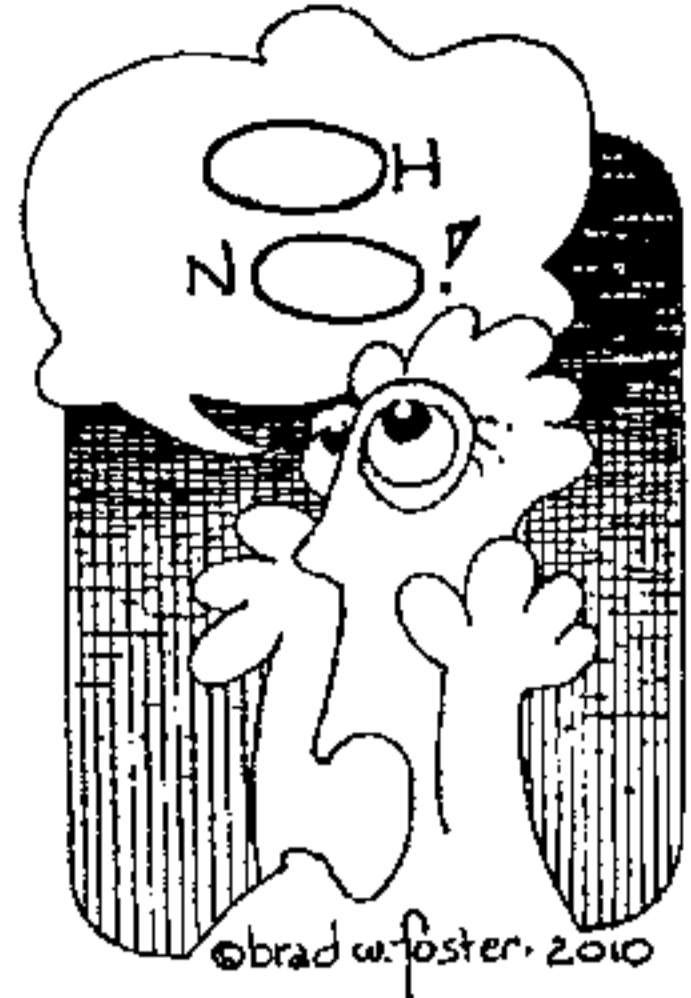


# Ansible



## Ansible 279 October 2010

From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Web news.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE, or full diagram of N, O and R pangas.

**Gosh.** I'd thought *Ansible's* award-winning days were over, and was stunned by the British Fantasy Award for 'Ansible Link' (the bimonthly *Interzone* digest) as best nonfiction. All thanks to the kindly voters.

### October's Frosts Fall Futilely

**Brian Aldiss** (Renaissance Man) scoffs at last month's issue: 'That's funny! You've missed the great news! It was in all the local papers. I now have a second career—as artist. An Aldiss artwork exhibition is now on in Oxford and will continue until the end of this month. I then have another exhibition showing elsewhere. Keeps you out of trouble, you know.' (5 September) But does this include *Ansible*-relevant images of spacehips and talking squid? Aldiss: 'Spaceships? Silly boy!'

**Stephen Baxter** is thrilled that 'some Czech biologists have named a new trilobite after my "Xeelee" books. The beast itself looks like a woodlouse (to me), is about a centimetre long, and apparently was a big cheese about 500 million years ago. "This is very important species with surprisingly very advanced features just very close to the origin of entire group," they say. Quite an honour! For me, I mean, not the trilobite.' From the 10 September paper: 'We place it tentatively in the genus *Mezzaluna* as a new species *Mezzaluna? xeelee* ... DERIVATIO NOMINIS: Xeelee—a legendary civilization of very advanced extraterrestrial beings forming a mainstay of excellent science-fiction sequence of Stephen Baxter.' (*Journal of the National Museum [Prague]*)

