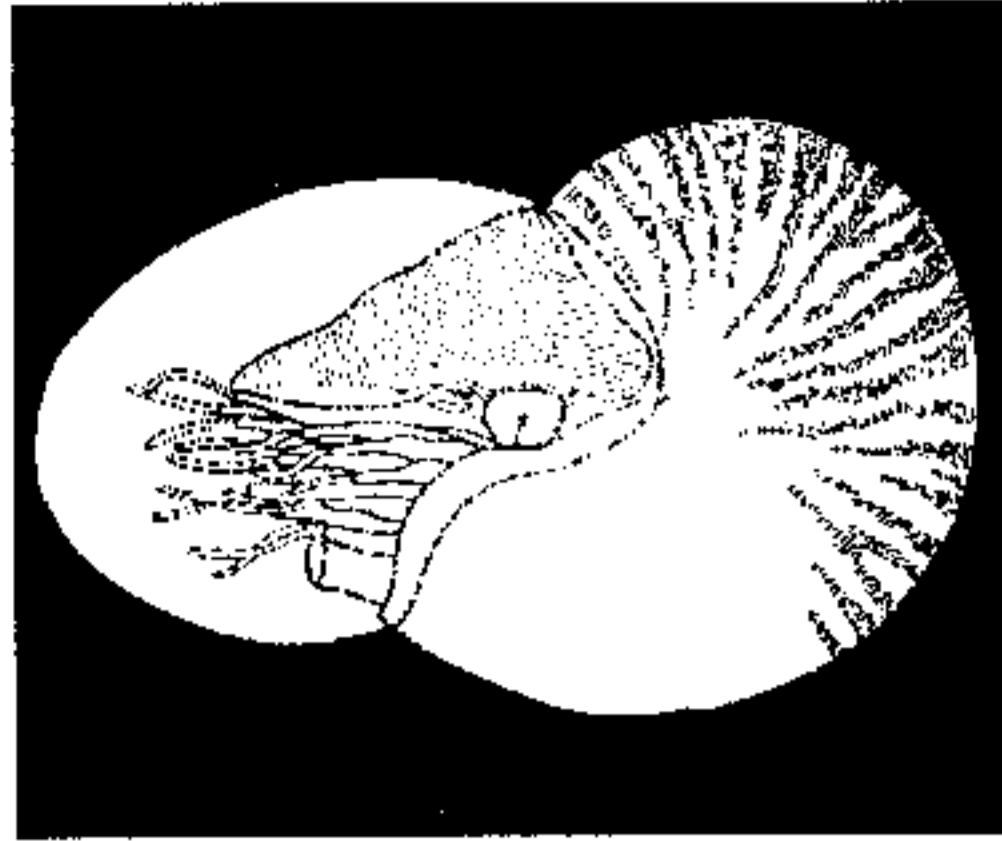


# ansible



## Ansible 274 May 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: Amanda Kear, 'Astronautilus'. Available for SAE or interocitor schematics.

**Odyssey.** An enjoyable Eastercon despite some criticism of its 'sf lite' programme (there weren't *that* many knitting and bondage workshops, but the jokes proliferated anyway) and scanty use of pro guests Iain Banks, Alastair Reynolds and Liz Williams. • **BSFA Awards** went to China Miéville for *The City & The City* (novel), Ian Watson & Roberto Quaglia for 'The Beloved Time of Their Lives' (short), Stephan Martiniere for the cover of Ian McDonald's *Desolation Road* (artwork), and Nick Lowe for his long-running *Interzone* film column 'Mutant Popcorn' (nonfiction). • **London in 2014:** the Worldcon bid was launched with a nifty promotional film assembled from many sf clips of London menaced, Big Ben exploding, etc etc. Further details below. • **Doc Weir Award** for unsung fannish heroism: Alice Lawson. • **Eastercons to Come:** *Illustrious* (Birmingham NEC Hilton) was unanimously acclaimed for the 2011 event; *Olympus* (returning to Odyssey's venue, the Radisson Edwardian/'Noneuclidean' Hotel at Heathrow) received somewhat less than unanimous approval for 2012. Again, more below.

