

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 information on the precise expiry date of summer's lease.

CONVERSATION, the 2023 UK Eastercon, took place in the Birmingham NEC Hilton despite the best efforts of a rail service fraught with line closures and cumbersome replacement buses. 900+ members, with nearly 800 physically present. ● **BSFA Awards**: NOVEL Adrian Tchaikovsky, *City of Last Chances*. YOUNGER READERS Frances Hardinge, *Unraveller*. SHORTER Aliette de Bodard, *Of Charms, Ghosts and Grievances*. NON-FICTION Rob Wilkins, *Terry Pratchett: A Life with Footnotes*. ARTWORK Alyssa Winans, cover for *The Red Scholar's Wake* by Aliette de Bodard. ● **Overheard** (mostly from the Discord server): 'It's a sign of the times – the con has drunk the hotel dry of non-alcoholic beers.' – Tony Keen. 'Favourite subtitle so far: "I should buy copies for my nibblings" (i.e. nephews and nieces) was rendered as "I should buy copies for my nipple rings".' – Michael Abbott. Also the livestreamed BSFA Awards were subtitled as the infinitely more fannish Beer Survey Awards. [CP] ● **Eastercon 2025**: despite the ominous intrusion of a joke bid, 'Catastrophe' run by cats, the Belfast 'Reconnect' bid was an easy winner and takes Eastercon to Northern Ireland for the first time ever. See below. ● **Doc Weir Award**: Claire Brialey. ● **Fan Funds**: the auction raised £1,733, and the tombola plus other sales and donations a further £360+. [GS/CB] ● **Covid Watch**: many positive tests were reported by attendees during and soon after the con. The final figure must be well over 100, with 96 reports – some for 'entire household' – on Discord alone a week later.

The Darling Buds of May

Angela Bassett of *Black Panther* fame, **Neil Gaiman** and **Salman Rushdie** are all in *Time's* list of the most influential people of 2023 – as a Titan, an Artist and an Icon respectively. [AIP]

Jorge Luis Borges's estate and copyrights are in the news again after the death on 26 March of his widow Maria Kodama, who despite fiercely protecting his memory since he died in 1986 seems to have made no will. Five of her nephews very soon went to court, claiming ownership of all the valuable rights and manuscripts. (AP, 6 April) [PDF]

Avram Davidson's centenary on 23 April was celebrated with the release of a new collection and (for five days only) three free ebooks including *The Avram Davidson Treasury*. See avramdavidson.com.

Fonda Lee has been alerted by a reader to one of publishing's happy little surprises in her fantasy novel *Jade War*, where 'instead of chapters 13-15, there are 31 pages of *A New World Begins: The History of the French Revolution* by Jeremy D. Popkin'. (Twitter, 3 April)

Fiona Moore was Noticed by *QI*: 'This year, the "Non-Fiction" category of the British Science Fiction Association Awards included a business book titled *Management Lessons from Game of Thrones: Organization Theory and Strategy in Westeros*.' (*QI* on Facebook, 17 April)

James D. Nicoll mused on blobby art: 'WHAT MODERN ARTIST CAN MATCH RICHARD POWERS' "STARING AT A LAVA LAMP WHILE ON LSD" OR "STARING AT A DIFFERENT LAVA LAMP WHILE ON LSD"?' (Facebook, 2 April)

Convocant

10-12 May ● **GIFcon 2022** (Glasgow University online conference), 'Boundaries and Margins'. See tinyurl.com/472fpk3c.

13-14 May ● **Steampunk Fairytale**, Belvoir Castle, Grantham. Tickets £40; under-17s £15; family (2 adults, up to 3 children) £55; carers £20. See www.belvoircastle.com/castle-book-tickets/.

16 May ● **Tolkien Lecture** by Maria Dahvana Headley, Pichette Auditorium, Pembroke College, Oxford. 6pm. See tolkienlecture.org.

20-21 May ● **HorrorCon UK**, Magna, Sheffield. Weekend tickets £45 (11am entry) or £55 (10am entry); more at horrorconuk.com.

