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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 secrets of the Temper Racket, Honeymoon Rob and Glim-Drop.

The Blue Jaunte

Forrest J Ackerman's 1953 Hugo as #1 Fan Personality – much hyped as the first Hugo ever presented – was auctioned in June for \$12,065 (\$9,500 plus 'buyer's premium'). Happily it was acquired by the Worldcon Heritage Organization for its regular Worldcon Hugo exhibit. [BB]

Hilary Harwell, literary agent at KT Literary, incautiously tweeted: 'Just read a query that was essentially THE ROAD meets DELIVERANCE and now I want someone to write this for me, please?' (Xitter, 23 June). This vision of aspiring authors being brushed off and their interesting ideas farmed out to others was not well received ('I'd rather pitch my story straight into the heart of the sun ...'); Harwell very soon deleted her X.com account. Next day, KT Literary announced the departure of an agent 'whose recent public statements directly contradict our values and the trust we work to build with our clients'. [F770] Oh dear.

Ursula K. Le Guin's house in Portland, Oregon, is being donated to Literary Arts as a venue for the Le Guin Writers Residency. (AP, 10 June)

Chris Priest's library has for the most part (over 2,000 books) been donated to Abbey Books in Paisley, Scotland, where a 'gobsmacked' bookshop worker reported severe autograph overload: '[He] wrote his name in all of the books he purchased so, in a sense, everyone buying any of his books will be receiving a signed copy.' (*Daily Record*, 17 June) [GVG] The shop owner has been told about the coming Worldcon in nearby Glasgow.

Imelda Staunton, whose genre credits include *The Snow Queen* (1995) and the *Chicken Run*, *Harry Potter* and *Paddington* films, was made a Dame in the King's Birthday Honours. (BBC, 14 June) Other honours include an OBE for the UK Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho, and an MBE for actor and stuntman Kiran Shah, seen in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) plus *Star Wars* and *Hobbit* films, among many others.

Thomas Taylor, who for £500 created the watercolour cover art for the first edition of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and much later sold it for some \$100,000, was, well, philosophical about its Sotheby's auction sale in June for \$1.92 million. (*New York Times*, 27 June)

J.R.R. Tolkien has a new bronze memorial at Pembroke College, Oxford, created by his great-nephew Tim Tolkien and unveiled in a 12 June ceremony with Neil Gaiman (whose Tolkien Lecture that day drew record queues) as MC and a poem read by Roz Kaveney. (BBC, 12 June)

Robert Charles Wilson was thrilled by an irresistible offer from *New Scientist* Discovery Tours: 'Robert, interested in becoming a science fiction writer?' With enormous will-power he demurred: 'Thanks, guys, but I already crossed that one off my bucket list.' (Facebook, 20 June)

Contortae

6 Jul • **Tolkien Society Seminar** on his 'Romantic Resonances', Leeds Hilton and online. Free. See www.tolkienociety.org/events/.

7 Jul • **Aintree-Con**, Aintree Racecourse. 10am-4pm. Adult tickets £11; other rates at www.ljeventsentertainment.com.

SOLD OUT 19-21 Jul • **Fantasy Forest** (cosplay), Sudely Castle, Cheltenham. Waiting list at fantasyforest.co.uk.

26-29 Jul • **Continuum** (RPG), Cranfield University CMDC. £60 reg; day pass £25 for any day. See continuumconvention.co.uk.

2-4 Aug • **Diana Wynne Jones** (conference/festival), Watershed, Bristol. Enquiries to dianawynnejohns2024@gmail.com

SOLD OUT 2-5 Aug • **Discworld Convention**, Birmingham NEC Hilton. £100 reg; £60 concessions. Waiting list at 2024.dwcon.org.

3-4 Aug • **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivial.

6 Aug • **Extra London Pub Meeting** before Worldcon: The Crown, 51 New Oxford St, upstairs 7-11pm. If venue is closed try the Bloomsbury Tavern, 236 Shaftesbury Avenue (ground floor, same times). See also file770.com/london-experiences-for-those-heading-to-the-worldcon/.

8-12 Aug • **Glasgow 2024** (Worldcon), Glasgow SEC. *The planned 1 July price rise has been cancelled*. £230 reg; first Worldcon and 'historically under-represented' £165; Scots residents £150; under-26s £135 (£95 if Scots); under-16s £90; under-11s £55; under-6s £5. Virtual membership £80. Further details and day rates at glasgow2024.org.

