



Ansible® 395 June 2020

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: **Atom**, from 1986. Available for SAE or the social distancing facilities of Ullward's Retreat.

The Door with Seven Locks

Michael Crichton (1942-2008) asserts from beyond the grave on the copyright page of *The Andromeda Evolution* (HarperCollins UK), a sequel by another hand to *Andromeda Strain*: 'Michael Crichton and Daniel H. Wilson assert the moral right to be identified as the author of this work'.

John Crowley had a targeted Facebook ad: 'New Loans for Small Businesses / As someone who manages John Crowley, you can now use Facebook to learn more about the available programs.' (29 May)

Elizabeth Knox, fantasy author, became a Companion of the Order of Merit for services to literature in the Queen's NZ Birthday Honours. Also honoured, for services to film, was Taika Waititi (*What We Do in the Shadows*, *Wellington Paranormal*, various sf films forthcoming). [F770]

Michael Moorcock reports: 'Heard today that some companies are turning down Elric project because it reminds them too much of *GOT* and *The Witcher*. A pretty irony. So much for "homages"....' (23 May)

Samanta Schweblin's latest novel gets a free pass: '*Little Eyes* may function as a sci-fi story, but its central concern is the purpose of humanity.' (Bethanne Patrick, *Washington Post*, 20 May) [MMW]

SFWA members voted on the referendum question: 'Should SFWA allow writing of graphic novels and comics in science fiction, fantasy, horror, and related genres to be used as qualification for membership?' The results were 95.18% 'Yes' to 4.82% 'No'. (sfwa.org, 11 May)

Bruce Sterling's 17-year-old 'Beyond the Beyond' spot at *Wired* came to an end in May owing to cutbacks at Condé Nast that somehow required the trimming of such unpaid 'loose ends': 'My weblog is a collateral victim of Covid19, which has become a great worldwide excuse to stop whatever you were doing.' (*Wired.com*, 17 May) [F770]

Condolent

ONLINE. 4 Jun • **Virtual First Thursday**, 6-10pm, replacing the usual London pub meeting at the Bishop's Finger. See tinyurl.com/uow6hqh.

ONLINE. 5-7 Jun • **Cymera**: Scotland's Festival of SF, Fantasy & Horror Writing, Edinburgh. See www.cymerafestival.co.uk.

VENUE CLOSED. 15-21 Jun • **Talos IV**: SF Theatre Festival of London, The Cockpit, London. See www.cyborphic.com/talos-2020.

CANCELLED. 3-5 Jul • **Lavecon** (sf/fantasy/gaming). See below.

ONLINE. 4 Jul • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, on adapting Tolkien to the screen etc. See www.tolkiensociety.org/events/seminar-2020/.

POSTPONED TO 2021. 18-19 Jul • **EM-Con**, Nottingham. See below.

POSTPONED TO 2021. 26 Jul • **Forever Avon** (*Blake's 7*). See below.

ONLINE. 29 Jul - 2 Aug • **ConZealand** (Worldcon 78), New Zealand. Virtual attendance rates: \$300NZ reg, \$150 unwaged (NZ only), \$150 YA (born after 2000), \$75 child (born 2005-2010), 'kid in tow' (born after 2010) free, \$75 supporting. See conzealand.nz. *The Hugo Voter Packet*, for members only, became available at the end of May.

CANCELLED. 7-10 Aug • **Continuum** (RPG), Oadby. See below.

POSTPONED TO 2022. 7-10 Aug • **Discworld Convention**, Hilton Metropole, Birmingham NEC. £85 reg, £60 concessions; the 2020 event had sold out. New dates in August 2022 are awaited at dwcon.org.

28-31 Aug • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. Admission wristbands sold out at www.asylumsteampunk.co.uk. *Considering postponement or a reduced-scale campus event ; full-size festival seems unlikely.*

CANCELLED. 28-30 Aug • **TitanCon**, Hilton Hotel, Belfast. See below.

CANCELLED. 30-31 Aug • **Stars of Time** (media), Tropicana, Weston-super-Mare. Refunds in process. See www.starsoftime.co.uk.

CANCELLED. 3-6 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), St Anne's College, Oxford. See www.tolkiensociety.org/events/oxonmoot-2020/.

