



## Ansible 340 November 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, asterzine, duodec, frack, PyrE or smashite.

**Snitters**, defined by Douglas Adams and John Lloyd in *The Meaning of Liff* as 'rather unfunny newspaper clippings pinned to an office wall [whose] headline contains a name similar to one of the occupants of an office', seems a useful header for the sensational news that 'Red Hat is buying Ansible for more than \$100M' (Venturebeat.com, 15 October) [HO'B] while 'RGU lecturer Dr Dominic Ahiaga-Dagbu has been awarded the David Langford Commemorative Award at the annual Association of Researchers in Construction Management conference.' (Robert Gordon University Media Review, 14-16 October) [RB]. Furthermore, Dave Lally sends a tasty full-colour brochure for 'Langford's, The Welsh Sausage Co Ltd', which may at last explain why at Loncon 3 last year someone gave me a badge ribbon proudly lettered SAUSAGE MAKER OF FANDOM.

### Space and Force and Fear

**John Carpenter** won a plagiarism suit against Luc Besson—plus his co-writers and the production company EuropaCorp—based on the close resemblance between Carpenter's *Escape from New York* (1981) and *Lockout* (2012), which has essentially the same plot relocated into space. The French court duly 'noted many similarities between the two science-fiction films: both presented an athletic, rebellious and cynical hero sentenced to a period of isolated incarceration—despite his heroic past—who is given the offer of setting out to free the President of the United States or his daughter held hostage in exchange for his freedom; he manages, undetected, to get inside the place where the hostage is being held after a flight in a glider/space shuttle ...' etc. EuropaCorp was ordered to pay a modest €80,000. (Indiewire.com, 15 October)

**Bernard Cornwell**, author of the Saxon Stories novels on which the BBC's new Viking drama series *The Last Kingdom* is based, was not afraid to have a bash at the perceived opposition, *Game of Thrones*: 'So many characters. So many strands. You have to have large sections where the plot is explained; just have to sit there and be told what's going on. / This is very, very dull. So they put a lot of naked women behind it all ... They're called "sexplanations" in the trade. My programmes won't need sexplanations.' (Independent, 13 October) [MPJ]

**David A. Hardy**, for his space art, was one of four recipients of the American Astronautical Society's 'Ordway Award for Sustained Excellence in Spaceflight History' in its first year of presentation.

**James T. Kirk** was briefly prevented from boarding a flight at Heathrow when revealed as a mutant imitator of the USS *Enterprise* captain: former Scottish first minister Alex Salmond, an avowed Trekkie who likes to travel incognito. 'I just wanted BA to "beam me up, Scotty",' he hilariously explained. (Guardian, 4 October) [NJ]

**David Mitchell** knows where his towel is: 'Anything that is good grabs me, irrespective of its genre. The idea of confining an entire genre as being unworthy of your attention is a bizarre act of self-harm. So, "The Shining" is a great book. "The Haunting of Hill House" by Shirley Jackson is a great book.' (Salon interview, 26 October)

**Tom Purdom**, sf novelist and story writer, has been hospitalized with spinal and other injuries ever since a cyclist crashed into him from behind on the Schuylkill River Trail (Philadelphia) on 5 August. (Broad Street Review, 29 September) [SHS] May he soon recover.

**John Williams**, US composer of theme music for many genre films including *Star Wars*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Superman*, *Jurassic Park*, the *Harry Potter* sequence etc, is to receive the American Film Institute's lifetime achievement award for 2016. He is the first composer to be honoured since this award began in 1973. (BBC, 9 October) [MPJ]

### Conkanee

**Cancelled** 12-15 Nov • **Gatecon UK** (*Stargate* etc), Holiday Inn, Brentford Lock, London, TW8 8GA. Page at www.gatecon.com deleted.

13-15 Nov • **Armadacon 27**, Future Inn, Plymouth. GoH Dr Susan Blackmore, Adam Hart-Davis, Liesel Schwarz. £35 or £20 per day ('concessions' £30 and £15); £5 evening from 6pm. Contact 18 Wadham Rd, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 3BD; www.armadacon.org.

13-15 Nov • **Novacon 45**, Park Inn, Nottingham. GoH Anne and

Stan Nicholls. *Advance booking closes on 1 November*; £50 at the door; day membership £10 Fri, £25 Sat, £15 Sun. Under-13s free. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. See also www.novacon.org.uk.

14-15 Nov • **Comic Con** (comics), Leeds. Tickets £27 for weekend pass; £17/day. Part of Thought Bubble, the Leeds Comic Art Festival, running 9-15 November. More at thoughtbubblefestival.com.

21 Nov • **Sledge-Lit** (Edge-Lit extra), QUAD Centre, Derby. Tickets £25. Book online at www.derbyquad.co.uk/special-event/sledge-lit.

