

# Ansible



## Ansible 312 July 2013

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 a cold voice in a room of iron clocks.

**Shameless Puffery.** The tiny publishing house Ansible Editions has assembled all the late Algis Budrys's more than 150 *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* 'Books' columns in three volumes. He'd wanted this work to appear under a title that was some variation of *Benchmarks*, his award-winning 1985 collection of criticism from *Galaxy*. Thus AE began with *Benchmarks Continued* in late 2012, and finished the job with the simultaneous publication on 1 July 2013 of *Benchmarks Revisited* and *Benchmarks Concluded*. Buy now! Act without thinking! Or if you *must* think, see descriptions and preview links at <http://ae.ansible.co.uk/>.

### The Pressure of Time

**Malorie Blackman**, whose more than 60 children's/YA novels include sf (notably the *Noughts and Crosses* trilogy), became the eighth UK Children's Laureate in June: 'as the first black Children's Laureate, she promised to 'bang the drum for diversity.' (*ALCS News*, 18 June)

**Pat Cadigan** has been diagnosed with endometrial cancer, but the prognosis is good: 'My doctor tells me that removal of the offending parts will no doubt be the end of the matter and five years from now I can probably forget I ever had a problem.' (*LiveJournal*, 27 June)

'**Vox Day**' (Theodore Beale), US writer and blogger who tries hard to live up to John Scalzi's succinct description 'racist sexist homophobic dipshit', posted a racist attack on black author N.K. Jemisin and copied the link to SFWA's Twitter feed—meant for 'relevant and appropriate content' only. Many are calling for his expulsion from SFWA.

**Roger Dean**, after years of brooding over it (see A271), filed a suit against James Cameron on 27 June for alleged copyright infringement, 'unjust enrichment', etc, by use of Deanish imagery in *Avatar*. (BBC)

**Neil Gaiman's** infant days in Portsmouth will be commemorated during his August 'homecoming visit' by naming a lane for his novel *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*. Neil is 'Gobsmacked, befuddled, delighted and baffled. When you make things up, you never expect them to creep out into the real world.' (Portsmouth City Council PR, 20 June)

**Frank Herbert**, not to be outdone by Neil Gaiman, may be further immortalized as a new waterfront park in Tacoma, Washington—on a site whose 1950s smelter pollution supposedly inspired *Dune*. The local Park Commissioner and Landmark Commissioner have started a campaign to name it for Herbert. (*Associated Press*, 20 June) [AIP]

**Diana Wynne Jones** had almost finished a new novel when she died in 2011: *The Islands of Chaldea*, a standalone not linked to any of her famous fantasy series. This has since been completed by her younger sister Ursula (also an author and playwright, who won the first Roald Dahl Funny Prize), for publication in 2014. (*PW*, 20 June) [PB]

**Elise Matthesen** wrote about being sexually harassed at Wiscon this year, describing how she reported this to the convention and confirmed her report to the employers of the offender. He was later named as Tor editor James Frenkel. ([www.jimchines.com](http://www.jimchines.com), 28 June) Lawyers should please imagine the above as sprinkled with 'allegedly'.

### Contracrostipunctus

Until 20 Oct • **Memory Palace**: exhibition or 'walk-in story' with a future dystopian London theme, V&A, London. 10am-7:30pm. £7 with various concessions. Details/booking at <http://tinyurl.com/amdy6v8>.

13 Jul • **Edge-Lit 2**, QUAD Centre, Derby. 11am-midnight. Tickets £25. See [www.derbyquad.co.uk/film/edge-lit-2](http://www.derbyquad.co.uk/film/edge-lit-2).

20 Jul • **Bristol Beer & Blake's 7**, Knight's Templar, Unit 1 Temple Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6DG. 12:15 to 7pm-ish.

24 Jul • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Argyle pub, Leather Lane, London. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Cory Doctorow. Free; all welcome.

8-11 Aug • **LeakyCon** (Harry Potter), Grand Connaught Rooms, London. Reportedly SOLD OUT: see [www.leakycon.com/london/](http://www.leakycon.com/london/).