26-28 May ● **Satellite 8**, Crowne Plaza, Glasgow. Now £75 reg; under-25s £60; under-18s £20; under-12s £5; under-5s £2. Rates are valid to 22 May and may rise thereafter. See eight.satellitex.org.uk.

27-28 May ● **Lawless** (UK comics), Hilton Doubletree, Bristol. Tickets £70 or £35/day. See lawlesscomiccon.co.uk.

27-28 May ● **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivials.

31 May - 6 Jun ● **Sci-Fi London** (film festival); multiple London venues including Picturehouse Central. See sci-fi-london.com; showings

listed and individually ticketed at sci-fi-london.com/2022-info/ [sic].

2-4 Jun ● **Cymera SF Festival 2023**, Edinburgh and online. Week-end pass £80, or £50 digital only. See www.cymerafestival.co.uk.

2-4 Jun ● **Jodiworld** (Jodi Taylor), Doubletree by Hilton, Coventry. £70 reg; £10 supp; see www.jodiworld.org.

3-4 Jun ● **Portsmouth Comic Con**, Guildhall, Portsmouth. *Weekend tickets now £28*. For day rates see portsmouthcomiccon.com.

8-11 Jun ● **Konflikt** (Eurocon), Uppsala, Sweden. €60 or 600 SEK reg; under-26s free but must register. See eurocon2023.wordpress.com.

10-11 Jun ● **EM-Con** (media), Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham. Week-end tickets £30 (11am entry) or £40 (10am) at www.em-con.co.uk.

2-5 Feb 2024 ● **Scotiacon** (furry), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. 'Prehistoric Panic' theme. Details awaited at www.scotiacon.org.uk.

29 Mar - 1 Apr 2024 ● **Levitation** (Eastercon), Telford International Centre. £115 reg (may rise on 1 June); £50 concessions; £35 supporting; all memberships include virtual access. See eastercon2024.co.uk.

8-12 Aug 2024 ● **Glasgow 2024**, Glasgow SEC. £170 reg; concessions £125; YA (under 26) £110; under-16s £75; under-11s £45; under-6s £5. *These rates rise on 1 May 2023: £190 full adult reg; unconverted 'Friend' memberships will be downgraded to virtual-only, raising the cost of conversion to full attending status from £45 to £95*. See glasgow2024.org.

18-21 Apr 2025 ● **Reconnect**, Hilton Lanyon Place Hotel and ICC, Belfast. GoH Lauren Beukes, Derek Landy, Ian McDonald ('bar GoH'), Jeannette Ng, Rebecca Roanhorse, William Simpson. £60 reg; £45 under-18s and concessions; £25 supporting membership only. *These rates will rise at the end of May*. See easterconbelfast.org.

Rumblings. *Science Museum*: the sf exhibition closing date has been extended from 4 May to 20 August. See news.ansible.uk. [SM] ● *Hugo Nominations* close on 30 April. Many fans outside China complained of being unable to nominate owing to persistent Chengdu website problems.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Define Us. Rachel Weisz, star of the gender-swapped tv reworking of David Cronenberg's 1988 film *Dead Ringers*, is reassuring: "It's not sci-fi," Weisz says, discussing the scientific possibilities the story wades into, it's closer than that: "It's near-fi." (*Guardian*, 16 April) [RM]

More Awards. *Fanzine Activity Achievement (FAAn)*: SPECIAL PUBLICATION 1957: *The First UK Worldcon* ed. Rob Hansen. GENZINE Portable Storage. PERSONALZINE *This Here ...* LETTERHACK Jerry Kaufman. FANARTIST Ulrika O'Brien. COVER Alan White for *Beam* 17. FANWRITER (tie) Justin E A Busch and Nic Farey. PAST PRESIDENT OF fwa: John D. Berry and Nigel Rowe, 2022; Keith Freeman, 1959. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT Rob Hansen. ● *Philip K. Dick: The Extractionist* by Kimberly Unger. ● *LA Times Ray Bradbury Prize* for sf/fantasy: *Spear* by Nicola Griffith. ● *Prometheus* (libertarian) finalists: *Widowland* by C.J. Carey, *Cloud-Castles* by Dave Freer, *Captain Trader Helmsman Spy* by Karl K. Gallagher, *A Beast Cannot Feign* by 'Dr. Insensitive Jerk' (Gordon Hanka), *Summer's End* by John Van Stry. ● *Seiun* (Japan): finalists for the best translated novel of 2022 reportedly include Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series, translated by Yasuko Kaji. ● *SFWA Infinity Award* (new posthumous Grandmaster): Octavia E. Butler.

