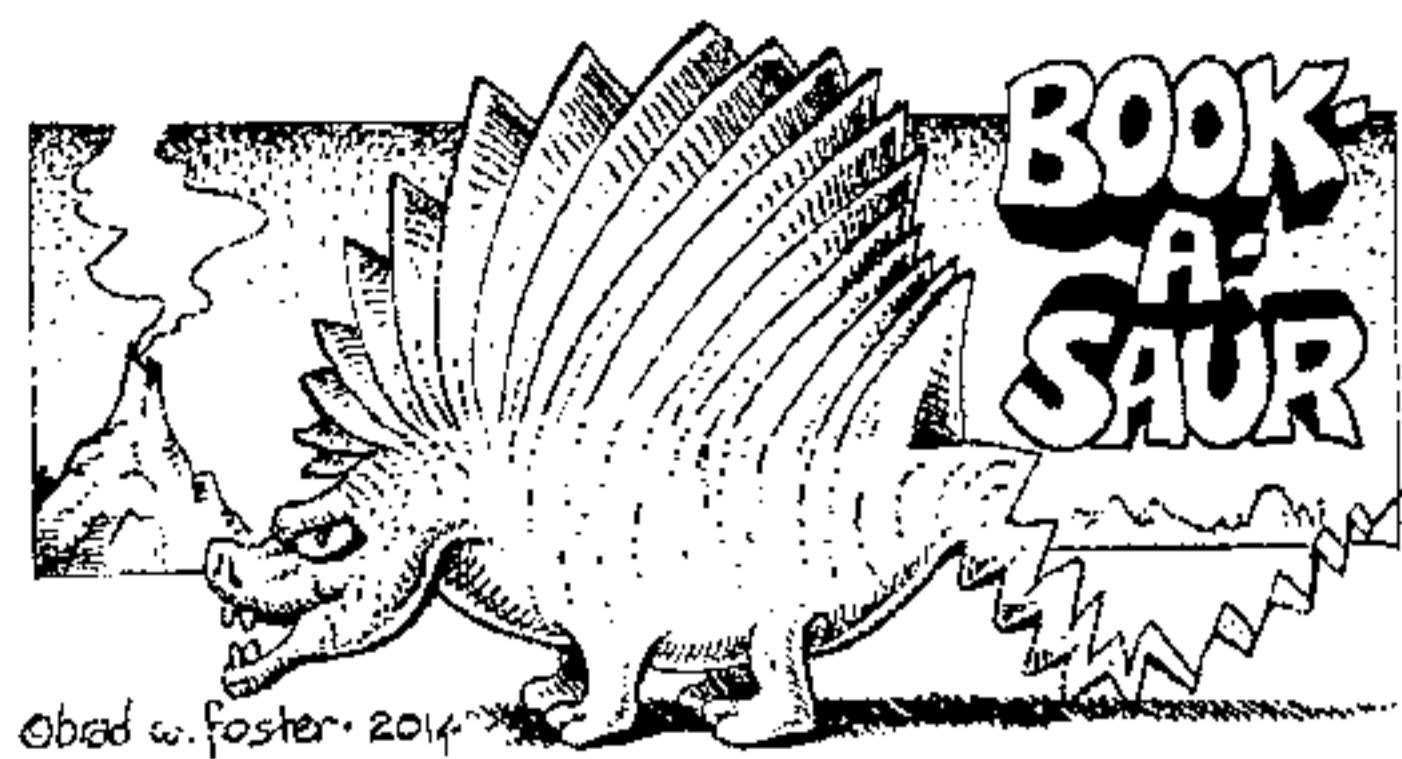


Ansible



Ansible 332 March 2015

From **David Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website news.ansible.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Brad W. Foster**. Available for SAE, egg-meat, gruts or the song of the Schi.

Forever Shameless. This month's offering from Ansible Editions is the first ever ebook of that man Langford's almost legendary SF/fantasy book review columns for *White Dwarf* et al: *The Complete Critical Assembly*. See ae.ansible.uk/?id=titles/critasm for the usual puffery.

