



Ansible® 363 October 2017

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 anything that's zymolosely polydactile.

Me and Nd-YAG. Very soon I hope to look like Brad Foster's cartoon, after having the post-cataract fog lasered out of one eye. Wish me luck.

The Scarlet Capsule

Leigh Brackett was revealed as the first ever woman finalist for the best-novel Hugo (with *The Long Tomorrow*) when the 1956 shortlist was at last unearthed from an old Worldcon PR. (www.thehugoawards.org)

Omar el Akkad's story of a new US civil war, *American War*, is happily free from genre taint despite being set in 2075: 'I certainly never intended to write a book about the future. The reason the book is set in the future is simply because I needed time for the fictional world to sort of marinate. I needed time for the sea levels to rise 60 meters or whatever ridiculous amount that I dreamed up to bury the coasts. I needed time for the Bouazizi Empire, which is sort of the rising empire in the book, to take form. That was the only reason to sort of set it in the future, but I certainly never set out to write science fiction or anything like that.' (Vox.com interview, 21 September) [JB]

Nigel Kneale's widow Judith Kerr conveyed his views on SF: 'He always said he hated science fiction and never read it because science fiction tends to happen in someplace where anything can happen, so it's not interesting. It's like writing about drunks, which is also terribly boring because they can do anything. I think the Quatermass stories are not so much science fiction as ideas. They're all based on an idea and what might happen to quite ordinary people if this particular thing happened.' (Interview, *Quatermass and the Pit* Blu-ray Extra) [RJS]

Steve Matchett tweeted from the Outer Planets: 'If this final transmitted message from Cassini is not "My God ... it's full of stars!" I will be really very, very disappointed.' (15 September) [JG]

Adam Roberts is busy 'reading through the whole of H.G. Wells's oeuvre, and am now up to *Bealby* (1915). Not one of his SFnal titles, of course, and for that reason perhaps not of interest to Thog. But one of the characters in the book, the Lord Chancellor no less, has some quite remarkable eyebrows, to wit: he has eyebrows which he is "able to furl or unfurl at will". I find that a little hard to picture, myself. And there's more: "By the end of dinner the Lord Chancellor kept his eyebrows furled only by the most strenuous relaxation of his muscles." "No," shouted the Lord Chancellor, losing all self-control and waving his eyebrows about madly." "With his eyebrows spread like the wings of a fighting-cock the Lord Chancellor in five vast noiseless strides had crossed the intervening space and gripped the butler by his collarless shirt." It's a rarely exploited superpower, that.' (27 September)

Conringia

6-9 Oct • **Grimmfest** (horror/cult film festival), Odeon Printworks, Manchester. Tickets £75 or £80 'premium' from grimmfest.com.

6-9 Oct • **Irish Discworld Convention**, Cork International Hotel, Cork Airport, Ireland. €50 reg; €40 concessions; accompanied under-13s €1. SOLD OUT; WAITING LIST AT WEBSITE. See idwcon.org.

6-8 Oct • **Octocon**, Camden Court Hotel, Camden St, Dublin, Ireland. €35 reg; concessions €20; accompanied under-13s free; €10 supp. Join online at octocon.com.

7-8 Oct • **Nor-Con** (media), Norfolk Showground Arena. Tickets at various prices from www.nor-con.co.uk.

7-8 Oct • **SFW in the City** (Sci-Fi Weekender spinoff), O₂ Academy, Sheffield. Various priced: see www.sfwinthecity.com.

13 Oct • **British Fantasy Society Social**, The Counting House, 50 Cornhill, London. 7pm to late. Free; all welcome.

13-15 Oct • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. Some parts free. For tickets see www.comicartfestival.com.

14 Oct • **M.A.S.H.** (Manchester Alternative SciFi Horror), Trafford Park. 10am-4pm & 7pm-1am. £10; £12 at door. See pod.events.

20-22 Oct • **Celluloid Screams** (horror film festival), Showroom Cinema, Sheffield. See celluloidscreams.co.uk. 0114 275 7727.

