

# Ansible



## Ansible 313 August 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 fun, fantasy, confusion and catastrophe.

**Me Again.** As a trial run before releasing the Algis Budrys *F&SF* 'Books' column collections in ebook form to complement the utterly wonderful trade paperbacks, my almost popular comic novel *The Leaky Establishment* is now available as an ebook. See [ae.ansible.co.uk/ebooks.php](http://ae.ansible.co.uk/ebooks.php).

### The Shadow Out of Time

**Iain Banks** had a surprise memorial in a 24 June *Independent* crossword set by 'Alchemi', featuring the one-word answers BUSINESS CANAL DREAMS COMPLICITY CROW ROAD WALKING GLASS WASP FACTORY WHIT. [PM] On 23 June, asteroid 5099 was officially named Iainbanks by the International Astronomical Union 'and will be referred to as such for as long as Earth Culture may endure.' (Minor Planet Center blog, 1 July)

**Arthur C. Clarke** will make it into space after all; at least a few of his scalp hairs will, in a late-2014 'space burial' launch of 'a giant kite which will sail through space like a galleon on solar winds'—called *Sun-jammer* after his 1964 story. Your hairs can travel with the great man's for a mere £8000 per (fraction of a) head. (*Independent*, 30 June) [MPJ]

**Richard Driscoll**, UK film producer who wrote and directed the horror comedy *Eldorado* (2012), was sentenced to three years in jail for a £1.5 million VAT fraud based on hugely inflating the actual expenses of this and other productions. (BBC, 1 July) [MPJ]

**James Frenkel** is no longer an editor at Tor Books (see also A312). Patrick Nielsen Hayden announced the departure in a succession of tweets: 'James Frenkel is no longer associated with Tor Books. We wish him the best. / We'll be contacting the authors and agents Mr. Frenkel worked with to discuss which editor here they'll be working with going forward. / This process will take some days or even weeks, so please be patient if you don't hear from us instantly. / Finally, if you had something on submission to Tor via Mr. Frenkel, you'll need to resubmit it via some other Tor editor. / If you don't have a particular editor in mind, you can re-submit it via Diana Pho (diana.pho [at] tor.com) who will route it appropriately.' (all 11 July)

**H.P. Lovecraft** will join Neil Gaiman and Frank Herbert (see A312) as a place name. The city council of Providence, Rhode Island, voted to give the name H.P. Lovecraft Square to the intersection of Angell Street, where HPL lived for years, and Prospect Street, home of his doomed character Charles Dexter Ward. (*Providence Journal*, 17 July) [PDF] Eldritch geometries and blasphemous ichor are surely to be expected.

**David Morris MP**, a member of the House of Commons spaceflight committee, referred during a BBC spot on the Moon and space tourism to 'Lunar winds' covering the Apollo landers with dust. [CE]

**Flann O'Brien** (1911-1966) continues his posthumous career with a new story collection whose editors are convinced that he appeared in *Amazing Stories Quarterly* for Winter 1932 with the comic sf tale 'Naval Control', published as by John Shamus O'Donnell—a name resembling other O'Brien pseudonyms. (*The Irish Catholic*, 11 July) [JN] There was an unseemly rush to add this vital datum to his *SF Encyclopedia* entry. *The Plain People of Fandom*: Of course we knew it all along, so we did.

**J.K. Rowling**, whose crime-fiction pseudonym Robert Galbraith was outed in the *Sunday Times* on 14 July, sadly acknowledged the truth of the ancient adage: 'When you confide a deep dark secret in total confidence to your trusted solicitors (Russells of London), one of the firm's partners (Chris Gossage) will tell his wife's best friend and she will proceed to spill the beans via Twitter.' (BBC, 14/18 July) The inevitable conspiracy theory—'it's all a publicity ploy to make the Galbraith novel *The Cuckoo's Calling* a best-seller'—was punctured by the discovery that UK bookshops had very few if any copies to meet the sudden demand.