31 Oct • **BristolCon**, Hilton DoubleTree Hotel, Bristol. Now £30 reg; £20 concessions and under-18s (£35/£25 at door); under-14s free. For other rates and online registration see www.bristolcon.org.

2-5 Apr 2021 • **Confusion** (Eastercon), Birmingham NEC Hilton. GoH Dan Abnett, Dave Lally, Nik Vincent. See confusion2021.uk.

1-2 May 2021 • **EM-Con** (media), Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham. New dates: originally postponed from 2-3 May to 18-19 July 2020. Week-end tickets £30, or £40 early entry; other rates at www.em-con.co.uk.

2-4 Jul 2021 • **Lavecon** (sf/fantasy/gaming), Sedgebrook Hall Hotel, Northants. *2020 membership refunds or carry-over available*. More to follow at www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-1.

18 Jul 2021 • **Forever Avon** (*Blake's 7*), Steventon Village Hall, Steventon, Oxfordshire. *New dates*. 10am-4pm. Tickets £26.64 including fee. Booking via www.facebook.com/TeamBlakeForeverAvon.

6-9 Aug 2021 • **Continuum** (RPG), John Foster Hall, Manor Road, Leicester University, Oadby. *New dates*. £45 reg; other rates to follow at continuumconvention.co.uk (see the 'Other Stuff' menu).

20-22 Aug 2021 • **TitanCon**, Hilton Hotel, Belfast. *2020 membership refunds or carry-over available*. £40 reg, rising on 1 July; first-timers and under-18s £25; under-15s £15; under-8s free. See titancon.com.

29-30 Aug 2021 • **Stars of Time** (media), Tropicana, Weston-super-Mare. 10am-5pm. See www.starsoftime.co.uk.

Rumblings. All Arvon writing course centres are currently closed until the end of June. The next sf/fantasy course is in mid-September.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. 'The coronavirus pandemic has taken hold of everyday life so quickly and completely that things suddenly feel like a science-fiction film, albeit one in which being a couch potato is part of our civic duty.' (Anna Nicolaou, *Financial Times*, 18 April) [MMW] • '[Anna] Kavan resists most literary comparisons as easily as she eludes the frequent and misguided attempts to categorise her as a writer of science fiction.' (*New York Review of Books*, 28 May) [JC]

Awards. *BSFA* (presented online on 17 May): NOVEL Adrian Tchaikovsky, *Children of Ruin*. SHORTER FICTION Amal El-Mohtar & Max Gladstone, *This Is How You Lose the Time War*. NON-FICTION Farah Mendelsohn, *The Pleasant Profession of Robert A. Heinlein*. ARTWORK Chris Baker (Fangorn), cover for *Wourism* by Ian Whates. • *Kitschies*: NOVEL *The Fire Starters* by Jan Carson. DEBUT *Jelly* by Clare Rees. COVER DESIGN Tyler Comrie for *The Memory Police* by Yoko Ogawa. • *Nebulas* (presented online, 30 May): NOVEL *A Song for a New Day* by Sarah Pinsker. NOVELLA *This Is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar & Max Gladstone. NOVELLETTE *Carpe Glitter* by Cat Rambo. SHORT 'Give the Family My Love' by A.T. Greenblatt (*Clarkesworld* 2/19). ANDRE NORTON (YA): *Riverland* by Fran Wilde. GAME WRITING *The Outer Worlds* by Leonard Boyarsky, Megan Starks, Kate Dollarhyde & Chris L'Etoile. RAY BRADBURY (dramatic): *Good Omens*: 'Hard Times' by Neil Gaiman.

Mostly Armless. *Quiz Host*: 'In the Bible, Samson lost his strength after what was cut off?' *Contestant*: 'His arm.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE]