9-11 Aug • **Fantastiq** (film festival), QUAD art centre, Market Place, Derby, DE22 3PN. Prices still TBA at [fantastiq.co.uk](http://fantastiq.co.uk). Contact Reel Solutions, Dean Clough, Halifax, HX3 5AX.

9-11 Aug • **Nine Worlds Geekfest** (multimedia), Renaissance Hotel and others, Heathrow. Now £85, rising to £95 on 1 August; £99

at the door. Payment online only at [nineworlds.co.uk](http://nineworlds.co.uk).

29 Aug - 2 Sep • **LoneStarCon 3** (71st Worldcon), San Antonio, Texas. Rates to 31 July: \$220 reg; YA/military \$110; child \$75; family \$520; supp \$60. Day: \$50 Thu; \$75 Fri, Sat, Sun; \$30 Mon (military/YA \$30/\$40/\$20; child \$15/\$25/\$10). See [www.LoneStarCon3.org](http://www.LoneStarCon3.org). Contact address PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755, USA.

20-21 Sep, **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Apparently you need to register online at [www.oxonmoot.org](http://www.oxonmoot.org) to learn the actual cost of booking and accommodation.

21 Sep • **Andromeda One**, Custard Factory, Birmingham. Doors open 8:30am; 11am-11pm. £25 reg; group of five £100. Register from 7pm Friday (social evening) or at [terror-tree.co.uk/andromeda-one/](http://terror-tree.co.uk/andromeda-one/).

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us.** *Cli-Fi Dept.* Some novels about climate change are of course more equal than others: 'Many of the 70-odd books written up to the late 1990s were science fiction, says Mr Trexler [*who has made a list*], and tended to treat climate change as one of several problems rather than the main one. / The pattern changed as growing numbers of notable writers began tackling the topic, from Margaret Atwood (*Oryx and Crake*) or Michael Crichton (*State of Fear*), Jeanette Winterson (*The Stone Gods*), Ian McEwan (*Solar*) and Barbara Kingsolver (*Flight Behaviour*).' (*Financial Times*, 1 June) [MMW] Poor J.G. Ballard was presumably too early an adopter to be notable for *The Drowned World*. Executive summary: 'Don't call it "science fiction". Cli-fi is literary fiction.' (*Christian Science Monitor* headline, 26 April) [BT]

**Awards.** *John W. Campbell Memorial*: Adam Roberts, *Jack Glass*. • *Lambda* (LGBT) sf/fantasy/horror category: Tom Cardamone, *Green Thumb*. • *Lifeboat to the Stars* (new, for stories of interstellar travel): Kevin J. Anderson & Steven Savile, *Tau Ceti*. • *Locus*: SF NOVEL John Scalzi, *Redshirts*. FANTASY NOVEL Charles Stross, *The Apocalypse Codex*. FIRST NOVEL Saladin Ahmed, *Throne of the Crescent Moon*. YA China Miéville, *Railsea*. NOVELLA Nancy Kress, *After the Fall, Before the Fall, During the Fall*. NOVELETTE Pat Cadigan, 'The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi' (*Edge of Infinity*). SHORT Aliette de Bodard, 'Immersion', (*Clarkesworld* 6/12). ANTHOLOGY Jonathan Strahan, ed., *Edge of Infinity*. COLLECTION Elizabeth Bear, *Shoggoths in Bloom*. Nonfiction William Gibson, *Distrust That Particular Flavor*. ART BOOK Cathy Fenner & Arnie Fenner, eds., *Spectrum 19: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art*. ARTIST Michael Whelan. EDITOR Ellen Datlow. MAGAZINE *Asimov's*. PUBLISHER Tor. • *SF Hall of Fame*: David Bowie, H.R. Giger, Judith Merril, Joanna Russ and J.R.R. Tolkien. • *Theodore Sturgeon Memorial* (short story): Molly Gloss, 'The Grinnell Method' (*Strange Horizons* 9/12).