The Reminders of the Day

'**Dracula** deserts Shropshire—to MPs' dismay' was the intriguing headline of a parliamentary sketch by Donald Macintyre (*Independent*, 26 February). MP Mark Pritchard (Con, Wrekin) complained to the House of Commons that location shooting for a *Dracula* film had moved from his constituency to ... 'another European country'. Macintyre: 'Though Pritchard could not bring himself to say so, the film is going to be made in Hungary, possibly because it's nearer Transylvania.' [MPJ]

Homer is in the news again. Thanks to the film *The Boy Next Door*, in which the hero presents the heroine with a 'first edition' of *The Iliad* (printed, in remarkably clean dustjacket, found at a garage sale), this rarity became the most popular search at AbeBooks. But was it signed?

Kazuo Ishiguro doesn't seem to worry about genre labels, but others feel he must be saved from the stigma of having written a post-Arthurian historical fantasy: 'It would be too easy to call what Ishiguro is undertaking "fantasy" or "magical realism." Critics will summon such phrases to describe this book, but they would be wrong to do so. Such facile labels—suggesting that the author is relying on literary devices pulled from old bags of tricks—have no meaning here. Instead, what we are given in *The Buried Giant* has the clear ring of legend, original and humane as anything Ishiguro has written.' (Marie Arana, *Washington Post*, 25 February) [MMW] Is even 'magic realism' no longer respectable? 'It would be too easy and facile to call Ishiguro's writing "prose" ...'

Ken MacLeod's *Independent* 'Book of a Lifetime' choice was perhaps inevitably headlined *NECROMANCER* BY WILLIAM GIBSON (28 February).

William F. Nolan is the World Horror Society Grand Master for 2015, as voted by the members of the World Horror Convention.

Conubium

11 Mar • **Cabot Institute Lecture**: 'Past, future, and fantasy climate change—from the mid-Cretaceous to Middle Earth' by Prof. Dan Lunt, Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building, Bristol U. 6pm. Free.

14-15 Mar • **Futurefest** (futurology), Vinopolis, Stoney St, London, SE1 9AA. £80 reg; £50 day; students £70, £40. See futurefest.org.

14-15 Mar • **Sci Fi Scarborough** (comics, media), The Spa, Scarborough. £30.25 reg; under-16s £15.13. Day £18.70 Sat, £14.30 Sun; under-16s £9.35, £7.15; under-6s free. See www.scifiscarborough.co.uk.

15 Mar • **EM-Con** (media), Capital FM Arena, Nottingham. 'Silver' tickets sold out; 'general' tickets £8. See www.em-con.co.uk.

19-22 Mar • **Sci-Fi Weekender**, Hafan y Mor Holiday Park, near Pwllheli. Booking by accommodation. See www.scifiweekender.com.

23-25 Mar • **North London Literary Festival**, Middlesex U, Hendon: sf panel 24 Mar, 5:30-7pm. Free. See northlondonlitfest.com.

25 Mar • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Suniti Namjoshi. Free.

27-29 Mar • **Tynecon III: the Corflu**, Vermont Hotel, Castle Garth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1RQ. Now £60/\$100 reg as of 1 March; £15/\$25 supp. Day rates only after 15 March: Fri £15, Sat £20. Contact 45 Kimberley Gardens, London N4 1LD. See corflu.org.

30-31 Mar • **Sideways in Time**: Alternate History and Counterfactual Narratives (conference), Liverpool University. £43.05 at sidewaysintime.eventbrite.co.uk. See sidewaysintime.wordpress.com.

3-6 Apr • **Dysprosium** (Eastercon), Park Inn, London Heathrow. £80 reg; £25 supp/under-18s, £15 under-12s, £5 infants under 6. Contact 101 Ninian Rd, Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP2 6NB; register online at www.dysprosium.org.uk.

