

# Ansible



## ANSIBLE 309 APRIL 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: Steve Stiles. Available for SAE or extracts from *The Anatomy of Nonscience*.

**EightSquaredCon.** Very brief notes on the Bradford Eastercon: • **Hugos:** nominations were announced; see far below. • **BSFA Awards** winners were: NOVEL Adam Roberts, *Jack Glass*; SHORT Ian Sales, *Adrift on the Sea of Rains*; ARTWORK blacksheep, for the cover of *Jack Glass*; NONFICTION The World SF Blog, chief editor Lavie Tidhar. • **In Typo Veritas:** Thog likes the hotel's plug, in every room's Guest Information book, for 'Our Four Season Brassiere'. Happily, 'our Brassiere has a no smoking policy ...' Also admired on the breakfast menu was the possible Aldiss homage 'Hand-reared pork sausages'. [BB] • **Eastercon 2015:** No official bid emerged; reportedly a one-year-notice London bid will be presented in Glasgow next Easter. • **Doc Weir Award** for unsung heroes of fandom: Jan van't Ent, the first non-British winner.

### Against a Dark Background

**Iain Banks'** online announcement headed 'I am officially Very Poorly.' was widely circulated and brought widespread dismay: 'The bottom line, now, I'm afraid, is that as a late stage gall bladder cancer patient, I'm expected to live for "several months" and it's extremely unlikely I'll live beyond a year. So it looks like my latest novel, *The Quarry*, will be my last.' (www.iain-banks.net) Oh damn. There are no words for this.

**Orson Scott Card's** *Adventures of Superman* script for DC Comics, controversial not for its actual content but on account of Card's vigorous anti-gay polemics elsewhere, was put on hold when artist Chris Sprouse left the project. Sprouse stated: 'The media surrounding this story reached the point where it took away from the actual work, and that's something I wasn't comfortable with.' (*Wired*, 5 March) See A308.

**Anders Celsius** (1701-1744), Swedish astronomer who proposed the scale of temperature now named for him, indulged in sf speculations in his working diary circa 1735. Interplanetary travel and war; multi-century interstellar flights; Wellsian invisibility! This fragment, unpublished until 1991, remained untranslated and unknown in sf circles until very recently. (*European SF Portal*, 26 February) [AE]

**George Lucas** had an alt-history moment: 'The sequence with the battleships at each other is from an old pirate movie or an old seafaring movie from the 1700s.' (*Revenge of the Sith* DVD commentary) [CM]

**Mike Moorcock**, according to one of the more subtly terrifying news stories posted on 1 April, had his beard shaved off. Credit went to 'the famous Texan barber Olaf Priol'. (*Moorcock's Miscellany*) [RH]

### Confract

Until 11 Aug • **David Bowie Is** (exhibition), V&A, London. 10am-5:45pm (10pm Fri). See Outraged Letters below for a note on sf content. More at [www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/david-bowie-is/](http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/david-bowie-is/).

Until 8 Sep • **Alien Revolution** (exhibition), Royal Observatory, Greenwich. Free. See [www.rmg.co.uk/visit/events/alien-revolution](http://www.rmg.co.uk/visit/events/alien-revolution).

11-21 Apr • **Bradford After Dark** (film), Bradford: horror strand of Bradford Film Festival. See [www.bradfordfilmfestival.org.uk](http://www.bradfordfilmfestival.org.uk).

11-14 Apr • **Eurocon 2013**, Expo Plaza, Kiev, Ukraine. 35 reg online at [eurocon.org.ua](http://eurocon.org.ua) or at door; day rates 5 Thur, 15 Fri or Sat.

13-14 Apr • **QED** (science/skeptics), Mercure Piccadilly Hotel, Manchester, M1 4PH. SOLD OUT; see [www.qedcon.org](http://www.qedcon.org) for waiting list.

16 Apr - 21 May • **Aliens in SF** (Tuesday evening course), Royal Observatory. £72. See [www.rmg.co.uk/visit/events/aliens-in-sci-fi](http://www.rmg.co.uk/visit/events/aliens-in-sci-fi).