R.I.P. Asterisks mark reported COVID-19 deaths. • **Michael Angelis** (1952-2020), UK actor who narrated and did other voices for *Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends* (1991-2012) plus many sequels and spinoffs to 2019, died on 30 May aged 68. [IS] • **G-J Arnaud** (1928-2020), French sf author best known for the long 'Ice Company' sequence beginning with *La Compagne des glaces* (1980), died on 26 April aged 91. [L] • **Gregory Tyree Boyce** (1989-2020), US actor in *Twilight* (2008), died on 13 May aged 30. [MMW] • **Cindy Butler** (1955-2020), US actress in the Bigfoot film *Boggy Creek II: And the Legend Continues* (1984), died on 26 May aged 64. [SJ] • ***Matteo De Cosmo** (1968-2020), Marvel TV art director whose credits include *Luke Cage* (2016-2018), *The Punisher* (2017-2019) and *Emergence* (2019-2020), died on 21 April aged 52. [PDF] • **Brian Dennehy** (1938-2020), US actor in *Ants!* (1977), *Cocoon* (1985), *Fail Safe* (2000) and *Ratatouille* (2007), died on 15 April aged 81. • **Arthur Dignam** (1939-2020), Australian actor in *Grendel Grendel Grendel* (1981), *The Return of Captain Invincible* (1983), *Ghosts CAN Do It* (1987), *Escape from Jupiter* (1994 tv) and others, died on 9 May aged 80. [LP] • **John Ericson** (1926-2020), German-born actor in *7 Faces of Dr. Lao* (1964), *The Bamboo Saucer* (1968), *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971) and others, died on 3 May aged 93. [LP] • ***Samantha Fox** (Stasia Micula, 1950-2020), US actress in *Dracula Exotica* (1980) and *The Devil in Miss Jones II* (1982), died on 22 April aged 69. [GC] • **Danny Goldman** (1939-2020), US actor in *Beware! The Blob* (1972), *Young Frankenstein* (1974), *Wholly Moses!* (1980) and others, died on 12 April aged 80. [SG] • **Richard Herd** (1932-2020), US actor in *Hercules in New York* (1970),