24-25 Nov • **Starship Engineer Workshops** (day 2 on sf starships), BIS, 27/29 South Lambeth Rd, Vauxhall, London, SW8 1SZ. £99 or £59/day including lunch, coffee; concessions £79 or £49/day. See www.bis-space.com/2015/09/26/15288/starship-engineer-workshops.

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

5 Dec • **Dragonmeet** (gaming), ILEC Convention Centre & Ibis Earls Court, 10am-11:55pm. Tickets £8 (concessions £6; group of six £40; group of £64); £10 at door. Booking at www.dragonmeet.co.uk.

17 Dec • **London Christmas Meeting**, upstairs bar, The Bishop's Finger, 9-10 West Smithfield, EC1A. 6pm-late. Not the usual First Thursday venue (Inn of Court). [RR] See news.ansible.uk/london.html.

25-28 Mar 2016 • **Mancunicon** (Eastercon), Manchester. £60 reg; 13-17s £45; 4-12s £30; under-4s free. *Rates reviewed 30 November*. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ, or see mancunicon.org.uk.

28-29 May 2016 • **Satellite 5**, Marriott Hotel, Glasgow. Added GoH: Ed Buckley. £55 reg; 12-17s £20; 5-11s £5; under-5s £2. *Rates good to 18 November*. Contact c/o Flat 2/1, 691 Shields Rd, Pollokshields, Glasgow, G41 4QL. Online registration at satellite5.org.uk.

23-25 September 2016 • **Fantasycon**, Scarborough. Grand Hotel, St Nicholas Cliff, and The Royal, St Nicholas St. £50 reg (BFS members £40) plus £35 for awards banquet. See fantasyconbythesea.com.

**Rumblings**. *Blackpool Comic Con*: the aftermath of this 12 September 2015 event was an October newspaper announcement that the parent company The Comic Con Co Ltd will hold its creditors' meeting under the 1986 Insolvency Act on 3 November. Gosh, that was quick.

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us**. Profiling serial killers and school shooters: 'Like all beta males, [Elliott] Rodger began to live a life outside of himself, or above the commonality he felt sure despised him. In the ordinary run of things, such boys get deep into the internet and chatrooms, drawing power from their anonymity, overarching their difficult years with TV shows and games and porn. They do no harm. They may read books—the audience for *Games of Thrones* [sic] is made up of such people—and they may be drawn to fantastical tales of the strong. So far, so what? Boys like that used to wear anoraks and read Tolkien and swap sci-fi comics, or get into heavy metal, overcoming shyness or adolescent angst with dark otherworldliness that lightened with age. But for some the darkness can prove engulfing. "I began a daily routine of walking to Barnes & Noble in Calabasas every day," Rodger writes in his manifesto ...' (Andrew O'Hagan, *London Review of Books*, 22 October) [DC]

**Science Corner**. "When an exponential hits the bend in the hockey stick curve," Doob said, "the result can be indistinguishable from a detonation." (Neal Stephenson, *Seveneves*, 2015) [PM]

**Awards**. *Arthur C. Clarke Foundation Imagination in Service to Society Award*: Margaret Atwood. [L] • *British Fantasy Awards*: ANTHOLOGY *Lightspeed: Women Destroy Science Fiction* ed. Christie Yant. ARTIST Karla Ortiz. COLLECTION Adrian Cole, *Nick Nightmare Investigates*. COMIC/GRAPHIC NOVEL Emily Carroll, *Through the Woods*. FANTASY NOVEL Frances Hardinge, *Cuckoo Song*. FILM/TV *Guardians of the Galaxy*. HORROR NOVEL Adam Nevill, *No One Gets Out Alive*. INDEPENDENT PRESS Fox Spirit Books. MAGAZINE/PERIODICAL: *Holdfast Magazine*, ed. Laurel Sills and Lucy Smee. NEWCOMER Sarah Lotz for *The Three*. NONFICTION *Letters to Arkham: The Letters of Ramsey Campbell and August Derleth, 1961-1971*, ed. S.T. Joshi, NOVELLA Stephen Volk, 'Newspaper Heart' (*Spectral Book of Horror Stories*). SHORT STORY Emma Newman, 'A

Woman's Place' (*Two Hundred and Twenty-One Baker Streets*). SPECIAL AWARD Juliet E. McKenna. • *US National Book Awards* shortlists, Young People's category genre titles: *Bone Gap* by Laura Ruby, *Challenger Deep* by Neal Shusterman and *Nimona* by Noelle Stevenson. [L]

**As Others See Us II.** *Tony Livesey*: 'Tickets for the new *Star Wars* film go on sale today, so we'll be talking to assorted oddballs in the queue later.' (BBC Radio 5Live, 19 October) [MPJ]