Messing with the Mouse. In his late-night HBO show *Last Week Tonight*, John Oliver tweaked Disney's tail by adopting the original Mickey Mouse character from *Steamboat Willie* – due to fall out of copyright on 1 January 2024 – as a show mascot. Will to see what happens: 'we do like to take a risk every now and then.' (*Deadline.com*, 2 April) [AIP]

R.I.P. *Harry Belafonte* (1927-2023), US singer and actor seen in *The World, the Flesh and the Devil* (1959), *The Angel Levine* (1970) and *White Man's Burden* (1995), died on 25 April aged 96. [SG/LP] ● *Gennadi Bogachyov* (1945-2023), award-winning Russian actor whose credits include *Chudesnoe yabloko* (1988 animation) and *The Master and Margarita* (2005 mini-series), died on 25 April aged 78. [AW] ● *Bill Butler* (1921-2023), US cinematographer whose films include *Deathmaster* (1972), *Demon Seed*, (1977), *Omen II* (1978) and *Child's Play* (1988), died on 5 April aged 101. [LP] ● *Larry Card* (1940-2023), long-time US convention-goer and member of First Fandom, died on 14 April. [JC] ● *Michael Denneny* (1943-2023), pioneering US editor of gay and lesbian fiction and of the

magazine *Christopher Street*, who at St Martin's Press edited two Joanna Russ story collections and *Battlefield Earth*, was found dead at home on 15 April; he was 80. [GVG] ● **Frank Dobson**, UK comics fan and dealer who founded the first British comics adzine, *Fantasy Advertiser*, in 1965 and published 31 issues before handing over to others, died on 31 March. His 1975-1979 London shop was *Weird Fantasy*, later becoming *Dez Skinn's Quality Comics*. [SH] ● **Mike Foster** (1947-2023), US academic, Tolkien scholar and Mythcon regular, died on 12 April. [F770] ● **Yevhen Gulevych**, Ukrainian editor and 'culturologist' who translated Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, was killed fighting at Bakhmut, perhaps as long ago as December. [F770] ● **Lee Harding** (1937-2023), Australian author active in fandom from the early 1950s and publishing professionally from 1961, died on 18 April aged 86. [JHW] He won the Australian Children's Book of the Year Award for *Displaced Person* (1979), two Ditmars, and the 2006 Chandler award for life achievement. ● **Barry Humphries** (1934-2023), Australian actor, author, director and script-writer famed for very much more than his credits in *Bedazzled* (1967), *Howling III* (1987), *Finding Nemo* (2003) and *The Hobbit* (2012), died on 22 April aged 89. ● **Al Jaffee** (1921-2023), US comics artist best known for contributions to *Mad* (including the famous 'fold-ins'), whose 1942-2020 comics career holds the Guinness World Record for longevity, died on 10 April aged 102. Genre collections include *Mad Monstrosities* (1974). [LP] ● **Michael Lerner** (1941-2023), US actor in *Godzilla* (1998 tv), *Tale of the Mummy* (1998), *Elf* (2003) and *X-Men: Days of Future Past* (2014), died on 8 April aged 81. [AIP] ● **Denny Lien** (1945-2023), Minneapolis fan, librarian, collector, worker on many Minicons and contributor to many APAs, died on 15 April aged 77. [MW] He was a valued contributor to the Fictionmags discussion list; his research skills were a great help to Ansible Editions book projects. ● **Carol Locatell** (1940-2023), US actress in *Friday the 13th V* (1985), died on 11 April aged 82. [LP] ● **John Mansfield**, long-time Canadian fan who co-founded the Ontario SF Group in 1966 and chaired the 1994 Worldcon in Winnipeg, died on 19 April. [F770] ● **Murray Melvin** (1932-2023), UK actor in *Ghost Story* (1973), three *Starhunter* series (2000-2018), *Torchwood* (2007) and others, died on 14 April aged 90. [AIP] ● **Kenzaburo