**Harlan Ellison** explained why MadCon (September) would be his last convention: 'The truth of what's going on here is that I'm dying ... I'm like the Wicked Witch of the West—I'm melting. I began to sense it back in January. By that time, I had agreed to do the convention. And I said, I can make it. I can make it.' Thus: 'This is gonna be the biggest fucking science-fiction convention ever, because no con has ever had a guest of honor drop dead while performing for the goddamn audience. The only comparison is the death of Patrick Troughton, at a Doctor Who convention. And I don't think he was even onstage.' Last wishes were expressed: 'My wife has instructions that the instant I die, she has to burn all the unfinished stories. And there may be a hundred unfinished stories in this house, maybe more than that. There's three quarters of a novel. No, these things are not to be finished by other writers, no matter how good they are. It could be Paul Di Filippo, who is just about the best writer in America, as far as I'm concerned. Or God forbid, James Patterson or Judith Krantz should get a hold of *The Man Who Looked for Sweetness*, which is sitting up on my desk, and try to finish it, anticipating what Ellison was thinking—no!' (*The Daily Page*, 23 September) [PDF] *Ansible* is happy to report that HE survived MadCon.

**Diana Wynne Jones** on the mysterious consequences of giving up chemotherapy: 'I am at present confounding medics by apparently getting better. Two of my most prominent growths have vanished away, much to the astonishment of doctors, who had so confidently expected me to be dead by now that they came and stuck enigmatic messages on my front door (like Passover in reverse) telling the morgue folk where the notes on me were. I'm wondering whether to peel the things off. Or is this Too Good to Last? Personally, I put this down to Red Wine. [*In short ...*] I am currently having a slow motion miracle. This strikes me as peculiar—but welcome.' (email, 15 September)

**Mazlan Othman**, Malaysian astrophysicist and head of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, is about to take up her new role as official UN First Contact Person for any visiting aliens. (News.com.au) [DKMK]

### Conspurge

9-10 Oct • **NewCon 5**, The Fishmarket, Northampton. Hotel: Park Inn. £45 reg; under-16s £30; £25 day. Contact 41 Wheatsheaf Road, Alconbury Weston, Cambs, PE28 4LF.

14-16 Oct • **Sci-Fi London Oktoberfest** (films, events): various London venues. See [www.sci-fi-london.com](http://www.sci-fi-london.com). 0871 220 6000.

16-17 Oct • **British International Comics Show**, Think Tank, Millennium Point, Curzon St, Birmingham, B4 7XG. 10:30am-5:30pm. £20 reg; £12/day. Contact info at [thecomicsshow.co.uk](http://thecomicsshow.co.uk).

16-17 Oct • **Octocon 2010**, Camden Court Hotel, Dublin. GoH George R.R. Martin. €40 reg; students/under-18s 30; 10 supp. Contact Apt 56 Shalimar, Monastery Rd, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Ireland.

23-24 Oct • **Unconvention** (Fortean), University of Westminster, 35 Marylebone Rd, London, NW1 5LS. 10am-5pm. £50 reg; £30/day. Booking at [www.forteanimes.com/uncon2010](http://www.forteanimes.com/uncon2010), or call 020 7907 6112.

25-30 Oct • **Close Encounters** (music/UFOs/space/sf film), Albert Hall, London. Films £14; some items free. <http://tinyurl.com/albertsf>.

27 Oct • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 6pm. Free. With N.K. Jemisin.

6 Nov • **BristolCon '10**, Ramada Hotel, Bristol. Programme 10.30am-6pm (provisional); informal evening stuff in bar. £20 reg; £25 at door. Cheques to 34 Dongola Road, Bishopston, Bristol, BS7 9HP.

6 Nov • **Other Worlds**, Derby Quad, Market Place, Derby. 1pm-4pm. With Peter F. Hamilton, others. £8 (£6 concessions): book at box office 01332 290606, or <http://www.derbyquad.co.uk/other-worlds>.

12-14 Nov • **ArmadaCon 22**, Royal Fleet Hotel, Plymouth. GoH Ben Morris, Terry Molloy, another TBA. £30 reg, £20 concessions. Contact 20 Pinewood Close, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon, PL7 2DW.

12-14 Nov • **Novacon 40**, Park Inn, Mansfield Road, Nottingham. £40 reg. Contact 379 Myrtle Rd, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

5-6 Feb 11 • **QED** (science/skeptics), Piccadilly Hotel, Portland St, Manchester, M1 4PH. £99 (students £75) via [www.qedcon.org](http://www.qedcon.org) only.

