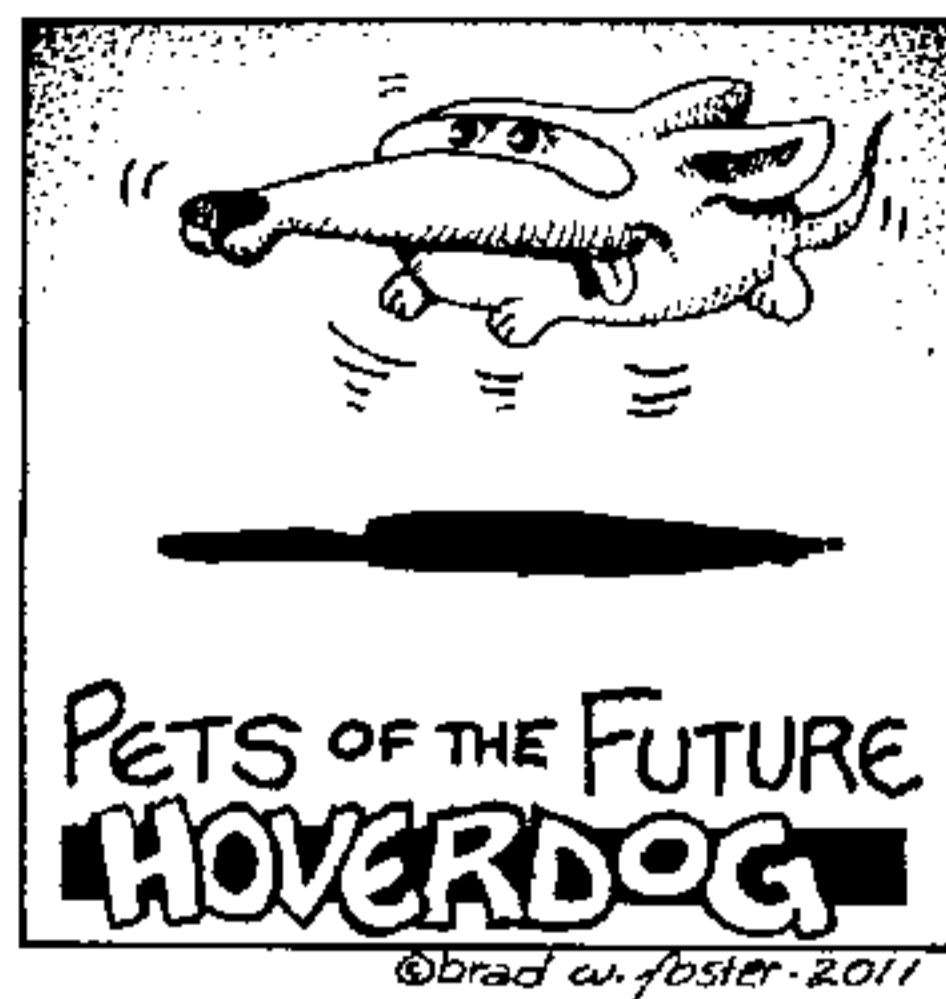


# ansible



## Ansible 287 June 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 or the legendary riches of Vwopdingorp.

**Out of This World.** The British Library sf exhibition, guest-curated by Andy Sawyer and with an official Book of the Show by Mike Ashley, opened on 20 May and has been well reviewed. Don't miss. A preview party on the night before was good fun, densely packed with the usual suspects, including the pride-swelled Ashley and Sawyer. There was much wine, plus strange canapés that may well have been homage to the more exotic alien cuisines of Jack Vance. Introductory speeches by Baroness Blackstone (British Library chair) and China Miéville bounced disconcertingly around the vast echoey foyer. Many of us were thrilled to meet Charles Chilton of BBC Radio *Journey into Space* fame, still going strong at 93. Overcome with emotion and free wine, I failed to notice on that first visit that the exhibition's cataclysm-and-doom segment includes a rare copy of the greatest disaster novel (or novelistic disaster) of all time, *Earthdoom!* by Modesty Forbids and John Grant. Gosh! We have made an exhibition of ourselves. Thanks, Andy....