14 Apr • **Yesterday's Tomorrow** (*Eagle*/Dan Dare), 27/29 South Lambeth Rd, Vauxhall, London, SW8 1SZ. £50 reg (£40 BIS/*Eagle* Soc). See www.bis-space.com/2015/02/12/14260/yesterdays-tomorrow.

8-10 May • **Fantastiq** (genre film festival), QUAD art centre,

Market Place, Derby, DE22 3PN. £50 reg. See fantastiq.co.uk.

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

4 Jul • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, Hilton Hotel, Leeds, LS1 4BX. See www.tolkienesociety.org/events/tolkien-society-seminar-2015/.

17-19 Jul • **SF Foundation Masterclass in SF Criticism**, Royal Observatory, Greenwich. £200 (postgrads £150). For fuller details see www.sf-foundation.org/masterclass2015.

27-31 Aug • **Frightfest** (horror film festival), Glasgow Film Theatre. Bookings: www.frightfest.co.uk or 0141 332 6535.

28-31 Aug • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. Dates announced; tickets available 'shortly' at steampunk.synthasite.com.

10-13 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), St Antony's College, Oxford. £50 reg. See www.tolkienesociety.org/events/oxonmoot-2015/.

16-18 Oct • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. Some parts free. For tickets see www.comicartfestival.com.

22-25 Oct • **Bram Stoker International Film Festival**, Whitby. Four-day pass now £125. See www.bramstokerfilmfestival.com.

14-15 Nov • **Comic Con** (comics), Leeds. As usual this is part of Thought Bubble, the Leeds Comic Art Festival, running 9-15 November. Ticket prices TBA. More at thoughtbubblefestival.com.

27-31 Jan 2016 • **Conception** (RPG), New Milton, Hampshire. Booking by accommodation. Prices TBA at www.conceptionuk.org.

5-7 Feb 2016 • **Con2bil8** (filk), Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester. £37 reg/£27 unwaged; children (5-17) £1 per year of age; under-5s free. Cheques to UK Filk Convention, c/o 119 Whitehill Lane, Gravesend, DA12 5LU. Online booking: con2bil8.wordpress.com.

5-7 Feb 2016 • **SF Ball** (media), Grand Harbour Hotel, Southampton. £150 reg; child £75; other options. See sfbevents.com/sfball.

Rumblings. *Dublin in 2019*: to raise campaign funds this Worldcon bid offers presupporting membership at £12 or dollar/Euro equivalent, pre-opposing (or 'Backer') at £28, 'Friend' at £65 and 'Super Friend' at £160. The last two, giving full attending membership if you vote in the 2017 site selection and Dublin wins, *rise to £85 and £175 on 31 March*. That day also sees the addition of 'YA Friend' at £45, for those under 26 at the start of the convention in 2019. More at dublin2019.com.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* sets us right in its (favourable) review of *Game of Thrones*: '... oft fälschlicherweise dem Fantasy-Genre zugeordnet wird, obwohl es hier weder Zauberringe gibt noch einen fabulösen Sieg des Guten über das Böse.' That is, '... often erroneously regarded as Fantasy, although there are neither magic rings here nor a fantastical triumph of good over evil.' [LS]

Awards. *Skylark* (NESFA's life achievement honour): Moshe Feder.

In Typo Veritas. *Bioengineering Dept.* 'Gwen saw him as he glanced towards her, and realised that he reassembled the Duke of India.' (Christopher Nuttall, *The Royal Sorceress*, 2012) [HP]

