



## Ansible 331 February 2015

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, ascomycin, melange, pilac or stroon.

**Yet More Shamelessness.** My latest ebook, just published, is a slight expansion (one extra story and some bits) of my 2003 parody/pastiche collection *He Do the Time Police in Different Voices*. For more than you wished to know about this, see [ae.ansible.uk/?id=titles/timepolice](http://ae.ansible.uk/?id=titles/timepolice).

### The Secret Crocodile

**Melissa Conway**, highly successful director since 2001 of the vast sf/fannish Eaton Collection at the University of California Riverside, announced her retirement on 3 January. As a minor donor (of *Ansibles* etc.), I appreciated her regular acknowledgments and Christmas cards.

**Charles Coleman Finlay** is the new editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, as of the March/April 2015 issue. Gordon Van Gelder, formerly both publisher and editor, is still publisher. [L] Online submissions are welcome at [submissions.ccfinlay.com/fsf/](http://submissions.ccfinlay.com/fsf/).

**Rose Fox** sends a forthcoming-novel blurb: "To call Clive Barker a 'horror novelist' would be like calling the Beatles a 'garage band' ... He is the great imaginer of our time. —Quentin Tarantino." Personally, I think that to call Clive Barker a horror novelist would be like calling the Beatles a rock 'n' roll band: entirely accurate, entirely compatible with real talent, and the snobs can go hang.' (29 January)

**George Lucas**, talking to Robert Redford at the Sundance Film Festival, confirmed the dark suspicions of many fans: 'I really have no interest in science fiction at all.' (*Independent*, 30 January) But after deploring the 'circus'-like insubstantiality of too many recent films, he stoutly added: 'If you go into *Star Wars* and see what's going on there, there's a lot more substance than circus.'

**Norman Spinrad** has only just learned that an asteroid discovered in 2004 has been named for him: 186835 Normanspinrad.

### Consigliori

6-8 Feb • **Con27ilkin** (filk), Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester. Day rates at the door: £10 Fri, £20 Sat, £15 Sun. Contact 119 Whitehill Lane, Gravesend, DA12 5LU; [con27ilkin.wordpress.com](http://con27ilkin.wordpress.com).

6-8 Feb • **SFBall** (media), Grand Harbour Hotel, Southampton. See the various ticket prices at [www.sfbevents.com/sfball](http://www.sfbevents.com/sfball).

7-8 Feb • **Microcon**, M&D Rooms, Exeter University campus. £12 reg; Exeter U students £10; sf club members £8. Online registration at [www.exeterguild.org/societies/sciencefiction/](http://www.exeterguild.org/societies/sciencefiction/).

14-15 Feb • **Picocon 32**, Imperial College Union, London. £10 reg; £8 concessions; £5 ICSF members; past GoHs free. Contact ICSF, Beit Quad, Prince Consort Rd, London, SW7 2BB; [picocon at icsf co uk](http://picocon.at.icsf.co.uk).

20-22 Feb • **Redemption '15** (multimedia sf), Britannia Hotel, Fairfax St, Coventry, CV1 5RP. £70 reg to 11 February 2015, when advance booking closes, and £75 at door (concessions £20 off); £40/day, £45 at door (concessions £5 off); under-18s £25 or £15/day; £15 supp; under-3s free. Contact 61 Chaucer Rd, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 8SP.

21-22 Feb • **Sunderland Comic Con**, Seaburn Centre, Whitburn Road, Sunderland, SR6 8AA. £15 reg or £8/day; concessions £10 and £6. See [suncc.wordpress.com](http://suncc.wordpress.com) for more details and online booking.

27 Feb • **British Fantasy Society Open Night**, Bristol Central Library. 7pm-9pm. Free. Readings/Q&A: Joanne Hall, Gareth L. Powell.

14-15 Mar • **Sci Fi Scarborough** (comics, media), The Spa, Scarborough. £30.25 reg; under-16s £15.13. Day £18.70 Sat, £14.30 Sun; under-16s £9.35, £7.15; under-6s free. See [www.scifiscarborough.co.uk](http://www.scifiscarborough.co.uk).

