

ansible



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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 cerebrate psittacoids.

The Hermeneutical Doughnut

Arthur C. Clarke featured in the 27 November *Jeopardy* quiz: 'This *Space Odyssey* author: "I predict that a new species could well appear on Earth – what I call Robosapiens."' No one could supply his name. [AIP]

Greg Egan contributed to the mathematical canon with new work on the maximum lengths of 'superpermutations' that include all possible permutations of a given set of numbers (see tinyurl.com/y8eeyph for an explanation in terms of video binge-watching). Not for nothing do our man's sf novels include *Permutation City*. (*Quanta*, 5 November) [AT]

Marc Gascoigne, founder and publisher at Angry Robot Books, is leaving at the end of 2018 in hope of 'a new challenge'.

Ada Lovelace, who has an *SF Encyclopedia* entry for being generally iconic, is on the Bank of England's longlist of past UK scientists nominated to appear on the new £50 note. Further nominees with *SFE* entries include J.D. Bernal, Margaret Cavendish, Erasmus Darwin, John Dee, John (J.B.S.) Haldane, Fred Hoyle, Patrick Moore and Bertrand Russell.

George R.R. Martin explained the genesis of *A Game of Thrones* to a *Guardian* interviewer: 'When I began, I didn't know what the hell I had. I thought it might be a short story ...' (10 November) [AIP]

Robert Silverberg has much to say about his personal non-racism and non-sexism at file770.com/racism-and-sexism/. (27 November)

Consecute

Until 9 Dec ● **Fanatical: A Sci-Fi Convention Musical**, Playground Theatre, London. Various ticket prices from £11 to £25 (£10 to £22 concessions) at theplaygroundtheatre.london/events/fanatical/.

Until 16 Mar 2019 ● **Frank Hampson** – The Man Who Drew Dan Dare (exhibition), The Atkinson, Lord St, Southport. 10am-4pm, Mon-Sat. Free; donations welcome. See theatkinson.co.uk/whats-on/events/.

7 Dec ● **British Fantasy Society Social**, Central Station Pub, 37 Wharfedale Rd, King's Cross, London. 7pm-11:30pm. Free; all welcome.

15 Dec - 9 Feb ● **Discworld & Beyond** (exhibition), N. Herts Museum, Hitchin. See www.paulkidby.com/event/discworld-beyond-6/.

20 Dec ● **London Xmas Meeting** (additional to First Thursdays), The Bishop's Finger, 9-10 West Smithfield, EC1A 9JR. All evening.

18-20 Jan 2019 ● **Redemption** (multimedia), Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield. £70 reg; concessions £50; under-18s £25; under-3s free. *Advance booking closes 5 January: £75 (concessions £50) at the door.* For online booking (5% fee) and day rates, see redemptioncon.org.uk.

1-3 Feb 2019 ● **31-ET** (filk), Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester. £38 reg or £28 unwaged plus booking fees; under-18s £1/year of age; under-5s free. Further details at www.contabile.org.uk/31et/.

8-10 Feb 2019 ● **SF Ball** (media), Grand Harbour Hotel, Southampton. £135 reg or £15/day; child £45 or £5. See sfbevents.com/sfball.

16 Feb 2019 ● **Picocon 36**, Blakett Building, Imperial College, London. Several guests of honour. £12 reg; £10 concessions; £8 for ICSF members; past GoHs free. See www.union.ic.ac.uk/scc/icsf/picocon/.

1-2 Mar 2019 ● **Frightfest** (film), Glasgow Film Theatre. Details to follow at www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsevents.html. Also London events: Leicester Square, 22-26 August 2019, and a Hallowe'en special TBA.

12-13 Apr 2019 ● **Corroding the Now: Poetry + Science|SF** (conference), Egham, Surrey. Details and CFP at corrodingthenow.com.

19-22 Apr 2019 ● **Ytterbium** (Eastercon), Park Inn, London Heathrow area. *Now £80 reg, rising to £90 on 1 April 2019; £30 concessions; £25 under-18s; £5 under-5s; £20 supporting.* See ytterbium.org.uk.

9-19 May 2019 ● **Sci-Fi London** (film festival), various London venues. Further details awaited at sci-fi-london.com/festival.

7-9 June 2019 ● **Cymera**: Scotland's Festival of SF, Fantasy & Horror Writing, Edinburgh. See www.cymerafestival.co.uk.

