5RP. £60 reg, rising to £65 on 1 September 2011; unwaged etc £20 less; £75 at door. £15 supp and under-18s; under-3s free. Contact 61 Chaucer Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 8SP.

Rumblings. Eurocons. June's Stockholm event was the largest Swedish convention ever. The 2012 Eurocon is in Croatia; Kiev won the 2013 vote; the 2014 Dublin bid, intended to complement that year's expected London Worldcon, now faces a rival bid from Romania. [JC]

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Interviewing the actor playing Merlin in *Camelot* (Channel 4), journalist Benji Wilson deftly sums up the entire history of Arthurian legend: 'When did epic fantasy switch from being the nerdy stuff that the Dungeons & Dragons kids played at break time to something that is currently asking for consideration as serious television?' (*Daily Telegraph*, 11 June) [MPJ]

Awards. Carnegie Medal (children's): Patrick Ness, *Monsters of Men*. • David Gemmell Legend (heroic fantasy): NOVEL Brandon Sanderson, *The Way of Kings*; Cover Artist Olof Erla Einarsdottir (*Power and Majesty* by Tansy Rayner Roberts); NEWCOMER Darius Hinks, *Warrior Priest*. • Locus: NOVEL Connie Willis, *Blackout* and *All Clear*. FANTASY NOVEL China Miéville, *Kraken*. FIRST NOVEL N.K. Jemisin, *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*. YA Paolo Bacigalupi, *Ship Breaker*. NOVELLA Ted Chiang, *The Lifecycle of Software Objects*. NOVELETTE Neil Gaiman, 'The Truth Is a Cave in the Black Mountains' (*Stories*). SHORT Neil Gaiman, 'The Thing About Cassandra' (*Songs of Love and Death*). MAGAZINE *Asimov's*. PUBLISHER Tor. ANTHOLOGY George R.R. Martin & Gardner Dozois, eds, *Warriors*. COLLECTION Fritz Leiber: *Selected Stories*. EDITOR Ellen Datlow. ARTIST Shaun Tan. NON-FICTION William H. Patterson, Jr., *Robert A. Heinlein: In Dialogue with His Century: Volume 1*. ART BOOK Cathy & Arnie Fenner, eds, *Spectrum 17*. • Bram Stoker (horror) NOVEL Peter Straub, *A Dark Matter*. FIRST NOVEL (tie) Benjamin Kane Ethridge, *Black and Orange*; Lisa Morton, *Castle of Los Angeles*. LONG FICTION Norman Prentiss, *Invisible Fences*. SHORT Joe R. Lansdale, *The Folding Man (Haunted Legends)*. ANTHOLOGY Ellen Datlow and Nick Mamatas, ed., *Haunted Legends*. COLLECTION Stephen King, *Full Dark, No Stars*. NONFICTION Gary A. Braunbeck, *To Each their Darkness*. POETRY COLLECTION Bruce Boston, *Dark Matters*. SPECIALTY PRESS Dark Regions Press. • European SF Society (Eurocon) included: GRAND MASTER Sam J. Lundwall. AUTHOR Alastair Reynolds. ARTIST David A. Hardy. TRANSLATOR Attila Németh. PROMOTER (tied) Louis Savy of Sci-Fi London.

Near Miss Dept. Anne Robinson: 'Which "T" is the wife of Oberon and Queen of the Fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?' Contestant: 'Tinkerbell.' (BBC1, *The Weakest Link*) [PI]

R.I.P. James Arness (1923-2011), US actor best known for Westerns but forever remembered by sf fans as *The Thing from Another World* (1951), died on 3 June aged 88. Other sf credits are *Two Lost Worlds* (1951) and *Them!* (1954). [SJD] • Gene Colan (1926-2011), US comics artist best known for his work at Marvel—including *Iron Man*, *Tomb of Dracula*, *Daredevil*, *Doctor Strange* and *Howard the Duck*—died on 23 June aged 84. [DKMK] • Peter Falk (1927-2011), US actor most famed as the tv detective Columbo, whose several sf/fantasy credits included *The Princess Bride* (1987) and most recently *Next* (2007), died on 23 June; he was 83. [SJD/AW] • John Glasby (1928-2011), UK author who was hugely prolific in many genres in the 1950s and 1960s—including much sf and supernatural fiction for Badger Books and Curtis Warren