R.I.P. *Paul Anderson* (1943-2015), Australian fan active in the 1970s in ANZAPA and as a reviewer for Bruce Gillespie's *SF Commentary*, died on 1 January. [BRG] • *Andre Brink* (1935-2015), South African academic, writer and anti-apartheid campaigner during the bad times, died on 6 February aged 79. His novella *The First Life of Adamastor* (1993) has mythic and fantastic elements. [AW] • *John Cooper* (1942-2015), UK comics artist who drew many strips based on tv sf—including *Captain Scarlet*, *Joe 90*, *Thunderbirds* and *Lady Penelope* for *TV Century 21* and *Blake's 7* and *Doctor Who* for Marvel UK—died on 22 February. • *Brett Ewins* (1955-2015) UK comics artist who worked on *Judge Dredd*, *Bad Company*, other 2000 AD series, *Hellblazer*, *Skreemer* and *Swamp Thing*, died on 16 February aged 59. [GW] • *Pauline Fisk* (1948-2015), UK author of unconventional fantasy for children whose first novel *Midnight Blue* (1990) won the Smarties Prize, died on 25 January; she was 66. [AIP] • *Leonard Nimoy* (1931-2015), actor, writer and director universally known for his role as the half-Vulcan Mr Spock in the original *Star Trek* (1966-1969) plus its spinoff films (two of which he

directed) and series, died on 27 February. [GM] He was 83. Pre-Trek sf film appearances include *Zombies of the Stratosphere* (1952), *Them!* (1954) and *The Brain Eaters* (1958). His two autobiographies were *I Am Not Spock* (1975) and *I Am Spock* (1995). ● Mick O'Connor, Irish fan involved with the 2019 Dublin Worldcon bid, died in hospital on 16 February. [AIP] ● Demis Roussos (1946-2015), Greek singer and performer who was lead singer of Aphrodite's Child for such apocalyptic Vangelis-composed albums as *End of the World* (1968) and *666* (1972), died on 25 January aged 68. [RF] ● Carol Severance (1944-2015), US author of *Reefsong* (1991; Compton Crook Award winner) and the 1992-1993 'Island Warriors' trilogy, died on 19 February. [SFS] ● Bertrice Small (1937-2015), US romance author who wrote several romantic fantasies including *A Moment in Time* (1991) and the 'World of Hetar' series (2005-2010), died on 24 February; she was 77. [PDF] ● Ryder Syvertsen (1941-2015), US author best known for the 1984-1991 'Doomsday Warrior' survivalist sf sequence as by Ryder Stacy (early volumes written with Jan Stacy), died on 24 February; he was 73. [JEL] ● Melanie Tem (1949-2015), US horror/dark fantasy author whose first novel was *Prodigal* (1991; Bram Stoker Award winner), died on 9 February. 'The Man on the Ceiling', written with her husband Steve Rasnic Tem, won Stoker, IHG and World Fantasy awards. [F770]

As Others See ISIS. 'He has the kind of unkempt facial hair one sees on certain overgrown fans of *The Lord of the Rings*, and his obsession with Islamic apocalypticism felt familiar. He seemed to be living out a drama that looks, from an outsider's perspective, like a medieval fantasy novel, only with real blood.' (*The Atlantic*, March) [PP]

SFWA announced on 3 February that—following a members' vote that was six to one in favour of the policy change—SFWA membership would from 1 March be open to self-published and small-press authors with sufficient earnings. \$3,000 from a novel or 10,000 words of short fiction at 6¢/word qualifies for active membership; a mere 1,000-word short at the same rate is enough for associate membership. (SFWA.org) Some grumbling came from authors to whom 6¢/word is but a dream.