### The Hand-Reared Boy

**Philip K. Dick**, as a trivia answer, was the last straw that got the setter of a May *Canberra Times* quiz fired. The problem wasn't so much that final question ('Which American novelist wrote the sci-fi novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*') as the overall theme. Each innocuous answer ('What is the official currency of Vietnam?') was also slang for the, ahem, pork sword or one-eyed trouser snake. Some Australians, poor dears, are easily shocked. (*The Register*, 25 May)

**Neil Gaiman** was bemused when the year-old teapot storm about his high speaking fees (given to charity; see A275) was revived by some Minnesota politician called Matt Dean who characterized Neil, 'who I hate,' as a 'pencil-necked little weasel who stole \$45,000 from the state of Minnesota'. Neil, *inter alia*: 'I feel like this is one of those moments where I'm going to discover that I stole his parking space, or had sex with his sister and didn't know. / There's also the really sort of weird kinky Republican thing of maybe he likes me, and this is some sort of weird cry for attention. The whole "I hate you, you're a pencil-neck" thing, and then he'll try for some sort of reconciliation and then the next thing you know he's putting his hand on my leg. It's just going to be weird. It could be awkward.' (*City Pages*, 4 May) Under pressure from his mother, Dean soon issued a semi-apology admitting that the name-calling was wrong without retracting the hate. (*Ibid*, 5 May) [JC]

**Matthew Graham**, co-creator of *Life On Mars* and *Ashes To Ashes* and writer of the May *Doctor Who* episode 'The Rebel Flesh', is less than enthusiastic about his audience, or at least one age-group: 'Doctor Who fans can be very fascistic. But I don't really take them seriously. I don't write it for 45-year-old men.' (*Total TV Guide*, 21-27 May) [MPJ]

**Alex Kingston**, River Song in *Doctor Who*, took up the tale on the Graham Norton Show. *Graham*: 'Fans are incredibly resourceful; Alex, you've just been filming *Doctor Who* in the desert.' *Rob Lowe*: 'Oh, the *Who* fans have gotta be nuts.' *Alex*: 'Yeah. They are.' *Graham*: 'Weren't you out in the middle of Utah somewhere?' *Alex*: 'We were in the middle of Utah ... and we'd never filmed *Doctor Who* in America before, obviously. And the American fans are amazingly resourceful because of Twitter. Everyone now knows that the minute they catch sight of one of you it goes out, and people know where you are. We were in the middle of Monument Valley, the middle of nowhere, and suddenly these fans just appeared, out of the scrub and the desert. They wear those funny anoraks.' *Graham*: 'So you know who they are!' *Alex*: 'It's a bit like trainspotters really, it's awful to say but they kind of are.' (27 May) [JCx] But were they all 45-year-old men? We need to know.

**Gary Shteyngart** won the Wodehouse prize for comic fiction with *Super Sad True Love Story*, set in 'a dystopian, near-future America' and described by a prize judge as 'great literature' and 'wild comedy' but not of course anything sordid like sf. (*Guardian*, 24 May) [MK]

**John Scalzi** has been voted in for a second term as President of SFWA. Among his tastier campaign pledges was: 'I will also finish construction of the SFWA VOLCANO-POWERED LASER which we will use to VAPORIZE ERRANT PUBLISHERS WHO DARE TO DEFY US.'

### Consobrine

Until 25 Sep • **Out of This World** (sf exhibition), PACCAR Gallery, British Library, London. Free. For associated sf/science talks and panels, variously priced, see [www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/outof/events/](http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/outof/events/). Alas, there are too many of these to list individually in *Ansible*.