27-29 Mar • **Tynecon III: the Corflu**, Vermont Hotel, Castle Garth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1RQ. £50/\$85 reg, rising to £60/\$100 on 1 March; £15/\$25 supp. Day rates only after 15 March: Fri £15, Sat £20. Contact 45 Kimberley Gardens, London N4 1LD. See [corflu.org](http://corflu.org).

3-6 Apr • **Dysprosium** (Eastercon), Park Inn, London Heathrow. Now £80 reg; £25 supp/under-18s, £15 under-12s, £5 infants under 6. Contact 101 Ninian Rd, Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP2 6NB; register online at [www.dysprosium.org.uk](http://www.dysprosium.org.uk).

19 Jul • **Edge-Lit 4**, Cinema One, QUAD Centre, Derby. Tickets £30. Book online at [www.derbyquad.co.uk/special-event/edge-lit-4](http://www.derbyquad.co.uk/special-event/edge-lit-4).

19-23 Aug • **Sasquan** (Worldcon), Spokane Convention Center,

Spokane, WA, USA. Now \$210 reg as of 1 February; \$105 YA/military; \$90 child; \$40 supp. See [sasquan.org](http://sasquan.org).

22-25 Oct • **Bram Stoker International Film Festival**, Whitby. 'Earlybird Pass' £85 to 1 March. See [www.bramstokerfilmfestival.com](http://www.bramstokerfilmfestival.com).

31 Oct - 1 Nov • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Pendulum Hotel (formerly Days Manchester Hotel), Sackville St, Manchester, M1 3BB. £50 reg until 1 August 2015. Contact 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN. See also [fantastic-films.com](http://fantastic-films.com).

13-15 Nov • **Novacon 45**, Park Inn, Nottingham. GoH Anne and Stan Nicholls. £45 reg; £50 at the door. Under-17s £12; under 13s free. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. See [www.novacon.org.uk](http://www.novacon.org.uk).

16-21 Nov • **Arvon SF Course**, Lumb Bank, W. Yorks. £725 single room; £680 shared. See [www.arvon.org/course/science-fiction-2/](http://www.arvon.org/course/science-fiction-2/).

**Rumblings.** *Eastercon 2016*: Pasgon, the Cardiff bid launched at Novacon, has been postponed because the IAAF World Half Marathon is to be held in Cardiff on that weekend, with dire effects on overflow hotel pricing. It's already an expensive city, and before relaunching for 2017 the Pasgon committee is asking presupporters how they feel about £100+/night for a double in an overflow. [RR] See [www.pasgon.org.uk](http://www.pasgon.org.uk).

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us.** "Radical life extension isn't consigned to the realm of cranks and science fiction writers any more," says David Masci, a researcher at the Pew Research Centre, who recently wrote a report on the topic looking at the scientific and ethical dimensions of radical life extension. "Serious people are doing research in this area and serious thinkers are thinking about this." (*Guardian*, 11 January) [DB]

**Awards.** *Crawford Award* for debut fantasy (tie): Zen Cho, *Spirits Abroad*, and Stephanie Feldman, *The Angel of Losses*. • *Philip K. Dick Award* shortlist: Jennifer Marie Brissett, *Elysium*; Rod Duncan, *The Bullet-Catcher's Daughter*; Meg Elison, *The Book of the Unnamed Midwife*; Emmi Itäranta, *Memory of Water*; Cherie Priest, *Maplecroft: The Borden Dispatches*; Jonathan Strahan, editor, *Reach for Infinity*. [GVG] • *James Herbert Award* (horror published in the UK), shortlist for first presentation: M.R. Carey, *The Girl with All the Gifts*; Nick Cutter, *The Troop*; Frances Hardinge, *Cuckoo Song*; Andrew Michael Hurley, *The Loney*; Josh Malerman, *Bird Box*; Kim Newman, *An English Ghost Story*. • *National Book Critics Circle Awards* (USA): Chang-rae Lee's sf novel *On Such a Full Sea* is on the shortlist of 5. [L] • *Robert A. Heinlein Award*: Jack McDevitt, for all his sf novels and stories.