13 Jul 2019 ● **Edge-Lit 8**, QUAD Centre, Derby, DE1 3AS. 10am-9pm. £30. See www.derbyquad.co.uk/whats-on/events/edge-lit-8.

15-19 Aug 2019 ● **Dublin 2019** (Worldcon), Dublin, Ireland. €210 reg; under-26s €130; under-13s €70; under-6s €5; supp €40. *Join by 31 December to qualify as a 2019 Hugo nominator.* See dublin2019.com.

22-25 Aug 2019 ● **Eurocon/TitanCon**, Waterfront Convention

Centre and Hilton Hotel, Belfast. £50 reg; 16-25s £35; 6-15s £20; £10 supp; all rates subject to PayPal fees at titancon.com/2019/.

31 Aug 2019 ● **Whooverville** (*Doctor Who*), QUAD Centre, Derby, DE1 3AS. Tickets £50; £33 concessions and under-16s; £10 under-12s; bookings at QUAD site (Edge-Lit above) but not yet at whooverville.org.

25-27 Oct 2019 ● **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Pendulum Hotel, Manchester. Membership costs awaited at fantastic-films.com.

8-10 Nov 2019 ● **Novacon 49**, Park Inn, Nottingham. GoH Mike Carey. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. Registration form awaited at www.novacon.org.uk.

Rumblings. As usual, there is no December BSFA pub meeting. ● *Daydream Events/Patchwork Events* cons were all cancelled owing to illness (Facebook post, 5 November), including the Harry Potter-themed Expelicon (Grimsby, 24 November) and the Sci-Feb media event (ditto, 3 February 2019); patchworkevents.co.uk died in early November.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. 'I avoid science fiction – religious traditions already are packed with fantasy stories.' (Elaine Pagels, religious historian, in the *New York Times Book Review*, November) [JB] ● On Norwegian author Karl Ove Knausgaard: 'I would suggest that time spent reading almost anything (with the exception of science fiction, fantasy, and celebrity autobiographies – almost) would be time better more enrichingly spent than reading Knausgaard.' (Metafilter, 23 November) [WM]

Awards. *Edgar Grand Master* (crime): Martin Cruz Smith. The same honour went to Linda Fairstein but proved controversial and was swiftly withdrawn. ● *Gaylactic Spectrum* novel: Ellen Klages, *Passing Strange*. (2018 award for 2017 work, presented in November; the one given in May this year was 2017's for 2016 work.) ● *Imagination in Service to Society* (Arthur C. Clarke Foundation): Cixin Liu. [L] ● *J.F. Gonzalez Lifetime Achievement Award* (for horror): David G. Barnett. [F770] ● *National Book Award for Translated Literature* (USA): Yoko Tawada, *The Emissary* (2014), a dystopia set in future Japan. (Europa SF, 15 November) ● *Rotsler Award* for life achievement in fanzine art: Ken Fletcher. ● *World Fantasy Awards*: NOVEL (tie) Victor LaValle, *The Changeling*; Fonda Lee, *Jade City*. NOVELLA Ellen Klages, *Passing Strange*. SHORT Natalia Theodoridou, 'The Birding' (*Strange Horizons* 18/12/17). ANTHOLOGY Peter S. Beagle and Jacob Weisman, eds., *The New Voices of Fantasy*. COLLECTION Jane Yolen, *The Emerald Circus*. ARTIST Gregory Manchess. SPECIAL – PROFESSIONAL Harry Brockway, Patrick McGrath & Danel Olson for *Writing Madness*. SPECIAL – NON-PROFESSIONAL Justina Ireland & Troy L. Wiggins for *FIYAH: Magazine of Black Speculative Fiction*.

Prediction Flasterclass. 'I predict that a small town in Nebraska will produce a woman physicist in the late 1970s who will develop a theory of magnetism that overcomes gravity. Practical application of her theory will result in aircraft and space vehicles that require no sustained rocketry propulsion.' (*Criswell Predicts from Now to the Year 2000!*, 1968)