Awards Shortlists. **BSFA:** NOVEL Nina Allan, *The Race*; Frances Hardinge, *Cuckoo Song*; Dave Hutchison, *Europe in Autumn*; Simon Ings, *Wolves*; Anne Leckie, *Ancillary Sword*; Claire North, *The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August*; Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon*; Neil Williamson, *The Moon King* (8 not 5 finalists owing to a tie for fourth place). **SHORT** Ruth E.J. Booth, 'The Honey Trap' (*La Femme*); Octavia Cade, 'The Mussel Eater' (*The Book Smugglers*); Benjanun Sriduangkaew, *Scale Bright*. **NONFICTION** Karen Burnham, *Greg Egan*; Niall Harrison, ed., 'The State of British SF and Fantasy: A Symposium' (*Strange Horizons*); Edward James, *Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers in the Great War*; Paul Kincaid, *Call and Response*; Jonathan McCalmont, 'Deep Forests and Manicured Gardens: A Look at Two New Short Fiction Magazines' (*Ruthless Culture*). **ARTWORK** Richard Anderson, cover, Kameron Hurley's *The Mirror Empire*; Blacksheep, cover, Adam Roberts's *Bête*; Tessa Farmer, *Wasp Factory*; Jeffrey Alan Love, cover, Simon Ings's *Wolves*; Andy Potts, cover, Sophia McDougall's *Mars Evacuees*. ● **Kitschies:** NOVEL Nina Allen, *The Race*; William Gibson, *The Peripheral*; Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon*; Andrew Smith, *Grasshopper Jungle*; Will Wiles, *The Way Inn*. **DEBUT** Monica Byrne, *The Girl in the Road*; Becky Chambers, *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet*; Hermione Eyre, *Viper Wine*; Emmi Itäranta, *Memory of Water*; Hanya Yanagihara, *The People in the Trees*. **COVER ART** Emily Carroll & Sonja Chaghatzbanian, Carroll's *Through the Woods*; Steve Marking (design) & Kimberly Glyder (lettering), Valerie Martin's *The Ghost of the Mary Celeste*; Glenn O'Neill, Nick Harkaway's *Tigerman*; Rafaela Romaya & Yehring Tong, Michel Faber's *The Book of Strange New Things*; Ben Summers, Lavie Tidhar's *A Man Lies Dreaming*. **DIGITAL** Cardboard Computer, *Kentucky Route Zero: Act III*; Meg Jayanth, *80 Days*; various on Twitter, *echovirus12*; Simogo, *The Sailor's Dream*. ● **Nebula Awards**, novels only: Katherine Addison, *The Goblin Emperor*; Charles E. Gannon, *Trial by Fire*; Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Sword*; Cixin Liu trans Ken Liu, *The Three-Body Problem*; Jack McDevitt, *Coming Home*; Jeff VanderMeer, *Annihilation*. For the other Nebula categories, see www.sfwaworldcon.org/2015/02/2014-nebula-awards-nominees-announced/. ● **Stokers** (horror), main novel category only: Craig DiLouie, *Suffer the Children*; Patrick Freivald, *Jade Sky*; Chuck Palahniuk, *Beautiful You*; Christopher Rice, *The Vines*; Steve Rasnic Tem, *Blood Kin*. For the rest, see horror.org/final-ballot-bram-stoker-awards/.

As Others See Us II. Former chess champion Garry Kasparov gives an interview. *Reason:* 'You have written recently that people in America don't seem to have a kind of bold sense of vision, of innovation, of change. Can you talk a little bit about that? What happened to the idea that we were going to reinvent the world?' *Kasparov:* 'I wish I knew. In

the 1950s and '60s, science fiction was the most popular genre. It has disappeared. Now you talk about elves, or magic, or it's dystopia. It's all you talk about—machines attacking us. There's no more positive vision of machines cooperating.' (*Reason*, March) [MMW]

Borderlands Reprieve. The San Francisco genre bookshop Borderlands was to close on 31 March, owing to a local minimum-wage law that would eventually add 39% to the payroll. Loyal customers persuaded them to accept sponsorships at \$100 per year (giving various privileges—see borderlands-books.com), and enough have been sold to keep Borderlands going until 31 March 2016 at the least.

