

Ansible



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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 or gifts at Ecksmass from Kringle-san.

Numerology Redux. The editors of the online *SF Encyclopedia* had a little gloat on 18 November 2015 when the text reached and passed its latest milestone of five million words. Next: 5,271,009!

The Long Winter

John Joseph Adams is editing a new SF line, John Joseph Adams Books, for Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. (*Publishers Weekly*, 9 November)

Don D'Auria, noted horror editor, was fired by Samhain Publishing less than 24 hours after the Samhain PR department had requested all their authors to write and post testimonials about his wonderfulness. A later public statement from Samhain implied that D'Auria had devoted too much of his time to such old-fashioned practices as editing, and neglected social-media promotion. Which one would have thought was the job of that PR department. (www.briankeene.com, 5 November)

Philip K. Dick can still cause trouble, with 300,000 copies of the 14 November *Guardian* Guide reportedly pulped because someone got cold feet about the Nazi imagery on its cover—illustrating a feature on the tv *The Man in the High Castle*. (*Press Gazette*, 17 November) [SH] Amazon's promotion of this series with Nazified and Japanified US flag designs on New York subway seats led to some public outcry and swift removal of the offending ads. (nbcnewyork.com, 24 November) [AIP]

Jon Langford modestly failed to tell *Ansible* about his 'Lord of the Book Covers' win for favourite indie-press cover design: *Breakfast at Cannibal Joe's* by Jay Spencer Green, whose porcine artwork somehow suggests a study of contemporary UK politics. (Completelynovel.com)

H.P. Lovecraft's caricatured head—as sculpted by Gahan Wilson—will no longer be the World Fantasy Award trophy after this year, said David Hartwell at the 2015 WFA ceremony on 8 November. During the same event, perhaps for the first time at any awards presentation ever, toastmaster Paul Di Filippo uttered the phrase 'eldritch miscegenation'. The trophy change was cheered by Daniel José Older and others who'd campaigned for it since last year, mainly on the basis of Lovecraft's overt racism and the discomfort caused by this association to such past WFA winners as Nnedi Okorafor. But the leading HPL scholar S.T. Joshi promptly returned his own 'irremediably tainted' World Fantasy Awards in protest against 'a craven yielding to the worst sort of political correctness'. Either way, it's goodbye to what was widely regarded as the ugliest prize in the long and chequered history of genre awards.

Beatrix Potter and **Richard Powers** are among the latest artists announced as having been inducted into the US Society of Illustrators Hall of Fame. (Irene Gallo, Tor.com, 20 November)

Simon Spanton, associate publisher at Orion's Gollancz sf imprint, left Orion on 20 November 'by mutual agreement'. [AIP]

Conopophaga

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.

5 Dec • **Yulemoot** (Tolkien Society), The Old Contemptibles, 176 Edmund St, Birmingham, B8 2HB. 5pm-late. All welcome; free entry.

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.

27-31 Jan 2016 • **Conception** (RPG), New Milton, Hampshire. Booking by accommodation from £170 (double or twin) to £400 (2 double plus 2 twin). Details/booking forms at www.conceptionuk.org. Contact 23 Canberra Road, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 2HN.

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.

25-28 Mar 2016 • **Mancunicon** (Eastercon), Manchester. Now £75 reg with other rates unchanged: 13-17s £45; 4-12s £30; under-4s free.

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 4 April 2016. Contact c/o Flat 2/1, 691 Shields Rd, Pollokshields, Glasgow, G41 4QL. Online registration at satellite5.org.uk.

16 Jul 2016 • **Edge-Lit 5**, QUAD, Market Place, Derby. 10am-late. Tickets £30. See www.derbyquad.co.uk/special-event/edge-lit-5.

12-14 Aug 2016 • **Nine Worlds Geekfest** (multimedia), London. Early tickets £85; child £28.50. Book online at nineworlds.co.uk.

26-29 Aug 2016 • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. Full details and online booking awaited at steampunk.synthasite.com.

13-15 Nov 2016 • **Novacon 46**, Park Inn, Nottingham. GoH Juliet McKenna. £46 reg 'until at least 31 December 2015'. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. More to come at www.novacon.org.uk.

14-17 Apr 2017 • **Pasgon** (Eastercon), Mercure Holland House Hotel, Cardiff, CF24 0DD. Now £70 reg; YA (14-17) £30; child (5-13) £15; supp £25. Contact 38 Cecil Court, Addiscombe Rd, Croydon, CR0 6SN. Online registration at www.pasgon.org.uk.