R.I.P. *John Bluthal* (1929-2018), Polish-born UK actor whose genre credits include *Superman III* (1983), *The Fifth Element* (1997) and *Dark City* (1998), died on 15 November aged 89. [JM] ● *Andrew Burt* (1945-2018), UK actor who starred in the tv *Legend of King Arthur* (1979) and *Gulliver in Lilliput* (1982) – also appearing in *Doctor Who*: 'Terminus' (1983) – died on 16 November aged 73. [DWN] ● *George A. Cooper* (1925-2018), UK actor in *Doctor Who*: 'The Smugglers' (1966), *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* (1968) and *The Light Princess* (1978), died on 16 November aged 93. [DWN] ● *Maurine Dorris*, long-time US fan and convention worker who chaired the 1987 World Fantasy Convention and co-founded the World Horror Convention – first held in 1991 – died on 11 November. [MI] ● *Pablo Ferro* (1935-2018), Cuba-born film title designer for *Dr Strangelove* (1964), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *Being There* (1979), *Beetlejuice* (1988), *Darkman* (1990), *The Addams Family* (1991) plus sequel, *Men in Black II* (2002) plus sequel, *Cthulhu* (2007) and many more, died on 16 November aged 83. [MMW] ● *William Goldman* (1931-2018), US winner of two Oscars for screenwriting, whose novels include the much-loved fantasy *The Princess Bride* (1973) and the psychological-horror *Magic* (1976) – filmed in 1987 and 1978

respectively with his own scripts – plus the genre-switching thriller *Control* (1982), died on 15 November aged 87. [AS] Other genre screenplays include *The Stepford Wives* (1975), *Misery* (1990) and *Dreamcatcher* (2003). ● **Stephen Hillenburg** (1961-2018), creator of the multiple award-winning animation *SpongeBob SquarePants* that launched in 1999 and still continues, died on 26 November aged 57. [TP] ● **Ricky Jay** (1946-2018), US magician and actor whose films include *The Water Engine* (1992), *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997) and *The Prestige* (2006), died on 24 November aged 72. [PDF] ● **Gloria Katz** (1942-2018), US screenwriter and producer whose credits include *Messiah of Evil* (1973), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984) and *Howard the Duck* (1986), died on 25 November aged 76. [SG] ● **Stan Lee** (1922-2018), famed comics writer and publisher best known for the superhero characters he co-invented for Marvel in the 1960s, died on 12 November aged 95. With Jack Kirby he created the Fantastic Four, Incredible Hulk, Thor (well, the comics version), Iron Man, X-Men and the Avengers team including some of the above; with Bill Everett, Daredevil; and with Steve Ditko, Doctor Strange and Spider-Man. Lee made regular cameo appearances in the resulting Marvel Cinematic Universe productions. ● **Bertil Mårtensson** (1945-2018), Swedish philosopher and notable sf, fantasy, and crime novelist who was also active in fandom in the 1960s and 1990s, died on 4 November; he was 73. [J-HH] ● **Akira Miyazaki** (1934-2018), Japanese anime director and screenwriter who scripted *The Wizard of Oz* (1982), *Happy Moomin Family* (1990-1991) and many more, died on 25 November aged 84. [HM] ● **Mike Noble** (1930-2018), UK comics artist whose work included the *Fireball XL5* and *Captain Scarlet* strips for *TV Century 21*, died on 19 November aged 88. [JF] ● **Kitty O'Neil** (1946-2018), US stuntwoman and racing driver who was stunt double for the stars of *The Bionic Woman* (1976-1978) and *Wonder Woman* (1977-1979), died on 2 November aged 72. [AIP] ● **Fred Patten** (1940-2018), US fan, collector and scholar of fan history, anime, manga and anthropomorphic ('furry') fiction – of which he edited several anthologies – died on 12 November aged 77. [LG] His work was honoured with a special committee award from the 2006 Worldcon. ● **Douglas Rain** (1928-2018), Canadian actor who voiced HAL 9000 in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and *2010* (1984) – also the Evil Computer in *Sleeper* (1973) – died on 11 November aged 90. [S] ● **Nicolas Roeg** (1928-2018), UK director of *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976), *The Witches* (1990, based on Roald Dahl's novel), *Cold Heaven* (1991) and *Puffball* (2007, based on Fay Weldon's novel), died on 24 November aged 90. [CH] As cinematographer he worked on *The Masque of the Red Death* (1964) and *Fahrenheit 451* (1966). ● **Domingo Santos** (Pedro Domingo Mutiño, 1941-2018), major Spanish author, editor, publisher and translator who co-founded the magazine *Nueva Dimensión* in 1968, died on 2 November aged 76. [MV] He did much to popularize sf in Spain, publishing Spanish authors and translating many English-language classics. ● **Carl Sargent** (1952-2018), UK parapsychologist and author of source material for the role-playing games *D&D*, *Shadowrun* and *Warhammer* – plus 'Fighting Fantasy' novels and gamebooks as Keith Martin – died on 11 November aged 65. [MR] ● Late report: **Rosie Scott** (1948-2017), New Zealand-born author whose sf novel is *Feral City* (1992), died on 4 May 2017 aged 71. [SH] ● **Harold Stein**, US filk fan and unofficial sound archivist of the filk community, died on 26 October. [AT] ● **Ken Swofford** (1933-2018), US actor in *The Andromeda Strain* (1971), *Black Roses* (1988) and *The Stepford Children* (1987), died on 1 November aged 85. [PDF] ● **Terry Wiley** (1961-2018), UK comics artist whose independent comics *More Tales From Sleaze Castle* and *Petra Etcetera* both won awards, died on 9 September aged 56. [SG/SH] ● Late reports: **Chloe Zerwick** (1923-2018), US author, editor and artist who co-wrote *The Cassiopeia Affair* (1968) with Harrison Brown, died on 13 June aged 95. [JC] ● **Norman Zierold** (1927-2018), US author whose sf novel was *The Skyscraper Doom* (1972), died on 7 March aged 90. [JC]

