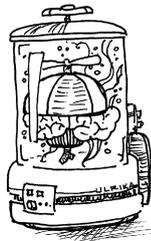


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From **David Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website news.ansible.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Ulrika O'Brien**. Available for SAE or an elephant with a wooden leg.

A Celery of No Compass

Lady Penelope Creighton-Ward of *Thunderbirds* fame – salvaged by the Anderson production team puppeteer Mary Turner – was valued at £38,000 by the BBC *Antiques Roadshow* pundits. Captain Scarlet's valuation in the same show was a mere £20,000. (BBC, 6 January)

Claire Eddy has been promoted to executive editor at Tor/Forge Books. (*Publishers Lunch*, 8 January) [MJW]

Michel Houellebecq was awarded France's highest civilian distinction, the Legion of Honour, in January. Innovatively, the latest 'novel by the celebrated but controversial author predicts the doom of western civilisation.' (*Telegraph*, 1 January) [DP]

Sherrilyn Kenyon, US author of the 'Dark-Hunter' paranormal romance series, filed a lawsuit against her husband Lawrence Kenyon (divorce in progress) and his assistant Kerrie Ann Plump for having 'systematically poisoned her since 2015' and stolen 'hundreds of thousands of dollars of her personal income'. Lawrence Kenyon's attorney says: 'These astonishing and unsubstantiated allegations may stand as her best fantasy creation yet'. (*Publishers Lunch*, 16 January) [AIP/PB]

Michael Moorcock's farewell stage performance will be as part of the band Moonhawks in a celebration of '50 Years of the Music of Hawkwind' at North American Space Ritual 2019 (Austin, Texas, 30 March 2019; comeandtakeitproductions.com). [JL] The Moorcockian version of the event poster can be seen at tinyurl.com/ydh4gc4v.

J.K. Rowling continued to provide Too Much Information about her wizarding world when her Pottermore site broadcast the vital datum – years old at Pottermore but new to Twitter – that 'Hogwarts didn't always have bathrooms. Before adopting Muggle plumbing methods in the eighteenth century, witches and wizards simply relieved themselves wherever they stood, and vanished the evidence.' (4 January) SF fans may be reminded of similar effects achieved via permeable clothing and absorptive furniture in Theodore Sturgeon's 'The Skills of Xanadu'.

Gahan Wilson, whose 89th birthday is on 18 February, announced his retirement from cartoon work in January. [PW]

Contragredient

Until 9 Feb • **Discworld & Beyond** (exhibition), N. Herts Museum, Hitchin. See www.paulkidby.com/event/discworld-beyond-6/.

Until 24 Feb • **The Art of the Gestetner** (exhibition), Bruce Castle Museum, Lordship Lane, N17 8NU. Closing date extended from 26 January: see below. Open 1pm-5pm, Wednesday to Sunday. Free.

1-3 Feb • **31-ET** (filk), Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester. £38 reg or £28 unwaged plus booking fees; under-18s £1/year of age; under-5s free. Further details at www.contabile.org.uk/31et/.

7-8 Feb • **The Art of the Mimeograph** (conference linked to exhibition above), University of Westminster, 35 Marylebone Rd, London, NW1 5LS. 9am-6pm. Free, but booking is required: see goo.gl/t3dizP. Thursday-afternoon events include an interview with Rob Hansen.

8 Feb • **The Hitchhiker's Guide to Alice** (Lewis Carroll Society talk on Douglas Adams), Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queens Sq, London. 6:30pm for 7pm. £5; LCS members free. See lewiscarrollsociety.org.uk.

8-10 Feb • **SF Ball** (media), Grand Harbour Hotel, Southampton. £135 reg or £15/day; child £45 or £5. See sfevents.com/sfball.

13 Feb • **The Shakespeare of SF**: talk on H.G. Wells by Michael Sherborne, Century Club, Soho, London W1. 6:30pm for 7pm. Tickets £12: acuriousinvitation.com/scientificromanceandhgwells.html. More talks (same venue, time, price): *Brave New World*, 20 March; Philip K. Dick, 24 April; *A Clockwork Orange*, 15 May; Aleister Crowley, 10 July.

