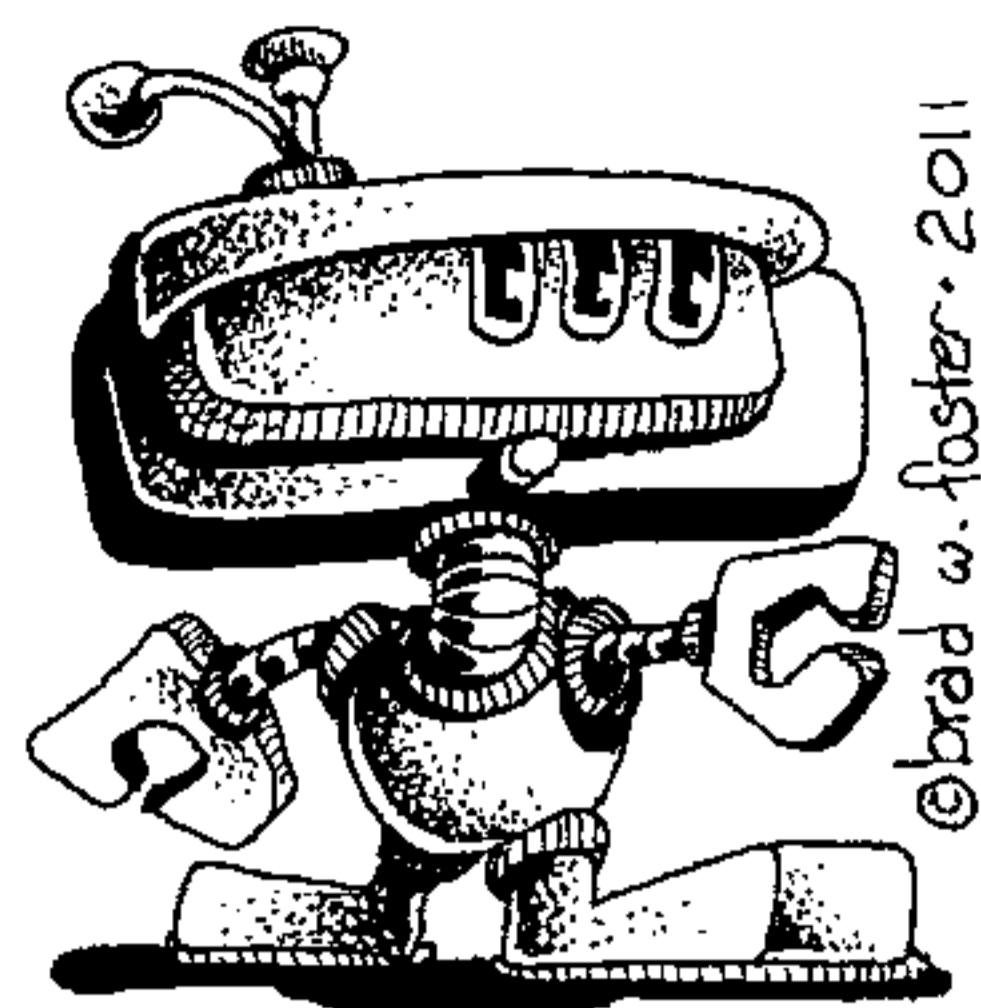


# Ansible



## Ansible 284 March 2011

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, flattery, or Orntitz's unattainable end.

### Yon Bonnie Banks

**Iain Banks** is now a recognized tourist attraction in VisitScotland's latest guide to literary Scotland: 'Iain Banks (b.1954), novelist, author of numerous sensational works combining fluent storytelling, political engagement and moral indignation, and many science fiction novels.' (issued 21 February) [DH] At least the sf isn't sensational.