3 Jun • **British Fantasy Society Open Night**, Mug House, 1-3 Tooley St, London, SE1 2PF. 6pm-late. Free. All welcome.

4 Jun • **BSFA/SF Foundation** mini-convention and AGMs. GoH Mike Ashley (SFF), Tricia Sullivan (BSFA). 10am-5pm. Free. Royal Astronomical Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BQ.

17 Jun • **David Gemmell/Legend** fantasy awards, Magic Circle HQ, 12 Stephenson Way, Euston, London, NW1 2HD. 7:30pm. 'Fan tickets' £20. Contact [christineharrson\\_007](mailto:christineharrson_007@hotmail.com) at hotmail dot com.

17-19 Jun • **Eurocon 2011/Swecon**, Stockholm. *Advance booking now closed*: SEK500 at the door; day rates SEK150 Fri or Sun, SEK250 Sat. Further convention details at [www.eurocon2011.se](http://www.eurocon2011.se).

18 Jun • **CRSF 2011** (academic), Rendall Building, Bedford St South, University of Liverpool, L69 7ZA. 9am for 9:30-6pm. £30 reg. See [www.liv.ac.uk/english/conferences/crsf/](http://www.liv.ac.uk/english/conferences/crsf/); CRSF2011 at gmail com.

25 Jun • **PKD-Day** (Philip K. Dick), George Eliot Building, Clifton Campus, Clifton Lane, Nottingham. 10am-5pm. Free, but tell them if you plan to come: [john\\_dot\\_goodridge@ntu\\_dot\\_ac\\_dot\\_uk](mailto:john_dot_goodridge@ntu_dot_ac_dot_uk).

26 Jun • **Lint the Movie** world première, Brighton. With Steve Aylett. 7pm. Tickets £5. More at <http://tinyurl.com/6h5dayz>.

30 Jun • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 7pm. Free. With Gillian Polack.

23 Jul • **Beer & Blake's 7**, Knight's Templar, Unit 1 Temple Sq, Temple Quay, Bristol, Avon, BS1 6DG. From 12:15pm. All welcome.

30 Jul • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, Bar Convent, York. £18; members £15. Booking closes 16 July. Contact c/o 20 York Rd, Stony Stratford, Bucks, MK11 1BJ. See [www.tolkiensociety.org/seminar/](http://www.tolkiensociety.org/seminar/).

14-20 Nov • **Thought Bubble** (comics), Leeds, inc. 19-20 Nov con at Saviles & Royal Armouries Hall. See [www.thoughtbubblefestival.com](http://www.thoughtbubblefestival.com).

2-4 Feb 2012 • **SFX Weekender 3**, Prestatyn Sands, Holiday Park, North Wales. 'Pre-launch' prices available until some time in June: call 08700 110034. Announcement at [tinyurl.com/SFXWeekPreLaunch](http://tinyurl.com/SFXWeekPreLaunch).

**Rumblings.** *Eastercon 2013*: a bid has emerged, EightSquared for Bradford. See [www.eightsquaredcon.org](http://www.eightsquaredcon.org); contact 19 Uphall Road, Cambridge, CB1 3HX. • *Worldcon 2015*: there's a bid to hold this in Spokane, Washington, in Summer 2015. Website at [spokanein2015.org](http://spokanein2015.org).

### Infinitely Improbable

**Nebula Awards.** NOVEL Connie Willis, *Blackout* and *All Clear*. NOVELLA Rachel Swirsky, 'The Lady Who Plucked Red Flowers Beneath the Queen's Window' (*Subterranean* Summer 2010). NOVELETTE Eric James Stone, 'That Leviathan Whom Thou Hast Made' (*Analog* 9/10). SHORT (tie) Kij Johnson (Tor.com 17/1/10), 'Ponies'; Harlan Ellison, 'How Interesting: A Tiny Man' (*Realms of Fantasy* 2/10). BRADBURY (dramatic) *Inception*. NORTON (YA) Terry Pratchett, *I Shall Wear Midnight*.

