



Ansible® 400 November 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, 1980s. Available for SAE or notes on the correct use of salt and sea-kelp and gold.

The Intelligence Gigantic

J.G. Ballard's bibliographers had an October Surprise regarding an ITV novel adaptation: 'JG Ballard's Empire trilogy (of which *The Singapore Grip*, 1978, is the final part) in fact uses piercing satire to mock the British colonials and the commercial exploitation of the colonies.' (Chris Kelt, Letter of the Week, *Radio Times*, 17-23 October) [DG]

Alfred Bester is no longer safe for work: when Gully Foyle's famous line 'Vorga, I kill you filthy' was quoted in an M.R. James discussion group, Facebook threatened the administrators with shutdown. [RP]

Beth Meacham, long-time editor at Tor Books, announced that she is retiring at the end of this year – although the temptations of future freelance/consultancy work cannot be ruled out. (Facebook, 7 October)

N.K. Jemisin is one of the 2020 recipients of the MacArthur Foundation's \$625,000 'genius' fellowship grants. (Tor.com, 6 October)

Roger Penrose was awarded a half-share of the 2020 Nobel Physics Prize for his influential 1965 paper on black holes, 'Gravitational Collapse and Space-Time Singularities'. Fans will remember his sf credentials as co-author with Brian Aldiss of *White Mars* (1999).

J. Michael Straczynski is annoyed by rumours, supposedly direct from the executor's mouth, about Harlan Ellison's estate. ('Didja hear? All of Harlan's stories and IP have been sold to Paramount for next to nothing to pay off debts!') He explained: 'I am the Executor of the Harlan and Susan Ellison Trust. [...] Everything that Harlan ever owned, did or wrote will be fiercely protected.' (Facebook, 16 October)

Contrafibularity

PARTLY ONLINE. 2-8 Nov • **Talos IV**: SF Theatre Festival of London, The Cockpit, London. See www.cyborphic.com/talos-2020.

ONLINE. 5 Nov • **Virtual First Thursday**, 6-10pm, replacing the usual London pub meeting. See tinyurl.com/uow6hqn.

ONLINE. 6-8 Nov • **Armadacon 2020**; former venue Future Inns, Plymouth. See www.armadacon.org.

ONLINE. 14-15 Nov • **Punctuation**, UK, via Discord, Zoom and other platforms. £5 reg; see punctuationcon.uk. Bring your own semicolons.

POSTPONED AGAIN. 28-31 Jan 2021 • **ChillerCon UK** (horror), Grand & Royal Hotels, Scarborough. *New dates awaited*. See chillercon-uk.com and in particular chillercon-uk.com/coronastatement.htm.

18-21 Mar 2021 • **Eurocon 2021**, Fiuggi, Italy. €50 reg; see eurocon2021.it for hotel booking packages with registration included.

SOLD OUT. 18-21 Mar 2021 • **Camp SFW** (was Sci-Fi Weekender), Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth. See www.scifiweekender.com.

ONLINE/HYBRID. 2-5 Apr 2021 • **Confusion** (Eastercon), notional venue Birmingham NEC Hilton. 'We do not see how an "in person only" convention will be possible by Easter of 2021, but we are continuing to make plans to allow those who want to be there in person to be able to attend if the guidelines change to the point where this will be permitted.' (8 October) Online reg £50; concessions £30. See confusion2021.uk.

11-14 Nov 2021 • **Camp SFW**, Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth. Adult three-day pass £120 (Fri/Sat £99); for extras, camping and accommodation packages see www.scifiweekender.com.

7-10 Apr 2022 • **LuxCon** (Eurocon), Luxembourg. Further details and dedicated website awaited at www.facebook.com/LuxConvention/.

