

Ansible



Ansible® 431 June 2023

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, Harzan's Monograph or the Incantation of Raaeee.

The Moving Fur Case

Stephen Baxter was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Open University on 31 March for 'Services to the Arts and Sciences': that is, his 'extraordinary contribution to science fiction writing'. [PM-R]

Neil Clarke's struggle against a barrage of AI submissions at *Clarkesworld* continues. The cover of issue 200 (May 2023) was criticized as AI-generated and hastily replaced with a 'No AI' logo; *Clarkesworld* and the unnamed artist – who'd signed a contract including 'a statement that the work was not generated or assisted' – have decided without further comment 'to go our separate ways'. (Twitter.com/clarkesworld, 1-2 May)

Carrie Fisher (1956-2016) was at last honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on, of course, May the Fourth. [F770]

Mark Hamill has recorded voice messages in character as Luke Skywalker for a Ukrainian air-raid warning app. The all-clear goes: 'The alert is over. May the Force be with you.' (*The Verge*, 29 March) [GF]

Mike Moorcock on resurgent daft claims that 'Shake Spear' is an obvious pseudonym: 'Clearly More Cock is another invented name. One person could not have written so many books!' (Facebook, 16 May)

SFWA sends a worried release about the future of the Nebula conference, increasingly subsidized by SFWA itself to cover rising costs across the board. The May 2023 conference may perhaps be the last: 'Because there is absolutely nothing left in our funds to pass on to future events.' Donations are urgently requested at sfwa.org/donate. (Email, 4 May)

Concessible

Until 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/2023-info/.

Until 11 Jun • **Gerry Anderson's Century 21**, Cartoon Museum, London. Adults £9.50. See www.cartoonmuseum.org/whatson.

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

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

3-4 Jun • **Portsmouth Comic Con**, Guildhall, Portsmouth. Weekend tickets £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. Weekend tickets £30 (11am entry) or £40 (10am) at www.em-con.co.uk.

17 Jun • **BSFA & SF Foundation AGMs** as part of online sf event. Zoom/agenda links emailed to BSFA members in late May; Foundation members should request links from [grahamsleight\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:grahamsleight[at]gmail.com).

24 Jun • **Leicester Horror Con**, Guildhall, Leicester. £6.66 reg; under-10s free (tickets 'very limited'). See linktr.ee/leicesterhorrorcon.

24-25 June • **The Town That Never Was** (steampunk), Blists Hill, Telford. Further details at www.ministryofsteampunk.com.

27 Jun • **An Outsider in the City** (on Colin Wilson), Century Club, London. 7pm. Tickets £12. See acuriousinvitation.com/colinwilson.html.

2 Jul • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, Leeds Hilton and online. Free. See www.tolkienociety.org/events/seminar-2023/.

30 Jul • **Paperback & Pulp Book Fair**, Holiday Inn Bloomsbury, Coram St, London WC1N 1HT. 9:30am-3pm. £3 admission. Combined with the Bloomsbury Ephemera Fair; see etcfairs.com/ephemera-fairs/.

5 Aug • **Small Press Day**, all UK. See smallpressday.co.uk.

25-28 Aug • **Asylum-XII** (steampunk), The Lawns and other Lincoln venues. £45 reg; sales and day rates at www.ministryofsteampunk.com.

2 Sep • **Whooverville 14** (*Doctor Who*), QUAD Centre, Derby. Tickets £55; concessions £38; under-12s £10; book at www.derbyquad.co.uk/Whooverville14. (Former website now seething with malware.)

21-22 Oct • **Film & Comic Con Cardiff**, International Arena, Cardiff. Weekend £16; £32 for early entry. See filmandcomicconcardiff.com.

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

6 Apr 2024 • **Bedford Who Charity Con** (*Doctor Who*), King's House, Amphill Road, Bedford, MK42 9AZ. 10am-5:30pm. Guests TBA; tickets 'available soon' at bedfordwhocharitycon.co.uk.

20-21 Apr 2024 • **Sci-Fi Scarborough** (multimedia), The Spa, Scarborough. £30 reg; students £20; 'kids' £10. See scifiscarborough.co.uk.