**As Others See Us.** 'Even when we consider the realm of fantasy at large, including J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Wizard of Oz*, C.S. Lewis and George Lucas, there's a heavy dose of dourness in the mix. As expansive as fantasy and sci-fi can be, spewing forth know-it-all translation droids and winged monkeys and gigantic worms, it all seems to end in the same predictably doomed battles between factions—armies from the north, east, south, and west, clashing into the night.' (Heather Havrilesky on *A Game of Thrones*, *New York Times Magazine*, 17 April) [MMW]

**World Brain.** *Anne Robinson*: 'In 2006, the *Star Wars* character voted the most annoying film character ever was Jar Jar ... what? *Contestant*: 'Gabor.' *Anne Robinson*: 'The road known as Watling Street, which now incorporates part of the A5, was built by which ancient civilization?' *Contestant*: 'Apes.' (*The Weakest Link*, BBC1) [PI]

**R.I.P.** *William Campbell* (1923-2011), US actor seen in *Star Trek* (notably as the Klingon captain in *The Trouble with Tribbles*) and



ST:DS9, died on 28 April aged 87. [DKMK] • *Jeff Conaway* (1950-2011), US actor whose best-known genre role was as security officer Zack Allan in *Babylon 5* and its spinoff tv movies, died on 27 May aged 60. [IC] • *Jackie Cooper* (1922-2011), US actor who played Perry White in *Superman* (1978) and three sequels, died on 3 May; he was 88. [GW] • *Terry Jeeves* (1922-2011), long-time UK fan artist, writer and publisher, died on 29 May; he was 88. His solo fanzine *Erg* saw 166 issues from 1959 to 2005; he also co-edited *Triode* 1954-1977; his line artwork (including the trademark alien 'Soggies') appeared in many fanzines and won him the 2007 Rotsler Award; a founder member of the BSFA, he edited its critical journal *Vector* 1958-1959; he received the 1965 Doc Weir Award and was inducted into the First Fandom Hall of Fame in 2010. His name, with many others, will travel to Mars on the Mars Science Laboratory Rover. Throughout his long fan career he was well known for welcoming and helping newcomers to the world of fandom. Terry will be much missed. [CD/DR] • *Jeff Jones* (1944-2011, latterly Jeffrey Catherine Jones following a 1998 sex change), major US fantasy, sf and comics artist often compared with Frazetta—who once praised Jones as 'the greatest living painter'—died on 19 May aged 67. Jones won the 1986 World Fantasy Award for best artist. • *Mark Shepherd*, US author, composer and former secretary to Mercedes Lackey, whose novel debut was *Wheels of Fire* (1992) with Lackey and who wrote and co-wrote other novels in her fantasy series, shot himself on 24 May. [SFS] • *Yvette Vickers* (1928-2010), US actress who starred in *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* (1958) and *Demons of the Swamp/Attack of the Giant Leeches* (1959), died naturally at home about a year before being found mummified this April. [DKMK] • *Dolores Fuller* (1923-2011), US actress who inspired Ed Wood (he famously loved to wear her angora sweater) and appeared in his *Glen or Glenda* (1953) and *Bride of the Monster* (1955), died on 9 May aged 88. [MPJ] • *Dana Wynter* (1931-2011), US actress who co-starred in the fabled *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), died on 5 May; she was 79. [SD]

**As Others Classify Us.** *Dave Clements* writes: 'It would appear that the Apple iBooks store knows some things about Al Reynolds's books that we don't. *Galactic North* is classified as humour, while *Diamond Dogs & Turquoise Days* is described as Children's Fiction. Maybe children develop faster in California, and we know the sense of humour is different. But I was worried to find that many of the Revelation Space books, including *Revelation Space* itself, can be found under "religion and spirituality". Maybe Al Reynolds knows more about the universe than we think, since *Century Rain* is classified as biography!'

