



Ansible® 402 January 2021

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. Available for SAE, the Spots, or the significance of wearing the spiked bracelet.

The Donkey's Whistle

Ursula K. Le Guin's Twitter account @ursulaklequin (run by her estate) had an offer she couldn't have refused, or at least refused to giggle at: 'We came across your Instagram profile "ursulaklequin", and LOVE your style. We'd love to have you as one of our Brand Ambassadors. To celebrate our new [REDACTED] collection, we want to give you a FREE pair of leggings so you can post a picture of you wearing them and drive more exposure to our brand.' (8 December) [F770]

Hervé Le Tellier won France's major literary award, the Prix Goncourt, for his sf thriller *L'anomalie*. (*Guardian*, 30 November) [MMW]

J.R.R. Tolkien's old house (1930-1947) on Northmoor Road, Oxford, was announced as soon to be sold; the US-based 'Project Northmoor', supported by such notables as *Lord of the Rings* film actors, is crowdfunding to raise £4.5 million with which to buy it for a Tolkien 'literary centre'. (*NY Times*, 2 December) [MF] Doubts were raised by an untrue claim by that no Tolkien centre exists anywhere in the world, and by the discoveries that this project isn't endorsed by either the Tolkien estate or the Tolkien Society – the latter complaining that the directors include no Tolkien scholars – that the Christian charities involved will make no refunds if the goal isn't reached, and that it won't be a museum open to the public as initially assumed, but a centre for 'creative writing, screenwriting and illustrating, especially in fantasy', with an implied religious slant including 'spiritual retreats'. (*Guardian*, 8 December) [AIP]

Jeff VanderMeer regrets having invented – in his Ambergis series – the Festival of the Freshwater Squid, which has inspired all too many readers to send him pictures of squid, unfeasible quantities of dried squid, and worldwide squid sightings ... the last category including his tiny 'mayfly squid' which doesn't even exist. (Lithub.com, 2 December)

Conrector

ONLINE. 7 Jan • **Virtual First Thursday**, 6-10pm, replacing the usual London pub meeting. See tinyurl.com/uow6hqn.

ONLINE. 13 Feb • **Tolkien Society Seminar**. Details at www.tolkienociety.org/events/tolkien-society-seminar-2021-no-1/.

MOVING ONLINE. 19 Mar • **Futurefest** (futurology), Tobacco Dock, London. Virtual event details later in January at www.futurefest.org.

ONLINE. 2-5 Apr • **Grimmfest Easter Horror Nights** (film). £38 reg; see easterhorrorights.eventive.org/welcome for details.

ONLINE. 16 May • **Lawless: The Bunker** (UK comics). Details to follow at www.facebook.com/groups/1417073338554565/. See below.

24-26 Sep • **Fantasycon 2021**, Jury's Inn, Broad Street, Birmingham. Further details awaited at www.fantasycon.org.

21-31 Oct • **Edinburgh Horror Festival**, with expected venues (Banshee Labyrinth, Edinburgh Dungeon and Lauriston Castle as usual) to be confirmed later in January. See www.edhorrorfest.co.uk.

28-29 May 2022 • **Lawless** (UK comics), Hilton Doubletree, Bristol. 2021 hotel bookings can be switched on request: 'just call up the hotel'. More awaited at www.facebook.com/groups/1417073338554565/.

Rumblings. *Camp SFW* (Great Yarmouth, 18-20 March, sold out) is still scheduled as a physical event, with no website mention of COVID-19 or social distancing. • *ConFusion* (Eastercon 2021) has to be on-line only despite hopes of 'hybrid' status: fans with room bookings have received emails warning that the NEC Hilton will stay closed until May. [JB]

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. Aerospace author Joe Pappalardo on Elon Musk's launch pad: 'When you go to Boca Chica, it's like you've opened up a 1950s science-fiction paperback and you're living in it.' (*Commentary*, December) [MMW] *The Space Merchants? They'd Rather Be Right?*