### Mercer's Day

**Iain M. Banks's** secret is revealed: 'Iain M. Banks drops the M when he writes fiction.' (Victoria Coren, *Only Connect*, BBC4, 5 April) [RCF]

**Lionel Fanthorpe** was in the news again, performing an exorcism to remove a 'gipsy curse' from the hallowed grounds of the Newport, Gwent speedway stadium. (*South Wales Argus*) [BF/DR] *Ansible* understands that Lionel had read barely half of his potent incantation *Galaxy 666* (as by Pel Torro) when the curse fled in evident terror.

**Alan Moore** was 'disappeared' from *Time's* story about a US Republican video that tends to advocate the anti-government strategy of Guy Fawkes. 'A few years back, two left-leaning writers, Andy and Lana Wachowski, adapted the story of Guy Fawkes [...] The Wachowski brothers movie, *V for Vendetta*, made Fawkes the hero and presented the British crown as an oppressive dictatorship ...' No mention, alas, of the original *V for Vendetta* by Moore and David Lloyd. (23 April) [ML]

**Jeanne Robinson**, as Spider Robinson sadly reports, has reached the end of useful chemotherapy and entered palliative care for 'somewhere between a month and a year—more or less.' (5 April) Positive thoughts and emails welcomed, but no flowers or visits. All sympathy.

**Brian Stableford** writes: 'Circumstances oblige me to dispose of all my books. The reference collection has approximately 2,500 antique hardcovers and large pbs, 3,500 post-1950 hardcovers and pbs, 1,000 pulps, 1,000 other large sized magazines, 4,500 digest magazines, 6,500 small paperbacks, 1,000 non-fiction titles, 300 illustrated books and 200 books in French. My personal archive amounts to 1,000 items, with 2,000 duplicates. I am busy making lists of the more interesting and desirable items for the benefit of potential buyers—obviously, I'd prefer to sell off large lots rather than small numbers of items if I can.' (5 April) Some of the above is already spoken for, but much still remains. There's an email contact form at [ansible.co.uk/misc/bs.php](http://ansible.co.uk/misc/bs.php).

**Sigourney Weaver** knows why James Cameron's ex-wife won the best-director Oscar for *The Hurt Locker*, while Cameron and *Avatar* didn't: 'Jim didn't have breasts, and I think that was the reason. He should have taken home that Oscar.' (*Telegraph*, 15 April) [MPJ]

**Peter Watts**, convicted of not grovelling fast enough to a US border guard, was sentenced on 26 April: 60 days' jail, suspended on payment of \$1628 fines/costs. A trace of sanity at last—but this still leaves him officially a felon, barred from entering the USA. [F770]

**Gene Wolfe** had successful open-heart surgery on 24 April. [L]

### Conturmentation

7-12 May • **Stomach Pump Exhibition** (zines), Islington Mill, off Chapel St, Manchester, M3 5HW. Opens 7pm, 7 May. 07947 649 896.

8 May • **Write Fantastic** event, Jacqueline Du Pré Bldg, St Hilda's Coll, Oxford. £15 reg; students £12. Contact/cheques: Write Fantastic c/o Newcon Press, 41 Wheatsheaf Rd, Alconbury Weston, PE28 4LF.

26 May • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Tce, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 6pm. *Doctor Who* panel/book launch.

28-29 May • **Magus:** Transdisciplinary Approaches to the Work of Alan Moore (conference), University of Northampton. £60 reg inc lunches; £45 unwaged. Cheques (payable to the university) to Nathan Wiseman-Trowse, School of the Arts, University of Northampton, St George's Avenue, Northampton, NN2 6JD. Contact 01604 893072.

19 Jun • **SF Foundation/BSFA** mini-con & AGMs: Royal Astronomical Society, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BQ. 9:30am-4pm. Free.

26 Jun • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, Birmingham Central Library. £18 reg (members £15); *advance booking only; closes 29 May*. Payment to Tolkien Society c/o 21 Christian St, Peel, Isle of Man, IM5 1NW.