**R.I.P.** *Murphy Anderson* (1926-2015), US comics artist active from the 1940s 'Golden Age' and best known for work on DC Comics characters (Adam Strange, Batgirl, Hawkman, the Spectre, Superman, Zatanna) from the 1950s to the 1970s, died on 22 October; he was 89. [AIP] • *Ayerdhal* (Yal Soulier, 1959-2015), French sf and thriller writer who won the Grand Prix de l'Imaginaire in 1993 and 2004 for his novels *Demain une oasis* and *Transparences* respectively, died on 27 October aged 56. [PDF/J-DB] • *Dave Gibson* (1939-2015), co-proprietor with Ted Ball of London's well-loved Fantasy Centre bookshop from its 1969 founding until he retired to Scotland in 1991, died on 21 October; he was 76. [RR/AR] Ted Ball died this March; see A333. • *Alex Giannini* (1958-2015), UK character actor who played the Penguin in the 2011 touring production *Batman Live*, died on 2 October aged 57. [MPJ] • *Árpád Göncz* (1922-2015) Hungarian politician who was President of Hungary 1990-2000 and also translated many English works including *Frankenstein*, *The Lord of the Rings* and multiple titles by William Golding, died on 6 October; he was 93. [NW] • *Göran Hägg*, (1947-2015), Swedish author whose large output included three satirical sf novels—*Det automatiska paradiset* ('The Automatic Paradise', 1979); *Doktor Elgrantz eller Faust i Boteå* ('Doctor Elgrantz, or Faust in Boteå', 1983) and *Anders och Dafne* ('Anders and Daphne', 1987)—and short fiction in similar vein, died on 30 September aged 68. [J-HH] • *Gordon Honeycombe* (1936-2015), UK newsreader for ITN, playwright, actor and author of the supernatural horror novels *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand* (1969) and *Dragon Under the Hill* (1972), died on 9 October; he was 79. [AW] • *Bruce Hyde* (1941-2015), US actor and later academic remembered by fans for two appearances as Lt Kevin Riley in the original *Star Trek* (1966), died on 13 October aged 74. [F770/PDF] • *Marty Ingels* (1936-2015), US actor who did much voice work for animated cartoons, among them *Pac-Man* (title role) and *Darkwing Duck*, died on 21 October aged 79. [MMW] • *Nick Kisella* (1966-2015), US horror novelist and actor (in *Zombies Incorporated*, 2013), died unexpectedly on 28 October. [HS] • *Eiji Maruyama* (1930-2015), Japanese voice actor in many 'sentai' superhero-team productions including *Kyoryu Sentai Zyuranger* (1992-1993), died on 24 September aged 84. [PDF] • *Maureen O'Hara* (1920-2015), Irish-born actress whose film credits include *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939), *Sinbad, the Sailor* (1947) and *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947), died on 24 October; she was 95. [PDF] • *Noriyoshi Ohrai* (1939-2015), Japanese artist best known for his film posters—including the first three episodes of *Star Wars* in Japan and nine *Godzilla* productions—died on 27 October aged 79. [PDF/JC] • *Liviu Radu* (1948-2015), respected Romanian sf author and translator, died on 16 October aged 66. [SF<sup>2</sup>C] His translations include novels by Isaac Asimov, Neil Gaiman, Dean Koontz, George R.R. Martin, A. Merritt and China Miéville. • *Paul West* (1931-2015), UK-born US novelist, essayist and critic whose considerable output included fantasy—e.g. *Colonel Mint* (1973)—and absurdist sf shorts and fables, died on 18 October age 85. [PDF] • *Christopher Wood* (1935-2015), UK author and screenwriter for the Bond films *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977) and *Moonraker* (1979)—both of which he also novelized—died on 17 October; he was 79. [PDF] • *Pat Woodell* (1944-2015), US actress whose films include the *Island of Dr Moreau*-based *The Twilight People* (1972), died on 29 September aged 71. [AIP] • *Zdravko Zupan* (1950-2015), noted Yugoslav/Serbian comics creator and historian of his country's comics, died on 9 October aged 65. [PDF]

**The Weakest Link.** *Shane Richie*: 'The manager of the England football team between 1994 and 1996 was Terry who?' *Contestant*: 'Pratchett.' (BBC1, *Decimate*) [PE]

**Court Circular.** Another Nominet 'abusive registration' verdict: the Norfolk businessman who registered thebeano.co.uk must surrender this domain to D.C. Thomson & Co., publishers since 1938 of the UK kids' comic *The Beano*. (BBC, 1 October) [MPJ] • The owners of the real-life Rhode Island house whose (fake, they say) ghost stories inspired *The Conjuring* (2013) are suing Warner Bros for failing to protect their privacy: 'their property has been flooded with fans and unwanted visitors trespassing for a closer look'. (*Vulture*, 27 October) [MPJ]

