



Ansible® 398 September 2020

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**, from 1986. Available for SAE or a Project for a General Illumination of the Human Mind.

The Happy Hypocrite

John Boyne's research for his very serious historical novel *A Traveller at the Gates of Wisdom* led him to include a recipe for red dye, allegedly used at the court of Attila the Hun, with such specialist ingredients as keese wing, Octorok eyeball, red lizalfos tail and Hylian shrooms. Incautious Googling had unearthed dye-making instructions from the fantasy videogame *Zelda: Breath of the Wild*. (*Guardian*, 3 August)

Brendan DuBois spotted a tasty new adverb in the *New York Times Book Review* for 23 August: 'Sometime between then and now, the writer Kurt Andersen argues in his essential, absorbing, infuriating, full-of-facts-you-didn't-know, saxophonically written new book...' (Facebook, 23 August) The time has perhaps come for all of us to act accordantly.

Mike Moorcock, speaking for the Jack Trevor Story Memorial Prize committee, announced Peter S. Beagle as winner of the 2020 award – a cup plus \$500 to be spent in 'a week to a fortnight'. (11 August) As Jack Trevor Story once told a bankruptcy court: 'You know how it is, judge. Two hundred or two thousand. It always lasts a week to a fortnight.'

Marc Zicree, a member of SFWA, spammed its membership directory with mass email plugging his television project. The SFWA Board was not pleased, and fast-tracked an already planned announcement that the directory 'is not to be used for marketing or promotional purposes', with hideous penalties such as 'a formal letter of censure' and (second offence) ejection from SFWA. Zicree responded with a video non-apology consisting mostly of further self-promotion. [F770]

Consistory

ONLINE. 3 Sep • **Virtual First Thursday**, 6-10pm, replacing the usual London pub meeting. See tinyurl.com/uow6hqn. *The Bishop's Finger reopened on 3 August, but only 12 people are allowed in 'our' bar*. [RR]

ONLINE. 16 Sep • **Launch Event** for the Centre for Fantasy and the Fantastic, University of Glasgow. 6pm-8pm. With Ellen Kushner, Terri Windling, Brian Attebery, Robert Maslen. Free ticket booking via the CFF website at fantasy.glasgow.ac.uk (see the post for 24 August).

ONLINE. 18-20 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (The Tolkien Society). *New dates*. £30 'per connection' for all events; Tolkien Society members £20. More details at www.tolkiensociety.org/events/oxonmoot-online/.

ONLINE. 2-4 Oct • **Futuricon** (Rikon/Eurocon); original venue was Rijeka, Croatia. €10 reg; €5 supp; under-14s free. See futuricon.eu.

ONLINE. 7-11 Oct • **Grimmfest** (horror/cult films); original venue was Odeon Manchester Great Northern. See grimmfest.com.

ONLINE. 9-11 Oct • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. Free virtual event. See www.comicartfestival.com.

ONLINE. 16-18 Oct • **The Ineffable Con 2** (*Good Omens*). Guests include Neil Gaiman, Rob Wilkins. £25 reg. See theineffablecon.org.uk.

POSTPONED AGAIN. 17 Oct • **Bedford Who Charity Con**: see below. 22-25 Oct • **Celluloid Screams** (horror films), Showroom Cinema, Sheffield. £90; £85 concessions. Still on, according to twitter.com/sheffhorrorfest, though celluloidscreams.co.uk is seriously broken.

POSTPONED. 24 Oct • **Whooverville 12** (*Doctor Who*): see below. CANCELLED. 7-8 Nov • **Edge-Lit 9**, QUAD Centre, Derby.

19 Mar 2021 • **Futurefest** (futurology), Tobacco Dock, London. 10am-10pm as usual? 'If you are a current ticket holder, we'll be in touch.' 2021 ticket sales awaited at www.futurefest.org.

10 Apr 2021 • **Bedford Who Charity Con** (*Doctor Who*), The King's House, Ampthill Road, Bedford, MK42 9AZ. *New date; 2020 tickets refunded or carried over*. 10am-5:30pm. £42.50 reg; under-19s/students £22.50; under-14s £15. More at bedfordwhocharitycon.co.uk.