9-11 Aug • **TFnation** (*Transformers*), Hilton Birmingham Metropole near the NEC. Various day ticket rates at tfnation.com/2024.

16-19 Aug • **Erasmuscon** (Eurocon), Rotterdam, Netherlands. €125 reg; under-23s €75; under-13s €10, under-3s free. Under-19s must be accompanied by an adult. See www.erasmuscon.nl for day rates.

17 Aug • **Small Press Day**, various events throughout the UK and Ireland, and online. See smallpressday.co.uk.

17 Aug • **Stars of Time** (comics), Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare. £11.55; child/concessions £7.21. See www.starsoftime.co.uk.

29 Sep • **Fantasy & Sci-Fi Spotlight**, The Nerdy Café, Shrewsbury. 11am-7pm. See www.fantasyandscifispotlight.co.uk.

11-13 Apr 2025 • **Corflu 42** (fan), Chequers Hotel, Newbury. £75/\$95 reg; £25/\$32 supp; £10/\$15 virtual. More details at corflu.org. *Room bookings are now open to members and The Boss advises fans to book early*.

18-21 Apr 2025 • **Reconnect**, Hilton Lanyon Place Hotel and ICC, Belfast. *Now £80 reg; £40 discounted (under-18s, concessions, Eastercon first-timers, fans living in Ireland); £25 supp*. See easterconbelfast.org.

3-4 May 2025 • **Portsmouth Comic Con**, Guildhall, Portsmouth. Tickets £33; concessions and day rates at portsmouthcomiccon.com.

18 Oct 2025 • **PictCon1**, Salutation Hotel, 30-34 South St, Perth, Scotland. GoH Francesca Tristan Barbini. £30 reg; £20 concessions. See www.facebook.com/events/1186045639366253/.

Rumblings. *Birmingham Anime Film Festival* returns in September/October 2024: dates and prices are awaited at www.baff.uk. • *Worldcon 2026*: site selection voting is open at the Glasgow 2024 site, the only filed bid being Los Angeles. • *Worldcon 2028*: at last, several signs of life from Australia's Brisbane bid, which in June updated its banner at x.com/brisbanein28 to say 2028 rather than 2025 and launched a new website at brisbane28.org. The only active bid had long been Kampala, Uganda, regarded by many fans as problematic owing to the country's horrific anti-LGBT laws (punishments include life imprisonment and death).

Infinitely Improbable

Technology Masterclass. *Microsoft Windows Time Estimates Predicted!* 'In the indicator windows of the electronic brain various groups of figures began to appear. First, "400,000", then appeared a little sign "3 Minutes", which promptly disappeared and gave place to "800,000 Minutes". There was a whirring and clicking which rapidly changed to "133,33/20". Just as rapidly these figures also vanished to the accompaniment of another clicking, then a new row of fives began to appear, "555-555-555".' (Vargo Statten [John Russell Fearn], *A Time Appointed*, 1954) [BA]