16 Feb • **Picocon 36**, Blackett Building, Imperial College, London. Several guests of honour. £12 reg; £10 concessions; £8 for ICSF members; past GoHs free. See www.union.ic.ac.uk/scc/icsf/picocon/.

26 Feb • **Tolkien Lecture**: Marlon James. Pichette Auditorium, Pembroke College, Oxford. 6pm. Free booking at tolkienlecture.org.

27 Feb • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 6pm for 7pm. Speaker(s) TBA. Free.

1-2 Mar • **Frightfest** (film), Glasgow Film Theatre. Tickets £75 for

the full weekend, or (limited numbers) £11.50 per film: now on sale at www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsevents.html. Also London events at Leicester Square: 22-26 August plus a Halloween special on 2 November.

10 Mar • **Birmingham International Horrorshow**, Victoria pub, John Bright St, Birmingham. See www.birmingham-horror.co.uk.

11 Mar • **John Wyndham** event on the 50th anniversary of his death. 6pm for 6:15pm talk at his one-time home The Penn Club, 21-23 Bedford Place, London; later at The College Arms pub, 18 Store Street. Further details and poster at triffidalley.com/50_Anniversary.html.

15-16 Mar • **Starburst Film Festival**, The Landing, Salford. 5pm-1:15am. Tickets £33.25. See starburstmagazine.com/filmfestival/.

SOLD OUT 29 Mar - 1 Apr • **Irish Discworld Convention**, Cork. Waiting list for membership transfers at idwcon.org (deadline 1 March).

5-7 Apr • **Springmoot** (Tolkien Society), Ambassadors Bloomsbury Hotel, London. AGM for members only; dinner with GoH speech £36. Details at www.tolkiensociety.org/events/springmoot-and-agm-2019/.

11-12 May • **HorrorCon UK**, Magna Science Adventure Centre, Sheffield Rd, Rotherham, S60 1DX. Tickets £40 for 11am entry, £50 for 10am; accompanied under-17s £16. Bookings at horrorconuk.com.

23 May - 26 Aug • **Manga** (exhibition), British Museum, London. Tickets £19.50; under-19s and concessions £16; accompanied under-16s free. See britishmuseum.org/whats_on/exhibitions/manga.aspx.

15-19 Aug • **Dublin 2019** (Worldcon), Dublin, Ireland. €210 reg; under-26s €130; under-13s €70; under-6s €5; supp €40. *Hugo nominations opened in January and close on 15 March*. See dublin2019.com. Also the academic programme track has a call for papers (closing on 22 February) at: dublin2019.com/whats-on/programming/academic/.

28-29 Sep • **Nor-Con** (media), Norfolk Showground Arena. Tickets inc fees: £31.03; £20.33 child; £96.30 family. See www.nor-con.co.uk.

26 Oct • **BristolCon**, Hilton DoubleTree Hotel, Bristol. GoH Diane Duane, Gareth L. Powell, Andy Bigwood. Membership rates and online registration form awaited at www.bristolcon.org.

1-3 Nov • **Armadacon 31**, Future Inn, Plymouth. £35 reg; concessions £30; under-16s free. PayPal registration at www.armadacon.org.

28-31 Aug 2020 • **Redemption** (multimedia), Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield. Guests of honour TBA. £55 reg to 31 April 2019 (then £65 to 31 April 2020; then £70 to 31 July; £75 at door); concessions £20 less; under-18s £25; under-3s free; supp £15. See redemptioncon.org.uk.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. 'I don't enjoy science fiction because there are things in science fiction that violate the laws of physics. I like science and I like fiction separately.' (Avi Loeb, chair of Harvard's astronomy department – interviewed in *The New Yorker*, 16 January) [SD]

Awards. *Academy Awards* (Oscars): *Black Panther*, with seven nominations, is the first superhero film to be shortlisted for Best Picture. ● *Golden Globes*, Animated Film: *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*. ● *Golden Kite* (children's): Jane Yolen, *Mapping the Bones*. [L] ● *Philip K. Dick* shortlist: Ian McDonald, *Time Was*; Jeff Noon, *The Body Library*; Claire North, *84K*; Abbey Mei Otis, *Alien Virus Love Disaster: Stories*; Audrey Schulman, *Theory of Bastards*; Vandana Singh, *Ambiguity Machines and Other Stories*. [GVG] ● *Robert A. Heinlein Award* for 2019: Gregory Benford. ● *SFWA* career awards: *Damon Knight Grand Master*, William Gibson; *Kate Wilhelm Solstice*, Nisi Shawl and Neil Clarke.