under his own name, various house names and as A.J. Merak—died on 5 June; he was 82. Since retirement he had returned to fiction with ghost stories, plus novels including contributions to John Russell Fearn's sf 'Golden Amazon' sequence. [PDF] ● *Martin H. Greenberg* (1941-2011), leading US anthologist who edited and co-edited well over a thousand anthologies in all genres—the *SF Encyclopedia* currently lists 575 of sf, fantasy and horror relevance—died on 27 June at the age of 70. Like so many others, I have fond memories of appearing in his anthologies—with prompt payment! ● *Kees Huizer* ('Uncle Kees'), Dutch fan who ran security at the 1990 Hague Worldcon, died on 8 June aged 61; see letters below. ● *Joel Rosenberg* (1954-2011), Canadian-born author of several popular sf and fantasy series including 'Guardians of the Flame' (1983-2003), died unexpectedly on 2 June; he was 57. His debut story was 'Like the Gentle Rains' (*Asimov's* 2/82). [SHS] ● *Alan Ryan* (1943-2011), US horror writer whose first novel was *Panther!* (1981) and who had begun to publish again after over 20 years' silence, died on 3 June; he was 68. His 1984 story 'The Bones Wizard' tied for a World Fantasy Award. [TM] ● *Roy Skelton* (1931-2011), UK actor who voiced many Daleks (1967-1988), Cybermen, and the puppets Zippy and George in the children's show *Rainbow*, died on 8 June aged 79. Interview quote: 'I can walk down the street and no one knows who I am. People don't say, "There's Zippy", or ask me to say, "Exterminate!" I sometimes wish they did.' (*Telegraph*, 8 June) [MPJ/GW] ● *Larry Tritten*, US author of many articles and short stories including much sf (his 1974 'The Star Sneak' entertainingly parodies Jack Vance), died on 6 April aged 72. (*Brum Group News*) ● *Margaret Tyzack* (1931-2011), noted UK actress seen in *2001, A Clockwork Orange*, the 1979 *Quatermass* and *Young Indiana Jones*, died on 25 June aged 79. [GD/AW] ● *Laura Ziskin* (1950-2011), US screenwriter and producer who worked on the psychic thriller *Eyes of Laura Mars* (1978) and, most famously, the 2002-2007 *Spider-Man* trilogy (plus the 2012 reboot *The Amazing Spider-Man*), died on 12 June; she was 61. [SG]

As Others See Us II. Erin McKean of wordnik.com shudders at the thought of an alternate time-track besmirched by shocking liberties: 'In a world without standard spelling, writers would pledge allegiance to different spelling schools. Some would fancy double letters; others would dispense with the silent "e" or add decorative umlauts; romance writers would gravitate toward faux-French endings such as "-eau/x;" and science-fiction writers would use even more of the letters 'x' and 'q' than they do now.' (*Washington Post*, 5 June) [MMW] Surely not?

Award Shortlists. *Sidewise* (alternate history): LONG Adam Chamberlain & Brian A. Dixon, *Columbia & Britannia*; Robert Conroy, *Red Inferno: 1945*; Jay Lake, *Pinion*; Eric Swedin, *When Angels Wept*. SHORT Eleanor Arnason, *Mammoths of the Great Plains*; Barry B. Longyear, 'Alter Kameraden' (*Asimov's* 4/10); Ken MacLeod, 'Side-winders' (*The Mammoth Book of Alternate Histories*); Alan Smale, 'A Clash of Eagles' (*Panverse Two*); William F. Wu, 'Goin' Down to Anglotown' (*The Dragon and the Stars*). ● *John W. Campbell Memorial*: Jon Armstrong, *Yarn*; Greg Bear, *Hull Zero Three*; William Gibson, *Zero History*; Tom McCarthy, *C*; Ian McDonald, *The Dervish House*; Adam Roberts, *New Model Army*; Hannu Rajaniemi, *The Quantum Thief*; Gavin Smith, *Veteran*; Sheri S. Tepper, *The Waters Rising*; Jean-Christophe Valtat, *Aurorarama*; E. O. Wilson, *Anthill*; Connie Willis, *Blackout / All Clear*; Charles Yu, *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe*.

Shock Horror Outrage. The most complained-about films of 2010 were *The Lovely Bones* and *Kick-Ass*, reports the British Board of Film Classification. Protesters felt these should have been rated higher than the BBFC's 12A and 15. (BBC 13 June) [MPJ] The horror sequel *The Human Centipede II* was refused any BBFC certificate owing to excessive ickiness and 'a real risk of harm to viewers', who are perhaps in danger of being stitched together by the easily influenced. (BBC 7 June)

C.o.A. James Bacon, 'Home for Wayward Bachelors', 54 Bridge Road, Uxbridge, UB8 2QP.

Science Masterclass. A rather splendid paper in the *European Journal of Neurosurgery* analyses the 704 instances of traumatic head injury to be found in the *Asterix* comic canon, noting such common symptoms as 'outstretched and sideward-pointing tongue' (paresis of the hypoglossal nerve) and marvelling that even the 390 cases of 'severe trauma' were, for the ancient world, remarkably lacking in fatal consequences. [MPJ]