22-25 Apr 11 • **Illustrious** (Eastercon), Hilton Metropole, NEC, Birmingham. Added GoH: Roz Kaveney as Eastercon Poet Laureate. £55 reg, £30 under-25s/unwaged, £20 under-18s, £10 under-12s, £1 under-5s. Contact 4 Burnside Ave, Sheffield, S8 9FR. Hotel booking opened in September, when it was revealed that the announced room rates—£60 single, £50/person double or twin—do not include VAT and (with a rise from 17.5% to 20% due in January) will in fact be £72 and £60. Much online debate ensued. Illustrious plans a further meeting with the hotel, but staff members they formerly dealt with are on maternity leave....

17-21 Aug 11 • **Renovation** (69th Worldcon), Reno, NV, USA. Now \$180 reg; \$50 supp; \$100 under-21s; \$75 under-17s; under-7s free. Contact PO Box 13278, Portland, OR 97213-0278, USA.

**Rumblings** • *Dublin in 2014?* James Shields has a master plan to chair or co-chair a Dublin convention (which would bid to be that year's Eurocon) on the weekend after the hoped 2014 London Worldcon.

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us.** We are, it seems, rabid. On US conservatives and climate change: 'Some have embraced fantastical geo-engineering schemes—massive machines, for example, that suck carbon out of the sky—with the rabid certainty of a science-fiction nut.' (*New Republic*, 30 December) [MMW] On F. Gwynplaine MacIntyre's death: 'The F also stood for Froggy. That's what fans in the rabid science-fiction world on the Internet called him ...' (*New York Times*, 12 September) [MA]

**British Fantasy Awards.** NOVEL (August Derleth Award) Conrad Williams, *One*. NOVELLA Sarah Pinborough, *The Language of Dying*. SHORT Michael Marshall Smith, 'What Happens When You Wake up in the Night' (*Nightjar*). ANTHOLOGY *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror 20* ed. Stephen Jones. COLLECTION Robert Shearman, *Love Songs for the Shy and Cynical*. SMALL PRESS Telos Publishing. COMIC/GRAPHIC NOVEL Neil Gaiman & Andy Kubert, *Whatever Happened to the Caped Crusader?* ARTIST Vincent Chong. NON-FICTION David Langford, 'Ansible Link' (*Interzone* column). MAGAZINE *Murky Depths* ed. Terry Martin. TELEVISION *Doctor Who*. FILM *Let the Right One In*. NEWCOMER (Sydney J. Bounds Award) Kari Sperring, *Living With Ghosts*. SPECIAL (Karl Edward Wagner Award for outstanding contribution) Robert Holdstock.

**As Others Sex Us.** From a summary of critics' reactions to *Resident Evil 4*: 'Kim Newman from Empire gave it a C-. She stated, "What fun there is to be had is undermined by drab 3D, hacked-out dialogue and rehashed plots. [...]"' (*Ontheflix.com*, 10 September) [GW]

**R.I.P.** *Geoffrey Burgon* (1941-2010), UK film/tv composer who wrote music for two *Doctor Who* storylines (1975-1976), *Monty Python's Life*

of Brian (1979) and the BBC Narnia adaptations (1988-1990), died on 21 September; he was 69. [MPJ] • **Tony Curtis** (1925-2010), major and much-loved US actor whose genre films—all minor—include *The Manitou* (1978), *BrainWaves* (1983), *Lobster Man from Mars* (1989), *The Mummy Lives* (1993) and *Stargames* (1998), died on 29 September aged 85. [HB] • **Harold Gould** (1923-2010), US tv actor with genre credits for *Twilight Zone*, *Green Hornet*, *The Invaders*, *Lois & Clark*, the reprised *Outer Limits*, *Touched by an Angel* and *Freaky Friday* (2003 remake), died on 11 September; he was 86. [SJD] • **Kevin McCarthy** (1914-2010), long-time US actor whose best-known role was in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), died on 11 September aged 96. [NV] • **Jennifer Rardin** (1965-2010), US author of the 'Jaz Parks' CIA assassin/vampire hunter sequence beginning with *Once Bitten, Twice Shy* (2007), died on 20 September; she was only 45. [PDF] • **Glenn Shadix** (1952-2010), US actor in Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice* (1988), *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (voice, 1993) and *Planet of the Apes* (2001), died on 7 September aged 58. [SG] • **E.C. Tubb** (1919-2010), long-time UK sf author and fan—always known as Ted—died on 10 September; he was 90. His first story (for *New Worlds*) and first of over 130 novels (*Saturn Patrol* as by King Lang) both appeared in 1951; he was a founder member of the British SF Association in 1958 and edited the first issue of the BSFA's *Vector*; his best-known space opera series, the Dumarest saga, ran to 33 volumes 1967-2009. He kept writing until the last: even now, further novels are scheduled. [PH] A longer appreciation by Phil Harbottle appears in this issue's online supplement. • **Ralph Vicinanza** (1950-2010), US agent whose New York agency Ralph Vicinanza Ltd represents many genre authors including Stephen Baxter, Joe Haldeman, Stephen King, Terry Pratchett, Peter Straub and Connie Willis, died unexpectedly on 26 September, aged 60. [L] He is credited as producer on various adaptations of clients' work: *Jumper*, *FlashForward* and the forthcoming *The Forever War* and *The Wee Free Men*.