**More Awards.** *Compton Crook*, first sf/fantasy/horror novel: James Knapp, *State of Decay*. [L] • *Lambda* (LGBT), sf/fantasy/horror category: Sandra McDonald, *Diana Comet and Other Improbable Stories*. [L]

**We Are Everywhere.** On the relentless expansion of a 1970s punk rock collection at New York University library: 'Taylor [*the librarian*] says the Downtown Collection is growing at the rate of "800 linear feet a year", making it sound like one of those uncontrollable furry monsters from a 1950s sci-fi movie.' (*Financial Times*, 14 May) [MMW]

**Mythopoeic Awards** shortlist. ADULT FICTION *Guy Gavriel Kay*, *Under Heaven*; *Karen Lord*, *Redemption in Indigo*; *Patricia A. McKillip*, *The Bards of Bone Plain*; *Devon Monk*, *A Cup of Normal*; *Sharon Shinn*, *Troubled Waters*. • CHILDREN'S *Catherine Fisher*, *Incarceron and Sapphique*; *Terry Pratchett*, *I Shall Wear Midnight*; *Polly Shulman*, *The Grimm Legacy*; *Heather Tomlinson*, *Toads and Diamonds*; *Megan Whalen Turner*, 'The Queen's Thief' series (*The Thief*, *The Queen of Attolia*, *The King of Attolia*, *A Conspiracy of Kings*). • SCHOLARSHIP: *Inklings* *Bradford Lee Eden*, ed., *Middle-earth Minstrel: Essays on Music in Tolkien*; *Verlyn Flieger & Douglas A. Anderson*, eds. *Tolkien on Fairy-stories: Expanded Edition*; *Douglas Charles Kane*, *Arda Reconstructed: The Creation of the Published Silmarillion*; *Steve Walker*, *The Power of Tolkien's Prose: Middle-earth's Magical Style*; *Michael Ward*, *Planet Narnia*. • SCHOLARSHIP: OTHER *Don W. King*, ed., *Out of my Bone: The Letters of Joy Davidman*; *Ursula K. Le Guin*, *Cheek by Jowl*; *Farah Mendlesohn*, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*; *Leslie A. Scoduto*, *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf*; *Caroline Sumpter*, *The Victorian Press and the Fairy Tale*.

**Geometry Masterclass.** 'Vanning sat down, fingering the smock and staring at the metal locker. It was a cube, approximately 3 x 3 x 5, lined with what seemed to be grayish paint, sprayed on.' (*Lewis Padgett*, 'Time Locker', January 1943 *Astounding*) [LA] • 'Using a spade, they had scooped off the topsoil with its grass stalks, leaving a square of earth some three feet wide by five feet long.' (*Jay Williams and Raymond Abrashkin*, *Danny Dunn and the Heat Ray*, 1962) [PL]

**Outraged Letters.** *Sherry Gottlieb* broods on mortality: 'Twenty years after I closed A Change of Hobbit (at that time, the oldest and

largest SF bookstore in the world), I have had an epiphany: My ongoing and lifelong association with the field—beginning as a reader, then as a bookseller for a couple of decades, then as an agent's assistant, a published author, and a book doctor—is over. I recognized very few names on the most recent Hugo Award shortlist published in *Ansible* 286 ... and realized that even fewer people would recognize my name. But even as I become increasingly mired in SF obscurity, there is some comfort in knowing that *Ansible* will probably run a brief obituary when I die (provided that someone tells Dave). Sic transit.' • *Steve Green* listens: 'Naomi Alderman's *Borrowed Time* was described on BBC R4's *World At One* today as "the first *Doctor Who* book to be written by a literary novelist", which must come as a surprise to Michael Moorcock. To be fair to Naomi, she dismissed any distinctions between "literary" and "genre" in the subsequent interview.' (5 May) • *Bryan Talbot* reports from deeper in the ghetto: 'You may think that SF gets short shrift from mainstream media but that's nothing compared to how comics are treated. Recently a production company that regularly makes documentaries for Channel 4 proposed a programme centred on *Alice in Sunderland*. They even sent a copy of the book for the Controller to read. He claimed to have enjoyed it immensely but informed them that he couldn't possibly commission a documentary based on it as "we did a programme [*Comics Britannia*] about comics four years ago".'