**Guillermo del Toro** explained his personal vision of H.P. Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness*: "The architecture of the Old Ones was based on "curves and cylinders," he said. "There are no steps, no ramparts. And the edifices are not at all human. There's no balconies or doorways." The city resembled a labyrinth of pneumatic tubes. / As del Toro had promised, the city's form intimidated the silhouette of the Old Ones. "They are essentially suppositories," he said. "They sort of torpedo through the tubes." But didn't Lovecraft write that they had wings? Del Toro smiled: wings and tentacles had been hidden inside the ovoid silhouette. An Old One opened up "like a Swiss Army knife." His planned filmic subtleties are also revealed: 'Having read the script, I knew that the body count would be high. ("BAMMMMM!!!!!! A massive Shoggoth explodes out from the tower!!!!!! It grabs and devours Gordon in mid-sentence!") But del Toro promised that the film was "not gory."' (Daniel Zalewski, *The New Yorker*, 7 February) [MF]

**Kazuo Ishiguro** is not a science fiction denialist: 'It's almost like they've given us older writers licence to use it. Before, it was ghettoised and stigmatised. For years there has been a prejudice towards sci-fi writing, which I think has been to the loss of the literary world, and not vice versa. But with things like graphic novels now, people are taking it seriously.' Still, he has misgivings: 'In truth, the sci-fi label is misleading. I'm just wary like everybody else that it'll bring in the wrong audience with the wrong expectations.' (*Herald*, 4 February) [PC]

**Stephen King** is being sued for plagiarism. The claim is that chunks of his 2008 novel *Duma Key* were stolen from plaintiff Rod Marquardt's 2002 *Keller's Den* (publishers: the dread PublishAmerica). The first smoking gun in Marquardt's legal filing is an astonishing similarity between his book's hypnotic state that 'controlled him like the talons of an eagle wrapped around a harmless garter snake', and King's 'I was like a bird hypnotized by a snake.' What's more, both novels use the word 'earthbound' and—in the rescue sense—'cavalry'! *Duma Key* mentions Garrison Keillor, whose name sounds uncannily like Keller! Digital clock-radios read 2:19 (original creation) and 3:19 (blatant theft). A fiancée in one novel and a frog in the other *both have sharp teeth*. Characters in each book say 'What do you think?', words never before strung together in that order... Also cited are various horror/suspense tropes or clichés that weren't new in 2002 either, in particular that of an artist whose talent is affected by occult influence. Marquardt has a bad case of Willy the Wizard syndrome: see A264, A272, A283. King and his publishers have entered a robust defence asking for the complaint to be dismissed with prejudice. (*Making Light*, 20 February)

**Paul Krugman** on US Gross Domestic Product figures: 'Maybe the real point here is to remember, always, that economic statistics are a peculiarly boring sub-genre of science fiction; extremely useful, but not to be treated as absolute truth.' (*New York Times*, 2 February) [KH]

**Christopher Lee** received the top British Academy of Film & TV Arts honour—a BAFTA Fellowship—at the 13 February awards. [MPJ]

**George R.R. Martin and Parris McBride**, having pondered this step carefully throughout their thirty years together, were married on 15 February. (*Grrm.livejournal.com*) [LP] Congratulations!

### Contraveer

Current • **Doctor Who Experience** (exhibition), Olympia 2, London, W14 8UX. 10am-6pm daily. Tickets £17.05; £13.55 age 5-16; £1 booking fee. Some days sold out: check [www.doctorwhoexperience.com](http://www.doctorwhoexperience.com).

4-6 Mar • **P-Con VIII**, Central Hotel, Exchequer St, Dublin 2. €35 reg; €40 at door; €25/day; €15 student. Cheques to Peter McClean c/o 6 Weston Ave, Lucan, Co. Dublin, Ireland. See [www.pcon.ie](http://www.pcon.ie).

5-6 Mar • **Microcon 31**, Junior Common Room, University of Exeter. Various speakers. £14 reg at the door only; EUSFS members £8. Contact mp236 at exeter dot ac dot uk.