Oe** (1935-2023), Nobel-winning Japanese author, some of whose work uses genre themes, died on 3 March aged 88. [L] ● **Anne Perry** (born Juliet Hulme, 1938-2023), historical mystery author who also wrote the fantasies *Tathea* (2000) and *Come Armageddon* (2002), died on 10 April aged 84. [LP] ● **Rachel Pollack** (1945-2023), US author and Tarot expert whose first novel was *Golden Vanity* (1980), died on 7 April aged 77. Her *Unquenchable Fire* (1988) won the Arthur C. Clarke Award, and *Godmother Night* (1996) the World Fantasy Award; she created the first transgender comics superhero while writing *Doom Patrol* for DC 1993-1995. [SHS] ● **Duane Earl Poole** (1948-2023), US screenwriter with credits for *Electra Woman and Dyna Girl* (1976), *Smurfs* (1981), *Return to the Batcave* (2003), *Angel in the Family* (2004) and others, died on 1 April aged 74. [AIP] ● **Norman Reynolds** (1934-2023), US production designer and art director who shared Oscars for his work on *Star Wars* (1977) and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), died on 6 April aged 89. Other credits include *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), *Return of the Jedi* (1983) and *Bicentennial Man* (1999). [AIP] ● **Joseph Ross** (*Wrzos*) (1929-2023), managing editor of *Amazing* and *Fantastic* 1965-1967, editor of *The Best of Amazing* (1967) and worker on Arkham House projects, died on 7 April aged 93. He entered the First Fandom Hall of Fame in 2016. [BNM] ● **Ryuichi Sakamoto** (1952-2023), Oscar-winning Japanese composer with credits for *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990), *Wild Palms* (1993) and an episode of *Black Mirror* (2019), died on 28 March aged 71. [CL] ● **Kate Saunders** (1960-2023), UK author whose fantasies include the six-book 'Belfry Witches' series opening with *A Spell of Witches* (1999), and the E. Nesbit homage *Five Children on the Western Front* (2014), died on 21 April aged 62. [AIP] ● **Jerry Springer** (1944-2023), US talk show host and actor in *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me* (1999) and *Sharknado 3* (2015), died on 27 April aged 79. [LP] ● **Leo D. Sullivan** (1940-2023), US animator who worked on *Flash Gordon* (1979-1982), *BraveStarr* (1987-1988), *The Incredible Hulk* (1996) and many more, died on 25 March aged 82. [AIP] ● **Klaus Teuber** (1952-2023), German board game designer who four times won the Spiel des Jahres (Game of the Year) with *Barbarossa* (1988), *Settlers of Catan* (1995) and others, died on 1 April aged 70. [MR] ● **Viktor Tchinov** (1966-2023), Russian horror author whose 38 novels since 2003 include some sf, died on 13 April. [AM] ● **Richard Ng Yiu-Hon** (1939-2023) Hong Kong actor in *Mr Vampire 3* (1987), *Spooky, Spooky* (1988), *Gambling Ghost* (1991) and others, died on 9 April aged 83. [K]

Court Circular. 'Demetrios Polychron', author of the Middle-earth fan fiction novel *The Fellowship of the King*, is suing Amazon and the Tolkien estate for \$250 million on the basis that much of the *Rings of*

Power tv series is plagiarized from his book – allegedly copyrighted in 2017 yet not published until September 2022 when the series began to air. A smoking gun: *Rings of Power* features a hobbit or Harfoot called Elanor, as does the fan fiction, where Elanor is Sam Gamgee's daughter. The fact that said daughter appears in Tolkien's own *The Return of the King* (1955) is seemingly not relevant. (Radar & Kotaku, 17 & 21 April) One commentator paraphrased the detailed court filing as: 'Here's my annotated list of everything I plagiarized from Tolkien, that Amazon is using without MY permission!' (@TolkienGuide, Twitter, 18 April)