### Concavoconvex

Until 11 Aug • **David Bowie Is** (exhibition), V&A, London. 10am-5:45pm (10pm Fri). Last chance to see this; with a fair amount of sf content. More at [www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/david-bowie-is/](http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/david-bowie-is/).

Until 27 Oct • **Space Age Archaeology**: Eduardo Paolozzi and Science Fiction, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh. Free. 10am-5pm. See [www.nationalgalleries.org/visit/introduction-118](http://www.nationalgalleries.org/visit/introduction-118).

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. £60 reg, day pass £30, via [fantastiq.co.uk](http://fantastiq.co.uk) (see under 'News'). Contact Reel Solutions, Dean Clough, Halifax, HX3 5AX.

9-11 Aug • **Nine Worlds Geekfest** (multimedia), Renaissance Hotel and others, Heathrow. Now £95 reg; £99 at the door. Advance booking online only at [nineworlds.co.uk](http://nineworlds.co.uk).

18 Aug • **An Evening with Neil Gaiman**, Portsmouth Guildhall. 7:30pm. £6 plus booking fee. 023 9282 4355 or [tinyurl.com/n4jln5h](http://tinyurl.com/n4jln5h).

28 Aug • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Argyle pub, Leather Lane, London. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Ian Stewart. Free; all welcome.

29 Aug - 2 Sep • **LoneStarCon 3** (71st Worldcon), San Antonio, Texas. Rates now and at the door: \$240 reg; YA/military \$120; child \$75; family \$540. 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.

7 Sep • **TitanCon** (sf & *Game of Thrones*), Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast. £25 reg; £5 supp. Join online at [www.titancon.com](http://www.titancon.com) (PayPal only, with £1.20 surcharge on full membership).

22-24 Feb 2015 • **Redemption '15** (multimedia sf), Britannia Hotel, Fairfax St, Coventry, CV1 5RP. £65 reg to 30 August 2013, £70 to 11 February 2015 (concessions £20 off); £40/day (concessions £5 off); under-18s £25 or £15/day; £15 supp; under-3s free. Contact 61 Chaucer Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 8SP.

16 Mar 2014 • **EM-Con** (mostly media/*Red Dwarf*), Albert Hall, Nottingham. Many guests. Tickets £12 'early entry' (10am-5pm), £9 'all day' (11am-5pm: the day starts late in Nottingham), under-5s free; £5 at door for evening live-music party elsewhere. See [www.em-con.co.uk](http://www.em-con.co.uk).

**Rumblings**. For numerous August *Prisoner*-related tours and events, mostly in London, see [www.theunmutual.co.uk/events.htm](http://www.theunmutual.co.uk/events.htm).

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us.** *It Really Happened Dept*: Singer Katherine Jenkins is asked, 'What can't you miss on telly?' Her reply: 'Right now I'm into *The White Queen*; before that it was *Game of Thrones*. I'm a bit of a history geek.' (*Radio Times*, July) [MC] • *Nomenclature Dept*. On the Project Ansible integrated-communications thingy from Siemens: 'The aspect of Ansible that I'd like to highlight is its name, which is some kind of sci-fi reference. You see, Ansible is the machine Lieutenant Uhura used to warn Chewbacca about Voldemort attacking the Tardis. Something like that.' (Brian Riggs, NoJitter.com, 16 July) [TB]

**Awards.** *Branford Boase*, for both author and editor of a UK novel for children of 7 and up: Dave Shelton ed. David Fickling, *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat*. [MPJ] • *Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery* for neglected authors: Wyman Guin, best known for 'Beyond Bedlam' (1951 *Galaxy*). • *Munsey* 'for the betterment of the pulp community': Garyn G. Roberts. • *Mythopoeic* (fantasy) ADULT FICTION Ursula Vernon, *Digger* volumes 1-6. CHILDREN'S Sarah Beth Durst, *Vessel*. SCHOLARSHIP—INKLINGS Verlyn Flieger, *Green Suns and Faërie: Essays on J.R.R. Tolkien*. SCHOLARSHIP—OTHER Nancy Marie Brown, *Song of the Vikings: Snorri and the Making of Norse Myths*. • *Prometheus* (libertarian): Cory Doctorow, *Pirate Cinema*. Hall of Fame: Neal Stephenson, *Cryptonomicon*.