R.I.P. II: Late Reports. James H. Cobb (1953-2014), US author of futuristic naval technothrillers beginning with *Choosers of the Slain* (1996), died on 8 July 2014 aged 61. [DPB] ● Frederic Mullally, UK author, journalist and publicist whose alternate-history novel was *Hitler Has Won* (1975), died on 7 September 2014 aged 96. [DP]

The Dead Past. 70 Years Ago, August Derleth revealed: 'I have completed the Lovecraft novel for which notes and fragments were left under [the] title of *The Lurker at the Threshold*; pending magazine publication, it will later on be issued as a collaboration under the Arkham House imprint.' (*Futurian War Digest*, March 1945) ● 40 Years Ago, another UK debut: 'FANTASYCON was the name the British Fantasy Society gave to its one-day meeting held at the Imperial Centre Hotel, Birmingham (scene of many a Novacon) on Saturday February 22nd. The meeting may fairly be said to have been a success. Attendance was more than fifty people.' (*Checkpoint* 60, March 1975) ● 30 Years Ago: 'SEX AUTHOR SLAMS VAT ON BOOKS ... was reportedly the modest headline surmounting Oxford Star coverage when "well known sex author Brian Aldiss" protested plans (*A41*: now scrapped?) to tax books and magazines at 15%. Will this revelation boost sales of the filthy *Helliconia Winter*? Or of his lewd essay collection *The Pale Shadow of Science*, being produced by Jerry Kaufman for Westercon [...] Brian's buddy Ian Watson is also big news, with his council election campaign against Lord Hesketh (Con): "Extremely miniature headline in the Towcester & Brackley Post: SPACEMAN WILL TAKE ON LORD H.'" (*Ansible* 42, March 1985) ● 20 Years Ago in the Brighton local-events mag *Punter*: '... *Interzone*, which has actually been going since 1982, this month celebrates the 100th anniversary of Jules Verne's portentous novel, *The War of the Worlds*.' (*Ansible* 92, March 1995) 'Imminent Death of the Net Predicted! "Please could you tell me how to get on to "Internet?"' writes the Rev. Lionel Fanthorpe.' (*Ibid*)

C.o.A. Julie Bell & Boris Vallejo, www.borisjulie.com (new website). Howard Waldrop, 3011 Whitis #106, Austin, TX 78705, USA.

Fanfundery. TAFF 2015 reminder: voting in the current Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund race continues until 7 April. See taff.org.uk.

Media Miscellany. *Annie Awards* (animation): *How to Train Your Dragon 2* won as best feature, and also for direction (Dean DeBlois), feature character design, storyboarding and music. ● **BAFTAs:** the animated film winner was *The Lego Movie*; *Birdman* won for cinematography award and *Interstellar* for Visual Effects. ● **Golden Raspberry:** Michael Bay was acclaimed as worst director for *Transformers: Age of Extinction* ● **Independent Spirit:** *Birdman*. [MPJ] ● **Oscars:** the best picture award went to *Birdman*, which also won for director (Alejandro G. Iñárritu), original screenplay and cinematography. Animated feature: *Big Hero 6*. Visual effects: *Interstellar*. ● **Nebula dramatic presentation shortlist:** *Birdman*, *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, *Edge of Tomorrow*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Interstellar*, *The Lego Movie*.

Thog's Masterclass. *Neat Tricks.* 'Alex's snub-nosed face sagged open. His blue eyes revolved incredulously.' (Poul Anderson & Gordon R. Dickson, 'Heroes are Made' aka 'The Sheriff of Canyon Gulch', May 1951 *Other Worlds Science Stories*) [CG] ● 'Huddled on the armchair where he'd sat to read until late last night, Helenka was embracing her retracted knees.' 'Her anguish could be perceived only by the way her lips tightened in a peristaltic pucker.' (both Ben Pastor, *Lumen*, 1999) [PB] ● *Eyeballs in the Sky.* 'For a few seconds, behind Torstad's eyes, something rattled its chains.' (Poul Anderson, *There Will Be Time*, 1973) [MMW] ● 'Jim stared with all his eyes.' (Isabel Ostrander, *Anything Once*, 1920) [PB] ● *Digital Commerce Dept.* 'Daniel sat back, steepling his long fingers across his waistcoat. He bought them from a little shop in Brixton Market.' (Paul McAuley, *Something Coming Through*, 2015) [HF]

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