Random Fandom. *First Fandom*, following the death of its last original member Bob Madle (1920-2022), has voted by an 'overwhelming majority' to reorganize under a new name. (*Scientifiction* 75)

As Others Left It to Us. 'The only other thing I wish to say about this collection is that, as far as I know, it contains no references to juvenile delinquency, the atomic bomb, supersonic flight, Miss Marilyn Monroe, or any of the other phenomena peculiar to our times. This may easily lead a good many readers to suppose that I died several years ago, probably in the explosion of the first electric icebox, but the truth is that these subjects are just a little beyond my range. I am content to leave them all, including Miss Monroe, to the science-fiction writers.' (Wolcott Gibbs, introducing his book *More in Sorrow*, 1958)

Outraged Letters. D.M. Sherwood writes: 'You could mention the reason I've missed the last three Novacons is a nervous condition at the base of the spine which means I can only walk five or six steps.'

The Dead Past. 30 Years Ago, some 1993 Eastercon memories: 'Brian Aldiss said he managed to remain placid even when the *Independent* reporter asked him if he also wrote as Harry Harrison. / Iain Banks, deprived of heights to scale, instead crawled around under the carpet of the hotel bar. / John Jarrold was elected President of World SF but explained that he wasn't there at the time and knew nothing about it.' (*Ansible* 70, May 1993) ● 60 Years Ago, a new recruit was welcomed to the sf canon: *The Tin Drum*, the new German superman story by Günter Grass, has been chosen as an alternate selection by the Book of the Month Club. Harry Warner says the hero is a combination of Paul Bunyan, Baron Munchausen, Sparky Watts and the devil.' (Ron Elik, *Starspinkle* 12, May 1963) ● 80 Years Ago, Benson Herbert wrote his own blurb for *Strange Romance*: 'The cover is snappy, being in erotic purple (i.e. the shade of purple said to stimulate the erotogenic centres), deals with lovers in different dimensions (very awkward for them), with bits of interplanetary wars, fights between he-men, those funny old rays, stock monsters, enough gadgets to fill a children's store and mental conflicts between patriotism and the Higher life.' (*Futurian War Digest*, May 1943)

Fanfundery. *European Fan Fund*: the inaugural race is over with 33 valid votes cast, and the winner is Matylda Naczyńska, who will travel to this year's Eurocon – Konflikt in June. [MK] ● **TAFF**: Sandra Bond won by a clear majority (81 of the 137 valid votes cast) and will travel to Pemmi-Con, the July NASFiC in Winnipeg: 'I'm gearing up to enjoy the distinction of being the only ever westbound candidate not to attend a Worldcon!' [FKMJL] Sue Mason released her 2000 TAFF trip report as *Into the Wide Purple Yonder: A Fan Artist in America*, available for £5 in PDF or as a print edition (postage extra) from the publisher, Alison Scott. ● **TAFF Ebooks**: a new addition at taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?all is Jacq Monahan's 2012 TAFF report *Same Planet Different World*. ● **Corfu Craic** auctions and publication sales raised over £1,200 for various funds. [CB]

Chog's Masterclass. *Bowels of the Earth*. 'To a restless man on a train, America becomes only a ribbon stretching from his window to the hilltops or the horizon ... the roads leading like intestines into the hills.' (Frederic Wakeman, *The Hucksters*, 1946) ● *Sometimes A Dawn Is Just A Dawn*. 'They rode on and the sun in the east flushed pale streaks of light and then a deeper run of color like blood seeping up in sudden reaches flaring planewise and where the earth drained up into the sky at the edge of creation the top of the sun rose out of nothing like the head of a great red phallus until it cleared the unseen rim and sat squat and pulsing and malevolent behind them.' (Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian*, 1985) [LP] ● **Cold Truth Dept.** 'The cold was endless, especially when the temperature dropped.' (Stephanie Kraner, 'A Father's Hand', May/June 2021 *F&SF*) [ND] ● **Never Let It Go.** 'She gave a small cry of satisfaction, then quickly grabbed it up and sped down the dirt path ...' (Harold S. Sykes, 'The Ancient Ones', July 1950 *Super Science*)

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