Awards. *Bram Stoker* (horror) novel winners: NOVEL *The Reformatory* by Tananarive Due. DEBUT *The Daughters of Block Island* by Christa Carmen. CHILDREN'S *The Nighthouse Keeper* by Lora Senf. YA *She Is a Haunting* by Trang Thanh Tran. Full list at locusmag.com/2024/06/2023-stoker-awards-winners/. • **Lambdas** (LGBTQ+) speculative fiction category: *I Keep My Exoskeletons to Myself* by Marisa Crane, [F770] • **Locus**: SF NOVEL *System Collapse* by Martha Wells. FANTASY NOVEL *Witch King* by Martha Wells. HORROR NOVEL *A House with Good Bones* by T. Kingfisher. YA NOVEL *Promises Stronger Than Darkness* by Charlie Jane Anders. FIRST NOVEL *The Saint of Bright Doors* by Vajra Chandrasekera. NOVELLA *Thorn-hedge* by T. Kingfisher. NOVELETTE 'The Rainbow Bank' by Uchechukwu Nwaka (8/23 *GigaNotaSaurus*). SHORT 'How to Raise a Kraken in Your Bathtub' by P. Djèlí Clark (1/23 *Uncanny*). ANTHOLOGY *Out There Screaming* ed. Jordan Peele & John Joseph Adams. COLLECTION *White Cat, Black Dog* by Kelly Link. MAGAZINE *Uncanny*. PUBLISHER Tor. EDITOR Neil Clarke. ARTIST John Picacio. NONFICTION *Space Crone* by Ursula K. Le Guin. ART *The Culture: The Drawings* by Iain M. Banks. *Special Jeanne Cavelos* and the *Odyssey Writing Workshop*. • **National Fantasy Fan Federation**: these awards' wildcard 'none of the above' category went to the 2023 Hugos as 'Best example of how not to run fan awards'. [NF] • **Nebulas**: NOVEL *The Saint of Bright Doors* by Vajra Chandrasekera. NOVELLA *Linghun* by Ai Jiang. NOVELETTE 'The Year Without Sunshine' by Naomi Kritzer (*Uncanny* 11/23). SHORT 'Tantie Merle and the Farmhand 4200' by R.S.A. Garcia (*Uncanny* 7/23). CHILDREN'S/YA *To Shape a Dragon's Breath* by Moniquill Blackgoose. GAME *Baldur's Gate 3*. DRAMATIC *Barbie*. • **Seiun** (Japan) best

translated novel: *The Kaiju Preservation Society* by John Scalzi, translated by Masayuki Uchida. ● *Yoto Carnegie Medal for Writing: The Boy Lost in the Maze* by Joseph Coelho.

Random Fandom. *First Fandom* changed its name in June to First Fandom Foundation (since there are alas no surviving members of the actual First Fandom, as defined by fannish activity in the 1930s) and incidentally raised the annual dues from \$15 to \$20. [CP] ● *James D. Nicoll* sums up *The Last Dangerous Visions*: ‘On the plus side, after long delay, every word of Ellison’s title will soon see print.’ (*Reactor*, 12 June) ● *Retro Hugos*: a motion submitted to the 2024 WSFS Business Meeting (by Kent Bloom, seconded by Kevin Standlee) argues that these awards ‘have outlived their usefulness and should be abolished.’ [F770]