Miniaturization Masterclass. 'CERN physicists plan collider four times the size of Large Hadron'. (*Guardian* headline, 16 January) [JG]

R.I.P. *Diana Athill* (1917-2019), UK writer and editor who during her long publishing career at André Deutsch worked with Margaret Atwood, Philip Roth, John Updike and many more, died on 23 January aged 101. ● *Russell Baker* (1925-2019), Pulitzer-winning US humorous columnist whose rare genre work included *The Upside-Down Man* (1977) with Gahan Wilson, died on 21 January aged 93. [AIP] ● *Kaye Ballard* (1925-2019), US singer and actress whose genre credits include *Cinderella* (1957 tv musical), *Freaky Friday* (1976), *Eternity* (1990), *What a Dummy* (1990-1991) and *Little Insects* (2000, voice), died on 21 January aged 93. [TM] ● *Mervyn 'Merv' Barrett* (1932-2019), New Zealand fan

active in Australia and London fandom in the 1960s and 1970s, and a co-organizer of the first NZ national convention – Wellcon, 1979 – died on 15 January aged 86. [TC] ● *Verna Bloom* (1938-2019), US actress whose films include *Where Have All the People Gone?* (1974), died on 11 January aged 80. [JC] ● *John Burningham* (1936-2019), UK creator of children's picture-books – some fantasy – who illustrated the original three-volume edition of Ian Fleming's *Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang* (1964-1965) and twice won the Kate Greenaway Medal, died on 11 January aged 82. [RK] ● *Carol Channing* (1921-2019), US actress whose voice credits include *Shinbone Alley* (1970, as Mehitabel the cat), *The Addams Family* (1992-1993, as Grandma), *Thumbelina* (1994) and *The Brave Little Toaster Goes to Mars* (1998), died on 15 January aged 97. [PDF] ● *Dean Copkov*, Canadian stuntman whose films include *The Incredible Hulk* (2008), *Pacific Rim* (2013) and *RoboCop* (2014), died on 22 January. ● *Windsor Davies* (1930-2019), UK actor in *Doctor Who*: 'The Evil of the Daleks' (1967), *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* (1969), *Terrahawks* (1983-1986, voice) and *Gormenghast* (2000), died on 17 January aged 88. [SG/CM] ● Late report: *Paula E. Downing* (1951-2017), US author of several sf novels beginning with *Mad Roy's Light* (1990 as Paula King) and including the 'Cloudships of Orion' space operas (1994-1996 as P.K. McAllister, died on 17 December 2017 aged 66. She also wrote fantasy as Diana Marcellas. [JOW] ● *Bob Einstein* (1942-2019), US comedy writer and actor with a genre credit for *Strange Magic* (2015, voice), died on 2 January aged 76. [PDF] ● *John Falsely* (1951-2019), US tv writer and producer whose co-creations include the *Amazing Stories* (1985-1987) anthology series with Steven Spielberg and Joshua Brand, died on 3 January aged 67. [AIP] ● *Eric Ferguson*, US fan once active in the Southern Fandom Press Alliance APA, died on 3 January. [GL] ● *Robert S. Friedman*, US publisher whose first venture was The Donning Company in 1974 – producing sf, fantasy and graphic novels under the Starblaze imprint – died on 9 January aged 76. [PDF] ● *GAK* (Gregg Kanefsky), US artist who from 1996 produced covers for Nova Express plus other magazines and books, died on the weekend of 12/13 January. [PDF] ● *Merwin Goldsmith* (1937-2019), US actor in *Hercules in New York* (1970) and *Unholy* (2007), died on 21 January aged 81. [PDF] ● *Lindig Hall Harris*, long-time US fan, con-goer and bookshop owner ('Lin Digs the Book') whose