25-28 Apr • **Dead by Dawn** (horror film festival), Filmhouse, Edinburgh. Box office 0131 228 2688; [www.deadbydawn.co.uk](http://www.deadbydawn.co.uk).

28 Apr • **Event Horizon**, Derby Conference Centre, London Rd, Derby. 11am-6pm. £5 at door; £10 for early entry (100 tickets only) at 9:30 or 10am. Contact [ehmderbyevents@gmail.com](mailto:ehmderbyevents@gmail.com).

30 Apr - 6 May • **Sci-Fi-London** (film festival), BFI Southbank Strafford Picturehouse. See [www.sci-fi-london.com/festival](http://www.sci-fi-london.com/festival).

9-11 Aug • **Nine Worlds Geekfest** (multimedia), Renaissance Hotel and others, Heathrow. £75 reg to 31 May, £85 to 30 July, £95 to 8 August, £99 at door. Payment online only at [ninemeworlds.co.uk](http://ninemeworlds.co.uk). The seeming event philosophy is that UK Eastercons and Worldcons are too small and narrowly focused, and that we need something like the US

GenCon, Dragon\*Con or Comic-Con with their 40,000 to 130,000 attendees; early plans for 20,000 seem to have been scaled down a bit.

8 Nov • **The Weird** (conference on weird fiction), Inst of English Studies, Senate House, University of London. Cost TBA, £30 or less. Call for papers by 1 August: [theweirdconference@gmail.com](mailto:theweirdconference@gmail.com).

7-9 Feb 2014 • **2emi6breve** (filk), Ramada Grantham Hotel. £37 reg; £24 unwaged; under-18s £1/year; under-5s free. Cheques: UK Filk Convention, c/o 159 Winns Avenue, Walthamstow, London, E17 5HB.

18-21 Apr 2014 • **Satellite 4** (Eastercon), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. Rates until 4 April 2014 are £65 reg; £50 unwaged; £20 supp/junior (12-17); £5 child (5-11); £1 infant. Contact c/o Flat 2/1, 691 Shields Rd, Pollokshields, Glasgow, G41 4QL.

14-18 Aug 2014 • **Loncon 3** (72nd Worldcon), London Docklands. £95.00 reg and £230.00 family, rising to £105 and £245 on 1 May 2013, when presupporter discounts cease. Other rates unchanged: £65.00 YA; £30.00 child; £2.00 infant; £25.00 supp. Full membership can be paid for in 3 quarterly or 4 monthly instalments. See [www.loncon3.org](http://www.loncon3.org).

22-24 Feb 2015 • **Redemption '15** (multimedia sf), Britannia Hotel, Fairfax St, Coventry, CV1 5RP. £55 reg rising to £65 on 1 May 2013. Contact 61 Chaucer Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 8SP.

### Infinitely Improbable

**Just Not Cricket.** 'An Intellectual Property Officer has ruled that a London-based company cannot use "Batsman" as trademark for a range of cricket-related products because it is too close to "Batman" owned by DC Comics. The Officer accepted there was a "conceptual dissonance" between the two words but that they "may be easily mistaken for one another". He also added that there was a comic book character called Batsman, who is the "disembodied consciousness of a future Batman".' (*The Cricketer* magazine, April 2013) [MPJ]

**Awards.** *Clarke Award* shortlist: Adrian Barnes, *Nod*; Chris Beckett, *Dark Eden*; Nick Harkaway, *Angelmaker*; Peter Heller, *The Dog Stars*; Ken MacLeod, *Intrusion*; Kim Stanley Robinson, *2312*. • *Philip K. Dick*: Brian Francis Slattery, *Lost Everything*; special citation, Andri Snær Magnason, *Lovestar*. [GVG] • *Tiptree*: Caitlin R. Kiernan, *The Drowning Girl*; Kiini Ibura Salaam, *Ancient, Ancient*.