Awards. A *Bertram Chandler Award* (for outstanding achievement in Australian sf), 2020: Dr Gillian Polack. • *SF & Fantasy Poetry Association Grand Master*: Linda Addison. • *SFWA Damon Knight Grand Master* for life achievement in sf, 2021: Nalo Hopkinson. (SFWA, 1 December)

Publishers and Sinners. An Oxford whistleblower points out that Elsevier's supposedly highly specialist, peer-reviewed medical journal

Early Human Development has published a surprising number of articles by Maltese researcher and *Star Trek* fan Victor Grech – often in the category 'Best practice guidelines' – on such clinical subjects as 'Doctors in Star Trek', 'Nurses in Star Trek' and 'The banality of evil in the occupation of Star Trek's Bajor'. (*Retractionwatch.com*, 12 December) [TC]

Strange. Weird. Eerie. The November *Ansible* remembered Uri Geller's twenty-years-past lawsuit filed against Nintendo because he was affronted by the bent-spoon-wielding Pokémon creature Kadabra alias Yun Geller, later taken out of play. Later that very month it was reported that Geller had apologized and withdrawn his objections to the beastie in question. (*The Register*, 30 November) *Can this be coincidence?*

R.I.P. *Sten Andersson* (1951-2020) Swedish sf author active since the late 1970s with shorts in *Jules Verne-magasinet* etc. and with five novels 1980-2013, died some weeks before being registered as deceased on 20 November; he was 69. [J-HH] • *Roman Arbitman* (1960-2020), Russian sf author and critic whose *A History of Soviet SF* (1993 as Rustam Katz) is alt-history disguised as scholarship, died on 19 December. [AM] • *David Ashford*, UK comics historian who with various collaborators produced many collectors' indexes and (mainly with Norman Wright) books on comics, died on 17 December. He was also an actor, seen in *The Quatermass Conclusion* (1979) and *Doctor Who* (1988-1989). [SH] • *Warren Berlinger* (1937-2020), US actor whose rare genre credits include *The Shaggy D.A.* (1976), died on 2 December aged 83. [SJ] • *Claude Bolling* (1930-2020), French composer whose genre film credits include *The Hands of Orlac* (1960) and the Bram Stoker-based *The Awakening* (1980), died on 29 December aged 90. [AIP] • *David Britton* (1945-2020), UK author and publisher who with Michael Butterworth founded Savoy Books and wrote the ultra-black satire *Lord Horror* (1989) – confiscated and banned for obscenity by the easily upset Manchester police – died on 29 December aged 75. [MB] *Charles Platt writes*: 'Dave Britton went to prison, twice, because he wouldn't surrender his principles. I had immense admiration for him.' • *Jeremy Bulloch* (1945-2020), UK actor who played Boba Fett in *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Return of the Jedi* (1983), died on 17 December aged 75. [PDF] Other credits include *Doctor Who* (1965, 1973-1974). • *Richard Corben* (1940-2020), US comics artist and animator known for work in *Creepy*, *Eerie*, *Heavy Metal*, *Vampirella* and many other titles (some from his own Fantagor Press), died on 2 December aged 80. In 2012 he entered the Will Eisner Hall of Fame. [PDF] • *Doug Crane* (1935-2020), US animator whose credits include *Mighty Thor* (1966), *Spider-Man* (1968-1970), *The Smurfs* (1981), *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* (1985) and *She-Ra: Princess of Power* (1985), died on 17 December aged 85. [AIP] • *Marcus D'Amico* (1965-2020), UK actor whose films include *Superman II* (1980), died on 16 December aged 55. [AIP] • *Mark Eden* (1928-2021), UK actor in *Quatermass and the Pit* (1958-1959), *Doctor Who: Marco Polo* (1964), the Lovecraft-based *The Crimson Cult* (1968) and *An Adventure in Space and Time* (2013), died on 1 January aged 92. [SJ] • *Phyllis Eisenstein* (1946-2020), US author active since 1971 whose books include *Born to Exile* (1978) and *Shadow of Earth* (1979), died on 7 December aged 74. She is survived by her husband and collaborator Alex Eisenstein. [SHS] • *Kevin H. Evans*, US author who contributed to Eric Flint's '1632/Assiti Shards' shared universe with solo essays plus fiction written with his wife Karen C. Evans, died on 23 December. [PDF] • *Mike Fenton* (1938-2020), US casting director with very many genre credits from *Young Frankenstein* (1974) via *Aliens* (1986) to *Sharknado 2* (2014), died on 30 December aged 82. [SJ] • *Dave Galanter* (1969-2020), US author of several *Star Trek* tie-in novels beginning with *Star Trek: The Next Generation #31: Foreign Foes* (1994) with Greg Brodeur, died on 12 December aged 51. [PDF] • *David Giler* (1943-2020), US film-maker whose producer credits include *Alien* (1979) and *Aliens* (1986) – both Hugo winners – *Alien³* (1992, which he also co-scripted) and others in this franchise, died on 19 December aged 77. [SHS] • *Cliff Green* (1934-2020), Australian writer and producer who scripted the arguably genre-adjacent *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) and the fantasy *The Steam-Driven Adventures of Riverboat Bill* (1986, based on his own book), died on 4 December aged 85. [GC] • *James Gunn* (1923-2020), US author, editor,