Outraged Letters. Simon R. Green remembers his roots after A287: 'You know, reading the pieces on people who work in the sci-fi business slagging off the fans, still pisses me off big time. Like your good self, I started out as a fan, and even though I've been a Philthy Pro for some time now, I still think of myself as a fan. I still get just as big a kick out of wandering round a convention, dropping in on whatever panels I

fancy, as I ever did. I still enjoy wandering round Forbidden Planet, picking up books and comics and magazines just on the impulse, looking for the good stuff. In fact, I think when you start thinking and feeling otherwise, it's time to find another business to get into.' ● *Kees van Toorn* (see R.I.P. above): 'Uncle Kees is a name associated with ConFiction, the world SF convention in the Hague. Organizing the con, chairman Kees van Toorn called all hands on deck and massive support was given by Anglo-American fans—supported, when it came to security, by Kees Huizer and his team, handling the official security side of the convention. Nicknamed Uncle Kees (he was indeed an uncle of Kees van Toorn) he brought in several squads of real police and used the event as training for his men: he worked for the Hague police as an instructor. With the US Ambassador present at the Hugo ceremony, it helped a lot to keep the Men in Black with their sunglasses at ease as Uncle Kees liaised with them—they knew him because of his police background. / A story he liked to tell about that convention was that the Worldcon bid winners took the cash from the vote and walked at ease to the bank ... protected on all sides by real police with squad cars standing by. He and his team got on really well with the fan-security and were part of the success of ConFiction.'

As Others See Others Seeing Us. More on that 'terrific fantasy drama series' *A Game of Thrones*: 'The Beeb's icky Merlin it ain't. / Yet, as the critics have clocked that there is a groundswell of love for this show, they've been frantically selling it as exactly what it isn't, trying to imbue it with the necessary cool to edge it into the exclusive zeitgeist club of acceptable media. / Phrases are rolled out like "defies the genre," or The Guardian's particularly irritating "breaks fantasy convention." / Of course Game Of Thrones doesn't break fantasy convention, because it is exactly fantasy convention. / The numpties write like that because they're afraid their readership might balk at the concept of fantasy. And why might their readership do so? / Because, over the years, those very same hegemonies of critical mass have nurtured exactly that disassociation.' (*Morningstaronline.co.uk*, 20 June) [MC]

Fanfundery. *Down Under Fan Fund.* David Cake won the 2011 trip from Australasia to the Reno Worldcon, with 80 first-place votes to Paula McGrath's 57. (No Preference 9, Hold Over Funds 1, write-in 1.)

The Dead Past. *60 Years Ago*, there was multimedia fun at the UK national convention ('Festivention'): 'The last item of the day was a showing of the "Lost World", a film based on A. Conan Doyle's famous fantasy of a South American land in which dinosaurs and pterodactyls still exist. Made in 1925 and starring Wallace Beery and Bessie Love, the film was naturally silent, but by clever manipulation of gramophone records ("Night on Bare Mountain", "Rite of Spring", etc), and of the volume control, [William F.] Temple and Arthur C. Clarke managed a very appropriate accompaniment.' (*Science Fantasy News*, July 1951). Less well received was the festival year's South Kensington Exhibition of Science: 'Frankly, from the coal mine blackness of the first section (designed to show the atomic structure of a lead pencil) to the final case showing the Universe (which during our visit was not working and invisible), the whole affair is very disappointing. [...] There are some extremely interesting Waltzing Mice (no information), a cinema show we didn't have the courage to see, and, best of all, an exit into the time-tested Science Museum proper.' (*Ibid*, July 1951)

Random Fandom. Rich Lynch's proposal for Fanzine/Semiprozine Hugo reform in its latest version: rwl.livejournal.com/41971.html.

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of Just How Does He Know?* 'The face [of the woman who answered] the door was ghostly white, of a person who had been bled, veal-like, from the ankles.' (Peter Turnbull, *The Man With No Face*, 1998) [PB] ● *Sonic Stealth Attack Dept.* 'It was a silence that screamed.' (Brian Lumley, *Beneath the Moors*, 1974) [LP] ● *Dept of Anatomy.* 'Memories leaked out of his head and burned acid paths down his throat and into his lungs.' (Allan Guthrie, *Hard Man*, 2006) [PB] "'Who's there?" a voice called out of the darkness, causing Pearce's stomach to shoot into his throat.' (*Ibid*) [PB] '... something was niggling away at the back of his mind. He couldn't quite put his finger on it.' (Mack Reynolds, *The Cosmic Eye*, 1969) [IH] ● *Surprise Package Dept.* 'There was also something in his head. It was a brain.' (Mervyn Peake, 'Boy In Darkness', in *Sometime, Never*, ed anon, 1956)

Ansible 288 © David Langford, 2011. Thanks to Paul Barnett, Sarah Biggs, Mat Coward, Jonathan Cowie, Gordon Davie, Paul di Filippo, Steven J. Dunn, Steve Green, David J. Haddock, Izzy Hanson, Martyn P. Jackson, David K.M. Klaus, Bennett McCordle, Todd Mason, Lawrence Person, Andrew I. Porter, Private Eye, Steven H Silver, Gary Wilkinson, Andrew Wells, Martin Morse Wooster, Jessica Yates, and as ever our Hero Distributors: Dave Corby (Birmingham SF Group), SCIS/Prophecy, Alan Stewart (Australia). 1 July 2011