**In Typo Veritas.** 'The matronly old houses seemed to wear the lush foliage of the street's many oaks and maples like fir stoles.' (John Shirley, *Wet Bones*, 1993) [BA]

**R.I.P.** Terry Becker (1921-2014), US actor and producer/director who played Chief Sharkey in *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (1965-1968) and directed *The Thirsty Dead* (1974), died on 30 December aged 93. [SFS] • *Kan (Khan) Bonfils*, who played a Jedi master in *The Phantom Menace* (1999) and also appeared in Bond films and *Batman Begins* (2005), collapsed and died on 5 January during a rehearsal for the London stage production *Dante's Inferno*. [MPJ] • *Brian Clemens* (1931-2015), UK screenwriter who wrote for *The Avengers* in its 1960s heyday, died on 10 January aged 83. Other genre credits *Dr Jekyll & Sister Hyde* (1971), *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* (1973), *Timestalkers* (1987) and *Highlander II: The Quickening* (1991). [CS] • *Carl Djerassi* (1923-2015), Austrian-born chemist (best known for work on oral contraception) and author of 'lab lit' novels of which *Menachem's Seed* (1997) is borderline sf, died on 30 January aged 91. • *Anita Ekberg* (1931-2015), famed Swedish-born actress who had an early sf role in *Abbott and Costello Go to Mars* (1953), died on 11 January aged 83. Other genre credits include *Fangs of the Living Dead* (1969). [JL] • *Suzette Haden Elgin* (1936-2015), US author and linguist whose popular Coyote Jones sf series began with *The Communipaths* (1970), died on 27 January after long illness; she was 78. Other works include the Ozark and Native Tongue trilogies, the latter (her most significant work) making use of her invented women's language Láadan. In 1978

Elgin founded the SF Poetry Association, whose Elgin Award is named for her. ● *Gerry Fisher* (1926-2014), UK cinematographer whose genre credits include *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1977), *Wolfen* (1981), *Highlander* (1986), *Black Rainbow* (1989) and *The Exorcist III* (1990), died on 2 December aged 88. [MPJ] ● *Richard Graydon* (1922-2014), UK stunt man seen in *Star Wars* (1977), ten James Bond films including *Moonraker* (1979), and *Batman* (1989), died on 22 December aged 92. [PDF] ● *Kazumasa Hirai* (1938-2015), Japanese manga writer and sf novelist who created the manga/anime superhero 8 Man and the *Wolf Guy* manga/novel series, died on 17 January; he was 76. [PDF] ● *Barrie Ingham* (1932-2015), UK actor who voiced the star role in *The Great Mouse Detective* (1986), died on 23 January aged 82; he was also in *Dr. Who and the Daleks* (1965), the *Who* tv storyline 'The Myth Makers' (1965), and *Josh Kirby ... Time Warrior* (1995-1996). [SFS] ● *Michel Jeury* (1934-2015), French author of nearly 40 sf titles (some early work being bylined Albert Higon), died on 9 January; he was 80. His *Le temps incertain* (1973) was translated by Maxim Jakubowski as *Chronolysis* (1980). [J-DB] ● *Robert Kinoshita* (1914-2014), US cinema art director and model-maker who designed the celebrated robots in *Forbidden Planet* (1956) and *Lost in Space* (1965-1967), died on 9 December; he was 100. [PDF] ● *Colleen McCullough* (1937-2015), Australian writer best known for *The Thorn Birds* (1977), whose sf venture was *A Creed for the Third Millennium* (1985), died on 29 January; she was 77. [PDF] Her obituary in *The Australian*—'Plain of feature, and certainly overweight, she was, nevertheless, a woman of wit and warmth.'—sparked many parody self-obit tweets, such as Neil Gaiman's 'Although his beard looked like someone had glued it on & his hair would have been unconvincing as a wig, he married a rockstar.' [MPJ] ● *Geraldine McEwan* (1932-2015), UK actress with voice roles in *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (2005) and *The Secret World of Arrietty* (2010), died on 31 January aged 82; she was also in the 1999 *Red Dwarf* episode 'Cassandra'. [AW] ● *Valentin Nicolau*, Romanian sf publisher whose Nemira Publishing House (founded 1991) reissued very many world sf classics, died unexpectedly on 13 January; he was 54. [RQ via SF2C] ● *Dave Reason*, UK academic at the University of Kent who co-ran two sf courses there, died on 31 October. Andrew Wells writes: 'He was a brilliantly clever lecturer who turned many first year students into life-long sf fans (and also introduced us all to *Ansible!*)'. ● *Rod Taylor* (1930-2015), Australian actor who starred in George Pal's *The Time Machine* (1960) and Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963), died on 7 January aged 84. Other genre credits include *101 Dalmatians* (voice, 1961) and *The Warlord: Battle for the Galaxy* (1998). [PB] ● *Alice K. Turner* (1939-2015), US editor and critic who was fiction editor of *Playboy* 1980-2000 and compiled *The Playboy Book of Science Fiction* (1998), died on 16 January; she was 75. With Michael Andre-Driussi she edited *Snake's Hands* (2001; expanded 2003), a critical anthology about John Crowley to which she also contributed several essays. [ED]