20-22 Oct • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Pendulum Hotel, Manchester. £85 reg; day rates £35 Fri or Sun, £50 Sat. Cheques c/o 8

Glenfield, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 4QH. See fantastic-films.com.

20 Oct - 28 Feb • **Harry Potter: A History of Magic**, British Library, London. See www.bl.uk/events/harry-potter-a-history-of-magic.

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

25 Oct - 28 Jan • **Tove Jansson** (exhibition), Dulwich Picture Gallery. £15.50; £7 concessions. See tinyurl.com/y725rdts.

27-31 Oct • **Edinburgh Horror Festival**, various city venues and programme to be announced. See www.edhorrorfest.co.uk.

28 Oct • **BristolCon**, Hilton Doubletree Hotel, Bristol. £25/£20 concessions; £30/£25 at the door. Cheques to Flat 11, Beaufort Ct Flats, 1 Beaufort St (off Stapleton Rd), Easton, Bristol, BS5 0SQ. PayPal registration at www.bristolcon.org.

28 Oct • **Frightfest**, Empire Cinema, Haymarket, London. Tickets £45 or £14.50 per film. See www.frightfest.co.uk/2017films/.

28 Oct • **Writing Horror Stories** (workshop), QUAD Centre, Derby, DE1 3AS. 10am-4pm. £30 reg; £25 concessions. For details see [derbyquad.co.uk/creative-course-\(adult\)/writing-horror-stories.aspx](http://derbyquad.co.uk/creative-course-(adult)/writing-horror-stories.aspx).

29 Oct • **Out of This World**, Sheffield city centre. Free, with dealer stalls. See www.digi-fest.co.uk/ootw-trader-tables.

1-30 Nov • **Grandville: Force Majeure** (Bryan Talbot exhibition), Orbital Comics, London, WC2H. See tinyurl.com/ycjzy5ss.

4-6 Nov • **Armadacon 29**, Future Inns, Plymouth. £35 reg; day £20 (concessions £30 and £15). Contact Moor Cottage, Gardinham, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL30 4BR; or see www.armadacon.org.

4-5 Nov • **Gollancz Festival**, Phoenix Artist's Club & Foyles, London. £25 Saturday; no information on Sunday. See gollanczfest.com.

10-12 Nov • **Novacon 47**, Park Inn, Nottingham. £50 reg (*may rise in November*); under-17s £12; under-13s free. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. Online registration at www.novacon.org.uk.

25 Nov • **Sledge-Lit**, QUAD Centre, Derby. 10am-6pm. Tickets £25. See www.derbyquad.co.uk/events/sledge-lit-3.aspx.

3 Dec • **Stars of Time** (media), Tropicana, Weston-super-Mare. 10:30am-5:30pm. £6.50; child £3.50. See www.starsoftime.co.uk.

9 Dec • **2017: A Clarke Odyssey** (conference), Canterbury Christ Church University. *Rates now announced: £65, concessions £50, including lunch etc.* See 2017acl Clarkeodyssey.wordpress.com.

30 Dec - 2 Jan • **Steampunk New Year**, Mercure Hotel, Leicester. See www.asylumsteampunk.co.uk/steampunk-new-year-2017.

15-22 Sep 2018 • **Milford UK**, Trigonos, Snowdonia. £636 including room and meals; £150 deposit; published writers only. Booking has already begun for 14-21 September 2019. See www.milfordsf.co.uk.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Fail to See Us. John Clute grumbled about the *Guardian's* 'ineffably poshlosty article by Alison Flood announcing the 2017 [*Man Booker*] shortlist, gingerly skirting the clear fact that at least three titles are fantastika—there are entries on Paul Auster, George Saunders and Mohsin Hamid in the *SF Encyclopedia*, where each of the shortlisted titles is described—and that the novel that had been in contention from the surprise non-listed author Colson Whitehead was also transgressively non-mimetic (*The Underground Railroad* is also described at length in the *SFE*). Just to be clear: science fiction, fantasy, the fantastic, non-mimetic are among the relevant terms that do not pass the *Guardian* good-taste filter.' (Facebook, 14 September)

