

# Ansible



## Ansible® 373 August 2018

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 or second-hand skrode wheels.

**Trademark Wars.** US author Michael-Scott Earle, not content with applying for a US trademark on the words 'Dragon Slayer' (found in various forms in 652 existing titles at Amazon), has gone further with a blanket application for every possible cover design featuring the unique visual concept of – following any title – 'one or more human or partially human figures underneath, at least one of the figures holding a weapon'. (Cory Doctorow, BoingBoing.net, 14 June and 19 July) ● Meanwhile in the UK, sf fans are alarmed by BrewDog PLC's now formally published application to trademark the word 'fanzine' in any and every beer-related context (20 July). Which sounds like bad news for traditional fanzines that might discuss pub meetings or convention real-ale bars....

### Hexapodia Is the Key Insight

**Bruce Boston**, SF Poetry Association Grand Master, joined the Facebook thread of congratulations to this year's Rhysling winners (see Awards below) with: 'I suspect someone is stuffing the ballot box by getting friends and relatives to join SPPA just so they could vote for them. This has happened before with SPPA and a winning poem was disqualified.' (4 July) Since the sole evidence for this charge was that he didn't like one of the winning poems, Boston was suspended from SPPA for six months under the terms of their Code of Conduct. [F770]

**Harlan Ellison** was remembered in a great many obituaries, the following appearing somewhat late in the day: 'The dustjacket of one book called him "possibly the most contentious person on Earth." The "possibly" was a bit namby pamby.' (*The Economist*, 7 July) [MLO] ● Elsewhere, more paradoxically: 'The Los Angeles resident and former lord of the architectural marvel known as the Lost Aztec Temple of Mars did not pass on, nor is he resting in peace. He's dead, an existential reality that he'd probably be the first to acknowledge were he still with us.' (Simon Abrams, RogerEbert.com, 28 June) [BH] Would he really?

**Chuck Palahniuk** of *Fight Club* fame is one of the authors who between them lost \$3.4 million or more to embezzlement at the New York literary agency Donadio & Olson. Darin Webb, accountant at D&O, was arrested in May and is now out on \$200,000 bail. (*Locus*, 21 July)

**E.H. Shepard's** original 1926 map of the Hundred Acre Wood in *Winnie-the-Pooh* – in a private collection for many years – was auctioned by Sotheby's in July and sold for a record £430,000. (*Guardian*, 10 July)

**John Sladek** featured in a *New York Times* article about weird Amazon pricing: 'Mr. Sladek, who died in 2000, is little read now, which naturally means his books are often marketed for inordinate sums on Amazon. One of his mystery novels, "Invisible Green," has a Red Rhino "buy box" – Amazon's preferred deal – offering it for \$664.' ('Amazon's Curious Case of the \$2,630.52 Used Paperback', 15 July) [PNH]

### Condalia

SOLD OUT 3-6 Aug ● **Discworld Convention**, Chesford Grange Hotel, Warwick. Perhaps too late to join the waiting list for cancelled memberships (£74 reg; £59 concessions; £30 supp) at dwcon.org.

10-12 Aug ● **Nine Worlds Geekfest** (multimedia), Novotel London West, Hammersmith, London. £119 reg; £49.99 per day; under-18s free. Book online at nineworlds.co.uk.

16-20 Aug ● **Worldcon 76** (Worldcon), San José, CA, USA. Now \$250 reg; \$125 YA (15-21) and military; under-15s \$75; under-6s free. \$50 supp. Day rates \$50 Thur and Mon; \$80 Fri, Sat and Sun. See worldcon76.org. Hugo voting has ended; site selection voting continues.

17-19 Aug ● **Wadfest** (camping; games, cosplay), 51 Mill Rd, via Church Road, Emneth, Wisbech, Cambs, PE14 8AE. Adult campers £45; under-17s £5; under-5s free; visitors £20. See www.wadfest.co.uk.

24-27 Aug ● **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. £42.50 reg and £21 ages 5-16, plus £0.30 fee. Day tickets for adults and juniors have different prices each day: see www.asylumsteampunk.co.uk.