Rumblings. *Octocon 2021* (venue and exact October date TBA): upgradable supporting membership €20 from 2021.octocon.com; 2020 memberships automatically transferred. • *Eurocons*. Finland is bidding to hold the 2025 Eurocon in the Åland Islands as Archipelacaon II. [F770]

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Cite Us. 'Even parts of Washington, a family-minded place, could pass for a sci-fi film in which our species' reproductive knack has been unaccountably mislaid.' (*Financial Times*, 3 October) [MMW] • *US President's Election Rhetoric Summarized* by Rep. Denver Riggleman (R, Virginia): 'I just think we have jumped the shark, crossed the Rubicon, and now we're on the crazy train about to run into the ice cliffs that guard the flat earth.' (*Washington Post*, 15 October) [MMW] • *On the UK*

Prime Minister: 'He has created a sort of Covid Westeros, where local warlords rail and scheme against him, as do some of his own courtiers.' (Marina Hyde, *Guardian*, 16 October) [DA]

Awards. *Academy of British Cover Design* sf category: Alycia Raynaud/Jo Walker for *Dead Astronauts* by Jeff VanderMeer. [L] • *European SF Society Achievement*. ART Dublin 2019 Hugo bases. FICTION *Luna: Moon Rising* by Ian McDonald. DRAMATIC *Good Omens*. FANZINE *Journey Planet – A Half Pint of Flann*. FOR CHILDREN *The Invasion* by Peadar Ó Guilín. INTERNET PUBLICATION (tie) Irish Fandom Community Group on Facebook; *Fantascientificast*. • *European SF Society Hall of Fame*. ARTIST Sergey Shikin. AUTHOR Milena Benini. PUBLISHER L'Atalante. PROMOTER Cristina Jurado. MAGAZINE *Esensja*. TRANSLATOR Pilar Ramírez Tello. • *Starburst*: BRAVE NEW WORDS Nisi Shawl as editor of *New Suns: Original Speculative Fiction by People of Color*. HERO Jenni Hill, senior commissioning editor at Orbit Books. • *Theodore Sturgeon Memorial* (short): 'Waterlines' (*Asimov's* 7/19) by Suzanne Palmer. • *World Fantasy*: NOVEL *Queen of the Conquered* by Kacen Callender. NOVELLA *Silver in the Wood* by Emily Tesh. SHORT 'Read After Burning' by Maria Dahvana Headley. ANTHOLOGY *New Suns* edited by Nisi Shawl. COLLECTION *Song For the Unraveling of the World* by Brian Evenson. ARTIST Kathleen Jennings. SPECIAL/PROFESSIONAL *Ebony* Elizabeth Thomas for *The Dark Fantastic*. SPECIAL/NON-PROFESSIONAL the editors of *Fafnir – Nordic Journal* ...

Headline of the Year. 'Escaped cloned female mutant crayfish take over Belgian cemetery'. (*Telegraph*, 26 October, via nzherald.co.nz)

Publishers and Sinners. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt has decided to discontinue its sf/fantasy imprint John Joseph Adams Books, says JJA himself: 'We've still got several books forthcoming, and those will still be published, but nothing new beyond those, alas.' (Facebook, 7 October)

As Others Grudgingly Acknowledge Us. 'Which writers [...] do you admire most?' *David Byrne*: 'Some of Ted Chiang's stories, which might be called science fiction....' (*New York Times*, 8 October) [JB]