Terror Out of the Sky (1978) and many genre series from *V* (1983) to *Star Trek: Renegades* (2015), died on 26 May aged 87. [MMW] ● **Anthony James**, (1942-2020), US actor in *Burnt Offerings* (1976), *Return from Witch Mountain* (1978), *Ravagers* (1979) and others, died on 26 May aged 77. [SJ] ● **Eizo Kaimai**, Japanese 'kaiju' suit and model maker who worked on the original *Godzilla* (1954) plus many sequels and other monster films including *Rodan* (1956) and *Mothra* (1961), died on 24 April aged 90. [SJ] ● **Michael Keenan** (1939-2020), US actor in *Star Trek: TNG* (plus later series) and *Earth vs. the Spider* (2001), died on 30 April aged 80. [LP] ● **Graham Kennedy**, UK fan who created and wrote the content of the *Star Trek* reference site 'Daystrom Institute Technical Library' (ditl.org), died on 4 May aged 51. [CM] ● **John Lafia** (1957-2020), US writer/director who co-wrote *Child's Play* (1988) and directed *Child's Play 2* (1990), died on 29 April aged 63; other credits include *Repo Man* (1984). [PDF] ● **Silvia Legrand** (1927-2020), Argentinian actress whose tv credits include *¡Robot!* (1970), died on 1 May aged 93. [PDF] ● ***Charles Lippincott** (1939-2020), US publicist for genre films including *Westworld* (1973), *Star Wars* (1977) and *Alien* (1979), and producer of *Judge Dredd* (1995), died on 20 May aged 80. [GvG] ● **Sam Lloyd** (1963-2020), US actor in *Flubber* (1997), *Galaxy Quest* (1999) and *Waking up with Monsters* (2007), died on 1 May aged 56. [PDF] ● **Helen McCabe**, UK author of romance and horror – the latter including the Piper trilogy opening with *Piper* (2008) – reportedly died in early May. [SLH] ● **George T. McWhorter** (1931-2020), US singer and bibliophile who for many years was curator of the Edgar Rice Burroughs Collection at the University of Louisville, died on 25 April aged 88. [AIP] ● **John Mahon** (1938-2020), US actor in *The Exorcist* (1973), *Lifepod* (1993), *Natural Selection* (1994), *Armageddon* (1998) and others, died on 18 May aged 82. [SJ] ● **Monique Mercure** (1930-2020), French-Canadian actress in *Quintet* (1979), *Naked Lunch* (1991) and *Master Key* (2009), died on 17 May aged 89. [SJ] ● **Barry Newton**, US fan, con-runner (including Worldcons) and SFWA member, a past president of the Washington SF Association and active in the SCA and Baltimore SFA, died on 12 May aged 70. [JN] ● ***Kumiko Okae** (1956-2020), Japanese voice actress in *The Cat Returns* (Studio Ghibli 2002), *Pokémon: Lucario and the Mystery of Mew* (2005) and others, died on 23 April aged 63. [PDF] ● **Martin Pasko** (1954-2020), Canadian comics writer who worked on many titles for DC (*Superman*, *Doctor Fate*, *Wonder Woman*, *Swamp Thing* ...) and Marvel (*Star Trek* ...), died on 10 May aged 65. [GD] ● ***Pilar Pellicer** (1938-2020), Mexican actress in *The World of the Dead* (1970), *Dulce espíritu* (1985) and others, died on 16 May aged 82. [SJ] ● **Richard 'Little Richard' Wayne Penniman** (1932-2020), influential US singer, songwriter and musician seen in *Purple People Eater* (1988) and *Last Action Hero* (1993) – with soundtrack credits for *Predator* (1987) and others – died on 9 May aged 87. [LP] ● **Michel Piccoli** (1925-2020), French actor whose credits include *The Creatures* (1966), *Danger: Diabolik* (1968), *Themroc* (1973), *The Timekeeper* (1992) and *Holy Motors* (2012), died on 12 May aged 94. [SJ] ● ***Joel M. Reed** (1933-2020), US horror actor/writer/director whose films include *Blood Sucking Freaks* (1976), *Night of the Zombies* (1981) and the forthcoming *Killer Zombies from the Titanic*, died on 12 April aged 86. [PDF] ● **Richard Sala** (1955-2020), US comics artist and creator whose darkly humorous horror/mystery comics include *The Chuckling Whatsit* (1997), *Peculia* (2002) and *The Bloody Cardinal* (2017), has died aged 64 or 65. [PDF] ● **Tony Scannell** (1945-2020), Irish actor in *Flash Gordon* (1980) and *Evil Never Dies* (2014), died on 27 May aged 75. [SJ] ● **Florian Schneider-Esleben** (1947-2020), German musician and founding member of the influential electronic band Kraftwerk that made frequent use of sf themes, died on 30 April aged 73. [DKMK] ● **Geno Silva** (1948-2020), US actor in *My Mom's a Werewolf* (1989) and *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997), died on 9 May aged 72. [MMW] ● **Jerry Stiller** (1927-2020), US comedy actor in *A Rat's Tale* (1977) and as guest in various genre series, died on 11 May aged 92. [LP] ● **Peter Thomas** (1925-2020), German film/tv composer with genre credits for *Zurück aus dem Weltall* (*Moonwolf*, 1959), an adaptation of G.K. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1966) and *Raumpatouille Orion* (*Space Patrol Orion*, 1966), died on 19 May aged 94. [CB] ● **Marshall B. Tymn** (1937-2020), US academic and sf scholar whose many books include *A Research Guide to Science Fiction Studies* (1977, with L.W. Currey & Roger C. Schlobin) and *Science Fiction, Fantasy & Weird Fiction Magazines* (1985, with Mike Ashley), died on 24 May aged 82. He received the 1990 Pilgrim Award for life achievement in sf scholarship. [L] ● **Fred Willard** (1933-2020), US comic actor in *WALL-E* (2008) and various genre series including the new *Space Force* (2020), died on 15 May aged 86. [MR] ● **Pong Fong Wu** (1964-2020), Taiwanese actor in *Silk* (2006), *The Wall* (2008), *The Ghost Tales* (2012) and *Soul* (2013), died on 25 May aged 55. [LP]

Nature Study. 'The National Trust reports that while 30 percent of eight-to-11 year olds could not identify a magpie, 90 percent could spot a Dalek.' (Horatio Clare, *Financial Times*, 9 May) [MMW]

Publishers & Sinners. Penguin is launching a new Penguin Classics Science Fiction line with ten titles in August and ten more in November; authors include the little-translated Andreas Eschbach (Germany) and Angélica Gorodischer (Argentina), plus such familiar names as Sheckley, Tiptree and Vonnegut. (*The Bookseller*, 28 May)

Blurbismo. *Tom Clancy* offered a careful compliment: 'The scope of Larry Niven's work is so vast that only a writer of supreme talent could disguise the fact as well as he can.' (Back cover, *The Draco Tavern*, 2006)

Random Fandom. *The Doc Weir Award* for unsung heroes of fandom was skipped in this year of no Eastercon; it should resume in 2021.