**Bumper Sticker** (warning—hotly controversial in USA): GUNS DON'T KILL PEOPLE. / GEORGE R.R. MARTIN KILLS PEOPLE. [via AC]

**Outraged Letters.** *Brett Davidson*, Andy Robertson's literary executor, reports that Andy's William Hope Hodgson/*The Night Land* site has been restored at nightland.website. 'We do not have contact details of all previous contributors to the site, so if there are any readers of *Ansible* who have contributed in the past and are not mentioned on the restored site, they can contact me at bidavids at hotmail dot com.' • *Mike Moorcock* approves of *A Vince Clarke Treasury*: 'Glad the Vince Clarke book's out. I mention Vince quite a lot in *The Woods of Arcady*. Sequel to *Whispering Swarm*. [...] As I say in the book, Vince was something of a mentor to me and really helped me. Great bloke.' (2 October)

**We Are Everywhere.** Confirming that fan trivia have entered the sphere of general knowledge: 'Where ... in Britain was the 63rd World Science Fiction Convention held?' (*Metro* quiz, 23 October) [PCoh]

**As Others Hire Us.** A London Barbican job ad for an assistant curator (closed 31 October, alas) stipulates that 'knowledge of the science fiction genre in the areas of contemporary art, design, film and music is desirable.' (artsjobs.org.uk) [JL] Books are so twentieth century.

**Random Fandom.** *Dave Lally* insists that the highlight of Titancon came near the end of the all-female panel 'Women in SF: Do We Need Them?', when—given the five-minutes-left warning by a male committee member—Pat Cadigan cried 'Typical. Men trying to hurry me up!'

**The Dead Past.** *30 Years Ago*, a poser from a *Battlefield Earth* promotional quiz with actual copies of *BE* as the prizes: 'Who was the first man to set food on the moon?' (*Waltham Forest Guardian & Gazette*, 8 November 1985) [PCol] • *20 Years Ago*, another sf invisibling: '**Neal Stephenson** was not best pleased when *The Economist* quoted "a recent sf novel" (i.e. his *Snow Crash*) as saying that America will soon lead the world only in software, movies and pizza delivery—but without attribution. "I found two footnotes—but for other people's books. Both, I note, are serious-sounding non-fiction works whose authors (unlike science-fiction novelists, alas) are evidently thought to deserve recognition for their work. / *The Economist* should feel free to quote my ideas with due attribution, or leave them to languish in the obscurity of mere genre fiction—but not to enjoy the convenience of having it both ways.'" (*Ansible* 100, November 1995)

**Auction Figures.** Recent winning bids of unusual size are \$96,000 US for Princess Leia's slave-girl bikini from *Return of the Jedi* (*Daily Mail*, 4 October) and, in Hong Kong, \$1.2 million US for an original Hergé drawing of Tintin in Shanghai (BBC, 6 October). Also, Blackwell's is asking £60,000 for a map of Middle-earth hand-annotated by J.R.R. Tolkien for the illustrator Pauline Baynes. (*Guardian*, 23 October) [MPJ]

**In Typo Veritas.** The final 2015 World Fantasy Convention progress report assured convention members that at the World Fantasy Awards banquet, 'all entrees are glutton and dairy free.' [BV]

**Fanfundery.** *GUFF 2016*: Jukka Halme defeated his deadly rival Hold Over Funds and on 6 October was declared the winner of the 2016 GUFF race. He will attend Contact 16 in Brisbane next March. • *TAFF 2016 and After*. Jim Mowatt writes: 'The TAFF admins (Nina Horvath, Curt Phillips and Jim Mowatt) have been discussing the forthcoming races and have taken the decision to switch direction and run another East/West race for 2016. This means we are currently looking for nominees from Europe to visit North America in 2016 and to attend MidAmericon II in Kansas City on the 17th to 21st August. The knock-on effect of this decision is that the 2017 race will be West to East so that we can send someone from North America to Helsinki. This would also mean that we are going in the right direction to aim for New Orleans or San José in 2018 and Dublin in 2019. So onwards we go—To Kansas City and Beyond. It's TAFF nomination time.' Jim later added that the 2016 race nominations deadline is 11 December 2015.

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Dept of Fuzzy Geometry*. 'It was slightly rectangular.' (Andrea Camilleri, *The Treasure Hunt*, 2010; trans Stephen Sartarelli 2013). [PB] • *Channelling Stephen R. Donaldson Dept*. 'The Operandi works provided we recharge the Lacuna every nine years by luring a gullible Engifted into a suitable orison ...' (David Mitchell, *Slade House*, 2015) [BT] • *Dept of Culinary Simile*. 'Understanding Avi's motives is like peeling an onion with a single chopstick.' (Neal Stephenson, *Cryptonomicon*, 1999) [BA]

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