10-24 Mar • **Oxfam Bookshop**, Market Place, Reading: sf events/displays linked with sale of Brian Stableford's huge donation of books.

19-20 Mar • **BritSciFi**, National Space Centre, nr Leicester. £13 admission, child/concessions £11. With Daleks! [www.spacecentre.co.uk](http://www.spacecentre.co.uk).

19 Mar • **Fred Hoyle Project Grand Finale** (exhibit/talks), St John's, Cambridge; part of the Cambridge Science Festival. 10am-4pm.

23 Mar • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 6pm. Free. BSFA Awards discussion.

25 Mar • **Tolkien Reading Day**, according to the Tolkien Society.

22-25 Apr • **Illustrious** (Eastercon), Hilton Metropole, NEC, Birmingham. £55 reg, £30 under-25s/unwaged, £20 under-18s, £10 under-12s, £1 under-5s until 1 April, noon. At the door: £15 Fri or Mon, £30 Sat or Sun. Contact 4 Burnside Ave, Sheffield, S8 9FR.

20 May - 25 Sep • **Out of this World** (sf exhibition), PACCAR Gallery, British Library, London. Free.

28 May • **Write Fantastic** event, St Hilda's College, Oxford. £15 reg; £12 concessions (£18/£15 at door). Cheques: The Write Fantastic, c/o 41 Wheatsheaf Rd, Alconbury Weston, Cambs, PE28 4LF.

17-21 Aug • **Renovation** (69th Worldcon), Reno, NV, USA. Now \$195 reg; \$480 family (2 adults, 2 kids). Contact PO Box 13278, Portland, OR 97213-0278, USA. NB: Hugo nominations close on 26 March.

22 Oct • **BristolCon**, Ramada Hotel, Bristol. Several guests of honour. £15 reg to 31 May; £20 to 21 Oct; £25 at the door. Cheques to 34 Dongola Road, Bishopston, Bristol, BS7 9HP.

11-13 Nov • **ArmadaCon 23**, Future Inns, Plymouth. £30 reg, £20 concessions. Contact 18 Wadham Road, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 3BD.

3-5 Feb 2012 • **Duple Time** (filk), Ramada Grantham Hotel. £35 reg; £25 unwaged; under 18 £1/year; under 6 free. Cheques: UK Filk Con, c/o 66 Railton Jones Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8BF.

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Our Films.** Julian Assange of Wikileaks fame felt he had excellent reasons not to face his accusers in Stockholm: 'The situation in Sweden is like a bad sci-fi movie. Forget everything you know about the common law system—we're dealing with the radical feminist version of Saudi Arabia.' (*Guardian*, 5 February) [PL] • British film director Stephen Frears on *Inception*: 'I'm a middle-aged man, I don't understand those sort of films.' (*Independent*, 25 February) [MPJ]

**Liverpool Literary List.** The back wall of the redeveloped Central Library in Liverpool is to showcase names of writers linked with the city. Those of genre interest include Clive Barker, Ramsey Campbell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Brian Jacques (see R.I.P.), Edward Lear, John Masefield and Olaf Stapledon. ([www.artinliverpool.com](http://www.artinliverpool.com), 4 February).

**Awards.** *Fan Achievement* (FAAns). Writer: Roy Kettle. Artist: Steve Stiles. Fanzine: *Trap Door*, ed. Robert Lichtman. Correspondent: Robert Lichtman. Website: [eFanzines.com](http://eFanzines.com). Lifetime Achievement: Art Widner. Past President fwa for 2010: Spike Parsons. • *Skylark Award* (NESFA, general contributions to sf): Lois McMaster Bujold.