fanzine was *Yclept Yarbrow*, died on 1 January aged 76. [PT] ● *Batton Lash* (1953-2019), US comics creator best known for the humorous *Wolff and Byrd*, *Counselors of the Macabre* (1979-1987, re-launched 1994 as *Supernatural Law*), died on 12 January aged 65. [PDF] ● *Michel Legrand* (1932-2019), Oscar-winning French composer whose many film scores include *Gulliver's Travels* (1977), *Never Say Never Again* (1983), *Revenge of the Humanoids* (1983) and *Eternity* (1990), died on 26 January aged 86. [MMW] ● *Dick Miller* (1928-2019), US character actor with many genre credits from *It Conquered the World* (1956) via *Little Shop of Horrors* (1960), *The Howling* (1981), *Gremlins* (1984), *The Terminator* (1984) and *Innerspace* (1987) to *Burying the Ex* (2014), died on 30 January aged 90. ● *Muriel Pavlow* (1921-2019), UK actress in *Hansel and Gretel* (1937) and *Project M7* (1953), died on 19 January aged 97. [SG] ● *Sam Savage* (1940-2019), US author of *Firmin: Adventures of a Metropolitan Lowlife* (2006) – whose hero is a rat – died on 17 January aged 78. [PDF] ● *Matt Rose*, make-up artist and sculptor whose films include *Invaders from Mars* (1986), *Predator* (1987), *Alien Nation* (1988), *Hellboy* (2004; also sequel) and *Star Trek Beyond* (2016), died in late January. [PDF] ● *Annis Shepherd*, 1979 Clarion graduate whose first story appeared in Lee Harding's *The Altered I* (1976), reportedly died in January. [SE] ● *William Morgan Sheppard* (1932-2018), UK actor whose genre films include *Elvira: Mistress of the Dark* (1988), *Star Trek VI* (1991), *The Prestige* (2006) and *Transformers* (2007), died on 6 January aged 86. [PDF] ● *Cecil Smith*, former art director at New English Library who worked with Bruce Pennington and others in the 1960s and 1970s, died on 31 December. [SH] ● *Ron Smith* (1924-2019), long-time UK comics artist who worked for D.C. Thomson 1951-1972 and from 1979 drew many Judge Dredd strips for *2000 AD*, died on 10 January aged 94. [PDF] ● *Solomon Strange*, UK author of the nautical-supernatural novel *The Haunting of Gospall* (2018), died on 4 January. [PDF] ● *Gary Tesser* (1952-2018), US fan active in APAs and in New York's fan club the Lunarians, died on 8 December. [GL] ● *Erica Yohn* (1928-2019), US actress in *An American Tail* (voice, 1986) and its sequels, and in *Amazon Women on the Moon* (1987), died on 27 January aged 90.

The Weakest Link. *John Humphrys*: 'The authors Brian Aldiss, Robert Heinlein and Isaac Asimov all wrote what kind of fiction?' *Contestant*: 'Children's?' (BBC1, *Celebrity Mastermind*, 5 January) [RJ] ● *Jeopardy* answer requiring the right question: 'This Poe story's title is realized as the narrator flees the "House" as it cracks and is torn asunder.' *Contestant*: 'What is the house with a crack in its wall?' (24

January) [AIP] ● *John Humphrys*: 'The Merchant, the Knight and the Wife of Bath are among the storytellers in which work by Chaucer?' *Contestant*: 'Shakespeare.' (BBC1, *Celebrity Mastermind*) [PE]

Magazine Scene. Angela Yuriko Smith has taken over as publisher of the long-running sf print magazine *Space and Time*, founded by Gordon Linzner in 1966. (Angelayuriko.com, 1 January) [GVG]

As Others Use SF Images. 'I was furious, feeling my children had been raped, or beaten, by an alien.' (Sylvia Plath, 1956 journal, after a friend returned borrowed books with passages underlined in pencil.)