24-26 Aug ● **TitanCon**, Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast. £42 reg; YA (16-25) £30; under-16s £15; under-6s £5; £6 supp. See titancon.com.

26-27 Aug ● **Stars of Time** (media), Tropicana, Weston-super-Mare. 10am-5:30pm. £6.50; child £3.50. See www.starsoftime.co.uk.

1-2 Sep ● **Middle-earth Festival**, Sarehole Mill, Cole Bank Rd,

Hall Green, Birmingham. Free. See middleearthfestival.wordpress.com.

1 Sep ● **Whooverville** (*Doctor Who*), QUAD Centre, Derby, DE1 3AS. £48; £33 concessions; under-12s £10. See whooverville.org.

15-16 Sep ● **Comics Uncovered**, BCEC, Birmingham. £85 reg; £45/day; students £45 and £25. More at www.comicsuncovered.co.uk.

15 Sep ● **Sublime Cognition**: SF and Metaphysics (conference), Birkbeck School of Arts, London. See http://tinyurl.com/y73kvj6d.

20-23 Sep ● **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), St Antony's College, Oxford. Now £85 reg or £75 for Tolkien Society members. Further information at www.tolkienesociety.org/events/oxonmoot-2018/.

4-7 Oct ● **Grimmfest** (horror/cult film festival), Odeon Printworks, Manchester. Tickets £80 – £75 concessions – from grimmfest.com.

12-14 Oct ● **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. £35 reg; £25 concessions. See www.comicartfestival.com.

16-19 Apr 2020 ● **StokerCon** (horror), Royal and Grand Hotels, Scarborough – the first StokerCon outside the USA. Details awaited.

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others Remember Us.** Michael Moorcock was interviewed for the Shakespeare & Co (Paris) website by Hari Kunzru, who began by explaining that before Mike arrived on the scene the science fiction field consisted of 'gentlemen in sports jackets with slide rules.' (5 July) [JL]

**Science Masterclass.** 'Virgin Galactic's space plane VSS Unity traveled more than twice the speed of light in a test flight.' (*Newsweek*, 28 July)

**Awards.** *Arthur C. Clarke*: at the ceremony on 18 July, the engraved bookend and £2018 cheque went to Anne Charnock for *Dreams Before the Start of Time*. ● *Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery*: Frank M. Robinson.

● *European SF Society* (selected): GRAND MASTER, Gerard Klein. FICTION Aliette de Bodard, *The House of Binding Thorns*. FANZINE *Journey Planet* 33. INTERNET *nooSfere*. ● *Gemmell* (fantasy): NOVEL Robin Hobb, *Assassin's Fate*. DEBUT Nicholas Eames, *Kings of the Wyld*. ARTWORK Richard Anderson, cover of *Kings of the Wyld*. ● *Man Booker* longlist titles of genre interest (out of 13): Daisy Johnson, *Everything Under*; Sophie Mackintosh, *The Water Cure*; Richard Powers, *The Overstory*. [L] ● *Munsey* (pulp community): William Lampkin. ● *Mythopoeic* (fantasy): ADULT John Crowley, *Ka: Dar Oakley in the Ruin of Ymr*. CHILDREN'S Garth Nix, *Frogkisser*. SCHOLARSHIP Michael Levy and Farah Mendlesohn, *Children's Fantasy Literature: An Introduction*. SCHOLARSHIP – INKLINGS Sorina Higgins, *The Inklings and King Arthur*. ● *Prometheus* (libertarian): NOVEL Travis Corcoran, *The Powers of the Earth*. HALL OF FAME Jack Williamson, 'With Folded Hands ...' (1947) ● *Rhysling* (poetry): SHORT Mary Soon Lee, 'Advice to a Six-Year-Old' (Spring 2017 *Star\*Line*). LONG Neil Gaiman, 'The Mushroom Hunters' (26 April 2017 *Brainpickings*). ● *Scribe Grandmaster/Faust* (life achievement in media tie-ins): Greg Cox.