**Tweets.** *The Ubiquitous Stephen Fry*: 'Off to Washington DC for one of the weirdest gigs of my life. Playing Hamlet on stage. In Klingon. Mad but true.' (27 February) [MPJ] • *Ken MacLeod*: 'the unit of space opera is the hamilton. One page = 1 millihamilton.' [BB]

**R.I.P.** *Brian Barritt* (1934-2011), UK counter-culture author who collaborated with Timothy Leary and wrote the 'near-unpublishable' sf sex comedy *The Nabob of Bombasta* (2010), died on 30 January aged 76. (*Independent*, 16 February) [SH] • *Peder Carlsson* (1945-2011), Swedish sf fan (active mid-1960s to 1980s), novelist and translator of Dick, Delany, Le Guin and other sf notables, died on 22 February; he was 65. [J-HH] • *Nicholas Courtney* (1929-2011), UK actor best known and loved in sf circles as *Doctor Who's* Brigadier Alistair Gordon Lethbridge-Stewart of UNIT, died on 22 February at the age of 81. He was a popular convention guest and honorary president of the Doctor

Who Appreciation Society. [BB] • *David F. Friedman* (1923-2011), US producer of exploitation horror films who launched the splatter sub-genre with *Blood Feast* (1963), died on 14 February aged 87. [AIP] • *Ion Hobana* (1931-2011), noted Romanian sf author, editor, translator and historian, several of whose stories appeared in English translation, died on 22 February aged 80. [L] He was a 1980 Eurocon award winner. [JCo] • *Brian Jacques* (1939-2011), UK author of the lengthy Redwall series of animal fantasies for children that began with the mouse epic *Redwall* (1986), died on 5 February; he was 71. [PDF] • *Bill Justice* (1914-2011), veteran Disney animator whose many credits included *Fantasia* (1940) and *Bambi* (1942, for which he created the rabbit Thumper), died on 10 February—the day after his 97th birthday. (*Telegraph*, 14 February) [MPJ] • *Dwayne McDuffie* (1962-2011), US comics and tv writer who worked against racial stereotyping in comics, created the witty *Damage Control* for Marvel, co-founded the minority-friendly Milestone Media and worked on tv animations including *Static Shock* (his creation) and *Justice League Unlimited*, died on 21 February aged 49. [PDF] • *Margaret K. McElderry*, US children's editor and publisher at Harcourt Brace and later Simon & Schuster, whose authors included Susan Cooper, Edward Eager, Andre Norton and Mary Norton, died on 14 February aged 98. She founded and named S&S's still-continuing McElderry Books imprint. [PDF] • *L.K. Madigan* (Lisa Kay Wolfson), US YA novelist whose *The Mermaid's Mirror* (2010) is fantasy, died on 23 February; she was 47. [PDF] • *Kenneth Mars* (1936-2011), US comedy actor whose genre credits included *Young Frankenstein* (1974), *The Little Mermaid* (voice work, 1989) and numerous tv series, died on 10 February; he was 74. [AIP] • *Perry Moore* (1971-2011), an executive producer of the three Narnia films and author of the gay-superhero novel *Hero* (2007), died on 17 February; he was 39. His book about the making of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (2005) was a 2005-6 *New York Times* bestseller. [PDF] • *Tura Satana* (1938-2011), Japanese-born stripper and actress best known for Russ Meyer's *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965), died on 4 February aged 72. Her main sf/horror appearances were in *The Astro-Zombies* (1968) and its sequels (2002, 2010). [MPJ] • *Walter Seltzer* (1914-2011), US publicist and film-maker who produced *The Omega Man* (1971) and *Soylent Green* (1973), died on 18 February at the age of 96. [PDF]

**Prediction Masterclass.** British decimal coinage uncannily foretold, four years before the actual event: 'We adopted the same system [as America] but still called our chief unit a pound—one hundred shillings to the pound.' (Philip E. High, *These Savage Futurians*, 1967)