4 Sep 2021 • **Whooverville 12** (*Doctor Who*), QUAD Centre, Derby, DE1 3AS. *New date*. Tickets £50; concessions £33; online booking at www.derbyquad.co.uk/whats-on/events/whooverville-12.

19-22 Aug 2022 • **Discworld Convention**, Hilton Metropole, Birmingham NEC. *New dates*. £85 reg, £60 concessions. See dwcon.org.

Rumblings. *Worldcon 2023*. The bid committee for Memphis, Tennessee – opposed only by Chengdu, China – announced that owing to the 'increasingly mixed' reaction to the Retro Hugos they don't plan to award

1948 Retros for 1947 work. The next 1948 opportunity is in 2048. • *Surrey Steampunk Convivial* (Epsom), normally thrice yearly but not held this July, may just possibly take place on 10-11 October: developments are awaited at bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivals. • *Whitby Goth Weekend*, cancelled in April, remains unsure about its own hoped return in October. See www.whitbygothweekend.co.uk.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. From a story about the COVID-19 era: 'Life as he – and everybody else on the planet – had known it had been replaced, seemingly overnight, with some pulp-science-fiction approximation of itself.' (John Wray, 'Barcelona: Open City', *New York Times*, 12 July) [MMW] • On a writing workshop held by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: 'Many students in the workshop loved science fiction, but she thought sci-fi was childish, because anything could happen.' (Larissa MacFarquhar, *New Yorker*, 4/11 June 2018) [MMW]

Awards. *Gollancz/Rivers of London BAME*: 'The Principles of Moments' by Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson. • *The James White Award* for short stories by new writers will not be presented this year, owing to both pandemic and website problems. • *Seiun* for translation into Japanese: *The Three-Body Problem* by Liu Cixin (trans. Nozomi Ohmori, Toya Tachihara, Sakura Mitsuyoshi, Wan Zai) [F770] • *This Is Horror Awards* best novel: *The Bone Weaver's Orchard* by Sarah Read. • *World Fantasy Awards* novel shortlist: *Queen of the Conquered*, by Kacen Callender; *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* by Alix E. Harrow; *The Raven Tower* by Ann Leckie; *Gideon the Ninth* by Tamsyn Muir; *The Memory Police* by Yoko Ogawa (trans. Stephen Snyder).

Twinned with Innsmouth. News from a lake in Gosport: 'Over the weekend, those living in the area spotted hundreds of dead fish, including a local councillor.' (BBC, *South Today*, 16 August) [RJ]

R.I.P. *Raymond Allen* (1929-2020), US actor in *Fight That Ghost* (1946), died on 10 August aged 91. [LP] • *John Bangsund* (1939-2020), noted Australian editor and one of the greats of Aussie fandom, died from COVID-19 on 22 August; he was 81. From the Melbourne Age death notice by Sally Yeoland: 'John will always be remembered as the Australian ambassador for science fiction to the rest of the world, and as Toastmaster at Aussiecon Worldcon 1975. And also for *Australian Science Fiction Review*, *Scythrop*, *John W. Campbell: An Australian Tribute*, *Philosophical Gas*, *Parergon Papers* and many other fanzines, newsletter editor for the Victorian Society of Editors, Muphry's Law and Assistant Editor *Meanjin*.' Visiting him was a highlight of my only trip to Australia. Somewhere in Flann O'Brien territory, Keats and Chapman are in deep mourning and laying the groundwork for a dreadfully sombre pun. • *Chadwick Boseman* (1977-2020), US actor who was in *Gods of Egypt* (2016) and played T'Challa/Black Panther in *Captain America: Civil War* (2016), *Black Panther* (2018), and *Avengers: Infinity War/Endgame* (2018/2019), died on 28 August aged 42. [SG/LP] • *Richard Bright*, UK producer/director of arts documentaries including *Angela Carter: Of Wolves & Women* (2018) and *Paddington: The Man Behind the Bear* (2019), has reportedly committed suicide aged 51. [SJ] • *Elisar Cabrera* (1971-2020), UK film-maker and critic whose low-budget horror productions ran from *Demonsoul* (1995) to *The Tombs* (2019), died in early August aged 49. [AIP] • *Brent Carver* (1951-2020), Tony-winning Canadian actor whose films include *Millennium* (1989) and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1999), and who played Gandalf in the 2006 *Lord of the Rings* musical, died on 4 August aged 68. [AIP] • *Ben Cross* (1947-2020), UK actor whose many genre credits include *Paperhouse* (1988), *The Unholy* (1988), *Dark Shadows* (1991), *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1997), *The Invader* (1997), *Exorcist: The Beginning* (2004), *Species: The Awakening* (2007), *Hellhounds* (2009) and *Star Trek* (2009), died on 18 August aged 72. [SG] • *André-Paul Duchâteau* (1925-2020), Belgian author who created the long-running detective/fantastic comic *Ric Hochet* in 1955 (with artist Tibet) and scripted the dystopian sf series *Hans* (1980-2000), died on 26 August aged 95. [PDF] • *Kathleen Duey* (1950-2020), prolific US children's author whose work includes much fantasy – such as the 'Resurrection of Magic' series opening with *Skin Hunger* (2007) – died