● *Seiun* (Japan), international translation categories: NOVEL Sylvain Neuvel, *Sleeping Giants* trans Chiori Sada. SHORT Jingfang Hao, 'Folding Beijing' trans Mayumi Otani. [F770] ● *Shirley Jackson* (suspense) novel winner: Hye-young Pyun, *The Hole*. ● *Sidewise* (alt-history) finalists: SHORT Tom Anderson & Bruno Lombardi, 'N'oublions Jamais' (*Altered Europa*); Dave D'Alessio, 'The Twenty Year Reich' (*Ibid*), Nisi Shawl, 'Sun River' (*Clockwork Cairo*); Harry Turtledove, 'Zigeuner' (*Asimov's* 9/17). LONG Gregory Benford, *The Berlin Project*; Brent Harris, *A Time of Need*; Elan Mastai, *All Our Wrong Todays*; Alan Smale, *Clash of Eagles* trilogy; Bryce Zabel, *Once There Was a Way*. ● *Will Eisner Hall of Fame* (comics): Carol Kalish, Jackie Ormes. ● *World Fantasy Awards*: LIFE ACHIEVEMENT Charles de Lint, Elizabeth Wollheim. NOVEL shortlist: S.A. Chakraborty, *The City of Brass*; John Crowley, *Ka: Dar Oakley in the Ruin of Ymr*; Theodora Goss, *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*; Daryl Gregory, *Spoonbenders*; Victor LaValle, *The Changeling*; Fonda Lee, *Jade City*. See worldfantasy.org for many more categories.

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*the Beast* (1995) and *Spamalot* (2008 NA tour), died on 17 July aged 70. [AIP] ● **Yvonne Blake** (1940-2018), UK-born, Oscar-winning costume designer whose work appeared in *Fahrenheit 451* (1966), *Superman* (1978) and *Superman II* (1980), died on 17 July aged 78. [PDF] ● **Steve Ditko** (1927-2018), US comics artist and writer who while working at Marvel in the 1960s created (nominally with Stan Lee) Spider-Man, several regular Spider-Man villains, and Doctor Strange, was found dead at home on 29 June; he was 90. [MR/GW] ● **Jack Gonzalez** (1945-2018), US rare-book dealer specializing in sf, died on 1 July aged 72. [GVG] ● **Shinobu Hashimoto** (1918-2018), Japanese writer and director best known for films more famous than *Tidal Wave* (1973) – the *Japan Sinks* adaptation which he scripted – died on 19 July aged 100. [PT] ● **Bernard Hepton** (1925-2018), UK actor whose credits include *The Plague Dogs* (1982) and *The Woman in Black* (1989), died in 27 July aged 92. ● **Jeff Heusser** (1957-2018), US visual effects creator whose credits include *Deep Impact* (1998), *Æon Flux* (2005), *Fantastic Four* (2005) and *X-Men: The Last Stand* (2006), died on 23 July aged 61. [PDF] ● **George Jenson** (1930-2018), US visual effects artist whose work featured in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), *Return of the Jedi* (1983), *2010* (1984), *Dune* (1984) and others, died on 25 May aged 87. [F770] ● **Alan Johnson** (1937-2018), US choreographer of several Mel Brooks films including *Young Frankenstein* (1974) and director of *Solarbabies* (1986), died on 7 July aged 81. Other genre credits are *Dracula: Dead and Loving It* (1995) and *Neverland* (2003). [LP/MMW] ● **Clive King** (1924-2018), UK children's author best known for *Stig of the Dump* (1963), died on 10 July aged 94. [AW] This classic tale of a Stone Age caveman in modern times was twice adapted for tv (ITV 1981, BBC 2002). ● **Oliver Knussen** (1952-2018), UK composer best known for the opera *Where the Wild Things Are* (1983, with libretto by Maurice Sendak), died on 8 July aged 66. [MMW] ● **Dame Gillian Lynne** (1926-2018), UK choreographer of the musicals *Cats* (1981), *Phantom of the Opera* (1986) and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (2002), plus 17 *Muppets* episodes, died on 1 July aged 92. [MMW] ● **Darrell McNeil** (1957-2018), US animation artist, writer and historian who worked on many Hanna-Barbera series since 1976, died on 4 July aged 60; further productions include *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979), *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1989-1991) and *Jetsons: The Movie* (1990). [NF-G] ● **Robby Müller** (1940-2018), Dutch cinematographer who worked on *Repo Man* (1984) and *Until the End of the World* (1991), died on 3 July aged 78. [SG] ● **Christine Nöstlinger** (1936-2018), Austrian author of many children's/YA books including sf/fantasy titles such as *Conrad: The Factory Made Boy* (1975), died on 28 June aged 81. [MMW] ● **Derrick O'Connor** (1941-2018), Irish actor whose films include *Jabberwocky* (1977), *Time Bandits* (1981), *Brazil* (1985), *Daredevil* (2003) and *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* (2006), died on 29 June aged 77. [F770] ● **Jon Schnepf** (1967-2018), US animator and director whose work includes *Space Ghost Coast to Coast* (1995-1999), *Aqua Teen Hunger Force* (2000-2002) and *Metalocalypse* (2006-2012), died on 19 July aged 51. [SG] ● **Carlo Vanzina** (1951-2018), Italian screenwriter and director whose genre work included *Nothing Underneath* (1985), *A spasso nel tempo* (1996) plus its 1997 sequel, and *2061: Un anno eccezionale* (2007), died on 8 July aged 67. [SG] ● **Elmarie Wendel** (1939-2018), US actress best known for *3rd Rock from the Sun* (1996-2001), with other credits including *The Immortalizer* (1990) and *The Lorax* (2012), died on 21 July aged 78. (Syfy.com) ● **Hugh Whitmore** (1936-2018), UK playwright and screenwriter whose genre credits include *The Blue Bird* (1976) and *The Haunting of Helen Walker* (1995), died on 18 July aged 82. [AW]