Awards. *Elgin* (poetry collection): BOOK Jeannine Hall Gailey, *Field Guide to the End of the World*. CHAPBOOK Neil Aitken, *Leviathan*. • Emmy (television) genre winners include: DRAMA *The Handmaid's Tale*. TV MOVIE *Black Mirror: San Junipero*. • Lord Ruthven (vampires): NON-FICTION David J. Skal, *Something in the Blood: The Untold Story of Bram Stoker*. FICTION Anne Rice, *Prince Lestat and the Realms of Atlantis*. POP CULTURE *Vamped / The Vampire Historian*. [F770] • **PastWords Award:** a new career honour from the Historical Writers of America for an 'outstanding body of work.' The five inaugural winners include the learned historian of Westeros, George R.R. Martin. [L]

Alt-History. A Saudi Arabian social studies text was withdrawn because its photo of King Faisal signing the UN Charter in 1945 also includes Yoda from the *Star Wars* universe. The artist Abdullah Al Shehri, creator of many such mash-up images, has no idea how this one found its way into a schoolbook. (*NY Times*, 21 September) [AIP]

R.I.P. *Hasse (Hans) Alfredson* (1931-2017), Swedish actor, director and author whose novels include the 1996 alternate history *Attentatet i Pålssjö Skog (The Pålssjö Woods Attack)*, died on 10 September aged 86. [PDF/AH] • *Francis Xavier Atencio* (1919-2017), Disney animator since 1938 (his first on-screen work being uncredited in *Pinocchio*) and Disneyland imagineer from 1965 to 1984, died on 10 September aged 98. [SFS] • *Walter Becker* (1950-2017), US musician whose band Steely Dan used sf themes in such songs as 'King of the World' (1973), died on 3 September aged 67. [MJE] • *Shelley Berman* (1925-2017), US actor/comedian seen in *Beware! The Blob* (1972), *Teen Witch* (1989) and various genre tv series, died on 1 September aged 92. • *Bernie Casey* (1939-2017), US actor in *Never Say Never Again* (1983), *In the Mouth of Madness* (1994), *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* (1989) and *Vegas Vampires* (2007), died on 19 September aged 78. [PDF] • *Jennifer Daniel* (1936-2017), Welsh actress in *The Kiss of the Vampire* (1963), *The Reptile* (1966) and others including *Christmas with the Dead* (2012), died on 16 August aged 81. [PDF] • *Andy England*, UK fan, convention art auctioneer and dedicated book, magazine and ammonite collector long associated with Fantasy Centre (helping in the shop and at con dealer tables), died on 22 September; he was 63. [EA/BA/RR] • *Basil Gogos*, US artist of Greek ancestry best known for his *Famous Monsters of Filmland* cover paintings—collected in *Famous Monster Movie Art of Basil Gogos* (2005)—died on 14 September aged 68. [GW] • *Haiyan Xu*, Chinese academic and translator of sf by William Gibson, Robert A. Heinlein, Nancy Kress, Charles Stross and others, died in a diving accident on 6 September. [PDF/AIP] • *H.A. Hargreaves* (1928-2017), US-born Canadian sf author whose stories—beginning in 1963—are collected in *North by 2000* (1976; expanded 2012), died on 27 July aged 89. [F770] • *Hugh Hefner* (1926-2017), US founder in 1953 of *Playboy* magazine—for decades a usefully high-paying market for sf authors—died on 27 September aged 91. • *Harvey Jacobs* (1930-2017), US author of sf/fantasy fables collected in *The Egg of the Glak* (1969) and of such novels as the satirical dystopia *Beautiful Soup* (1993), died on 23 September; he was 87. [AJ] • *Anne Jeffreys* (1923-2017), US actress whose credits include *Zombies on Broadway* (1945) and *Topper* (1953-1955 tv), died on 27 September aged 94. [GVG] • *Cris Jones* (1980-2017), UK-born writer and director of the Australian sf/fantasy film *The Death and Life of Otto Bloom* (2016), died on 7 September aged 37. [GC] • *Charles H. King* (1934-2017), US author whose one known sf story was 'The Rememberers' (May 1952 *Future SF*) as H. Charles Blair, died on 15 September. [PDF] • *Tim Poston* (1945-2017), UK mathematician who with Ian Stewart wrote the sf novels *The Living Labyrinth* (2016) and *Rock Star* (2017)—intended as two-thirds of a trilogy—died unexpectedly on 22 August; he was 72. [IS] • *Jerry Pournelle* (1933-2017), US author initially known for his CoDominium sequence of military and libertarian sf, who won the first John W. Campbell Award for best new writer in 1973 and was president of SFWA 1973-1974, died on 8 September aged 84. [LP] His most popular and successful novels were collaborations with Larry Niven, in particular *The Mote in God's Eye* (1974), *Lucifer's Hammer* (1977) and *Footfall* (1985). • *Kit Reed* (1932-2017), US author of many quirky and often subversive stories and novels, from her 1958 debut in *F&SF* to the recent *Mormama* (2017), died on 24 September aged 85. Collections include *The Killer Mice* (1976) and *Other Stories And ... The Attack of the Giant Baby* (1981). I miss her. • *Dave E. Romm* (1955-2017), US fan active in Minneapolis fandom, in APAs and online since the Usenet era, died on 4 September aged 62. He had produced the *Shockwave* sf/science fact radio show since 1979. [SFS] • *Harry Dean Stanton* (1926-2017), US character actor in *Alien* (1979), *Escape from New York* (1981), *Repo Man* (1984), *Dream a Little Dream* (1989), *The Green Mile* (1999), *The Avengers* (2012) and *Twin Peaks* (2017 tv), died on 15 September aged 91. [CS/MR] • *Yoshio Tsuchiya* (1927-2017), Japanese actor in many Toho SF/Kaiju films including the Godzilla/Rodan epic *Invasion of Astro-Monster* (1965), died on 5 September aged 90. [BE] • *Len Wein* (1948-2017), US comics writer and editor who co-created Swamp Thing for DC and Wolverine for Marvel, edited *Watchmen* and was a key figure in the 1975 X-Men revival, died on 10 September aged 69. [GF]