**As Others See Us II.** Amanda Tapping, star and co-exec producer of the Canadian tv sf series *Sanctuary*, realizes that talking squid in outer space *may not be necessary*: 'When I read it I didn't actually think of it as sci-fi, I thought of it more as a graphic novel kind of feel to it. But I think the parameters of sci-fi have been so blown open, you know, we're not just in space any more. It's anything that defies imagination or steps outside and forces you to think about things that maybe aren't real, fits within that outside-the-box thinking.' (DVD feature) [DVB]

**ALA Banned Book Week.** The easily outraged of America are moving with the times: although *Guardian* coverage led off with the traditional photo of Kurt Vonnegut, the only fantastic work in the American Library Association's latest top-ten list of 'frequently challenged' books is Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series. 'Reasons: religious viewpoint, sexually explicit, unsuited to age group.' That heavily emphasized no-sex-before-marriage message was just too subtle.

**TV Choice Awards 2010.** A couple of BBC genre winners: *Ashes To Ashes* as best drama and *Doctor Who* as best family drama. [MPJ]

**Point of Agreement.** Margaret Atwood and Ursula K. Le Guin debated sf in Portland, OR, on 23 September, with Atwood introducing a whole new theory that sf (space squid etc.) descended from Wells while speculative fiction (Atwood) descended from Verne, and fantasy from, er, Tennyson. *Atwood, later*: 'What about *Star Wars*?' *Le Guin*: 'There have been really few science fiction movies. They have mostly been fantasies, with spaceships.' (*Space Canon* blog, 24 September)

**Dickless Google.** A report on terms blacklisted by Google Instant Search (the annoying feature that lists potential search results even as you type) reveals that although entering 'Philip K. Dick' gives a promising range of hits, adding a space causes the whole list to vanish for fear of Offensive Results. With 'Philip Kindred Dick', this vanishment happens when you type the R... ([www.2600.com/googleblacklist](http://www.2600.com/googleblacklist)) [ej]

**Outraged Letters.** *Charlie Stross* shares an all too familiar artistic experience: 'My editor at Ace just emailed me the art department's idea of a cover for *Rule 34*. / My reply was along the lines of: "You know it's set in Scotland? Handguns are illegal here. Also: policewomen don't usually wear red leather corsets on duty ..."'

**More Awards.** *First Fandom Hall of Fame*: Terry Jeeves, Joe Martino; also Ray Cummings (posthumous). • **Norma K. Hemming** (exploration of race, gender, class, sexuality): the late Maria Quinn, *The Gene Thieves*. • **William Atheling Jr.** (criticism or reviewing): Helen Merrick, *The Secret Feminist Cabal: A Cultural History of Science Fiction Feminisms*. • **A. Bertram Chandler** (sf achievement in Australia): Damien Broderick. • **Peter McNamara Achievement Award**: Janeen Webb.

**Salon Futura.** Cheryl Morgan's online nonfiction magazine about sf and related genres launched in September: [www.salonfutura.net](http://www.salonfutura.net).