**Publishers & Sinners.** Night Shade Books, whose difficulties have been rumoured for some while, was struck off SFWA's list of qualifying markets on 3 April. Authors have the awkward choice of becoming part of a sell-off of NS assets to Skyhorse Publishing and Start Publishing on terms less attractive than existing NS contracts, or risking their rights being tied up indefinitely in NS's possible Chapter 7 bankruptcy. The deal depends on enough NS authors agreeing to it... (*Locus*, *PW*, io9)

**R.I.P.** *Bob Clarke* (1926-2013), US artist who illustrated 'Ripley's Believe It or Not!' and was a *Mad* magazine stalwart in the 1950s and 1960s, died on 31 March; he was 87. [PDF] • *Didier Comès* (1942-2013), Belgian comics creator best known for the fantasy graphic novel *Silence* (1980) and its follow-ups, died on 7 March aged 70. [PDF] • *Basil Copper* (1924-2013), UK author of many supernatural horror and Cthulhu Mythos tales (also of detective stories continuing the adventures of August Derleth's Solar Pons), died on 3 April; he was 89. [SJ via MA] He was honoured as World Horror Grandmaster in 2010. • *Richard E. Geis* (1927-2013), US author, publisher and fan who won many fan Hugos between 1969 and 1983—seven (one tied) as fan-writer and six (one tied) for best fanzine with *Science Fiction Review/The Alien Critic*—died on 4 February aged 85. [DL] Most of his fictional output of 110+ volumes was soft porn, but there were several sf titles including collaborations with Elton T. Elliott. Geis published the online fanzine *Taboo Opinions* 2004-2010, and was an *Ansible* correspondent until eyesight failed him in 2012. • *Richard Griffiths* (1947-2013), UK actor who played Vernon Dursley in five Harry Potter films (2001-2010), died on 28 March aged 65. Other genre credits include *Superman II* (1980), the tv *Gormenghast* (as Swelter, 2000) and *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* (2011). [BaB/SG] • *Rick Hautala* (1949-2013), Finnish-US horror author and screenwriter whose *Night Stone*



(1986) was a bestseller and who received the Bram Stoker Award for lifetime achievement in 2012, died on 21 March; he was 64. [AIP/JS] ● *Jane Henson* (1934-2013), wife of Jim Henson, who designed many of the Muppets and also worked as a puppeteer on the show, died on 2 April; she was 78. [MPJ] ● *James Herbert* (1943-2013), popular UK author of many bestselling horror novels beginning with *The Rats* (1974, filmed 1982 as *Deadly Eyes*) and including *The Fog* (1975), *The Survivor* (1976, filmed 1981), *Fluke* (1977, filmed 1995), *Haunted* (1988, filmed 1995) and *Creed* (1990), died on 20 March aged 69. He received the OBE in 2010. ● *Mitchell Hooks* (1923-2013), US artist who produced covers (including some sf) for several paperback imprints as well as much magazine work, died in March at age 89. [AIP] ● Late notice: *Dan Morgan* (1925-2011), UK guitarist and author of several sf novels including *The Richest Corpse in Show Business* (1966), the telepathy series beginning with *The New Minds* (1967) and the *Venturer Twelve* space adventure trilogy (1968-1973 with John Kippax), died on 4 November 2011 aged 85. [SW] At the time this went unreported in sf circles. ● *Milo O'Shea* (1926-2013), Irish character actor whose best known sf role was the wicked tyrant Duran Duran (or Durand-Durand) in the 1968 *Barbarella*, died on 2 April aged 86. [MPJ] ● *Eris Parsons* (formerly Zoe), UK fan and convention-goer who had been deeply troubled and often spoke of suicide, reportedly killed herself on 30 March. ● *Don Payne* (1964-2013), US writer/producer who scripted or co-scripted *My Super Ex-Girlfriend* (2006), *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* (2007), *Thor* (2011), *Maximum Ride* (2013), *Thor: The Dark World* (2013) and episodes of *The Simpsons*, died on 26 March aged 48. [PDF] ● *Jennifer Schwabach* (1967-2013), US author and poet whose novels are *Dark Winter* (2006) and *Curse's Captive* (2007), died on 26 March; she was 45. [SFS] ● *David B. Silva*, US horror writer (first published 1981), anthologist and editor of the magazine *The Horror Show* 1982-1991, died in March aged 62. [GVG] ● *Toren Smith* (1960-2013), US comics entrepreneur and translator whose Studio Proteus brought adapted Japanese manga to the American market, died on 4 March; he was 52. He co-wrote three series of English manga adaptations of the *Dirty Pair* sf franchise. [JonC] ● *Derek Watkins*, UK trumpet player on every James Bond film soundtrack from *Dr No* to *Skyfall*, died on 22 March aged 68. [PDF] ● *Paul Williams* (1948-2013), US author, editor and fan best known outside sf circles for inventing rock journalism in 1966 with *Crawdaddy* (using his fanzine publishing experience from the 1962-1963 *Within*), died after long illness on 27 March; he was 64. [DGH] As Philip K Dick's literary executor he promoted Dick's posthumous career and ran the PKD Society 1983-1992; his *Only Apparently Real* (1986) is an early contribution to the now vast field of Dick studies; he launched a notable project to collect all Theodore Sturgeon's short fiction, editing 11 of the resulting 13 volumes.