Random Fandom. *Jack Cohen*, noted UK fan and biologist, hasn't been too well in recent years; but now there are plans for a June micro-convention in a Poole teashop where a few friends can chat with him. For details, see www.concatenation.org/stuff/jack-cohen-2019.html.

Precognition Dept. 'Ben H. Winters's new novel, *Golden State*, unfolds in such a place, an alternate-future California ...' (Jon Michaud review in *The Washington Post*, 23 January) [PL]

The Dead Past. *70 Years Ago*, the 1949 British Eastercon was announced: 'On Easter Saturday, April 16th, the Science Fantasy Society is holding the second British post war Convention, for all science-fiction and fantasy "fans", authors and editors. Present plans include holding this Convention, the LONCON, at a hall in the Central London area from approximately 3pm to 10.30 pm.; having a buffet and bar available early in the evening; interesting talks and "free for all" discussions and an auction of magazines and books.' Memberships cost a brutal 7/6d including buffet charges. (*Science Fantasy News Minor* 1, February 1949)

● *20 Years Ago*: 'Michael Crichton unveiled an all-purpose argument against anyone loathsome enough to grumble about dodgy or misleading science in his work: "In a story like *Jurassic Park*, to complain of inaccuracy is downright weird. Nobody can make a dinosaur. Therefore the story is a fantasy. How can accuracy have any meaning in a fantasy?" Um.' (*Ansible* 139, February 1999)

Fanfundery. *TAFF 2019* voting continues to 22 April 2019. See taff.org.uk for the ballot and online voting form. Jim Mowatt's 2013 trip report (published March 2018) is now freely downloadable at the *TAFF* site: taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=MowattReport. ● *GUFF 2019* voting continues until 22 April 2019. See ozfanfunds.com/?page_id=127.

SFWA currently decrees that short fiction markets must pay at least 6¢ per word to qualify their authors for SFWA membership. This will rise to 8¢ per word on 1 September this year. (SFWA.org, 16 January)

Outraged Letters. *Simon R. Green* has been a bad boy: 'Talking about the Dublin 2019 Worldcon: I volunteered to be a part of the programming, and was sent a massive e-mail form to fill in. Asking things like: what's your background, your class, your sexuality ... I made up some plausible lies. Because, after all, that's what I do for a living.'

As We Saw Others. After defining science fiction at some length: 'So much for classification and description, couched deliberately in the chilliest and most elementary terms; and if science-fiction were no more than this, it would no doubt deserve the derision with which the stupider of the intellectuals are already, on occasion, condescending to favour it.' (Edmund Crispin introducing his first *Best SF* anthology, 1955)

Small Press. *Ansible Editions* is back on the John Sladek trail with the tentatively titled *New Maps: More Uncollected John Sladek* – bringing together stories and oddities that have come to light since *Maps* (2002), plus many essays and reviews. 90,000 words so far; publication date to follow at ae.ansible.uk/?t=newmaps. ● With Hazel Ashworth West's blessing, the late D. West's two monumental fanwriting collections are now free downloads at taff.org.uk/ebooks.php: *Fanzines in Theory and in Practice* (1984; huge page-image PDF by Mick West, plus compact PDF and ebooks) and *Deliverance* (1995; PDF and ebooks). ● Catherine Pickersgill and former *Ansible Editions* henchman Greg Pickersgill have launched *Gostak Publishing* with famous Welsh author David Redd's *Collected Stories*, as detailed at www.gostak.cymru/reddbook.htm.

Chog's Masterclass. *Bright-Eyed and Bushy-Tailed*. 'He was an ex-regiment man, quick-witted and built like a fox.' (Scott Mariani, *The Mozart Conspiracy*, 2008) [PB] ● *Simile Dept.* '... his mind was like a blind octopus, squirming in an agony of knife-cuts ...' (Ford Madox Ford, *No More Parades*, 1925) [BT] ● 'From here the fire in the marina looked like a conflagration.' (David Lindsey, *An Absence of Light*, 1994) [PB] ● *Dept of Neat Tricks.* "'Oh," Paula said again, and Graver could see her brain working all over her face.' (*Ibid*) [PB]

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