**The Weakest Link.** *Ben Shephard*: 'The mythical creature the unicorn had what structure on its head?' *Contestant*: 'An icicle.' (ITV, *Tipping Point*) [PE]

**Roving Reportage.** John Clute was at the big event in San Diego: 'Entering last day of Comic-Con, about to return to main hall. Getting inside is a bit like docking into a generation starship way into its mission. The long labyrinth of the place is riddled with timeslips and alternate story lines, clashing families of costumes, incests and reboots: cross-functional storytelling nodules breeding everywhere, multiple origin stories eyeing each other up and down the hugely congested aisles like ghosts or revanchists. Stephen King's Castle Rock as imagined by Max Ernst. Costumes galore, inside the costumes bare skin. A lot of smiling faces. Smiling as they are emptied into product, but hey: they know that? The sense one comes away with is that Comic-Con, and multiplex universes like Marvel or (as it turns out) Stephen King, are really kind of versions of one another. Fargo a chamber opera version of this enabling structure.' (Facebook, 22 July, slightly revised)

**Lost Moons.** A huge display model of the Moon, 23 feet across, was mislaid in transit between Bristol – home of its creator Luke Jerram –

and Austria for one of several scheduled appearances this summer (BBC, 21 July) No one who knows the couriers, TNT, is particularly surprised.

**As J.G. Ballard Saw Us.** 'Exuberance, an attractive and abundant quality in science fiction, is comparatively rare among its writers, as anyone attending an sf convention soon notices. For some reason there is a marked contrast between the personal style of the genre's fans, a happy, beer-swilling, hotel-wrecking contingent – in short, the charge of the light ale brigade – and that of the writers themselves, for the most part shy and rather Thurberish figures with intimidating wives, who are plainly terrified by the silence of those infinite spaces.' (J.G. Ballard review column in *The New Statesman*, 27 March 1977) [DP]

**Magazine Scene.** The horror-themed *Fangoria*, founded in 1979, is to relaunch this autumn with its first print issue since October 2015.