● **Bob Madle**, long-term US fan and 1957 TAFF delegate, will celebrate his 100th birthday on 2 June amid a deluge of messages from fandom.

● **Uncle Hugo's**, the long-established Minneapolis sf bookshop, was burnt down – along with its next-door mystery sibling Uncle Edgar's – in riots on the night of 29/30 May. DreamHaven, another specialist genre bookshop a mile away, was broken into and vandalized (several attempts to start fires failed) but defended and later boarded up by local fans. [JS]

The Dead Past. *80 Years Ago:* 'Virgil Finlay was the best man at the wedding of C.L. Moore and Henry Kuttner in New York City recently.'

(*Fantasy News*, 23 June 1940). ● *60 Years Ago*, the queue began to form: 'Orders are now being taken by the publishers for Professor J.R.R. Tolkien's promised new work, provisional title, *The Silmarillion*, which recounts the earlier history of The Ring. The publishers still can't give a date or a price for the work, but this acceptance of orders is a step forwards.'

(*Skyrack* 20, June 1960) Only seventeen years to wait! ● *40 Years Ago*, 'Chris Evans, known as C.D. Evans on the Faber list owing to the existence of Dr Christopher Evans, has now, following the death of Dr Christopher Evans, been permitted to change his name, as regards Faber, from C.D. Evans to Chris Evans.' (*Ansible* 10, June 1980)

Magazine Scene. Jason Sizemore's *Apex*, on 'indefinite hiatus' since May 2019, plans to return on a bimonthly schedule in January 2021.

The Critical Heritage. '... the husband and wife team, who wrote under the name Eando Binder, that gave us the robot hero Adam Link.' (Forrest J Ackerman and Brad Linaweaver, *Worlds of Tomorrow: The Amazing Universe of Science Fiction Art*, 2004) [PL]

Editorial. Ansible Editions has no new titles on sale, but hasn't been idle during lockdown: the promotional ebook *A Budrys Miscellany: Occasional Writing 1954-2000* (note change from *1960-2000*) was expanded by 11,000 words in May. See taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=BudrysMisc. Hoped future releases include *The Jonbar Point* by Brian Aldiss (two long essays from *SF Horizons*), *Puff Love* by John Sladek (an offbeat mystery novel), the first complete edition of Bob Shaw's 'Glass Bushel' columns for *Hyphen*, and volume 4 of the collected *Ansible* – covering the decade 2011-2020, with 6 issues yet to be added. Unless I succumb to the lure of round numbers and stop at #400 in November. Decisions, decisions.

C.o.A. Fans who kept demon.co.uk email addresses despite growing hostility from Demon's current owner Vodafone were told they'd be shut down on 29 May; but there's a plague-year extension to 1 September.

Thog's Masterclass. *And Still They Move.* 'It was the woman's eyes. They were as still and as malignant as the eyes of a snake. She could see them quite plainly – flat eyes that stared at her – wandering over her body, assessing and appraising her from head to foot.' (Ann Petry, *The Street*, 1946) [PC] ● *When Chaos Theory Goes Bad.* 'The fire continued burning, the wood cracking and breaking, the sizzle and hiss of water hitting flame filling the night like the beating wings of a thousand butterflies.' (Stav Sherez, *Eleven Days*, 2013) [J-HH] ● *Arrest Snapshot Dept.* 'Her skin was pale and finely textured and it made her eyes appear unnaturally green and defiant. There was a dangerous curve to her lips and her hair was dyed purple and hung across her forehead in a set of uneven bangs that concealed as much as they revealed. She seemed squeezed into the photo's frame, its strict parameters unable to contain her, but even in this single snapped moment Carrigan could see a wealth of buried history lurking in her eyes, storms and resentments and things that happened to her when she was four years old.' (*Ibid*) [J-HH] ● *In Typo Veritas.* 'She breathed in his ear, rubbed the hard band of her public bone over his thigh.' (Kim Stanley Robinson, *Pacific Edge in Three Californias*, 2020) [RG]

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