2-5 Aug 2024 • **Discworld Convention**, Birmingham NEC Hilton. Prices to be announced at 2024.dwcon.org.

8-12 Aug 2024 • **Glasgow 2024**, Glasgow SEC. Now £190 reg; concessions/Scots residents/first Worldcon £140; YA (under 26) £120; under-16s £80; under-11s £50; under-6s £5. These rates good to 30 September 2023; virtual memberships available January 2024. See glasgow2024.org.

16-19 Aug 2024 • **Erasmuscon** (Eurocon), Rotterdam, Netherlands. €125 reg. Online registration is open at www.erasmuscon.nl.

18-21 Apr 2025 • **Reconnect**, Hilton Clayton Place Hotel and ICC, Belfast. £60 reg; £45 under-18s and £25 supporting only. Rates rise postponed from 1 June to 2 July. See reconnectbelfast.org.

Rumblings. *The Ray Bradbury Experience Museum* (2017-2023) in his home town Waukegan, Illinois, closed down in May. (Facebook, 26 May)

• **Eurocon 2026**: the team that ran the recent Metropolcon (Berlin, May) now plans a Berlin bid with a likely date of late May or June 2026. [DH]

Infinitely Improbable

Our New AI Overlords. Researchers into ChatGPT and its underlying GPT-4 large language model confirmed the notion that it's all based on fuzzy plagiarism – with a special fondness for sf/fantasy: 'GPT-4 was found to have memorized titles such as the *Harry Potter* children's books, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the *Hunger Games* books, *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *A Game of Thrones*, and *Dune*, among others.' (*The Register*, 3 May) [KF] • One 'Sci-fi author' using ChatGPT and Midjourney brags of creating 97 heavily illustrated stories in nine months, earning 'nearly \$2,000' from 574 sales. O brave new world, that has such people in it. (*The Register*, 22 May) • Mark Lawrence's Self-Published Fantasy Blog-Off competition is dropping the cover art category after the 2023 winner – by Sean Mauss for M.V. Prindle's *Bob the Wizard* – was identified as AI-generated despite the artist's strenuous denials. (Blogspot and Twitter, 27-28 May) [F770]

As Others Feel Us. On Chie Hayakawa's film *Plan 75*: 'The downplayed presentation sells the concept as something more tangible than science fiction.' (*The Movie Waffler*, May 2023) [JonC]

Royal Alt-History Masterclass. The first to be crowned in the Abbey was Norman the Conqueror.' (Christiane Amanpour, CNN) [PE]

Awards. *British Book Awards* (*Nibbies*): FICTION *Nobel* by R.F. Kuang. CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATED *Tyger* by SF Said and Dave McKean. FREEDOM TO PUBLISH Salman Rushdie. • *Horror Writers Association Lifetime Achievement*: Elizabeth Massie, Nuzo Onoh and John Saul. • *HWA Specialty Press*: Undertow Publications. • *International Booker Prize*: *Time Shelter* by Georgi Gospodinov. • *Nebulas*: NOVEL *Nobel* by R.F. Kuang. NOVELLA *Even Though I Knew the End* by C.L. Polk. NOVELETTE 'If You Find Yourself Speaking to God, Address God with the Informal You' by John Chu (*Uncanny* 7-8/22). SHORT 'Rabbit Test' by Samantha Mills (*Uncanny* 11-12/22). YA/MIDDLE GRADE *Ruby Finley vs. the Interstellar Invasion* by K. Tempest Bradford. DRAMATIC *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. GAME WRITING *Elden Ring*. • *Peabody* (media) entertainment category: *Andor*. • *Kurd Laßwits Preis* (Germany) for best foreign novel: *The Galaxy and the Ground Within* by Becky Chambers. [L]

Science Corner. 'First animal to appear on Earth identified – and its ancestors are now aquarium favourites' (*Sun* headline, 17 May) [RJ]