on 26 June aged 69. [AIP] ● *Susan Ellison* (1960-2020), UK fan and convention-goer, business partner and widow of Harlan Ellison, and author of the 'Through the Lens' media column in *Aboriginal SF* 1988-1996, died on 3 August aged 60. ● *Leslie H. Freas* (1956-2020), twin sister of Linda Hamilton and her body double in *Terminator 2* (1991), died on 22 August aged 63. [MMW] ● *Rolf Gohs* (1933-2020), Estonian-born Swedish comics artist who created over 900 covers for the Swedish edition of *The Phantom*, died on 25 August aged 86. [PDF] ● *Billy Goldenberg* (1936-2020), US composer whose credits include *Circle of Fear* (1972-1973), *The Sixth Sense* (1972), *Frankenstein* (1986) and *Annabelle Comes Home* (2019), died on 3 August aged 84. [AIP] ● *P.M. (Pauline Margaret) Griffin* (1947-2020), US author of the 12-book 'Star Commandos' military sf series (1986-2004) and contributions to various Andre Norton series (some in collaboration with Norton), died on 10 August aged 73. [L] ● *Pete Hamill* (1935-2020), US journalist and author whose novels *Snow in August* (1997) and *Forever* (2003) have fantastic elements, died on 5 August aged 85. [PDF] ● *Paul Hammond*, UK artist, translator and historian whose books include *Marvellous Méliès* (1974) – first English-language study of the film-maker – has died aged 72. [AIP] ● *Neil Kaden* (1954-2020), US fanzine publisher, con-runner (chair of Ditto 13 in 2000) and contributor to various APAs, died on 28 August aged 66. [F770] ● *James Keast* (1957-2020), UK costume designer with genre credits for *Clash of the Titans* (1981), *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (1990) and *Arthur Conan Doyle's The Lost World* (2001), died on 11 July aged 63. [AIP] ● *Paul Knight* (1944-2020), UK tv producer with credits for *Robin Hood* (1984-1985) and *Stanley's Dragon* (1994), died on 16 August aged 76. [AIP] ● *Linda Manz* (1961-2020), US actress whose films include *The Game* (1997), died on 14 August aged 58. [PDF] ● *Bob March*, who in the title role hosted the sf-themed Californian children's tv programme *Captain Satellite* (1958-1968), died on 8 March. [PDF] ● *Andrei Moscovit* (pseudonym of Igor Markovich Efimov, 1937-2020), Russian-born US author whose sf novel is *The Judgement Day Archives* (1982; trans 1988), died on 12 August aged 83. [AM] ● *Elaine Moss*, UK author, critic and publisher's reader of books for children – who wrote some fantasy and a 1961 children's abridgement of *Gulliver's Travels* – died in August aged 96. [AIP] ● *Lori Nelson* (1933-2020), US actress in *Revenge of the Creature* (1955), *Day the World Ended* (1955) and *The Naked Monster* (2005), died on 23 August aged 87. [LP] ● *Svetozar Obradović* (1950-2020), Serbian comics writer who worked on *Tarzan* and co-created the Serbian titles *Cat Claw* and *Kobra*, died on 15 August aged 69. [PDF] ● *Tom Pollock* (1943-2020), US producer whose credits include *Evolution* (2001, plus two animated spinoffs) and *Ghostbusters* (2016), died on 1 August aged 77. [MMW] ● *Roberta Jane Pournelle* (1955-2020), US fan and convention-goer, widow of Jerry Pournelle, who had published nonfiction in *Analog*, died on 2 August aged 65. ● *André Ptaszynski* (1953-2020), UK theatre producer whose credits include the musicals *Return to the Forbidden Planet* (1990), *Matilda* (2011) and *Groundhog Day* (2016), died on 29 July aged 67. [AIP] ● *Allan Rich* (1926-2020), US actor in *The Archer: Fugitive from the Empire* (1981), *Highlander II: The Quickening* (1991) and *Rise: Blood Hunter* (2007), died on 22 August aged 94. [MMW] ● *Jean Rosenthal* (1923-2020), French publisher and translator of English-language fiction who translated Isaac Asimov ('Foundation' trilogy), Clifford D. Simak (*City, as Demain les chiens*), A.E. van Vogt and many others, died on 26 August aged 97. [PDF] ● *Joe Ruby* (1933-2020), US producer and writer who co-created *Scooby-Doo* and whose credits include *Planet of the Apes* (1974 tv), *Bigfoot and Wildboy* (1977-1979) and *Rumpelstiltskin* (1995), died on 26 August aged 87. [AIP] ● *Renì Santoni* (1939-2020), US actor in *Manimal* (1983), *Radioactive Dreams* (1985) and *Doctor Dolittle* (1998 plus sequel), died on 1 August aged 81. [PDF] ● *Gillian White* (1945-2020), UK author whose psychological thrillers beginning with *The Plague Stone* (1990) sometimes hinted ambiguously at supernatural influences, died on 24 July aged 75. [AIP]