R.I.P. *Karen Babcock* (1964-2020), US con-goer, freelance editor/proofreader and acquisitions editor for Double Dragon Publishing, died on 21 October. [SHS] • *Brian N. Ball* (1932-2020), UK author whose many sf novels included his debut *Sundog* (1965), *Timepiece* (1968) and *Night of the Robots* (1972, aka *The Regiments of Night*), died on 23 July aged 88. [RR] • *Dana Baratta* (1961-2020), US tv writer/producer with credits for *Warehouse 13* (2009-2010), *The Secret Circle* (2011-2012) and *Jessica Jones* (2015), died on 18 October aged 59. [SHS] • *Ed Benguiat* (1927-2020), US typographer and typeface designer whose fonts and logos feature in *Planet of the Apes*, Stephen King's 1980s novels, two *Star Trek* films and *Stranger Things*, died on 15 October aged 92. [PDF] • *Rachel Caine* (Roxanne Longstreet Conrad, 1962-2020), US author of many fantasy and sf novels since *Stormriders* (1990), died on 1 November aged 57. • *Chris Carnel* (1963-2020), US stuntman and fight arranger whose many films include *Spider-Man* (2002), *Iron Man* (2008), *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (2014) and *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014), died on 5 October aged 57. [SJ] • *Marge Champion* (1919-2020), US dancer and choreographer who was the model for Disney's *Snow White* (1937), *Blue Fairy* (*Pinocchio*, 1940) and others, died on 21 October aged 101. [PDF] • *Sir Sean Connery* (1930-2020), utterly famous and multiple award-winning Scots actor in seven James Bond films – with many more genre credits including *Zardoz* (1974), *Time Bandits* (1981), *Highlander* (1986), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) and *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2003) – died on 31 October aged 90. • *Richard De Croce*, former BBC America VP and executive producer of four documentaries about *Doctor Who* (2009-2010) plus *The Real History of Science Fiction* (2014), died on 18 October aged 53. [GVG] • *Gianni Dei* (1940-2020), Italian actor in *The Seventh Grave* (1965), *Sex of the Witch* (1973), *Sex, Demons and Death* (1975) and *Patrick Still Lives* (1980), died on 19 October aged 79. [SJ] • *Debra Doyle* (1952-2020), US author of much sf/fantasy with her husband James D. Macdonald since 1988, died on 31 October aged 67. [F770] • *Robert Eighteen-Bisang*, Canadian scholar, collector and anthologist of vampire literature whose books include the Ruthven-winning *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula* (2013, with Elizabeth Miller), died on 29