2-6 Sep • **Aussiecon 4** (68th Worldcon), Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre. *New rates from 1 May:* \$A310/\$US280/\$CAN290/£190/€215/Yen26,200; supp (unchanged) \$A70/\$US50/\$CAN50/£25/€35/Yen4,900; see also [www.aussiecon4.org.au](http://www.aussiecon4.org.au). Contact GPO Box 1212, Melbourne, Vic 3001, Australia; info at [aussiecon4.org.au](mailto:aussiecon4.org.au).

3-6 Sep • **Cineology Live** (cult tv), Pontin's, Lowestoft, Suffolk. £199 (£299 'Club') inc shared room; bookings 0844 576 5949.

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

22-25 Apr 11 • **Illustrious** (Eastercon), Hilton Metropole, NEC, Birmingham. GoHs David Weber, Peter F. Hamilton, David A. Hardy, Vince Docherty. *Now £55 reg, £30 under-25s/unwaged, £20 under-18s, £10 under-12s, £1 under-5s*. Contact 4 Burnside Ave, Sheffield, S8 9FR.

17-21 Aug 11 • **Renovation** (69th Worldcon), Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, NV, USA. \$140 reg, *Now \$160 reg*. Unchanged: \$50 supp; \$100 under-21s; \$75 under-17s; under-7s free. *Presupporter discounts have expired:* see [www.renovationsf.org](http://www.renovationsf.org). Contact PO Box 13278, Portland, OR 97213-0278, USA.

6-9 Apr 12 • **Olympus 2012** (Eastercon), Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. GoHs Paul Cornell, George R.R. Martin. £40 reg, £35 unwaged, £20 supp/under-17s, £5 under-12s, £1 under-5s. Postal address awaited; for now, join at [www.olympus2012.org](http://www.olympus2012.org).

**Rumblings** • *London in 2014*. This Worldcon bid plans to use the International Convention Centre in the ExCel complex, Docklands, on 14-18 August 2014. £12 presupporting, £60 'Friend' (£30 if born after 14 August 1988). Payments to London in 2014, 4 Evesham Green, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 9RX, or online at [www.londonin2014.org](http://www.londonin2014.org).

### Infinitely Improbable

**Thog's Election Masterclass.** Gordon Brown, Zombie: 'A senior politician had a meeting with the Prime Minister shortly before the [2008] recess and was shocked by what he saw. "He looked absolutely terrible. The shoulders were hunched. The flesh was literally dripping off his face ..."' (Andrew Rawnsley, *The End of the Party*, 2010) [GS] • But Lembit Opik sees his LibDem leader Nick Clegg in terms of high fantasy: 'He's like Frodo. He arrived in Middle Earth all innocent, but ready to take on the forces of evil. He is the only one capable of wearing the ring of power without being corrupted. Vince Cable is our very own Gandalf.' (Pandora column, *Independent*, 20 April) Which party leader is Sauron in this metaphor, and which is Saruman? Who is Gollum? • In France, *Le Monde*—led astray by blue-tribe connotations?—identified the UK Conservative leader as James Cameron. (*Ibid*, 28 April) [MPJ]

**Awards.** *Arthur C. Clarke:* China Miéville, *The City and the City*—making him this award's first three-time winner. • *SFWA Solstice:* Tom Doherty, Terri Windling and the late Donald A. Wollheim. • *Philip K. Dick.* C.L. Anderson, *Bitter Angels*; special citation to Ian McDonald, *Cyberabad Days*. • *Carnegie Medal* shortlisted genre titles: Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*; Patrick Ness, *The Ask and the Answer*; Terry Pratchett, *Nation*; Philip Reeve, *Fever Crumb*. [JY] • *Shirley Jackson* novel shortlist: Victor LaValle, *Big Machine*; Brian Evenson, *Last Days*; Sarah Waters, *The Little Stranger*; Karen Maitland, *The Owl Killers*; Caitlin R. Kiernan, *The Red Tree*; Helen Oyeyemi, *White is for Witching*.