**It's the Arts.** There was much *Schadenfreude* at the news that a UK artist who made a papier-mache sculpture from comics found in a skip (including a first edition of *The Avengers*) had transformed their value from £20,000-£50,000 to Not Very Much At All. (BBC, 6 July) [GD/MPJ]

**R.I.P.** Eileen Brennan (1932-2013), US actress whose genre credits include *Freaky Friday* (1995), *Jeepers Creepers* (2001) and *The Hollow* (2004), died on 28 July aged 80. [SFS] • Louis S. Glanzman (1922-2013), US artist and book illustrator whose career began at age 16 with Centaur Publications comics including *Amazing Man*, died in July. [PDF] • Mick Farren (1943-2013), UK writer and rock musician who wrote two dozen genre books—beginning with the counterculture-steeped and proto-cyberpunk *The Texts of Festival* (1973) and the *DNA Cowboys*

trilogy—died after a heart attack on stage while performing with his group The Deviants on 27 July. He was 69. [CSM] • *George Inzer*, Southern US sf fan, died from a heart attack on 12 February; he was 64. [GHL] • *Len Leone* (1921-2013), US art director at Bantam Books from 1955 to 1984, died on 1 July aged 92. As well as working with Vincent Di Fate, Boris Vallejo and many other sf/fantasy artists, he was instrumental in the design of the Doc Savage pulp reprints. [AIP] • *Briony McRoberts* (1957-2013), UK actress whose genre credits include the live-action *Peter Pan* (1976) and the Jekyll and Hyde film *Edge of Sanity* (1989), died on 17 July; she was 56. [AW] • *David Rogers* (1927-2013), US playwright whose stage adaptations include *Brave New World* and musicals of *The Hobbit* and *Charlie and Algernon* (based on *Flowers for Algernon*), died on 5 June; he was 85. [PDF] • *Mel Smith* (1952-2013), UK writer/actor best known for tv comedy and seen in the genre films *Morons from Outer Space* (1985), which he co-wrote, *The Princess Bride* (1987) and *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* (1989), died on 18 July aged 60. [AW/SG] • *Alan Whicker* (1921-2013), UK journalist, broadcaster and celebrity interviewer satirized in Monty Python's 'Whicker Island' sketch, died on 11 July aged 91 (87 according to most obits; he had 'adjusted' his birthdate to 1925). The sf link: he attended the 1957 London Worldcon and interviewed fans, if wearing sufficiently silly costumes, for the BBC TV *Tonight* programme. [JL] • *John David Wilson* (1919-2013), UK-born animator, producer and director who worked on Disney's *Peter Pan*, *Lady and the Tramp* (opening credits) and Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck features, died on 20 June aged 93. [PDF] He also created the *Journey To The Stars* animation for NASA's Space Pavilion at the Seattle World's Fair, 1960. [MPJ] • *Snoo Wilson* (1948-2013) UK playwright whose satirical sf novels are *Spaceache* (1984) and *Inside Babel* (1985), died on 3 July; he was 64. [JC]

**In Typo Veritas.** 'He wore no shirt, only a vest, with the white hair of his chest showing atop the plunging collar. A thin golden chair clung snugly to the folds of his neck.' (Jeffrey Ford, 'A Meeting in Oz' in *Oz Reimagined* ed. John Joseph Adams, Douglas Cohen) [KS] • *Muphry's Law*, formulated by John Bangsund, rarely fails: an *Analog* jeremiad about e-publications—with 'common, easily correctable, obnoxious mistakes that even a so-so old school editor desperate for material would demand be fixed.'—refers soon after to the 'space travel non-fiction of Arthur C. Clark'. (Jeffery Kooistra, *Analog*, September 2013) [AL]

**Sidewise Award** (alt-history) shortlist: SHORT Lou Antonelli, 'Great White Ship' (*DailySF* 5/11/12); Sean McMullen, 'Steamgothic' (*Interzone* 7/12); Ian Sales, *Adrift on the Sea of Rains*; Catherynne Valente, 'Fade to White' (*Clarkesworld* 8/12); Rick Wilber, 'Something Real' (*Asimov's* 4/12). LONG Thomas Brennan, *Doktor Glass*; Mark Hodder, *Expedition to the Mountains of the Moon*; Jack McDevitt & Mike Resnick, *The Cassandra Project*; Matt Ruff, *The Mirage*; C.J. Sansom, *Dominion*.