Rumblings. *UK Worldcon in 2024?* As announced at Novacon 45, a number of fans are discussing a possible 2024 bid—for the Worldcon ten years after Loncon 3. All are welcome to join in, 'no matter their location, experience or fandom': send email to FutureUKworldcons[at]googlegroupsdot com. • **BSFA:** As you well know, Professor, the BSFA traditionally skips its regular open London meeting in December.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Research Us. 'Nothing like the RAND of the early 1950s has existed before or since. RAND may well have been the model for Isaac Asimov's "Foundation" series, about a RANDlike organization full of hyper-rational social scientists.' (Sylvia Nasar, *A Beautiful Mind*, 1998) Data point: RAND began in May 1948 when all but the last segment of the Foundation trilogy had appeared in magazine form. [AL]

Awards. *Guardian Children's Fiction Prize:* David Almond, *A Song for Ella Grey* (a modern retelling of the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice). • *Rotsler Award* for life achievement in fanzine art: Teddy Harvia (David Thayer). • *US National Book Awards* (Young People's category): Neal Shusterman, *Challenger Deep*. [L] • *World Fantasy Awards:* NOVEL David Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks*. NOVELLA Daryl Gregory, *We Are All Completely Fine*. SHORT Scott Nicolay, *Do You Like to Look at Monsters?* ANTHOLOGY Kelly Link & Gavin J. Grant, ed., *Monstrous Affections*. COLLECTION (tie): Helen Marshall, *Gifts for the One Who Comes After*, and Angela Slatter, *The Bitterwood Bible and Other Recountings*. ARTIST Samuel Araya. SPECIAL—PROFESSIONAL Sandra Kasturi & Brett Alexander Savory for ChiZine Publications. SPECIAL—NONPROFESSIONAL Ray B. Russell & Rosalie Parker for Tartarus Press. [L]

Thog's Alternate History Masterclass. The BBC press release for its Christmas programming includes a mindboggling what-if speculation: '**Sherlock.** "Dr John Watson, meet Mr Sherlock Holmes." We've been here before—but what if this wasn't the modern day but the late Victorian period? What if the world's most famous consulting detective and his best friend lived in a Baker Street of steam trains, hansom cabs, top hats and frock-coats? / Welcome to "Sherlock" in 1895!' [JM]

R.I.P. Hazel Adair (Hazel Joyce Marriott, 1920-2015), who with her husband Ronald Marriott scripted and novelized the early BBC children's sf series *Stranger from Space* (1952-1953), died on 22 November aged 95. She is best known for such non-genre tv serials as *Crossroads*. [SH] Circa 1969 she and David Frost acquired film rights to J.G. Ballard's *The Drought*, though the film was never made. [DP] • **George Barris** (1925-2015), US car customizer whose designs included the 1966 tv Batmobile, the *Munsters* Munster Koach and later versions of KITT in *Knight Rider*, died on 5 November aged 89. [MR] • **Perry A. Chapdelaine** (1925-2015), author of *Swampworld West* (1974) and other sf, and editor with Tony Chapdelaine and George Hay of *The John W. Campbell Letters* (two volumes, 1985 and 1993), died on 24 November aged 90. [JC] • **Bruce Edwards** (1952-2015), US academic and C.S. Lewis scholar