**As Others See Us.** On Michael Chabon's essay collection *Maps and Legends*: '(I would like to make a substantial bet that he is a fan of *The*

Lord of the Rings too; there are hurried nods to Tolkien's imaginarium here and elsewhere, but of all the means for professional suicide that are available to the writer, expressing affection for Tolkien is one of the most effective.)' (Nicholas Lezard, *Guardian*, 3 April) [AMB]

**Hugo Nominations.** 864 ballots cast. NOVEL (699 ballots) Cherie Priest, *Boneshaker*; China Miéville, *The City & The City*; Robert Charles Wilson, *Julian Comstock: A Story of 22nd-Century America*; Catherynne M. Valente, *Palimpsest*; Robert J. Sawyer, *Wake*; Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl*. • NOVELLA (375) Nancy Kress, 'Act One' (*Asimov's* 3/09); John Scalzi, *The God Engines*; Charles Stross, 'Palimpsest' (*Wireless*); James Morrow, *Shambling Towards Hiroshima*; Ian McDonald, 'Vishnu at the Cat Circus' (*Cyberabad Days*), Kage Baker, *The Women of Nell Gwynne's*. • NOVELETTE (402) Rachel Swirsky, 'Eros, Philia, Agape' (*Tor.com* 3/09); Peter Watts, 'The Island' (*The New Space Opera 2*); Nicola Griffith, 'It Takes Two' (*Eclipse Three*); Paul Cornell 'One of Our Bastards is Missing' (*The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction: Volume Three*); Charles Stross, 'Overtime' (*Tor.com* 12/09); Eugie Foster, 'Sinner, Baker, Fabulist, Priest; Red Mask, Black Mask, Gentleman, Beast' (*Interzone* 2/09). • SHORT (432) Mike Resnick, 'The Bride of Frankenstein' (*Asimov's* 12/09); Will McIntosh, 'Bridesicle' (*Asimov's* 1/09); Lawrence M. Schoen, 'The Moment' (*Footprints*); N.K. Jemisin, 'Non-Zero Probabilities' (*Clarkesworld* 9/09); Kij Johnson, 'Spar' (*Clarkesworld* 10/09). • RELATED WORK (259) John Clute, *Canary Fever*; Michael Swanwick, *Hope-In-The-Mist*; Farah Mendlesohn, *The Inter-Galactic Playground*; Farah Mendlesohn, ed., *On Joanna Russ*; Helen Merrick, *The Secret Feminist Cabal*; Jack Vance, *This is Me, Jack Vance!* • GRAPHIC STORY (221) *Batman: Whatever Happened to the Caped Crusader?*; *Captain Britain And MI13. Volume 3: Vampire State*; *Fables Vol 12: The Dark Ages*; *Girl Genius, Volume 9: Agatha Heterodyne and the Heirs of the Storm*; *Schlock Mercenary: The Longshoreman of the Apocalypse*. • DRAMATIC, LONG (541) *Avatar*, *District 9*, *Moon*, *Star Trek, Up*. • DRAMATIC, SHORT (282) *Doctor Who: 'The Next Doctor'*; *Who: 'Planet of the Dead'*; *Who: 'The Waters of Mars'*; *Dollhouse: 'Epitaph 1'*; *Flash-Forward: 'No More Good Days'*. • EDITOR, LONG (289) Lou Anders, Ginjer Buchanan, Liz Gorinsky, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Juliet Ulman. • EDITOR, SHORT (419) Ellen Datlow, Stanley Schmidt, Jonathan Strahan, Gordon Van Gelder, Sheila Williams. • PRO ARTIST (327) Bob Eggleton, Stephan Martiniere, John Picacio, Daniel Dos Santos, Shaun Tan. • SEMIPROZINE (377) *Ansible*, *Clarkesworld*, *Interzone*, *Locus*, *Weird Tales*. • FAN WRITER (319) Claire Brialey, Christopher J. Garcia, James Nicoll, Lloyd Penney, Frederik Pohl. • FANZINE (298) *Argentus*, *Banana Wings*, *Challenger*, *The Drink Tank*, *File 770*, *StarShipSofa*. • FAN ARTIST (199) Brad W. Foster, Dave Howell, Sue Mason, Steve Stiles, Taral Wayne. • JOHN W. CAMPBELL (not a Hugo) (356) Saladin Ahmed, Gail Carriger, Felix Gilman, Seanan McGuire, Lezli Robyn.