**Science Masterclass.** 'Botulinus, sir, is an organic poison—not a chemical one. The formula for it, in case you're interested, Mr Petersen, is  $OV_2CICA_6HH$ .' (Van Wyck Mason, *The Gracious Lily Affair*, 1957) [AB]

**R.I.P.** *Michael Baigent* (1948-2013), co-author with Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln of the nonfiction alternate history—or woo-woo, as you prefer—*The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, died on 17 June. He and Leigh unwisely sued Dan Brown for making free use of the story in *The Da Vinci Code* (with an anagrammatic nod to 'Sir Leigh Teabing'), and not only lost but were ruined by an order to pay £1.3 million in legal costs. • *Iain Banks* (1954-2013), Scots author of many successful genre-blurring novels beginning with *The Wasp Factory* (1984) and of equally acclaimed space operas beginning with *Consider Phlebas* (1987), died on 9 June—all too soon after announcing his terminal cancer diagnosis. He was 59. As well as a favourite writer—I'm always happy to reread his work and invariably gave top priority to a new Banks, with or without the M—Iain was a thoroughly nice man whose presence lit up any convention he attended. Why he never won a Hugo or Arthur C. Clarke award is a mystery. • *Thomas George Cockcroft* (1926-2013), New Zealander who published an index to the *Weird Fiction Magazines* (including *Weird Tales*) in 1962 as T.G.L. Cockcroft and corresponded with fans all over the world as Tom Cockcroft, died on 12 April; he was 86. [NB] • *Dennis Dolbear* (1953-2013), much-loved New Orleans fan,

host and raconteur, sloughed this mortal coil on June 17, 2013, The retired attorney, 59, suffered from pneumonia and septicemia.'—writes Guy H. Lillian. ● **Mark Fisher** OBE (1947-2013), UK stage designer noted for his spectacular sets for band performances and public events, died on 25 June aged 66. Genre credits include *Zardoz* (1974) and productions of *The Rocky Horror Show* and *We Will Rock You*. [MPJ] ● **Parke Godwin** (1929-2013), US author whose works include several sf and historical fantasy novels and who won a World Fantasy Award in 1982, died on 19 June; he was 84. Among his notable sf books are *Masters of Solitude* (1978) and its sequel, written with his friend Marvin Kaye), and the Snake Oil Wars diptych; his *Firelord* (1980) trilogy is Arthurian. [CC] ● **Annabel Johnson** (1921-2013), US author whose many YA novels include sf—e.g. *An Alien Music* (1982 with her husband Edgar Johnson)—died on 9 February aged 91. [DB] ● **Richard Matheson** (1926-2013), long-time US author and screenwriter famed for his edgy mingling of sf and horror in such novels as *I am Legend* (1954; film versions include *The Omega Man*) and *The Shrinking Man* (1956, filmed as *The Incredible Shrinking Man* with Matheson's own script)—plus many short stories and *Twilight Zone* scripts—died on 23 June. He was 87. Steven Spielberg's *Duel* (1971) was adapted by Matheson from his own short story. Career honours include the World Fantasy Award (1984), the Bram Stoker Life Achievement Award (1991) and induction into the SF Hall of Fame (2010). ● **Kim Thompson** (1956-2013), comics editor and publisher who co-founded Fantagraphics Books, was long involved with *The Comics Journal* since shortly after its founding and edited 204 issues of *Amazing Heroes*, died on 19 June; he was 56. [TM]

**As Others See Us II.** From episode 2 of ITV's 2013 gay sitcom *Vicious*: 'Will there be a lot of single men?' 'It's a science fiction fan club event. They'll be single but they'll be disgusting.' [CM]

**Stoker Awards.** NOVEL Caitlín R. Kiernan, *The Drowning Girl*. FIRST NOVEL L.L. Soares, *Life Rage*. YA NOVEL Jonathan Maberry, *Flesh & Bone*. GRAPHIC NOVEL Rocky Wood & Lisa Morton, *Witch Hunts: A Graphic History of the Burning Times*. LONG FICTION Gene O'Neill, *The Blue Heron*. SHORT FICTION Lucy Snyder, 'Magdala Amygdala' (*Dark Faith: Invocations*). SCREENPLAY *The Cabin in the Woods*. ANTHOLOGY Mort Castle & Sam Weller, eds., *Shadow Show*. COLLECTION (tie) Mort Castle, *New Moon on the Water*; Joyce Carol Oates, *Black Dahlia and White Rose*. NONFICTION Lisa Morton, *Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween*. POETRY COLLECTION Marge Simon, *Vampires, Zombies & Wanton Souls*.