R.I.P. *Ed Ames* (1927-2023), US actor in *Androcles and the Lion* (1967), *Cricket on the Hearth* (1967), and genre tv series, died on 21 May aged 95. [LP] • *Martin Amis* (1949-2023), noted UK author whose best-known genre venture is the time-reversed novel *Time's Arrow* (1991), died on 19 May aged 73. [JC] Other books played with near future and alternate history tropes; he also scripted the sf film *Saturn 3* (1980). Jim Linwood reminisces: 'I remember the 11-year old Martin running up and down the stairs in the 1961 Gloucester Eastercon hotel where his father, Kingsley, was GoH.' • *Kenneth Anger* (1927-2023), US experimental/

underground film-maker whose short works are often fantasy-themed – e.g. *Lucifer Rising* (1972) – died on 11 May aged 96. [LP] ● *Lev Askerov* (1940-2023), Azerbaijani author writing in Russian whose 15 books include four sf novels, died on 30 April. [AM] ● *John Beasley* (1943-2023), US actor in *The Gift* (2000), *Lost Souls* (2000), *The Purge: Anarchy* (2014), *Sinister 2* (2015) and others, died on 30 May aged 79. [SJ] ● *Helmut Berger* (1944-2023), noted Austrian actor with genre roles in *Dorian Gray* (1970), *Faceless* (1988) and *Timeless* (2016), died on 18 May aged 78. [AIP] ● *Bard Bloom*, US co-creator of the *World Tree* role-playing game whose novels in that setting include *A Marriage of Insects* (2007), died on 29 April aged 60. [RB] ● *Jim Brown* (1936-2023), US footballer and actor in *The Running Man* (1987), *Mars Attacks!* (1996) and *Small Soldiers* (voice, 1998), died on 18 May aged 87. [SG/LP] ● *Barbara Bryne* (1929-2023), UK actress in *Into the Woods* (1987 Broadway), *Two Evil Eyes* (1990) and *The Neverending Story* (1995-1996 tv), died on 2 May aged 94. [LP] ● *Marty Cantor* (1935-2023), long-time Los Angeles fan, APA-L contributor, publisher of fanzines including *Holier Than Thou* (1979-1998; three Hugo nominations) with his then wife Robbie Cantor (now Bourget) and *No Award* (1991-2008), died on 29 April aged 88. He and Robbie won DUFF in 1985. [F770] Another old pal gone. ● *Maths Claesson* (1959-2023), Swedish fan active for over 40 years – producing fanzines, attending cons, being a driving force of the Swedish SF Bookstore (and its second CEO) and publishing a well received juvenile sf trilogy 2014-2018, died on 18 May aged 64. [J-HH/B] ● *Marlene Clark* (1937-2023), US actress in *Cobra Woman* (1972), *Son of Blob* (1972), *The Beast Must Die* (1974), *Black Mamba* (1974) and others, died on 18 May aged 85. [SJ] ● *Peter Day* (1927-2023), UK visual effects designer who worked on several genre series including *Doctor Who* (51 episodes 1967-1977) and *The Goodies* (19 episodes 1975-1976), died on 13 March aged 95. [AIP] ● *Sergey Dreyden* (1941-2023), Russian actor who starred in the fantasy comedy *Window to Paris* (1993) and in *Russian Ark* (2002) died on 8 May aged 81. [AM] ● *Warren Hammack* (1934-2023), US actor in *The Eye Creatures* (1967), *Zontar: The Thing from Venus* (1967) and *Mars Needs Women* (1968), died on 13 February aged 88. [LP] ● *Terrence Hardiman* (1937-2023), UK actor who starred in *The Demon Headmaster* (1996-1998 plus spinoff film), with other genre credits including *The Worst Witch* (1998-2001) and *Fishtales* (2007), died on 8 May aged 86. [AIP] ● *Karen Kelly* (1966-2023), Cambridge UK fan, con-goer and committee member of Follycon (Eastercon 1988) and two Unicons, died on 24 May aged 57. [K] ● *Gary Kent* (1933-2023), US actor, stuntman and stunt co-ordinator with credits for *The Mighty Gorga* (1969), *Dracula vs. Frankenstein* (1971), *The Incredible 2-Headed Transplant* (1971), *Bubba Ho-Tep* (2002) and others, died on 25 May aged 89. [SG/LP] ● *Mikhail Khleborodov* (1967-2023), Russian director, screenwriter and producer whose film *Paragraph 78* (2007) is sf, died on 5 May aged 56. [AM] ● *Sergey Kolesnikov* (1955-2023), Russian actor in *Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War II* (2009, Russian dub) and *Land of Legends* (2022), died on 29 April aged 68. [AM] ● *Jerry Lapidus* (1948-2023), US fan active since the 1960s with many APA contributions (most recently to Slanapa), died on 19 April. [DGG] ● *Ralph Lee* (1935-2023), US mask and puppet designer who created the 'Land Shark' that ate *Saturday Night Live* cast members in the 1970s, died on 12 May aged 87. [AIP] ● *Angus McAllister* (1943-2023), Scots author of *The Krugg Syndrome* (1988) and other sf novels, died on 18 April aged 79. [JS] ● *George Maharis* (1928-2023), US actor in *The Satan Bug* (1965), *Death in Space* (1974), *The Sword and the Sorcerer* (1982) and *Doppelganger* (1993), died on 24 May aged 94. [LP] ● *Lisa Montell* (1933-2023), Polish-born US actress in *World Without End* (1956), *Daughter of the Sun God* (1962) and others, died on 7 March aged 89. [SJ] ● *Russ Nicholson*, UK fantasy artist who contributed to the early *White Dwarf* and illustrated many Fighting Fantasy gamebooks – beginning with the first, *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* (1982) – and various *Warhammer* products, died in May. [GW] ● *Giovanni Lombardo Radice* (1954-2023), Italian actor – also as John Morghen – in *Cannibal Apocalypse* (1980), *City of the Living Dead* (1980) and other horror films, died on 27 April age 68. [SF°C] ● *John Refoua* (1964-2023), film editor for *Avatar* (2009 plus sequel), *Geostorm* (2017), *Transformers: The Last Knight* (2017) and others, died on 14 May aged 58. [AIP] ● *Gerald Rose* (1935-2023), UK illustrator of children's books including Carroll, Lear, Ted Hughes's *Nessie the Mannerless Monster* (1964) and several in Norman Hunter's 'Professor Branestawm' series, died on 5 May aged 87. [AIP] ● *Eileen Saki* (1943-2023), *MASH* actress whose genre films include *Meteor* (1979) and *Splash* (1984), died on 1 May aged 79. [AIP] ● *Inger Sandberg* (1930-2023), Swedish children's author whose works include *Laban the Little Spook* (1965, first of a long supernatural series illustrated by her husband Lasse Sandberg), died on 16 May aged 92. ● *Rickey Sheppard* (1953-2023), US fan and book