**Random Fandom.** *John D. Berry* pondered the Powell's bookshop sign FANDOM BOOK CLUB. 'I think they probably just mean books that they really, really like.' ● **Dermot Dobson** was disappointed that the headline 'Scientologists' sewage is ten times the limit' (*Times*, 30 July) was literal (the East Grinstead HQ is polluting the River Medway) rather than a measured comment on their teachings. ● **Graham Sleight** hoped for an allusion to Doc Smith in the World Cup headline 'Lensman caught in Croatia victory pile' (BBC, 12 July); it was merely a chap with a camera.

**The Dead Past.** *20 Years Ago*, Tom Holt revealed the inside story: 'Enquiring minds might want to know what was in the mystery parcels handed to Messrs Boxleitner & Co by two damozels dressed in white samite at the orgiastic climax of the recent *SFX/Babylon 5* thrash, just outside the lost city of Heathrow. When, awestruck, Boxleitner tore away the shimmering gold paper, he was delighted beyond words to find he'd been given a pictorial history of the River Thames. So stunned was he by the munificence and aptness of this gift that he omitted to take it with him when he left the stage.' (*Ansible* 133, August 1998) ● *60 Years Ago*: 'Infinity and Galaxy have both dropped the "Science Fiction" portion of their logos. Infinity has become plain Infinity, while Galaxy has become Galaxy Magazine. / We called up Larry Shaw and Bob Guinn and asked their reasons for the name change. In both cases we obtained the same answer. Both informed us that they thought that many persons who actually enjoyed science fiction were not buying because the wording science fiction on the cover scared them away. So, they are experimenting by not placing the name science fiction on their covers.' (*Science-Fiction Times* 298, Second August 1958 Issue)

**C.o.A.** *Locus Publications*, 655 13th St, Suite 100, Oakland, CA 94612, USA.

**Another Headline.** 'Inside the World of Racist Science Fiction' (*NY Times*, 30 July) alarmed many sf people but proved to be about nasty tracts (mostly self-published) by white supremacists – *The Turner Diaries* and the like – rather than anything from the idols of our genre. [AIP]

**Fanfundery.** *TAFF*. Jim Mowatt writes: 'I have recently sent copies of my 2013 TAFF report to SCIFI and FANAC and both happily paid 500 dollars each into the TAFF coffers, so helping us to keep sending more delegates across the ocean to strengthen the science fictional bonds that enhance our community. Many thanks to both these fine organizations for their encouragement and support for the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund.' ● **Johan Anglemark's** current TAFF trip itinerary has been published by John Purcell as *TAFF News Special Report*, available at [taff.org.uk](http://taff.org.uk).

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Per Something Ad Astra*. '...the firm mounds of her breasts lifted their rubbery, coral tipped nipples toward the sky.' (Michael Knerr, *The Sex Life of the Gods*, 1962) [SS] ● **Hard-Boiled Dept.** [*Private eye encounters good liquor.*] 'Then his earlobes warmed up like radiant heaters, and there came a feeling in his throat as if it had grown an internal pelt of finest mink.' (Theodore Sturgeon, 'Excalibur and the Atom', August 1951 *Fantastic Adventures*) ● **Dept of True Romance** (see also *Ansible* 372). 'Her buttocks were like huge unshelled soft-boiled eggs.' (Philip José Farmer, *The Image of the Beast*, 1979) [DA] ● **Eggs Redux.** 'Mrs Grasatchow still lay on her back, arms and legs outflung, her mouth open, and her eyes open and showing white, as if hardboiled eggs had been stuffed into the sockets.' (*Ibid*) [DA] ● **Neat Tricks.** 'Childe [...] felt his entrails slip about each other and knot each other and, their tails coiled around his backbone, pull until they were choking each other.' (*Ibid*) [DA] ● **Mot Juste Dept.** [*Courtney has just thrown up, and is being helped by narrator Emma.*] "'You're the best friend ever," she gushed.' (Rosalind Noonan, *Pretty, Nasty, Lovely*, 2017) [PB]

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