The Critical Heritage. *Warm Words Dept.*: 'You only need to read a handful of Cat Sparks's stories before you start feeling the need for some shade and a nice margarita.' (Gary K. Wolfe, *Locus*, August) [MMW] ● *Dept of Literary Precedence.* From an Amazon.com review of Sarah Hoyt's *Ill Met by Moonlight*: 'I don't like the title which reminds too much of *Fafhrd* and the Grey Mouse by Leiber.' (*sic*, 15 July) [GF]

Yo-Ho-Ho. The Ukraine-based ebook pirate website KISS Library was taken down following a US court's restraining order, requested by Penguin Random House, Amazon and various authors. (*Locus*, 22 August) No doubt they'll soon be back under a different name.

The High Castle. Fawcner, Australia (a suburb of Melbourne), can boast the world's second tallest skyscraper at 2,300 feet, an awesomely towering sight in a flattish urban area – at least when seen in Microsoft

Flight Simulator. This game takes its data from OpenStreetMap, where someone had accidentally or naughtily listed the building as having 212 storeys rather than its actual two. (*The Register*, 20 August)

Voices Propheying War. As you well know, Professor... the dangerous, rabble-rousing, violence-iciting US demagogue in Octavia Butler's dystopian sf novel *Parable of the Talents* (1998, set in 2032) is particularly fond of the slogan 'make America great again'.

Random Fandom. *The Eye of Argon* saw its 50th anniversary on 26 August. [JM] Also overlooked in the August *Ansible* were the 35th anniversaries of the final UK *Silicon* and my first Hugo. ● *Fanac.org* has re-designed its archive of Worldcon publications at fanac.org/conpubs/Worldcon/. ● *Chris Garcia* and his family had to flee the wildfires threatening their North California home, and are living in hotels: there's a fannish fundraiser at www.gofundme.com/f/garciagatepinguins-need-a-new-home. [F770] ● *Ian Sorensen* brags: 'Sept 26th marks my 40th anniversary in fandom – I went to Hithercon 1 in Glasgow.'