dealer, a charter member of the Western Kentucky University SF Society and a mainstay of Bowling Green Fandom, died on 28 April aged 69. [RL] ● *Ray Stevenson* (1964-2023), Northern Irish actor in *Punisher: War Zone* (2008), *Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant* (2009), *Thor* (2011 plus sequels), *Divergent* (2014 plus sequels) and genre tv series, died on 21 May aged 58. [LP] ● *Roger Taylor* (1938-2023), UK author of the 'Chronicles of Hawklan' fantasy sequence opening with *The Call of the Sword* (1988), died on 25 March aged 85. [MF] ● *Tina Turner* (1939-2023), noted US singer and actress in *Tommy* (1975), *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985) and *Last Action Hero* (1993), died on 24 May aged 83. [LP] ● *Ken Westbury* (1927-2023), UK cinematographer who worked on *The Man in the White Suit* (1951), *Adam Adamant Lives!* (1966) and various *Doctor Who* storylines (1966-1978), died on 28 April aged 96. [AIP]

Explication. They are called the Super Mario Bros, even though "Mario" is not their surname – like Dostoevsky inventing a videogame called *The Brothers Dimitri*. (Peter Bradshaw, *Guardian*, 4 April) [PE] ● **Pedantry Corner:** 'As any schoolboy knows, Mario IS the surname of Mario Mario and Luigi Mario, as confirmed by the creator, Shigeru Miyamoto, in 2015.' (Letters, *Private Eye*, 19 May)