September aged 73. [GVG] ● *Edward S. Feldman* (1929-2020), US producer whose genre films include *Honey, I Blew Up the Kid* (1992) and *The Truman Show* (1998), died on 2 October aged 91. [SHS] ● *Conchata Ferrell* (1943-2020), US actress in *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), *Teen Angel* (1997-1998), *Modern Vampires* (1998) *K-PAX* (2001), *Krampus* (2015) and others, died on 12 October aged 77. [AIP] ● *Rhonda Fleming* (1923-2020), US actress in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1948) and *The Nude Bomb* (1980), died on 14 October aged 97. [PDF] ● *Janet Freer*, whose own literary agency represented various *New Worlds* authors in the 1960s (Disch, Ellison, Moorcock, Priest) and whose later clients at MBA included Le Guin and McCaffrey, died in October; she was 89. (*Guardian*, 11 October) ● *David Gale* (1955-2020), US children's book editor who worked with many genre authors during his 25 years as editorial director of the Simon & Schuster Young Readers imprint, died on 9 October aged 65. [PDF] ● *Gerald Gardner* (1929-2020), US screenwriter for *Get Smart* (10 episodes 1965-1967) and *The Magnificent Magical Magnet of Santa Mesa* (1977), died on 12 October aged 91. [SJ] ● *Jacques Godin* (1930-2020), French-Canadian actor in *Dans une galaxie près de chez vous 2* (2008), died on 26 October aged 90. [SHS] ● *Arvinder Grewal*, US production designer/art director whose genre credits include *eXistenZ* (1999), *Land of the Dead* (2005) and *Resident Evil: Afterlife* (2010), died on 22 October. [SHS] ● *Al Kasha* (1937-2020), US composer and songwriter with genre credits for *Freaky Friday* (1976), *Pete's Dragon* (1977), *Mystery Science Theater 3000* (1992-1997) and *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1998), died on 14 September aged 83. [MMW] ● *Pamela Kosh* (1930-2020), UK actress whose credits include *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1992, 1994) and *Superman vs. The Elite* (2012), died on 21 October aged 90. [SJ] ● *Len Lakofka* (1944-2020), US game designer and writer involved in the development of *Dungeons & Dragons*, died in October. [PDF] ● *Bob Laurent*, US filk fan who published the songbook *Save the Wails* and founded Consonance and the Interfilk Fan Fund, died on 14 September; his wife *Lindy Laurent* (née Sears, 1956-2020), filk convention runner, committed suicide on 25 September. [SHS] ● *Richard (Dick) Lupoff* (1935-2020), US author, publisher, Edgar Rice Burroughs scholar and long-time fan whose co-edited fanzine *Xero* won a 1963 Hugo and whose first novel was *One Million Centuries* (1967), died on 22 October aged 85. Comics-related essays from *Xero* formed the core of *All in Color for a Dime* (1970), co-edited with Don Thompson. [SE] ● *Martin McKenna* (1969-2020), UK artist for various small-press magazines – winning a 1995 British Fantasy Award – and Games Workshop's *White Dwarf*, *Warhammer*, etc., died in early September. Books include *Digital Fantasy Painting Workshop* (2004). [SJ] ● *Armelia McQueen* (1952-2020), US actress in *Ghost* (1990), *Adventures in Wonderland* (1992) and others, died on 4 October aged 68. [SJ] ● *Tom Maschler* (1933-2020), German-born UK publisher of many authors as literary director and chair of Jonathan Cape 1960-1988 – including Kingsley and Martin Amis, J.G. Ballard, Roald Dahl, John Fowles, Ian McEwan, Gabriel García Márquez, Philip Roth and Salman Rushdie – died on 15 October aged 87. (*The Bookseller*, 16 October) ● *Chris Meadows*, US sf/games/comics fan, contributor and former editor at *Telereads.org*, and author of *The Geek's Guide to Indianapolis* (2015), died on 12 October aged 47. [F770] ● *Clark Middleton* (1957-2020), US actor in *Fringe* (2008-2013), *Snowpiercer* (2013) and *Twin Peaks* (2017), died on 4 October aged 63. [HB] ● *Margaret Nolan* (1943-2020), UK model and actress in *Goldfinger* (1964), *After Many a Summer* (1967), *Dracula* (1968), Spike Milligan's *The World of Beachcomber* (1968-1969) and *Toomorrow* (1970), died on 5 October aged 76. [MMW/SH] ● *Jill Paton Walsh* (1937-2020), UK author who published several genre novels including the prehistoric-sf *Toolmaker* (1974) and the timeslip fantasy *A Chance Child* (1978), died on 19 October aged 83. (BBC, 19 October) [LW] ● *Mykola Petrenko* (1925-2020), Ukrainian poet and playwright whose huge output included fairy tales, died on 10 October aged 95. [PDF] ● *Stephen Prickett* (1939-2020), UK academic and critic, long-time president of the George MacDonald Society, whose books include *Victorian Fantasy* (1979; expanded 2005), reportedly died in October. [PM-R] ● *Tommy Rall* (1929-2020), US dancer and actor who played the werewolf in *Saturday the 14th Strikes Back* (1988), died on 6 October aged 90. [SJ] ● *James 'The Amazing' Randi* (1928-2020), Canadian magician and escapologist who applied his skills to debunking paranormal claims – for example in *Flim-Flam!* (1980) – and published short sf in *Omni* and *Destinies*, died on 20 October aged 92. [LP] ● *Gene Reed*, US comics fan, convention-goer and Grand Comics Database indexer, died in September. [SR] ● *Ryszard Ronczewski* (1930-2020), Polish actor in *The Two Who Stole the Moon* (1962) and *The Saragossa Manuscript* (1965), died on 17 October aged 90. [SHS] ● *Murray Schisgal* (1926-2020), US

producer of *The Devil's Arithmetic* (1999, based on Jane Yolen's timeslip novel), died on 1 October aged 93. [SHS] ● *Keith Short* (1941-2020), UK sculptor/modeller whose work appeared in many genre films from *Aliens* (1979), *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) and *Return of the Jedi* (1983) to *Prometheus* (2012), died on 11 September aged 79. [AIP] ● *George J. Steiner Jr.* (1952-2020), founding president of the now defunct Film-works New Orleans, who had crew credits in *Ender's Game* (2013), *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* (2014) and *Terminator Genisys* (2015), died on 25 September aged 68. [AIP] ● *David Toole* (1964-2020), noted double-amputee UK dancer and actor whose stage credits include *The Fall of the House of Usher* (2000) and *They Only Come at Night: Resurrection* (2012), died on 16 October aged 56. [AIP] ● *Kent L. Wakeford* (1928-2020) US cinematographer for *Doctor Death: Seeker of Souls* (1973), *Last Lives* (1997), *The Shadow Men* (1997) and others, died on 10 October aged 92. [SHS] ● *Frank Windsor* (1928-2020), UK actor in *A for Andromeda* (1961) and the *Doctor Who* storylines 'The King's Demons' (1983) and 'Ghost Light' (1989), died on 30 September aged 92. [JM]