**Definition.** 'What is television's most successful sci-fi series? Sorry, that's SF. Sci-fi is a term used by science fiction fans to describe favourites from bygone years such as *Lost in Space* and *The Tomorrow People*, shows that gave the genre a reputation for flying saucers, laser pistols and aliens in silver jumpsuits. / Nowadays, the genre would rather be taken seriously. / "I think science fiction has become more mainstream because it's less exclusive," says Sydney-based science fiction writer Jonathan Blum. "It used to be associated with spaceships and aliens, but now it's shows like *Lost* and *Heroes*, which are far more like relationship dramas.'" (*Weekend Australian*, 20-21 March) [YR]

**R.I.P.** *Carl Macek* (1951-2010), US producer who did much to put anime on the US map—adapting the tv *Robotech* from (somewhat controversially) three disparate originals, co-founding Streamline Pictures, producing the first English dub of Miyazaki's *My Neighbor Totoro*, and more—died on 17 April; he was 58. [JC/PT] • *William Mayne* (1928-2010), highly-regarded UK author of over 100 books for children and young adults, including such notable fantasies as the *Earthfasts* trilogy, *A Game of Dark*, *It and Cuddy*, died on 23 March aged 82. His career had ended shamefully with a conviction for past child abuse in 2004. [JC] • *Corin Redgrave* (1939-2010), UK actor whose long career included many genre credits—examples being *Excalibur* (1981), *Ultraviolet* (1998), *Doctor Sleep* (2002) and *The Turn of the Screw* (2009)—died on 6 April. He was 70. [SG] • *Shio Sato* (Chiyoko Sato, 1950-2010), Japanese manga artist best known for *Yumemiru Wakusei* (*The Dreaming Planet*), *One Zero* and the short *The Changeling*, died on 4 April; she was 59. [PM] • *John Schoenherr* (1935-2010), US artist whose most famous sf image was the giant *Prophet of Dune* sandworm on a large-format *Analog* (March 1965), died on 8 April aged 74. He won the Hugo as best professional artist in 1965, and the Caldecott Medal in 1988. • *Alan Sillitoe* (1928-2010), UK author of best-selling

'kitchen-sink drama' novels like *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958), died on 25 April aged 82; his genre work includes the sf satire *Travels in Nihilon* (1971). [JL] • *Peggy White* (1927-2010), much-loved fan and convention-goer since the 1950s heyday of classic Irish Fandom, died in hospital on 8 April. She was 82 and had been married to author James White from 1955 until his death in 1999. [SL]

**The Dead Past.** 60 Years Ago. Proto-Thogger in the UK magazine *Worlds of Fantasy*: 'Dawn, and Lew Gordon was flying a streamlined turbo-jet into space.' (*Science Fantasy News* 5, Summer 1950)

**Outraged Letters.** *Simon R. Green*: 'I enjoyed the World Horror Con in Brighton, though I do think I might have upset some Sherlock Holmes purists on a panel when I said I'd always wanted to write a story in which Holmes and Watson visit the moors and encounter a gigantic hound called ... Scooby. All this, and Moriarty and Muttley too. Move over, Kim Newman.' • *Joe McNally*: 'Visitors to Waterstone's in Piccadilly are greeted with a large display of books under the heading "Quintessentially English" [...] Selections include the expected light dusting of Brontës, Agatha Christie, Orwell, Greene etc, assorted biographies—and *The Crow Road* by Iain "as English as a slightly camp vicar nibbling cucumber sandwiches in a Harrogate tea room" Banks.' • *Bryan Talbot*: 'I always think of "As Others See Us" when I listen to the otherwise marvellous Radio 7, a great fund of drama and comedy. For the twice-daily science fiction and fantasy slot, *The 7th Dimension*, the assumed intelligence quota of the audience suddenly plummets. Host Nick Briggs puts on a creepy voice and addresses the listeners as if we are all eight-year olds, promising not to exterminate us, referring to his arrival in a flying saucer and so forth.' • *Martin Morse Wooster*: 'On the April 22 [US] *Flashforward*, sinister physicist Dylan Frost has a gigantic chart showing various nexuses of Conspiracy. (Of course it was called "the garden of forking paths.") At one point, for about a millisecond, the camera flashed on a circle that said, "ANSIBLE." Gosh.