**Court Circular.** Once again the Saul Zaentz Company has scored a mighty legal victory, by preventing the obscure 1970s UK band Bilbo Baggins from reforming under that name. The erstwhile lead singer said plaintively, 'There was never any problem with us using the name back in the 70s and the books had already been out for quite a while then.' The Group Which Is Now Nameless also had to pay £1200 costs after the humiliating decision: 'IPO hearing officer Ann Corbett said the band had not achieved enough success for people to distinguish them from the Tolkien character.' (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 6 June) [MPJ] ● Americans' inalienable right to read werewolf erotica in prison was ringingly confirmed by a Californian court, two years after guards confiscated a copy of Mathilde Madden's *The Silver Crown* as 'obscene and likely to incite violence.' (*Independent*, 23 June) [MPJ] Today's equivalent of having a bishop denounce your book from the pulpit.

**As Others See Us III.** *Granta* gets it right: 'If Iain (M) Banks leaves one significant literary legacy over and about his oeuvre, it is the diversity of that oeuvre. I was delighted that so many of the writers we chose for this decade's Best of Young British were unafraid of genre. That is the gift Banks has given us.' (*Granta* website, 14 June) [KH]

**Outraged Letters.** *Simon R. Green*: 'Have you been following the news/rumours about the appearance of missing *Doctor Who* episodes? Amazing claims are being made for around ninety of the missing 106 episodes having survived in South Africa, of all places. There have been all kinds of claims, and denials, from all sides. I think I'm in the camp of Please Let It Be True. I wouldn't be at all surprised to see church attendance levels rising sharply as fans all across the UK pray fervently along the lines of Oh Please Please I Promise I'll Be Good If Only ...' ● *Steve Sneyd* posted from Parnassus: 'Footnote to plagiarist poet item in June *Ansible*—two folk I passed copies on to reminded was *déjà vu*, i.e. same guy/same offence back in '80s; so "dog to vomit" 30 yrs on (& even less chance of getting away with it, in age of twitterati!).' ● *Jane Yolen* brags: 'Hey, Big Dog, this is the 50th year of my continuous book publishing. How can that be when I am only 49? 'Tis a wonder!'

**Magazine Scene.** Marvin Kaye at *Weird Tales* has been unaccepting stories previously described by him as 'excellent' and accepted for publication: 'Dear Contributor, I regret to inform you that the

publisher of *Weird Tales* has decided to pass on quite a few stories, yours included. This is a measure to reduce our huge fiction inventory. If you have not sold your submission elsewhere, try us again in 9 months. If we have room at that time, it will be an automatic sale (but do remind us of this message!).' [Later:] 'I don't like having to do this, but the pressure to reopen the submission portal has been growing and we can't ignore it any longer.' (June 2013) [JN] Actually publishing issues might help; there were just two in 2012, none as yet in 2013.

**Random Fandom.** *Pamela Boal* has lost much of her eyesight to cancer and would love phone calls from friends. Details from her son David Boal, trubal at tiscali co uk. ● *Brad Foster* is recovering well from surgery in May to repair a torn retina. Is *Ansible* bad for the eyes?