**The Weakest Link.** *Bradley Walsh*: 'In Norse mythology, which palace has more than 400 doors?' *Male Contestant*: 'Versailles.' (ITV1, *The Chase*) [MPJ] ● *John Humphrys*: 'Which Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, first staged in 1971, is narrated by Judas Iscariot?' *Georgia Henshaw*: 'Phantom of the Opera.' (BBC1, *Celebrity Mastermind*) [PE]

**C.o.A.** F&SF paper submissions: C.C. Finlay, *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, PO Box 8420, Surprise, AZ 85374-0123, USA.

**As Others See Us II.** We are so tiresome: 'Recently I wrote a story about *Star Wars* and science fiction for *The Atlantic*. The comments section, as these things will, featured a large number of people telling me that I was unqualified to write about the topic because I hadn't read enough sci-fi books, or hadn't read enough recent sci-fi books, or hadn't read the right sci-fi books, or hadn't seen the right sci-fi movies. / I'm sure this is a familiar experience for anyone who's published work on culture.' (Noah Berlatsky, *Los Angeles Review Of Books*, January) [MMW]

**Magazine Scene.** *Farrago's Wainscot*, online 'journal of the literary weird in fiction and poetry', resumed publication in January 2015 after a long hiatus since October 2009. See [www.farragoswainscot.com](http://www.farragoswainscot.com).

**Outraged Letters.** *Gregory Feeley*, regarding 'As Others ...' in A330, quotes Galleycat from 5 January: "HarperCollins's William Morrow imprint has plans to introduce a new line of nonfiction and literary fiction." So in response to Michael Caine's snarky "Does anybody use the term 'literary fiction' who doesn't have one foot on a spaceship?", one can say, "The U.S. media press, asshole." (5 January) ● *Neil Ford*: 'Re A330 "Outraged Letter" on the subject of *Interstellar* being classified as containing "science fiction themes": The best, because stupidest, advisory description used by Australian Classification is "Mild themes".' ● *Michael Moorcock* on David Pringle's J.G. Ballard family revelation in,

again, A330: 'Absolutely true about Ballard and Oxford. I hadn't bothered to book a room, telling Judy I'd just take Jimmy's when he didn't turn up (as usual). The bugger did the dirty on me by arriving and staying. Not surprised to learn about the stink bomb.' (5 January)

**Random Fandom.** *Fanzine Activity Achievement (FAAn) Awards*: voting on 2014 work opened in January and continues until Saturday 14 March 2015. See [www.corflu.org](http://www.corflu.org) for the downloadable ballot form and a gallery of eligible fanzine covers. ● *science-fiction.org*, reported in A323 (June 2014) as on offer with a minimum bid of \$1,000 or \$5,000 for quick sale—reduced from an optimistic \$2,000/\$10,000—has still attracted no bids; the current registration expires this month.... [JC]