**Magazine Scene.** The editorial rebellion at China's *Science Fiction World* (see A273) led to the replacement of the boss whose policies may have helped reduce circulation from 150,000 (early 2009) to 130,000.

**Random Fandom.** *Dermot Dobson* wants it known that his 110lb weight loss resulted from a regimen of serious healthiness, and not—as assumed by so many at Eastercon—some fearful wasting disease.

**Fanfundery.** *GUFF*: James Shields won by a first-round majority with 52 votes (38 UK/11 Aus/4 rest of world) to Douglas Spencer's 37 (32/4/1) and 10 (7/3/0) No Preference. James thus gets the coveted trip to Aussiecon 4 this year. • *DUFF*. After three eliminating rounds too complex to summarize, John Hertz emerged as winner with 73 votes—trailed by John Purcell with 47—and will likewise attend Aussiecon 4.

**C.o.A.** *Horror News* c/o Mike Bohatch, 3560 Rialto Heights #374, Colorado Springs, CO 80907, USA. • *Syfy*: the UK Sci Fi Channel finally imitated its US parent company's derided name-change in April. [MPJ]

**Group Gropes.** *Beer & Blake's 7*: Canal House, 48 Canal St, Nottingham; 15 May, 1pm. Next door (Fellows, Morton & Clayton) if wet.

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Dept of How Else?* 'The Marquis of London lifted his head a fraction of an inch and looked at Lord Darcy from beneath his brows.' (Randell Garrett, *Too Many Magicians*, 1966) • *Erudite Allusions Dept*. "Where did you learn a distraction technique like that with the doors?" [...] "A long time ago, in a city far, far away, to paraphrase Star Trek." (Gayle Lynds, *The Book of Spies*, 2010) [LG] • *Eyeballs [Not] in the Sky*. 'Afterward Lorimer can recall mostly eyes, bright curious eyes tugging his boots ...' (James Tiptree Jr, 'Houston, Houston, Do You Read?', 1976) [PB] '... the very suggestion ... was enough to make them close their minds and occupy their eyes with their shoelaces' (Hilary Mantel, *Fludd*, 1989) [PB] • *Chronology Dept*. "The twenty-first century," Kartan corrected her quietly. The blank fear he saw reflected in their eyes made him hesitate for a moment before he added, "This is the year 2179." (Margaret J. Anderson, *In the Circle of Time*, 1979) [PB] • *Proverbial Wisdom*. 'A weeping woman is a bucket with no bottom.' (Robert Jordan, *The Shadow Rising*, 1992) [AR] 'Never prod at a woman unless you must.' 'The only man completely at peace is a man without a navel.' 'Caution once forgotten could be forgotten once too often.' 'The best way to apologize to a man is to trip him in a secluded part of the garden.' 'You put your cat in your hat and stuff it down your breeches.' (all Robert Jordan, *Lord of Chaos*, 1994) [AR]

Ansible 274 © David Langford, 2010. Thanks to Paul Barnett, Andrew M Butler, John Clute, File 770, Rachel Coleman Finch, Bryn Fortey, Lisa Goldstein, Steve Green, Martyn P. Jackson, Sinead Larkin, Making Light, Jim Linwood, Locus, Petrea Mitchell, David Redd, Adam Roberts, Yvonne Rousseau, Graham Sleight, Jessica Yates, and our Hero Distributors: Dave Corby (Brum Group), SCIS/Prophecy, Alan Stewart (Australia). 31 Apr 10