**Fanfundery.** *Canadian Unity Fan Fund*. The lucky winner who will be wafted all the way from Canada to far-off Canada is Kent Pollard.

**Media Awards.** *BAFTAs*. Production Design: Tom Bowyer for *Misfits* (E4). Visual Effects: The Mill for *Merlin* (BBC1). • *BAFTA Cymru*. Children's Programme: *The Sarah Jane Adventures*. Sound, Lighting: both *Doctor Who*. • *National Movie Awards*. Fantasy: *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows 1* (part 2 was 'Must See Movie Of The Summer'). Comedy: *Paul*. Animation: *Tangled*. Screen Icon: *Johnny Depp*. [MPJ]

**The Dead Past.** *30 Years Ago*, the Helmdon Council Election: '2801 votes cast, 14 spoilt; Tattersall (Con) 1860, Ian Watson (Lab) 927. "Not bad for a safe Tory seat," Ian told our reporter, adding: "The mob chose Barabbas." (*Ansible* 18, June 1981) • *40 Years Ago*, UK cuts and austerity: 'The Arts Council have discontinued their grants to both *New Worlds* (about £1500) and *Ambit* (£400). The latter will almost certainly fold as a result. Hurrah for jolly Conservatives ...' (*Checkpoint* 5, June 1971). • *50 Years Ago*, a teasing news item: 'John Campbell has joined Liverpool Group—as BASTION 2 will reveal ...' (*Skyrack* 33, June 1961) Not John W. Campbell of *Analog* but John Ramsey Campbell, who legally discarded that first name some 24 years later. (*Ansible* 42, March 1985)

**C.o.A.** *New Worlds* revival: submissions should no longer go to the 'hodson798' address in A286. Try dickjude at googlemail dot com. *Dick and Leah Smith*, 855 S Harvard Drive, Palatine, IL 60067, USA.

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Radiology Dept*. 'Benson's attention was attracted by the whirring and hissing of the X-ray apparatus. [...] "Millstein, you've left your X-ray machine running!" / "Yes, I know," replied Don, eying the other closely. "It has a tight rotor bearing and I'm running it in...."' (*Joseph William Skidmore*, 'Murder by Atom', June 1937 *Amazing*) [KH] • *Dept of Introductions*. 'I am Ayla of the Ninth Cave of the Zeladonii, acolyte of the Zeladonii, First Among Those Who Serve The Great Earth Mother, mated to Jondalar, Master Flint-Knapper and brother of Joharran, leader of the Ninth Cave of the Zeladonii. I was Daughter of the Mammoth Hearth of the Lion Camp of the Mamutoi, Chosen to be the spirit of the Cave Lion, Protected by the Cave Bear, and friend of the horses Whinney, Racer, and Gray, and the four-legged hunter, Wolf.' (*Jean M. Auel*, *The Land of Painted Caves*, 2011) [EH via MMW] • *True Romance Dept*. 'You mean the babe? Wow! Isn't she built like a force-field latrine, though?' (*Isaac Asimov*, *The End of Eternity*, 1955) [PB] • *Eyeballs in the Sky*. 'Waldo began to nod. His lids, yellow-swollen with exhaustion, would crawl down over his eyes like grubs over two rotting berries ...' (*Ellery Queen*, *Double, Double*, 1950) • *Brain Strain Dept*. '... there was a swollen ache behind her eyes where the day's experiences had kicked bruises in her brain.' 'Three exhausted men drew their horses up in a phalanx across Gally's brain.' (*James Long*, *Ferney*, 1998) [PB] • *Dept of Painful Metaphor*. 'She towed him in her wake to Ferney's house, caution overruled by the pressing need to be out of the jaws of this human nutcracker.' (*Ibid*)

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