who was general editor of the multi-volume *C.S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy* (2007) and published four solo books about Lewis and his work, died on 28 October aged 63. [F770] • **Carl-Åke Eriksson** (1934-2015), Swedish actor whose best-remembered genre role was as a vampire in *Frostbitten* (2006), died on 7 November; he was 80. [PDF] • **Johan Frick** (1965-2015), Swedish fan, fanzine publisher, translator (of Philip K. Dick, Katherine Keer, Patricia McKillip, Gene Wolfe and others), sf bookshop co-owner and sf/fantasy author, died on 14 November aged 49. [J-HH] • **Kenneth Gilbert** (1931-2015), UK actor whose credits include *Wolfshhead: The Legend of Robin Hood* (1969) and *Doctor Who: 'The Seeds of Doom'* (1976), died on 29 October aged 84. [PDF] • **Michael Gross** (1945-2015), US artist, designer and producer who was art director of *National Lampoon* 1970-1974, designed the *Ghostbusters* logo and produced the film, its sequel and its animated spinoff *The Real Ghostbusters* (tv 1986-1992), died on 16 November aged 70. [GW] • **Gunnar Hansen** (1947-2015), Iceland-born US actor best known as Leatherface in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), died on 7 November aged 68. [GW] Other film credits include the sf horror spoof *Swarm of the Snakehead* (2006). • **Charles Herbert** (1948-2015), former US child actor seen in *The Fly* (1958), *Men into Space* (1959-1960 tv), *13 Ghosts* (1960) and episodes of *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits*, died on 31 October aged 66. [AIP] • **Martyn P. Jackson** (1963-2015), UK fan who was a frequent contributor of news items to *Ansible* since 2009, died on 8 November—the day after sending his last story. He was 52 and had long suffered from ME. [JAT] • **Julia Jones** (1923-2015), UK playwright and tv screenwriter whose BBC adaptations include E. Nesbit's *The Enchanted Castle* (1979) and Philippa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1989), died on 9 October aged 92. • **Al Markim**, US actor and producer who was Astro the Venusian in *Tom Corbett, Space Cadet* (tv 1950-1955), died on 24 November aged 88. [F770] • **Melissa Mathison** (1950-2015), US screenwriter who scripted *E.T.: the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), a segment of *Twilight Zone: The Movie* (1983) and the forthcoming Roald Dahl adaptation *The B.F.G.*, died on 4 November aged 65. [F770] • **Warren Mitchell** (1926-2015), UK actor whose genre credits include *The Trollenberg Terror* (1956 tv; 1958), *The Curse of the Werewolf* (1961), *Help!* (1965), *Night Caller from Outer Space* (1965), *Moon Zero Two* (1969) and *Jabberwocky* (1977), died on 14 November aged 89. [AW] • **K. Cassandra O'Malley** (1942-2015), US sf poet whose story 'Red Sky at Night' as by Jean Charlotte appeared in *New Worlds* 7 (1974; US *New Worlds* #6, 1975), died in mid-October; she was 72. [DL/RB] • **Hans Rancke**, Danish fan and comics writer who co-created and co-wrote the *Valhalla* comic and its animated movie spinoff, died on 9 October aged 59. An expert on the *Traveller* RPG universe, he co-wrote the *Sword Worlds* source book for GURPS Traveller. [KÆM] • **Rex Reason** (1928-2015), US actor seen in *This Island Earth* (1955, star role) and *The Creature Walks Among Us* (1956), died on 19 November aged 86. [SFS] • **Jim Slater** (1929-2015), notorious UK financier who also wrote children's fiction including the sf *The Boy Who Saved Earth* (1979), died on 18 November aged 86. [RR] • **Mike Sutton** (1971-2015), UK freelance journalist who wrote about sf/horror films for BFI Screenonline and booklets accompanying DVD/Blu-ray releases from Arrow and Eureka!, died on 5 November aged 44. [SG] • **Rena Wolner**, US publisher who at various times was president of Berkley (where she signed up Tom Clancy, William Gibson and Dean Koontz), Pocket and Avon, died on 7 November aged 70. [PDF] • **T.M. Wright** (1947-2015), US horror author whose debut novel was *Strange Seed* (1978) and who is perhaps best known for *A Manhattan Ghost Story* (1984) and its sequels, died on 31 October aged 68. [DAA]

The Weakest Link. *Ben Shephard*: 'In Christianity, Calvary is the location where which Biblical figure was believed to have been crucified?' *Contestant*: 'Joan of Arc.' (ITV, *Tipping Point*) [PE]

As Others See the Hugos. 'The Hugos are the Oscars of sci-fi—with a dollop of the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards, because they aren't bestowed by members of an academy.' (*Wired*, November) [MMW]

Hallowe'en Treats. Hodder & Stoughton promoted Thomas Olde Heuvel's *Hex* with an 'Eye Sewing Kit' for the kiddies—black thread and a steel bodkin. 'Instructions: sew eyes shut. Tip: for extra swelling, dip your needle in chilli oil.' Roars of laughter! Breaks the ice at parties! • Linus of *Peanuts* was at last vindicated in the *Independent's* Inquisitor crossword for 31 October: solvers who followed the hidden instructions were rewarded with a huge orange apparition of the Great Pumpkin.

Outraged Letters. *Stephen Gallagher*: 'I'm reluctant to argue industry terminology with Bernard Cornwell, but I've yet to come across the word "sexplanation"—the practice of propping up a dull dialogue scene with nudity or nookie is most commonly called "sexposition".'

We Are Everywhere. From a restaurant review: 'A helping of kale lay over the chicken like a drunken triffid.' (John Walsh, *Independent*, 21 November) Thog also liked the delicately evoked ambience of an old Yorkshire pub: 'The bar is as snug as a wombat's armpit ...'