R.I.P. *Erich Anderson* (1956-2024), US actor in *Friday the 13th: The Final Chapter* (1984), the unsold tv pilot *The Witches of Eastwick* (1992) and many genre tv series, died on 1 June aged 67. [SJ] ● *Nicholas Ball* (1946-2024), UK actor in *LifeForce* (1985), *Mutant Chronicles* (2008), *The Haunting of Pendle Hill* (2022) and others, died on 6 June aged 78. [SJ] ● *Terrence Beasor* (1935-2024), US actor in *Time Trackers* (1989), *Demon Hunter* (2005) and genre tv series, died on 28 May aged 89. [AIP] ● *Tom Bower* (1938-2024), US actor in *The Postman* (1997), *Brothers of the Head* (2005), *The Hills Have Eyes* (2006) and genre tv series, died on 30 May aged 86. [LP] ● *Kevin Brophy* (1953-2024), US actor in *Hell Night* (1981), *Time Walker* (1982), *White Dwarf* (1995) and others, died on 11 May aged 70. [LP] ● *John Burnside* (1955-2024), Scots author whose utopian sf novel was *Havergey* (2017), died on 29 May aged 69. [JC] ● *Jeannette Charles* (1927-2024), UK actress who played Queen Elizabeth II in various productions including *Q6* (1975-1980), *Queen Kong* (1976) and *Austin Powers in Goldmember* (2002), died on 2 June aged 96. [SJ] ● *Bill Cobbs* (1934-2024), US actor in *The People Under the Stairs* (1991), *Demolition Man* (1993), *Night at the Museum* (2006 plus sequel), *Vampires in Venice* (2013) and others, died on 25 June aged 90. [AIP] ● *Tom Davies* (1941-2024), Welsh author whose satirical sf novel was *The Electric Harvest* (1984), died on 16 March aged 82. [PS-P] ● *Hermína Franková* (1928-2024), Czech novelist and screenwriter whose 1968 children’s fantasy ‘Carodejnicka na košteti’ (‘The Witch on the Broom’) became the film comedy *Dívka na košteti* (*The Girl on a Broomstick*, 1972), died on 12 June aged 95. ● *Ruth Stiles Gannett* (1923-2024), US author of the popular, much-translated children’s fantasy *My Father’s Dragon* (1948) and its two sequels, died on 11 June aged 100. ● *Peter B. Gillis* (1952-2024), US comics writer most active with Marvel in the 1980s, writing *Captain America*, *The Defenders*, *Doctor Strange*, *Micronauts* and others, died on 20 June aged 71. ● *Alan Gold* (1945-2024), UK author whose novels include the global-pandemic ‘eco-thriller’ *Bat out of Hell* (2015), died on 18 June. ● *Robert Irwin* (1946-2024), UK mediaeval historian, Arabic scholar and novelist whose first book *The Arabian Nightmare* (1983) was a tour-de-force of darkly complex fantasy, and who wrote further fine novels and nonfiction studies, died on 28 June aged 77. I liked him a lot. ● *Yoshiko Kuga* (1931-2024), Japanese actress with a rare genre credit for *Godzilla vs. Biollante* (1989), died on 9 June aged 93. [SJ] ● *Tony Lo Bianco* (1936-2024), US actor in *God Told Me To* (1976) and *Endangered Species* (2002), died on 11 June aged 87. [LP] ● *Taiki Matsuno* (1967-2024), Japanese actor in many tokusatsu and anime series who was also the Japanese voice of SpongeBob SquarePants, died on 26 June aged 56. ● *Spencer Milligan* (1937-2024), US actor in *Sleeper* (1973), *Land of the Lost* (30 episodes 1974-1975) and other genre tv series, died on 18 April aged 86. [LP] ● *Martin Mull* (1943-2024), US actor in *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* (73 episodes 1997-2000), *Danny Phantom* (14 episodes 2003-2007), *Oliver’s Ghost* (2011) and others, died on 27 June aged 80. [LP] ● *Priscilla Olson* (1951-2024), US fan active in NESFA Press publishing, a Fellow of NESFA who chaired four Boskones and worked on multiple Worldcons, died on 14 June aged 72. [GS] I remember her fondly as unflappable chair of the Boskone where I was a guest. She is survived by her husband Mark Olson, to whom all sympathy. ● *Janis Paige* (1922-2024), US actress in *Angel on My Shoulder* (1980) and genre tv series, died on 2 June aged 101. [SJ] ● *Tamayo Perry* (1975-2024), US surfer and actor in *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* (2011), died in a shark attack while surfing off Oahu on 23 June; he was 49. ● *Betty Anne Rees* (1943-2024), US actress in *Deathmaster* (1972) and *Sugar Hill* (1974), died on 3 June aged 81. [LP] ● *John Maddox Roberts* (1947-2024), US author of much genre fiction (including Conan stories) since his sf debut *The Strayed Sheep of Charun* (1977), died on 23 May aged 76. [L] ● *William Russell* (1924-2024), UK actor in *The Adventures of Sir Lancelot* (1956-1957), the original *Doctor Who* (1963-1965 plus later spinoffs) and *Superman* (1978), died on 3 June aged 99. ● *Alan Scarfe* (1946-2024), UK-born Canadian actor in *Without Warning* (1994) and genre series including *Star Trek: TNG* (1991-1993), *Mysterious Island* (1995) and *Andromeda*

(2004-2005), died on 28 April aged 77. [LP] ● *Seven*, the dog in *Ghost Squad* (2015) and *The Walking Dead* (23 episodes 2018-2022), died in mid-June. [AIP] ● *Armando Silvestre* (1926-2024) Mexican-US actor in *Tarzan and the Mermaids* (1948), *The Bat Woman* (1968), *Night of the Bloody Apes* (1969) and others, died on 3 June aged 98. [SJ] ● *Pat Sims* (1937-2024), US fan and convention-runner active from the early 1960s, who with her husband Roger (1930-2022) won DUFF in 1995, died on 9 June aged 87. [JH] She received the 2002 Big Heart award. ● *Bud S. Smith* (1935-2024), US film editor and producer whose credits include *The Exorcist* (1973), *Darkman* (1990) and *Virus* (1999), died on 23 June aged 88. [AIP] ● *Donald Sutherland* (1935-2024), noted Emmy-winning Canadian actor whose genre credits include *Dr Terror’s House of Horrors* (1965), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992), *The Puppet Masters* (1994), the *Hunger Games* films (2012-2015) and *Ad Astra* (2019), died on 20 June aged 88. [LP] ● *Anthea Sylbert* (1939-2024), US costume designer whose films include *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968), *The Illustrated Man* (1969), *The Day of the Dolphin* (1973) and *King Kong* (1976), died on 18 June aged 84. [AIP] ● *Don Webb* (1934-2024), UK screen writer – mostly of police drama – who scripted the Alan Garner tv adaptation *Elidor* (1995), died on 26 May aged 89. [SH]