critic and academic who had published sf and related nonfiction since 1949 – with further work scheduled for 2021 – died on 23 December aged 97. His honours include a 1983 nonfiction Hugo and the 2007 SFWA Grand Master Award. [LP] ● **Parnell Hall** (1944-2020), US mystery author who scripted and appeared in *C.H.U.D.* (1984), died on 15 December aged 76. [TM] ● **Sture Hellström** (1941-2020), Swedish fan active from 1956 as ‘Sture Sedolin’, publishing the fanzines *Super SF*, *Science Fiction Times* and *Cactus*, died on 20 November aged 79. [J-HH] ● **Walter Hooper** (1931-2020), US-born author of several books about C.S. Lewis – beginning with *C.S. Lewis: A Biography* (1974, with Roger Lancelyn Green) – and editor of many Lewis collections including the genre-relevant *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories* (1966) and *The Dark Tower* (1977), died on 7 December aged 89. [F770] ● Late report: **Dean Ing** (1931-2020), US author active from 1955 to the early 1990s, whose first novel was *Soft Targets* (1979), died on 21 June aged 89. ● **Rafer Johnson** (1934-2020), US athlete and actor in *Tarzan and the Great River* (1967), *Tarzan and the Jungle Boy* (1968) and *Think Big* (1989), died on 2 December aged 86. [MMW] ● **Brian Jordan** (1942-2020), UK fan active from the 1960s in OMPA (Offtrails Magazine Publishers Association), the BSFA and other groups, died in December. [AR via JL] ● **Hugh Keays-Byrne** (1947-2020), Indian-born Australian actor who played the main villain in both *Mad Max* (1979) and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), died on 1 December aged 73. [BB] His other films include *The Blood of Heroes* (1989). ● **Gary Howard Klar** (1947-2020), US actor in *Day of the Dead* (1985) and *Big* (1988), died on 31 December aged 73. [SJ] ● **Peter Lamont** (1929-2020), UK production designer and art director whose films include *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968), *The Boys from Brazil* (1978), *Aliens* (1986) and various James Bond titles, died in December aged 91. [AIP] ● **David L. Lander** (1947-2020), US actor whose voice credits include *Galaxy High School* (1986), *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), *Midnight Patrol: Adventures in the Dream Zone* (1990) and *Tattooed Teenage Alien Fighters from Beverly Hills* (1994-1995), died on 4 December aged 73. [LP] ● **Lin Qi**, Chinese CEO of the Yoozoo entertainment group with a producer credit for the coming Netflix *The Three-Body Problem*, died on 25 December aged 39 – apparently poisoned by a colleague who has been arrested. [PDF] ● **Tommy ‘Tiny’ Lister** (1958-2020), US actor whose 220 credits include *The Meteor Man* (1993), *The Fifth Element* (1997), *The Dark Knight* (2008), *Terra Nova* (2008) and *Zootopia* (2016), died on 10 December aged 62. [MMW] ● **Rebecca Luker** (1961-2020), US singer and actress in the Broadway musicals *The Phantom of the Opera* (1989) and *The Secret Garden* (1991), and the sf film *Spectropia* (2006), died on 23 December aged 59. [AIP] ● **Alison Lurie** (1926-2020), US author whose ghost stories are collected in *Women and Ghosts* (1994), died on 3 December aged 94. Her criticism includes *Don’t Tell the Grown-Ups: Subversive Children’s Literature* (1990); she edited *The Oxford Book of Modern Fairy Tales* (1993). [GVG] ● **Hamish MacInnes** (1930-2020), UK author and mountaineer who as safety adviser, stunt double and cameraman worked on films including *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975) and *Highlander* (1986), died on 22 November aged 90. [AIP] ● **Malcolm Marmorstein** (1928-2020), US screenwriter and director who scripted 80 episodes of *Dark Shadows* (1966-1967) and wrote and directed *Dead Men Don’t Die* (1990) and *Love Bites* (1993), died on 21 November aged 92. [SJ] ● **Basil Moss** (1935-2020), UK actor in *UFO* (1970-1971), died on 28 November aged 85. [AIP] ● **Jarošlav Mostecký** (1963-2020), Czech sf author who won the 1997 Karel Čapek prize, died on 13 December aged 57. [PDF] ● **Keith Newstead** (1956-2020), UK automata artist whose often sf/fantasy-themed creations include ‘Invasion of the Body Snatchers’ (no relation to the film) and a remarkable 2018 evocation of Gormenghast, died on 8 November aged 64. [AIP] ● Late report: **Betty Rosenblum** (1921-2018), wife of old-time UK fan J. Michael Rosenblum and well known in the 1960s for her hospitality at conventions, died on 24 December 2018. [BB] ● **Guy N. Smith** (1939-2020), highly prolific UK author best known for horror – especially *Night of the Crabs* (1976) and its many sequels – died on 24 December aged 81. [SH] Other work included novelizations of animated Disney films such as *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). When ‘John Grant’ and I wrote a horror spoof, Guy kindly provided the blurb line ‘Makes *Night of the Crabs* look like Beatrix Potter!’ ● **Anton Strout** (1970-2020), US author of the Simon Canderous urban fantasies beginning with *Dead to Me* (2008), died on 30 December aged 50. [SHS] ● **Carol Sutton** (1944-2020), US character actress whose films include *Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh* (1995), *Rag and Bone* (1998), *The Last Exorcism* (2010) and *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* (2014), died on 11 December aged 76. [SJ] ● **Marilyn Jacobs Tenser** (1941-2020), US film producer with genre credits for *Galaxina* (1980) and *My Mom’s a Werewolf* (1989), died in late December aged 79. [SG] ● **Pamela Tiffin** (1942-2020), US actress