Random Fandom. *Ahrvid Engholm* is crowdfunding a Swedish-language space opera award in honour of long-time author, editor and translator Bertil Falk, who was 90 in May. Details from spaceoperapriz [at] rocketmail.com. ● *Alva C. Rogers's* Cthulhu cover art for *The Acolyte* #9 (Winter 1945, ed. Francis T. Laney and Samuel D. Russell), was sold through Heritage Auctions on 25 April for \$25,000. [MW]

In Typo Veritas: Cheesecake Dept. 'Burroughs Bulletin ... The free fanzine devoted entirely to Edgar Rice Burroughs' looks.' (Rog Phillips, 'The Club House', January 1950 *Amazing Stories*) [CR]

Magazine Scene. Further markets which like *Clarkesworld* have announced a ban on AI-created submissions include *Uncanny Magazine* (Twitter, 21 May) and *The Dark* (Facebook, 23 May).

We Are Everywhere. Chuck Sullivan, developer of a Gaithersburg, Maryland, neighbourhood, namechecked *Star Trek* spaceships in Antares Drive, Intrepid Lane and Reliant Drive. "I'm a Trekkie." Chuck said. "They wouldn't let me do Spock Court, but they did allow me to do Tribble Way, which I was surprised at." (*Washington Post*, 31 May) [PL]

Fanfundery. TAFF: Ted White's collected editorials and reviews for *Amazing* and *Fantastic* during his decade as editor are now available as trade paperbacks – one for each magazine – with all proceeds to TAFF. Book pages are linked from his author page at ae.ansible.uk/?a=white. Free ebooks: the latest from Rob Hansen is *British SF Conventions Volume 1: 1937-1951*. Download page at taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=UKcons1. ● Sue Mason's TAFF report *Into the Wide Purple Yonder* costs £5 as a PDF; £5 plus postage for the print edition. UK: £5 or £8 by Paypal to [eutaff\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:eutaff[at]gmail.com). USA: \$6 or \$15 by Paypal to [taff\[at\]toad-hall.com](mailto:taff[at]toad-hall.com). Elsewhere, contact the eutaff address 'and we'll sort it out'. TAFF thanks FANAC for its \$100 'bounty' to the fund on publication of this report.

The Dead Past. *30 Years Ago*, Karl Edward Wagner wrote to *Ansible*: 'U fergot to mention that the highlight of the Author C. Burk Award Bash was when yer man stood up to say he wasn't going to make a speech and then spoke for seven hours nonstop, whilst we peons drank funny beers and only ten quid a bottle. Dave Carson and I found a dish of olives before passing out from boredom. We ate them. I had to tell Dave about the pits. The ones in the olives.' (*Ansible* 71, June 1993)

Thog's Masterclass. *Ripping Yarns.* 'He crushed her roughly against his doublet. Silk tore like the scream of a small animal.' (Janny Wurts, *Curse of the Mistwraith*, 1993) [AR] ● *Noise Level Dept.* 'Could Asandir close his ears, he would have.' (*Ibid*) [AR] ● *Very Like a Simile.* 'Dakar slapped the reins, swaddled like a vegetable in wet cloaks.' (*Ibid*) [AR] ● *Greasy Dept.* 'The city apothecaries fattened their purses on profits wrung from unguents.' (*Ibid*) [AR] ● *As Bear Traps Do.* '... a bear trap mouth that writhed, pursed, stretched, and compressed itself ceaselessly when he wasn't talking – which was most of the time.' (James P. Hogan, *Out of Time*, 1993) [BA] ● *Double Entendre.* 'In the end, the wedding went off without a hitch.' (Eric Flint, 1632, 2000) [BA] ● *Sequitur Dept.* 'With his light brown hair and blue eyes, Roland stood tall for his age.' (Raymond E. Feist, *Magician*, 1982) [AR] ● *Calendar-Fi.* 'Did you realize this is the driest November in sixteen and a half years?' (David E. Fisher, 'You Don't Make Wine Like the Greeks Did', April 1960 *Amazing Stories*) [CR]

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