As Others See Us II. 'The devastation of [Hurricane] Laura in Louisiana and Texas has felt "like a week out of a bad science fiction novel," one mayor said ...' (NBC-2.com, 28 August) ● On the return of the SpaceX astronauts: 'Fifty-one years ago, 63 percent of U.S. households watched at least some of Apollo 11's historic trip to the moon. Sunday's return, by contrast, mostly enthralled space geeks who've been planning to colonize Mars since they were old enough to read their first science fiction.' (Megan McArdle, *Washington Post*, 5 August) [MMW]

The Dead Past. *40 Years Ago*, Peter Roberts reported from the doomed UK SF Book Club: 'No, I'm not in charge of the SFBC. As you might have guessed, *nobody* is.... All 10 Readers Union societies are run together, so I write copy for the SF newsletter along with the Sports, the Gardening *et al.*... Look out for overuse of the word "eldritch" and other hallmarks of Roberts copywriting.' (*Ansible* 12, September 1980) ● *20 Years Ago*: 'Piers Anthony's web newsletter contains a shock revelation that the controversial rape episode in *Lord Foul's Bane* stemmed from Stephen R. Donaldson's having been gang-raped 60 times in prison in 1973, leading to his death from AIDS in 1996. A little research shows that PA has confused "our" still-living Donaldson with an entirely different one.' (*Ansible* 158, September 2000) 'The *New York Times* makes a careful and pointed distinction in its 23 August article on writers who retire, which mentions Iain Banks's current sabbatical year in the wake of "a relentless writing schedule that has resulted in an annual novel or science fiction title for the last 16 years."' (*Ibid.*)

One of Us? A striking recent US obituary begins: 'Holly Blair exploded into glitter and bats on Aug. 17, 2020.' It goes on to say: 'Her future plans include drinking beer with Terry Pratchett and flying across the moon on her broomstick on Halloween.' (Twitter, 31 August)

Editorial. The latest from *Ansible Editions* is *The Jonbar Point* by Brian Aldiss, at last collecting his two long essays from *SF Horizons* in the mid-1960s, with a new introduction by Chris Priest. Read all about it at ae.ansible.uk/?t=jonbar (and don't forget the recent *Puff Love* by John Sladek: ae.ansible.uk/?t=pufflove). ● The 'Complete BoSh' project to collect all Bob Shaw's fan writing as free TAFF ebooks concludes with *Slow Pint Glass*, a vast (167,000 words) compendium of material outside the scope of *The Serious Scientific Talks* and *The Full Glass Bushel*. Though Rob Jackson and I still hope to add a few minor, hard-to-find items, it's time to release this third volume: taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Shaw3.

Publishers and Sinners. Head of Zeus announced its new 'high-concept SF' imprint, innovatively called Ad Astra (11 August). [L]

Thog's Masterclass. *Parlour Games Dept.* '... dark-blue eyes straying towards the window whenever he tried to catch them ...' (John Dickson Carr, *Dark of the Moon*, 1967) [BA] ● *A Villain Gloats Over Her Captive.* 'It is a species of boa constrictor [...] This particular boa is very fond of detectives, having developed that taste, from the fact that fate made it possible for him to swallow four in the last two years.' (David H. Keller, 'The Menace', *Amazing Stories Quarterly*, July 1928) ● *Philosopher's Reversible Stone Dept.* 'We finally were able to take a piece of the synthetic gold and shoot a special X-ray at it over half a mile and, pop, it would turn back to lead.' (*Ibid.*) ● *Neat Tricks.* 'Her mental jaw dropped at prince Bifalt's willingness to concede.' 'If lines marked his face, they were obscured by his short, blond beard.' (both Stephen R. Donaldson, *The War Within*, 2019) [AR] ● *Dept of Sensual Simile.* 'I looked at her breasts jutting against the soft fabric of her dress, nipples like split infinitives.' (Max Byrd, *Fly Away Jill*, 1981)