whose genre film is *La signora è stata violentata* (1973), died on 2 December aged 78. [LP] ● **Ron Weighell** (1950-2020), UK author of supernatural story collections beginning with *An Empty House and Other Stories* (1986), died on 24 December. [MV] ● **Dawn Wells** (1938-2020), US actress in *Gilligan’s Island* (1964-1967) and *Gilligan’s Planet* (1982), died on 30 December aged 82. [LP] ● **Dame Barbara Windsor** (1937-1920), UK actress whose genre credits include *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968), *Worzel Gummidge* (1980), *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) and *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (2016), died on 10 December aged 83. [FM]

The Weakest Link. Q: ‘Which Elizabethan character had children called Judith and Hamnet?’ A: ‘Cinderella.’ (ITV, *Tipping Point*) [PE]

Court Circular. The 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals overturned a lower court’s 2019 decision (see A381) that the *Star Trek*/Dr Seuss mashup *Oh, The Places You’ll Boldly Go!* by David Gerrold and Ty Templeton was ‘transformative’ and thus allowed by the US fair use/parody doctrine. All right according to trademark law, the court decided, but not copyright law. (*Business Insurance*, 21 December) [MF via AIP] ● The Conan Doyle estate’s lawsuit against Netflix and others, based on the dubious claim that Holmes shows emotion only in late stories still in copyright and that the *Enola Holmes* books and film are thus in breach (see A396), was ‘dismissed with prejudice by stipulation of all parties’ – thought to mean ‘privately settled’. James Lovegrove observed: ‘If you’re going to sue anyone over anything, you should sue over Mycroft Holmes being shown as a complete prick.’ (*Guardian*, 22 December)

Magazine Scene. Another casualty of 2020: Andy Cox of TTA Press reports that *Interzone* (and presumably *Black Static* too) will skip the January/February issue, with #290 appearing as March/April. ● Ira Nayman is resigning as editor of *Amazing*, says the publisher Steve Davidson.

We Are Everywhere. The UK Loose Cannon brewery’s 2021 beers include *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Pint*, *Mad Max: Brewery Road*, *Rack to the Future* and *Fermentator 2: Judgement Day*. (29 December) [BJ]

The Dead Past. *20 Years Ago*, Harlan Ellison had an epic fit of modesty: ‘Because I’m just a poor old guy trying to make a sparse living in a world full of “young people” who are smarter than I, cleverer than I, faster than I; and I’m just about on the verge of becoming like y’know a “bag lady” kind of guy, gnawing the heads off rats, peeing in doorways, begging from door to door ...’ (Introduction, *Troublemakers*, 2001) [BA]

Editorial. One of my lockdown projects in 2020 was *Beachcombing and Other Oddments*, collecting many Langford fanzine articles, convention talks and other offbeat material in the vein of the long-ago *The Silence of the Langford* (1996). For trade paperback and ebook details, see ae.ansible.uk/?t=beach. ● New ebooks available for free download at the TAFF site are: *The Harpy Stateside* by UK fan Ella Parker, whose unfinished report of a long 1961 US/Canadian trip has been cunningly expanded by Rob Hansen with others’ published tales of her travels; *Atom Abroad*, Arthur (Atom) Thomson’s lively account of his 1964 TAFF adventures; and the immense *Ansible Second Series 2011-2020* (issues 282-401). For all these, see taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?all&chron.

Outraged Letters. **Mike Moorcock** on Anthony Burgess’s ‘foul’ *Clockwork Orange* in *A401*: ‘Burgess hated *Clockwork*, especially à la Kubrick (so did I) and wrote a play of it for the National which I seem to recall Greenland, Nesvadba and self got sent to on some cultural junket.... I knew Burgess slightly and he did a lot of head-shaking and flubbing re that book/movie. Catholic guilt maybe?’ (20 December)

Thog’s Masterclass. *A Cupful of What?* ‘Crouched unseen in a corner, lashes fluttering like butterfly wings against her cheeks, she watched him filling a cup with quavering hands.’ (Jay Kristoff, *Nevernight*, 2016) [DM] ● **Neat Tricks.** ‘He wrapped his eyebrows around his nose, as if facing one of the agonizing decisions of a lifetime.’ (Tom Wolfe, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, 1987) [SS] ● **The Art of Imitating Scott Fitzgerald.** ‘Something vast and intimate opened up inside of him, and he drifted in that unbounded expanse like a mote of dust carried from thousands of miles and for thousands of years on the ceaseless wind that wraps the earth again and again.’ (Michael Farris Smith, *Nick*, 2021) [MMW] ● **Male Gaze Revisited.** ‘Tonguth grunted, licking his lips as his hot eyes explored the naked slave lingeringly.’ (Lin Carter, *The Star Magicians*, 1966) [BA] ● **Strobe Light Dept.** ‘A slave with the hot brown skin of a Marzon and the twitching eyes of a man born under a variable star.’ (John Brunner, *Interstellar Empire*, 1976)

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