**The Dead Past.** *30 Years Ago*: 'Chinese SF Secrets: writing in the *Times Literary Supplement*, the possibly famous Yang Xianyi reveals all. "There is a vogue for sf in China today... [But] Chinese people do not have pessimistic ideas that the world is going to be dominated by insects, robots or creatures from outer space, or destroyed by a nuclear holocaust or other catastrophe; so they find most present-day Western sf too depressing and unacceptable.'" (*Ansible* 34, July 1983)

**C.o.A.** *Dave Lally* lost his another.com email address. Remove the space from his name and add 'outlook com' with suitable punctuation. *David Redd*, Beracah House, Redstock Lane, Johnston, Haverfordwest, Pembs, SA62 3NQ. (Only the 'Lane' and postcode are new.)

**British Fantasy Awards** shortlist, novel categories: FANTASY Lou Morgan, *Blood and Feathers*; Margo Lanagan, *The Brides of Rollrock Island*; China Miéville, *Railsea*; Joe Abercrombie, *Red Country*; Graham Joyce, *Some Kind of Fairy Tale*. HORROR Caitlin R. Kiernan, *The Drowning Girl*; Ramsey Campbell, *The Kind Folk*; Adam Nevill, *Last Days*; Gary McMahon, *Silent Voices*; Graham Joyce, *Some Kind of Fairy Tale*. ● Full list at <http://tinyurl.com/k3a5yqv>. I'm thrilled that *Ansible* is nominated in Nonfiction, but will gladly lose to strong opposition including that posthumous essay collection from Diana Wynne Jones.

**Fanfundery.** *DUFF*: Bill Wright won the 2013 race from Australasia to LoneStarCon3, with 66 votes (32 NA/34 Aus) to Clare McDonald-Sims's 64 (18/46). 1 vote for Hold Over Funds; 2 for No Preference.

**Media Awards.** *Daytime Emmy*: George Lucas won for the animated series *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*; David Tennant won as outstanding performer in this series. ● *Tony*: The Royal Shakespeare Company musical adaptation of Roald Dahl's *Matilda* won for Best Book and Best Featured Actor (Gabriel Ebert). [MPJ] ● *US Critics Choice*: Best Drama Series was won by *Game of Thrones*, tied with *Breaking Bad*. [MPJ]

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Upstairs Downstairs Dept.* 'It operated as a Goth club downstairs and an underground sex club on one of the upper levels.' (A.C. James, *Ruler: A Paranormal Erotica Short Story*, 2013) [PB] ● *Dept of Product Placement.* 'Jocelyn reclined at ease on a couch covered in kzin fur. She was smoking a cigarette of mildly narcotic Wunderland chew-bacca ...' (Hal Colebatch, 'Music Box' in *Man-Kzin Wars X: The Wunder War*, 2003) [AIP] ● *Sherlock Holmes Astrophysics Dept.* 'Even my morning shadow, following as I ran westward, seemed to have bad intentions ...' (Dean Koontz, *Deeply Odd*, 2013) [WG] ● *Dept of Alternative Automobile Engineering.* 'Of course, a casual visitor wouldn't have seen the visitors arriving in the back of unmarked Lincoln Town Cars with smoked windows that sat oddly low on their suspension.' (Charles Stross, *The Revolution Trade*, 2013) [SJ] ● *Had I But Known Dept.* 'There was no premonition, as I opened my eyes in a sleepy sweet haze, that I was to be blown apart, and that the embers of the little fire at my core would be stamped out forever into ashes.' 'I felt little flames strong and bright inside me spreading a warm glow to my fingertips and toes. There was still no alarm bells.' (Susan Greenfield, *2121*, 2013) [AR] ● *Dept of Relativity.* 'Though rooted to the spot in front of me, everything about her was on the move' (*Ibid*) 'The face, almost eye-level with mine despite its fleshy folds, seems constituted of granite' (*Ibid*) ● *Eyeballs in the Sky (Surgical Division).* 'From under bushy brows peered eyes of a peculiar golden-green hue; a thousand phosphorus needles flickered there in high-frequency movement, as in a battery's spark gap, giving the pupils an expression of luminous penetration; these eyes literally cut into the body and examined its subject to the minutest fiber.' (Stefan Grabinski, 'On a Tangent' [circa 1918] translated by Mirosław Lipinski in *On the Hill of Roses*, 2012) [DL]

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