**Film Awards.** *Annie* (animation): *How to Train Your Dragon* had ten wins including best feature and direction. • **BAFTAs:** 'outstanding British contribution to cinema' prize for the Harry Potter films. *Inception* and *Alice in Wonderland* won some technical categories (effects, make-up, etc); *Toy Story 3* won for animation. • **London Critics' Circle:** Gareth Edwards took Breakthrough British Film-maker for *Monsters*. • **Writers Guild of America,** best original screenplay: *Inception*. [MPJ] • **Razzies** (worst in film): dominated, with five Golden Raspberry wins, by *The Last Airbender* and its director M. Night Shyamalan. (BBC, 27 February) • **Oscars:** *Toy Story 3*, animation; *The Lost Thing*, short animation (congratulations to Shaun Tan). Technical: *Alice in Wonderland*, art direction, costumes; *Inception*, cinematography, sound mixing & editing, visual effects; *The Wolfman*, make-up. (BBC, 28 February)

**Court Circular.** The Tolkien estate—which has trademarked the name 'Tolkien', so watch it—sent a cease-and-desist notice warning Texan author Stephen Hilliard not to release his historical novel *Mirkwood*, featuring Tolkien himself as a character. Hilliard has filed a US lawsuit, asking the court to declare his right to publish based on fair use and the First Amendment. (*Hollywood Reporter*, 18 February)

**As Others See Themselves.** Ethan Coen's latest remake isn't what you thought: 'Although True Grit has been heralded by many as the resurrection of the Western, Coen doesn't see it in genre terms. / "It's not a genre story, it does have people in cowboy hats and it does have six-shooters, but it's really about the characters and the story.'" (BBC, 21 February) [JB] The BBC asked whether he might make an sf film: 'That's one genre that I don't know that we would know what we were doing. It's funny given the degree to which some of our movies are stylised, but there has to be some kind of anchor in reality in order to get our minds around a story.' (BBC, 24 February) [JC]

**Magazine Scene.** *Analog* now accepts, indeed prefers, electronic submissions via analog.magazinesubmissions.com—though not as email attachments. • John Klima of *Electric Velocipede* is parting company with Night Shade Books, since 'they are not in the business of periodicals and as such our subscription numbers and individual sales have

suffered to the point that it made no sense to continue with our current model.' *EV* will continue on-line, with no print edition. [PDF]

**Nebula Ballot.** NOVEL M.K. Hobson, *The Native Star*; N.K. Jemisin, *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*; Mary Robinette Kowal, *Shades of Milk and Honey*; Jack McDevitt, *Echo*; Nnedi Okorafor, *Who Fears Death*; Connie Willis, *Blackout/All Clear*. • NOVELLA Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Alchemist*; J. Kathleen Cheney, 'Iron Shoes' (*Alembical* 2); Ted Chiang, *The Lifecycle of Software Objects*; Geoffrey A. Landis, 'The Sultan of the Clouds' (*Asimov's* 9/10); Paul Park, 'Ghosts Doing the Orange Dance' (*F&SF* 1/10); Rachel Swirsky, 'The Lady Who Plucked Red Flowers Beneath the Queen's Window' (*Subterranean* Summer 2010). • NOVELETTE Christopher Barzak, 'Map of Seventeen' (*The Beastly Bride*); Aliette de Bodard, 'The Jaguar House, in Shadow'; (*Asimov's* 7/10); Christopher Kastensmidt, 'The Fortuitous Meeting of Gerard van Oost and Oludara' (*Realms of Fantasy* 4/10); James Patrick Kelly, 'Plus or Minus' (*Asimov's* 12/10); Shweta Narayan, 'Pishaach' (*The Beastly Bride*); Eric James Stone, 'That Leviathan, Whom Thou Hast Made' (*Analog* 9/10); Caroline M. Yoachim, 'Stone Wall Truth' (*Asimov's* 2/10). • SHORT Adam-Troy Castro, 'Arvies' (*Lightspeed* 8/10); Harlan Ellison, 'How Interesting: A Tiny Man' (*Realms of Fantasy* 2/10); Kij Johnson, 'Ponies' (*Tor.com* 1/10); Vylar Kaftan, 'I'm Alive, I Love You I'll See You in Reno' (*Lightspeed* 6/10); Amal El-Mohtar, 'The Green Book' (*Apex* 11/10); Jennifer Pelland, 'Ghosts of New York' (*Dark Faith* 12/10); Felicity Shoulders, 'Conditional Love' (*Asimov's* 1/10). • BRADBURY (dramatic) *Despicable Me*, *Doctor Who* 'Vincent and the Doctor', *How to Train Your Dragon*, *Inception*, *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, *Toy Story 3*. • ANDRE NORTON (YA); Paolo Bacigalupi, *Ship Breaker*; Holly Black, *White Cat*; Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay*; Barry Deutsch, *Hereville: How Mirka Got Her Sword*; Pearl North, *The Boy from Ilysis*; Terry Pratchett, *I Shall Wear Midnight*; Megan Whalen Turner, *A Conspiracy of Kings*; Scott Westerfeld, *Behemoth*. • Winners to be announced 21 May.