**As Others See Us II.** On Max Brooks: 'Brooks has a deep understanding of history and geopolitics—he isn't just a standard-issue sci-fi author hopping on the zombie train. Rather, he's the engineer of that train, at least in its modern renaissance.' And: 'He (Brooks) appreciates that he has fans with streaks of nerd that run so deep that they appreciate the elaborate, chilling, too-real world he created in *World War Z*. As someone who can quote any episode of "Babylon 5," he is very close to this demographic.' (*NY Times* magazine, 23 June) [MMW]

**Outraged Letters.** *Steve Jeffery*: 'Heard just now on tonight's *I'm Sorry, I Haven't a Clue*. In "Suggestions for books that are guaranteed not to sell", one of the panel suggested *Alice in Sunderland*. Should someone tell that nice Mr Talbot?' (29 July) • *Dave Lally* on Simon R. Green (A312) and that rumoured trove of *Doctor Who* episodes: 'I have just been given to understand from v. gd. authority that (i) Simon's "Please Let It Be True" is indeed true, (ii) there are a no. of other lost TV eps, i.e. other than *Dr Who*, involved, (iii) negotiations are still at a v. delicate stage and (iv) if successful (keep praying!!), an announcement will be made (just in time for the gd. Dr's big 50!).' (27 July)

**Magazine Scene.** Andy Cox of *Interzone* and *Black Static* expostulated: 'What idiot put the same barcode on *Interzone* 247 and *Black Static* 35?' (Facebook, 31 July) At least the latter is correct....

**We Are Not Everywhere.** *Linn's Stamp News* (27 May) reports that under a new US Post Office marketing manager, commemorative stamp plans 'no longer include likely poorly selling subjects like science fiction.' The planned Asimov, Bradbury, Dick, Heinlein and Herbert stamps, first postponed until 2014, may never appear. [AIP]

**The Dead Past.** *70 Years Ago*, frivolity was deplored: 'I have noticed that you British fans have developed quite a tendency to ape the alleged "humor" of American fanzines—even in some cases reprinting humorous items verbatim. Generally speaking, the British fanzines

I've seen so far display a decidedly sane and level-headed approach, and it is my sincere hope that you Britons will keep your magazines serious. If you must imitate or reprint from America, refrain from the giddy items disgracing so many of our publications. Some things should be allowed to moulder into oblivion.' (Francis T. Laney, *Futurian War Digest* 30, August 1943) • *50 Years Ago*, news of a sought-after sf author: 'The police are looking for a James White in connection with the recent Great Mail Train Robbery.' (*Skyrack* 57, August 1963)

**Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells.** According to the BBFC, the three most complained-about films of 2012 were *The Woman in Black* remake ('too dark' for its 12A certificate), *Men in Black III* ('strong language, violence and sexual innuendo') and, despite 'edits to remove violent battle detail', *The Hunger Games*. (*Digital Spy*, 11 July) [MPJ]

**Random Fandom.** *Dragon Con, Inc.* is a new company replacing the huge US convention's former company Dragon\*Con/ACE Inc. The significant change is that founding organizer Ed Kramer—still awaiting trial on child molestation charges dating back to 2000, which led to a vigorous Dragon\*Con boycott campaign—is no longer involved.

**C.o.A.** *Jim Caughran*, 500 Duplex Ave, Apt 3310, Toronto, Ontario M4R 1V6, Canada. *Mike Scott and Flick*, Dane Farm House, Bladbean, Canterbury, CT4 6LY.