**Blurb Masterclass.** Found on the back of a 1983 edition of Poul Anderson's *Mirkheim*: 'Everybody knows that Poul Anderson is one of the best: they're wrong—he's better!' (Jerry Pournelle) [PM]

**Biting the Bullet.** Some of us are not ashamed. *Interviewer*: 'A lot of readers who don't normally go for sci fi—me included—read your books. Does that please you?' *China Miéville*: 'It can't possibly not! It's really nice to feel that you're not talking just to one particular audience but my only caveat to that is, while it's very flattering and nice to hear people say that, I myself have a lot of love and respect for the tradition that I come out of and I would not want to be seen as someone who's trying to distance himself from that tradition because I think it's a tradition that has been many things to be proud of about it and without that tradition I don't think that I would be a writer at all. What I would hope is that [reading my books] might also be a kind of gateway into that tradition.' (*Christian Science Monitor*, 10 September) [SG]

**Random Fandom.** *Rob Hansen* represented fandom at Ted Tubb's funeral in Hither Green on 22 September: 'About ten people showed up—all family except for me, so far as I could tell—and it was the quickest funeral I've ever been to, thanks to there being no hymns or any religious content at all. It was mostly just Ted's granddaughter reading out letters of condolence that had been sent, Phil Harbottle's reminiscences, and sharing her own memories of her grandfather, and all the more moving for that. I'm sure fans of Ted's generation would have attended if they could, but he pretty much outlived them all.' • **Luke Skywalker** (43) of Addiscombe, Croydon, had an unattended funeral on 9 August. He'd changed his name by deed poll; the undertakers couldn't trace any friends or family. (*Croydon Advertiser/Private Eye*)

**C.o.A.** *Paul Di Filippo*, 197 Medway St, Providence, RI 02906, USA. *Douglas Spencer*, 25 Driver St, Sheffield, S13 9WP.

**Follow-Up.** 'F. Gwynplaine MacIntyre's brother has announced that the remains found after the fire in MacIntyre's Brooklyn apartment on June 25 have been positively identified through DNA testing. He has expressed the thanks of his family to those in the sf community who cared about MacIntyre and has declined to provide information about himself or his family out of desire to remain private.' (*SF Site*) [SHS]

**The Dead Past.** *45 Years Ago*, the BBC2 *Theatre 625* series included a new production of Nigel Kneale's famed 1984 adaptation, as broadcast and recorded in 1954. This 1965 remake is among a large cache of 'lost' 1957-1970 UK drama recordings that were sent to WNET (New York) for US broadcast, archived in the Library of Congress, and only recently rediscovered. ([Kaleidoscope.org.uk](http://Kaleidoscope.org.uk)) [PM] • Also from the 1960s, here's Gerald Kersh on sf prediction: 'You fill a blunderbuss with nightmares and fire it into a crowd. If one slug grazes anything, you call yourselves prophets.' ('A Bargain With Cashel', 1963) [BA] • *50 Years Ago*: 'VARGO STATEN DEAD? The "Liverpool Echo" recently reported that a Mr J.R. Fearn, of South Shore, Blackpool, had collapsed and died suddenly, aged 52, whilst attending chapel. Eric Frank Russell first saw this report and tried to check with Ted Carnell who tells me that the age is about right and that the sf Fearn was a methodist. As things go, the report in the Echo may or may not have referred to our John Russell Fearn.' Alas, it did. (*Skyrack* 25, October 1960)

**Fanfundery.** *Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund* nominations for the 2011 westbound race (Europe to North America) open 12 November and close 18 December. Voting deadline 12 March; the winner attends the Reno Worldcon in August. Contact [stevegreen@livejournal.com](mailto:stevegreen@livejournal.com).

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Hot Action Dept.* 'He rubbed her again to generate some calories.' 'Their cold-blooded organisms needed to absorb calories from the sun.' (Bernard Werber trans Margaret Rocques, *Empire of the Ants*, 1996) [AK] • *Dept of Slipstream Chemistry.* 'As soon as he was again outside, he put a lit match to one of his methane soaked strings and they went up like tissue paper in the wind.' (D.W. Green, 'Nose Piercing' in *Subtle Edens: An Anthology of Slipstream Fiction* ed. Allen Ashley, 2008) • *Book of Lists Dept.* 'Inside and among the stars, a montage, a collage, a kaleidoscope, a cacophony, a song, of colors, shapes, sounds, trees, flowers, stones, bricks, houses, horses, unicorns, dragons, lizards, eagles, sparrows, mollusks, whales, wasps, mosquitoes, fairies, changelings, humans, centaurs, the dead, the living, the unborn, the not yet born, the just conceived, until, until there was nothing and there was everything.' (Warren Rochelle, *The Called*, 2010) [RF]

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