The Weakest Link. *Jeopardy* answer (category 'The World is Not Enough') requiring the correct question: 'In a Larry Niven novel, a motley crew of explorers travel to this ribbon-like "world" that encircles a star.' *Contestant*: 'What is Discworld?' (8 October) [AIP]

Court Circular. Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman filed a lawsuit against Wizards of the Coast on 16 October for cancelling their new Dragonlance fantasy trilogy, allegedly breaching the contract 'in stunning and brazen bad faith'. (Epicstream.com, 19 October) They feel they have suffered damages 'believed to be in excess of \$10 million'.

The Dead Past. *20 Years Ago*: 'Uri Geller is suing Nintendo for "hundreds of millions of dollars" over the Pokémon monster "Yun Geller", who wields a spoon, "uses psychic mind-waves to give his victims bad headaches", and worst of all has not only lightning bolts on his chest which are obviously SS insignia, but a forehead star which can only be the Star of David! "Nintendo turned me into an evil, occult Pokémon character ... Nintendo stole my identity by using my name and my signature image of a bent spoon."' (*Ansible* 160, November 2000) The (five-pointed) star and three-wavy-lines symbols are from the Zener ESP testing cards; still, this character hasn't appeared in anime since 2005.

● *97 Years Ago*, a word whose original invention was later disputed: 'by an ingenious arrangement of hidden wires the artful Muggles had contrived ...' (Ernest Bramah, *The Eyes of Max Carrados*, 1923)

Fanfundery. *TAFF*: in view of pandemic uncertainties, the next westbound race from Europe to a Worldcon will be to Chicon 8 in 2022 rather than DisCon III in 2021 (taff.org.uk). It's hoped that 2020 winner Michael Lowrey can make his delayed eastbound trip before then.

Editorial. Paul Barnett (John Grant) and I had been talking idly about an ebook of our extremely tasteless horror spoof *Guts* (2001), but he died in February. With the kind permission of Pam Scoville, this is now available from the Ansible Editions site: ae.ansible.uk/?t=guts. ● Proof copies of the new Langford collection *Beachcombing* are awaited.

Random Fandom. *Jim Barker* was deeply thrilled to be the cover-featured artist – and subject of a 12-page interview inside – for the October issue of *The Jester*, magazine of the Cartoonists' Club of Great Britain. ● *The Return of Hyper Comics* (Thintwhistle Books, 2020, ISBN 9798645729363) is a substantial collection of graphic weirdness by the great Steve Stiles, largely assembled by himself before his death.

Thog's Masterclass. *Anatomy Dept.* 'He had gotten hold of a knife somewhere and had it clenched firmly between his teeth. If he bumped into a tree, he would slit his own throat ...' (Gary K. Wolf, *Who Censored Roger Rabbit?*, 1981) [BA] ● *Obvious Once You Know.* 'There is scarcely a man in this class who has not heard of how Professor P222D29333-Male accidentally stumbled upon the scientific fact that the effect of gravity is reversed upon any body which vibrates perpendicularly to the plane of the ecliptic with a frequency which is an even multiple of the logarithm of 2 of the Naperian base "e".' (Harry Stephen Keeler, "John Jones's Dollar", 1915) ● *When Relativity Goes Bad.* 'The ship trembled, twisted, shuddered as full mass returned with the disruption of the field. Mass flooded back into the vessel, titanic mass, mass impossible to contain, it transformed into sheer energy, blasted through the nulgrav generator and poured from there into outer space.' (Volsted Gridban, *Planetoid Disposals Ltd.*, 1953) [BA] ● *Neat Tricks.* 'I scratched my head, internally ...' (Conrad Williams, *Loss of Separation*, 2010) [DB]

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