Random Fandom. *The Future of Eastercon?* Responses to this poll were presented at Novacon; since many fans hadn't heard about it, the questionnaire has re-opened at eastercon.wordpress.com. • **Bill Kunkel** (1950-2011) is remembered in the US Society of Professional Journalists' new Kunkel Awards for excellence in video game journalism. [SFS]

Magazine Scene. *Crossed Genres* will close with the December 2015 issue, say co-publishers Bart R. Leib and Kay T. Holt. [L]

The Dead Past. *70 Years Ago*, fandom was so very different: 'From the few American fanzines I have seen lately (mainly *Acolyte*), I gather a somewhat unfavourable impression of continual bickering over trivia—distasteful trivia to boot. When talk of libel and courts of law crops up in fanzines it's high time someone got their finger out and swept the cobwebs away and started over afresh?' (Ken Bulmer in *British Fantasy Society Bulletin* 24, December 1945) • *60 Years Ago*: 'Biggest British prozine news of the year (and SFN's exclusive scoop) comes with the report that Bert Campbell, one of the most colourful and bearded characters on the s-f scene, has relinquished his editorship of *Authentic Science Fiction*, and London fan-proauthor Ted Tubb has taken the vacant position.' (*Science Fantasy News*, Xmas 1955) • 'London fandom now has more active female fans than males in its ranks ...' (*Ibid*) • *50 Years Ago*, a nebulous intimation: 'The Science Fiction Writers of America is/are instituting a series of awards for the year's best SF, selected by members of the SFWA ...' (*Skyrack* 85, December 1965)

Fanfundery. *TAFF*: a final reminder that nominations for the 2016 westbound trip from Europe to MidAmericon II (Kansas City, 17-21 August) close on 11 December. See taff.org.uk for more, much more. So far the only declared candidate is Wolf von Witting. • *Sasquan*, the 2015 Worldcon, has kindly donated \$2000 apiece to DUFF and TAFF.

The Image Job. The World Fantasy Society calls for a new trophy design (see also above) at www.worldfantasy.org. MidAmericon II has a competition for the 2016 Hugo base design, with an 18 January submissions deadline. Details at midamericon2.org/hugo-base-contest/.

In Typo Veritas. 'We are also in negotiations with nearby hotels ...' (on accommodation at Pasgon, Progress Report 1, November)

Magical Media Moments. Howard Shore's Oscar-winning music for the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy has for the sixth year running won the popular vote, in the Classic FM Movie Hall of Fame poll, as the best film soundtrack of all time. (BBC, 7 November) [MPJ]

Group Gropes. *Birmingham Horror Group*, Spread Eagle pub, Warwick Rd, Acocks Green, B27 7SD, on the first Saturday of each month, beginning 5 December. 7pm on. See birmingham-horror.co.uk. [SG]

Thog's Masterclass. *Bad Hair Dept.* 'His unruly shock of red hair towered six feet above the floor ...' (Edmond Hamilton, *Captain Future and the Space Emperor*, 1940) [IC] • *Dept of Anatomy.* 'Her answer was a collection of shaking heads.' (Mike Shepherd, *Vicky Peterwald: Survivor*, 2015) [PM] "'Her neck may not have been on the line, but a good bit of her skin was in the game.'" (*Ibid*) "'It seems to me that in times like this, with belts cinched in as tight as they are, it might get hard to figure out just where honesty lies.'" (*Ibid*) • *Eyeballs in the Sky.* 'The commander threw Vicky a cautionary eye.' (*Ibid*) '... his eyes felt as if they had tendrils growing out of them, crawling like ants across the floorboards.' (Sheng Keyi, *Death Fugue*, trans Shelly Bryant 2014) [JB] • *Doublethink Dept.* 'Too weary to attempt subterfuge, John relied again on a false story to gain entrance.' (Martin Caidin, *The Long Night*, 1956) [BT] • *Underwater Haircare Secrets.* 'This is so weird it makes the hairs on the back of Beck's neck stand up—and there's a lot of hair there, because like most submariners, Beck hasn't shaved in weeks.' (Neal Stephenson, *Cryptonomicon*, 1999) • *Bicarbonate Dept.* 'The pessimism of the twentieth century has been a massive burp of indigestion; but the stomach ache is passing.' (Colin Wilson, *The Philosopher's Stone*, 1969) • *Dept of Anatomy II.* 'Maybe her stomach knew what it was doing when it threw up her toenails.' (Mike Shepherd, *Kris Longknife: Unrelenting*, 2015) [PM] 'Then the universe farted.' (*Ibid*)

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