The Weakest Link. Q: 'The mythical horse-like creature, the unicorn, has what protruding from its head?' A: 'An icicle.' (ITV, *Tipping Point*) [PE] • Q: 'Which object orbits the Earth at an approximate dis-

ance of 250,000 miles?' A: 'The Sun.' Q: 'What is the largest body in the solar system?' A: 'The galaxy.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE]

Court Circular. Ongoing: a deeply tedious trademark dispute between descendants of Philip Francis Nowlan, creator of Buck Rogers, and those of John Flint Dille, whose newspaper company syndicated the Buck Rogers comic strip. The Nowlan Family Trust came off best in the previous lawsuit and is now being challenged by the Dille Family Trust. Evidence includes a fame survey in which 63% of those who responded recognized Buck Rogers—well behind Captain America (91%) and Luke Skywalker (87%) but ahead of John Carter of Mars, the Doctor in *Doctor Who* and HAL 9000. According to Judge Wendy Beetlestone, Buck Rogers is therefore *not quite famous enough* to validate a Dille claim about 'trademark dilution'. (*Hollywood Reporter*, 28 August) [AIP]

As Others See Us. 'We scoured the literary world for everything from funny fiction and serious science fiction to knitting manuals and alternative art in search of the odd and the obscure.' (AbeBooks) [BA]

Magazine Scene. *Apex Magazine* returns to print with the January 2018 double issue, confides editor Jason Sizemore. Ebook publication continues, with the POD version following. (www.apex-magazine.com)

In Typo Veritas. A *Guardian* book-blog piece on 80 years of *The Hobbit* made mention of Fritz Leiber and his 'fantasy duo Fafhrd and the Gravy Mouser'. (21 September; all too soon corrected, alas.)