**The Dead Past.** *50 Years Ago:* Dr Arthur R. Weir, commemorated by the still-presented Doc Weir Award, died unexpectedly on 4 March 1961 after only two years in fandom. (*Skyrack* 30, March 1961) • *60 Years Ago:* H.P. Lovecraft's *Haunter of the Dark* (Arkham House) was welcomed in Britain: 'If you like your short stories reeking of unspeakable horrors with unpronounceable names committing unthinkable deeds this is your (putrescent) meat.' (*Science Fantasy News* 7, March 1951)

**C.o.A.** Leigh Kennedy [*Priest*], 11 Robertsons Hill, Hastings, TN34 3NU. Email address unchanged.

**Fanfundery.** *Down Under Fan Fund:* Nominations for the 2011 Australasia-NA race close 31 March; voting closes 20 May. Winner to attend the Reno worldcon (above). More from admins: john\_hertz2010 at hotmail dot com; ehawkes at iinet dot net dot au.

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Moody Blues Dept.* 'Only the uncounted, innumerable lakes of The-Blue-That-Blinded and shamed azure as a pale intonation.' (Alan Dean Foster, *The Tar-Aiym Krang*, 1972) [JS] • *Dept of Double Entendre.* "'Hold onto your sister," she ordered [...] "How can I hold my snake at the same time?" She took the snake, of which she was mortally afraid, and settled him in the pouch at the front of Icarus' loincloth. "He will think it's his tube," she reassured the boy.' (Thomas Burnett Swann, *Day of the Minotaur*, 1966) [RF] • *Social Concern Dept.* 'I want something that'll finish these two sneaking traitors, and at the same time get me into no trouble. If it has a twist of drama in it, so much the better. I've thought of calling in the emanation of Yoth, but that needs a child's blood and I must be careful about the neighbours.' (H.P. Lovecraft & Hazel Heald, 'The Man of Stone', *Wonder Stories*, October 1932) [RF] • *Dept of Lines Which Remarkably Were Not Final.* 'And then I lost consciousness. More or less permanently, this time.' (Marion Zimmer Bradley, *The Door through Space*, 1961) [BA] • *Male Anatomy Dept.* 'Manlike, he wore green tight-fitting trunks and a shirt of green fur that revealed bulging biceps where they shouldn't be ...' (*Ibid*) • *Dept of Uncomfortable Simile.* 'The words hung in her ear like a crouton that was too dry to swallow.' (Chris Redding, *Corpse Whisperer*, 2007) [Anon] • *True Romance Dept: Panopticon Division.* "'I love you," Jack told her as he drove into her, taking her completely with one stroke, making love to her all over the room wherever she looked, but the best place to look was right in front of her, directly into the head and passion of his gaze.' (Anna Windsor, *Captive Heart*, 2011) [DN]

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