**The Dead Past.** *50 Years Ago*: 'Following the ground-work put in by A.E. van Vogt last mid-summer on the idea of a sf writers' protection society, there now seems to be getting off the ground [...] a body known as the Science Fiction Writers of America. An introductory circular has appeared from Damon Knight informing would be members of a bimonthly bulletin and urging them to join the society. Subs are \$3 per year.' (*Skyrack* 75, February 1965) ● *40 Years Ago*: 'SCIENCE FICTION 75 is the title of a series of talks being organised by ICA in London (The Mall, Nash House, London SW1). The time is Wednesdays at 7.30 pm. February 26th is Brian Aldiss on "SF and the Nature of Time"; March 5th is Tom Disch on "SF and Cheese"; March 12th is Peter Nicholls on "SF: The Monsters and the Critics"; March 19th is Phil Dick on "The Man, The Android and the Machine".' (*Checkpoint* 59, February 1975) ● *20 Years Ago*, Bruce Sterling shared a beautiful dream: 'Perhaps some day, in stark futurity, people of goodwill (euphemism for you and me) will be able to dance a rickety arthritic fandango over the final grave of Scientology.' (*Ansible* 91, February 1995)

**As Others See Us III.** Revealed at last: the problem with sf is its essential unlovability. 'Those writers who feel the pressure of precursors and who successfully take poetry or prose in new directions deserve consideration beyond what we normally extend to writers who produce satisfactory work in various genres. Just because there is no objective list of Great Books does not mean there are no great books. I'm not suggesting that one can't fully enjoy James Crumley, James Lee Burke, Robert Heinlein, Philip K. Dick, and Orson Scott Card, but I'm not sure one can love them in the way that one loves Shakespeare, Keats, Chekhov, and Joyce. One can be a fan of Agatha Christie, but one can't really be a fan of George Eliot.' (Arthur Krystal, 'What We Lose If We Lose the Canon,' *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 5 January) [MMW]

**Editorial: Our Mailing List.** Steve Jones writes: 'I realized at Christmas that I have not received an electronic *Ansible* since last February. I have just tried to re-join the list ...' only to be told 'You are already subscribed to this group.' This appears to be a known quirk of Google Groups which Google isn't interested in fixing. Even with list owner privileges, the alleged existing subscription that's causing the blockage can't be found or removed. To get around this, I've set up an alternative email list based at [ansible.uk](http://ansible.uk), to which the plain-text version of *Ansible* will be posted each month (as well as to the old list). If you can't use or don't like Google Groups, ask me for an invitation.

**Media Miscellany.** *Critics' Choice Movie Awards*: seven awards went to *Birdman*; other winners of genre interest are *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Interstellar* (sf/horror film), *Edge of Tomorrow*, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* and *The Lego Movie* (animated feature). ● *Golden Globes*: animated feature, *How to Train Your Dragon 2*; actor (musical or comedy), Michael Keaton in *Birdman*, which also won for screenplay. [MPJ] ● *Oscars*: best motion picture and screenplay finalists include *Birdman*. ● *Screen Actors Guild Awards* went to *Birdman* (film cast performance) and *Game of Thrones* (tv stunt ensemble performance). [SFS]

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Dept of Close Scrutiny*. '... Donchak continued to stare at him, his eye moving in minute arcs across his body as it gauged the temperature differentials between veins and arteries ...' (Mark Geston, *The Siege of Wonder*, 1976) [BA] ● *Solid Fuel Dept*. '... beyond it was the steel skeleton of the launching platform, and above that, steep and gleaming, towered the magnesium spire of the rocket.' (Robert Abernathy, *Deep Space* [a.k.a. Axolotl], 1953) [BA] ● *Eyeballs in the Sky*. 'Her eyes were a rich, dark green, like a pair of verdantly forested planets.' (Joe Vasicek, *Star Wanderers: Outlander*, 2012) [JP]

Ansible 331 © David Langford, 2015. Thanks to Brian Ameringen, Paul Barnett, Jean-Daniel Brèque, Damien Broderick, Jonathan Cowie, Ellen Datlow, Paul Di Filippo, Martyn P. Jackson, Jim Linwood, Locus, Private Eye, John Purcell, Roberto Quaglia, Roger Robinson, Science Fact & Fiction Concatenation, SF Site, Cat Sparks, Gordon Van Gelder, Andrew Wells, Martin Morse Wooster, and our Hero Distributors: Dave Corby (Birmingham SF Group), SCIS/Prophecy, Alan Stewart (Australia).  
2 February 2015