Random Fandom. *Jim Barker*, ace cartoonist, writes: 'I'm Not Well and will probably need a liver transplant soon.' • *Greg Pickersgill's* 2005 Worldcon fanwriting collection *Can't Get Off the Island* is the latest addition to the TAFF free ebooks page at taff.org.uk/ebooks.php.

The Dead Past. *20 Years Ago:* 'Walter Jon Williams has been enjoying, or not enjoying, a run-in with *Wired* magazine over his 1986 novel title *Hardwired* ... a title subsequently licensed by WJW for games, action figures, cars, etc, and (nearly) as Paramount's "improved" title for *Johnny Mnemonic*. Imagine his joy when menacing *Wired* lawyers forced cancellation of NovaLogic's 1996 *Hardwired* CD-ROM game, costing WJW a heap of licence money, on the basis that (a) *Wired* owns everything with "Wire" in the title [...]; (b) *Wired's* brand-new imprint *HardWired Books* obviously has a prior claim over anything published in 1986.' (*Ansible* 123, October 1997) *Later in that issue:* 'Most of the cyber-sf titles scheduled for *Wired* magazine's new *HardWired* imprint are on hold and may never appear, owing to *Wired's* 1997 financial crises. Retrenchment looms. (*SF Chronicle*) *Ansible* has asked Walter Jon Williams for an exclusive giggle.' (*Ibid*)

British Fantasy Awards. BOUNDS (newcomer) Erika L. Satifka, *Stay Crazy*. MAGAZINE Tor.com. NONFICTION Kameron Hurley, *The Geek Feminist Revolution*. GRAPHIC Marjorie Liu & Sana Takeda, *Monstress, Vol 1: Awakening*. INDY PRESS Grimbold Press. ARTIST Daniele Serra. ANTHOLOGY *People of Colour Destroy SF*. COLLECTION Adam Nevill, *Some Will Not Sleep*. FILM/TV *Arrival*. NOVELLA Victor LaValle, *The Ballad of Black Tom*. SHORT Georgina Bruce, 'White Rabbit'. DERLETH (horror novel) Paul Tremblay, *Disappearance at Devil's Rock*. HOLDSTOCK (fantasy novel) Adrian Tchaikovsky, *The Tiger and the Wolf*. WAGNER (important contribution) Jan Edwards. LEGENDS OF FANTASY CON David & Sandra Sutton.

Thog's Masterclass. *Dept of 1% Inspiration.* 'The sweat poured from under Thomas' conical steel helmet, down the sides of his neck to the nape, where the salt streams of Tigris and Euphrates joined to trickle down the cataracts of his spine. That was while he stood silently at attention with his brother knights. When they moved forward, new freshets of moisture sprouted from his armpits and rolled across his kidneys.' (Roger Zelazny & Thomas T. Thomas, *The Mask of Loki*, 1990) [BA] • *Fire When You See ...* 'His shadow was thick and dark—except for the whites of his eyes ...' (*Ibid*) [BA] • *Eyeballs in the Emphyrean.* 'His eyes left the sky, falling back to Earth to where she stood.' (G.X. Todd, *Defender*, 2017) • *Auto-Extrusion Dept.* 'Auchinek left the car like toothpaste from a tube.' (Michael Moorcock, 'Voortrekker', 1971) [BA] • *Dept of Feline Simile.* '... when Miss Joan brung his vittles, he grabbed her arm and leered like a cat eating prickly pears, and says, "Gimme a kiss, gal!"' (Robert E. Howard, *Knife-River Prodigal*, 1937) [BA] • *Puberty Dept.* 'There was an adult beefswelling in his loins and he felt his mouth open, holding, clinging to the girdershape of ecstasy.' (Frank Herbert, *Children of Dune*, 1976) [BR]

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