The Weakest Link. *Joe Lycett:* 'Emma Hamilton was the mistress of which naval hero?' *Contestant:* 'I don't know. Popeye?' (BBC1, *The Time It Takes*) ● *Bradley Walsh:* 'Witches are most often depicted flying on what object?' *Contestant:* 'A UFO.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE]

As Others See Climate Change Fiction. 'There is something counterintuitive about cli-fi, about the fictional representation of scientifically substantiated predictions that too many people discount as fictions.' (Katy Waldman, *New Yorker* review, 9 November) [AIP]

Court Circular. The Satanic Temple filed a \$50m lawsuit against Netflix and Warner Bros. for using a copy of the Temple's notorious statue of the horned deity Baphomet in *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. Besides copyright violation, the complaint was that 'prominent use of this symbol as the central focal point of the school associated with evil, cannibalism and murder blurs and tarnishes the TST Baphomet with

Children as a mark of TST.' (*Hollywood Reporter*, 8 November) [AIP] On 21 November the suit was announced as 'amicably' settled, with any tasty details kept confidential. (*Guardian*, 22 November) [LK]

Nebula Award rules changes made public in November include adding the new category Game Writing and extending the award voting to associate as well as full members of SFWA. (SFWA.org, 9 November)

The Dead Past. 40 Years Ago, Peter Roberts reviewed *The International Science Fiction Yearbook* edited by Colin Lester: 'A 400 page handbook of sf & fandom, *The International Sf Yearbook* is divided into 29 sections, covering everything from Latin American sf, sf libraries, and sf pseudonyms, to tv, apas, and fan awards. Each section has some sort of an introduction followed, in most cases, by a bibliography or relevant listing. Contributors include Ben Bova, Ramsey Campbell, Malcolm Edwards, and Darko Suvin (whose contribution is sufficiently incomprehensible to deserve a mention in "Pseud's Corner" for its abuse of the English language). Strangely enough, most of these guest contributors receive only hidden credit and their names can only be winkled out by a thorough reading of the text – they're not even listed on the contents page. Still, that's their problem. / The listings are undoubtedly the most important part of the book and there's enough of them to prove useful as a reference source and address list. If you need someone to translate an sf story into Hungarian, Flemish, or Turkish, you'll find your man in here; or if you've ever wanted to join the International Wizard Of Oz Club Inc or even, believe it or not, the mysterious Astral Leauge itself, you can turn to the Yearbook for help.' (*Checkpoint* 92, December 1978) Despite hopes for improvement in future editions, this was the *International SF Yearbook's* one and only appearance. ● 100 Years Ago, Robert Ripley's first *Believe It Or Not* strip appeared (as *Champs and Chumps*) in the *New York Globe* – on 19 December 1918 according to Ripley Inc, but research by Art Lortie indicates it was really 15 December. Unbelievable!

Publishers & Sinners. Prometheus Books 'decided to return to its nonfiction roots' and sold off its Pyr (sf/fantasy) and Seventh Street (crime) imprints to Start Books. (*Publishers Weekly*, 12 November)

Fanfundery. TAFF 2019: candidates for the 2019 race from North America to the Dublin Worldcon are Teresa Cochran, Sarah Gulde, Mike Lowrey, and Geri Sullivan (announced 23 November). Voting runs from 1 December to 22 April 2019. See taff.org.uk for the ballot form. ● GUFF: nominations for the 2019 race from Australasia to the Dublin worldcon opened on 8 October and close on 5 December; voting will end on 22 April 2019. See ozfanfunds.com/?page_id=6.