**TV Poll.** The Writer's Guild of America voted on the 100 best-written tv series: *The Twilight Zone* (1959) was top genre choice at #3. Also: 26 *The X-Files*, 27 *Lost*, 33 *Star Trek*, 35 *Twin Peaks*, 38 *Battlestar Galactica*, 40 *Game of Thrones*, 49 *Buffy*, 79 *Star Trek: TNG*, 90 *The Prisoner*. [SV] Outraged letter from Mr Lally to follow soon....

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Thog by Gaslight*. 'He looked down at the tiny silver piece. It was a Victorian-era shilling, worth only five pennies in its day.' 'Her body was hunched, shoulders right above the tips of her toes.' 'Got into fisticuffs with another railman and beat him over the head with his pint o' bitters. It was a grim sight.' 'Identically uniformed constables streamed in and out of the front gate and up into the five-story as if they were tiny bubbles of carbon dioxide in a great bunsen burner.' 'He ground his teeth as he pulled, and he thought he might bite through his own molars.' (all Graham Moore, *The Sherlockian*, 2010) [PB] • *True Romance Dept.* 'But then the tips of her breasts became erect on their own, and the flood in her loins washed morals, despair, and all other abstract assessments away in a cloud of some sort of divine cologne of his. Now his big generative jockey was inside her pelvic saddle, riding, riding, riding, and she was eagerly swallowing it swallowing it swallowing it with the saddle's own lips and maw—all this without a word.' (Tom Wolfe, *Back to Blood*, 2012) [MMW] • *Eyeballs in the Sky*. "Be quiet," Alison Marie whispered, her eyes darting toward the door so quickly that she thought they might tear themselves from their sockets and continue on without her.' (Barbara A. Barnett, 'Memories of Mirrored Worlds', *Daily Science Fiction*, 5 July 2013) [PB] • *Dept of Prehistoric Adventure*. 'The torch of human life was burning very low, flickering the ever-present moist tepidity. It was a humid, vaporous world. In that particular cycle of evolution, scientists now academically compute, was millions of years ago, during the paleolithic age.' [*We meet the apeman Gowg:*] "Ghkr, rqrk, lkqr!" The guttural speech almost exhausted his limited vocabulary.' [*Gowg encounters a huge herbivore:*] 'He did not know that millions of years later man would guess at great length and profoundly name that creature a Brontossaurus.' [*More fauna:*] '... carnivorous, reptile beasts were gathered around a bubbling tar pit, trying to eat an unlucky saber-toothed tiger.' [*Pterodactyl attack!*] "Gngke!" Gowg snarled a warning to his family. [...] the weird winged made straight for Gowg, its fanged mouth drooling in anticipation of a tender morsel.' [*He clouts it:*] 'The mighty reptile, weighing possibly tons, was dazed for a moment.' [*But:*] 'Its almost useless feet, that were attached to the webbed wings, lurched the enrage animal at Gowg with amazing speed.' 'Desperately he tried to think, and something seemed to snap in his small brain. Spurred mentally by the peril, he thought and reasoned quickly, for the first time in his life.' [*2001-style insight follows! Pterodactyl succumbs to hurled rock. Cut to the moral:*] 'Our ancestors had again bravely and heroically fanned the flame—of the torch of life—that we might exist. THE END' (all Joe W. Skidmore, 'The Torch of Life', *Marvel Tales* July/August 1934) [DL]

Ansible 313 © David Langford, 2013. Thanks to Paul Barnett, Terry Bisson, John Clute, Mat Coward, Gordon Davie, Paul Di Filippo, Cathy Easthope, Steve Green, Martyn P. Jackson, Denny Lien, Guy H. Lillian, Locus, Andy Love, Peter Mabey, Charles Shaar Murray, Jess Nevins, Andrew I. Porter, Adam Roberts, Karen Schaffer, SF Site (Steven H Silver), Steve Volk, Andrew Wells, Martin Morse Wooster, and our Hero Distributors: Dave Corby (BSFG), SCIS/Prophecy, Alan Stewart (Australia).  
1 August 2013