Outraged Letters. *Mark O’Neill* pondered the pantheon: ‘I sometimes think that @ansiblemag’s Thog’s Masterclass has had a larger influence on the English language than Shakespeare’. (Xtwitter, 10 June) Hats off again to the late Paul Barnett/John Grant, onlie begetter of Thog.

Fanfunding. *TAFF Books*: as promised, the latest release is *Rob Hansen’s British SF Conventions Volume 2: 1952-1957* as a free ebook and simultaneous trade paperback. See ae.ansible.uk/?t=UKcons2. *TAFF* benefit paperbacks raised nearly £500 for the fund in January-June 2024.

The Dead Past. *30 Years ago*, censorship struck: David Garnett ‘had a story in *SF Age* recently – ‘Sherlock the Barbarian’. There was NO nudity, profanity, overt sex or violence. Well, not much. But the word ‘shit’ was changed to ‘dung’. *Ansible*: ‘Context! We need context! If, for example, the resulting phrase was “Oh, dung,” she hissed sibilantly....’ (*Ansible* 84, July 1994) ● *50 Years Ago*, a new urban legend was born: ‘Did you know that the ancient Egyptians had electric Mickey Mouse toothbrushes? / These and many other NEW facts are revealed in my next best selling novel of fact, titled *Toothpaste of the Gods!* Just mail me your signed blank check now and hold your breath waiting for the book.’ (Terry Hughes in *Mota* 7, July 1974) ● *60 Years Ago*, fan history was in the making: ‘*All Our Yesterdays* is the title Harry Warner currently favors for his history of fandom, 1939-59 – although John Trimble is campaigning for *The Immortal Calm*.’ (*Starspinkle* 43, 30 July 1964)

Another Auction. Fan memorabilia sold through Heritage Auctions in June included a rare flyer for the 1939 New York Worldcon (‘No admission charge’) that went for \$1,440; Frank R. Paul’s original logo artwork for the same event’s programme book was sold for \$10,200.

Editorial. Being routinely paranoid about links that don’t go where claimed, I was a little slow to vote in 2026 Worldcon site selection. The email from the voting subcontractor ElectionBuddy Inc shows the URL as ‘secure.electionbuddy.com/’ followed by the promised 19-character voter ID – but hovering over the link reveals it as ‘go.electionbuddy.com/’ plus some 200 characters of alphanumerical gibberish. No doubt there are vitally important security reasons for this.... ● *SF Encyclopedia*: many thanks to Conversation 2023, the UK Eastercon, for a substantial donation towards *SFE* expenses – much appreciated! Other donors likewise.

Thog’s Masterclass. *Science As She Was Spoke*. ‘We get our power by feeding gravity rays across the generator fins of our power units, because we’ve no natural gravity up here.’ A new satellite – made of uranium metal, ‘the strongest and lightest substance known to man’ – will ‘not be in orbit with Earth. It therefore will not spin on its own axis in order for it maintain the velocity necessary to retain it in an orbit.’ (E.C. Elliott, *Kemlo and the Satellite Builders*, 1960) [JD via NW] ● *Renewable Power Source*. ‘The Venusians are ... using their planet as a kind of armature. In its slow spin against the ether it obviously generates energy ...’ (Vargo Statten [John Russell Fearn], *A Time Appointed*, 1954) [BA] ● *Small Arms Dept*. ‘... he felt in the pockets of the heavy ammunition belt around his waist ... finally he had brought to light an A-bomb no larger than a walnut ...’ (*Ibid*) [BA] ● *He Did the Metaphor Mash*. ‘He opened the dampers on the fire of her passion, and she blew flame from the hot coals of his. His hunger was now a raging thirst ...’ (Pete Lewis [cover] or Peter J. Crown [title page], *Father of the Amazons*, 1961) [BA]

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