As Others Saw Us. 'An experienced writer in the pseudo-scientific field, John W. Campbell, Jr., is the new editor of *Astounding Stories*. He is also a trained physicist, and stands ready to help writers with scientific details and formulas – an important phase of these stories.' (*Writer's Digest* market report, December 1937) [JL/MMW]

Editorial. For many years my most hated *Ansible* chore was the regular search through a vast 'limbo list' of past convention websites for updates to the overseas events page at news.ansible.uk/conlisti.html. Enough! Henceforth, con listings will still vanish as they pass into history, but that page will otherwise be updated only when committees or other interested fans tell me about new or repeated events. Worldcons and Eurocons are listed in any case, and the UK events list is unaffected. ● Meanwhile, seasonal greetings and best wishes to all *Ansible* readers. To help blight the festivities I've added my 2015 fannish ebook *Don't Try This At Home: Selected Convention Reports* to the free downloads page at the TAFF site: see taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=DontTryThis. As always, readers who enjoy any of these freebies are urged to donate to TAFF.

Chog's Masterclass. *Dept of Pleonasm.* 'Aro started to laugh. "Ha, ha, ha," he chuckled.' (Stephanie Meyer, *New Moon*, 2006) ● *Paddington Bear Hard Stare Dept.* 'The vitriol in his eyes could have melted glass.' (Freda Warrington, *The Dark Blood of Poppies*, 1995) [BA] ● *More Neat Tricks.* "But whatever it means to you," she said, long mouth wrapping the words before it sent them out, packaged like presents ...' (Justina Robson, *Mappa Mundi*, 2001) [PB] "What?" I said without joining lips together.' (Cornell Woolrich, *The Black Angel*, 1943) [PB] ● *Ring of Confidence Dept.* 'Val's face was more confident now that he had sphincter control.' (T.G. Bass, *Half Past Human*, 1971) [DA] ● *Dept of Autopsy Reports.* 'At the moment of her death, her heart had weighed four grams, her brain seven.' (Thomas Cook, *Flesh and Blood*, 1989)

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Geeks' Corner

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Endnotes

Apparitions.

● 7 December 2018, Brum Group Christmas social at Selly Park Tavern: too late to book if you haven't already. Brum Group guest speaker evenings normally 7:30pm for 8pm at the Briar Rose Hotel, Bennett's Hill, Birmingham city centre. £4 or £3 for members. Contact [bhamsfgroup at yahoo co uk](mailto:bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk). Future events/speakers: 14 January 2019, AGM and book auction (free); 8 February 2019, Gareth Powell; 8 March 2019, TBA; 12 April 2019, TBA; 10 May 2019, Daniel Godfrey; 14 July 2019, Jeanette Ng and Micah Yongo.

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Outraged Letters. Owen Whiteoak on *Ansible* 376: 'I think you're very mean on poor old H.G. [Wells] and his comments on the future of air transport and of submarines, while ignoring his many successes. He did, after all, predict intelligent life on Mars and the invention of a time machine. Credit where credit's due.' (6 November)

Imminent Events. The following have been deported from the above events list since the printed *Ansible* won't reach anyone in time.

1 Dec ● **Dragonmeet** (gaming), Novotel London West, W6 8DR. 9am-midnight. £12 reg with group discounts: www.dragonmeet.co.uk.

1 Dec ● **Yulemoot** (Tolkien Society), Gunmakers' Arms, 93 Bath Street, Birmingham, B4 6HG. 6pm to late. Open to all.

2 Dec ● **Stars of Time** (media), Tropicana, Weston-super-Mare. 10:30am-5pm. £7.50; under-12s, OAP and disabled £4; under-4s free. Family of 2+2 kids £18; 2+3 kids £19. See www.starsoftime.co.uk.

Thog's Second Helping. 'This one stood even taller with a massive haunch of muscle around her shoulders.' Linden's horse snailed from the green.' 'My mother died before I was born.' 'A handful of shanten children were hurling stones from the flat top of an officious building.' (all Jay Northearn, *Beyond Falcon's Reach*, 2018) [BJ]