**As Others See Us.** Marvelling at the success of *Game of Thrones*, the *Telegraph* pinpoints its assumed minority audience: 'Aside from The Lord of the Rings, the thinking goes, audiences have always been resistant to grand fantasy. So it is strange that the programme, based on George RR Martin's bestselling books, is Sky Atlantic's most popular, and has drawn millions of unexpected fans: housewives and historians, as well as the expected men with beards.' (2 April) [MPJ]

**The Inescapable Hugo Nominations.** NOVEL (1113 ballots) Kim Stanley Robinson, *2312*; Mira Grant, *Blackout*; Lois McMaster Bujold, *Captain Vorpatril's Alliance*; John Scalzi, *Redshirts*; Saladin Ahmed, *Throne of the Crescent Moon*. ● NOVELLA (587) Nancy Kress, *After the Fall, Before the Fall, During the Fall*; Brandon Sanderson, *The Emperor's Soul*; Aliette de Bodard, *On a Red Station, Drifting*; Mira Grant, *San Diego 2014: The Last Stand of the California Browncoats*; Jay Lake, 'The Stars Do Not Lie' (*Asimov's* 10/12). NOVELETTE (616) Thomas Olde Heuvelt, 'The Boy Who Cast No Shadow' (*Postscripts* 26/27); Catherynne M. Valente, 'Fade to White' (*Clarkesworld* 8/12); Pat Cadigan, 'The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi' by (*Edge of Infinity*); Seanan McGuire, 'In Sea-Salt Tears' (self-published); Seanan McGuire, 'Rat-Catcher' (*A Fantasy Medley* 2). ● SHORT (662) Aliette de Bodard, 'Immersion' (*Clarkesworld* 6/2012); Kij Johnson, 'Mantis Wives' (*Clarkesworld*, 8/2012); Ken Liu, 'Mono no Aware' (*The Future is Japanese*)—others eliminated by a rules requirement for 5% of the category vote. ● RELATED WORK (584) Edward James & Farah Mendlesohn, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*; Lynne M. Thomas & Sigrid Ellis, ed., *Chicks Dig Comics: A Celebration of Comic Books by the Women Who Love Them*; Deborah Stanish & L.M. Myles, ed., *Chicks Unravel Time: Women Journey Through Every Season of Doctor Who*; John Helfers, ed., *I Have an Idea for a Book... The Bibliography of Martin H. Greenberg*; Brandon Sanderson, Dan Wells, Mary Robinette Kowal,

Howard Tayler and Jordan Sanderson, *Writing Excuses, Season Seven*. ● *Graphic Story* (427) Bryan Talbot, *Grandville Bete Noire*; Joe Hill & Gabriel Rodriguez, *Locke & Key Volume 5: Clockworks*; Brian K. Vaughn & Fiona Staples, *Saga, Volume One*; Howard Tayler & Travis Walton, *Schlock Mercenary: Random Access Memorabilia*; Paul Cornell, Ryan Kelly, Jimmy Broxton and Goran Sudzuka, *Saucer Country, Volume 1: Run*. ● DRAMATIC—LONG (787) *The Avengers*, *The Cabin in the Woods*, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, *The Hunger Games*, *Looper*. DRAMATIC—SHORT (597) *Doctor Who: 'The Angels Take Manhattan'*, *Doctor Who: 'Asylum of the Daleks'*, *Doctor Who: 'The Snowmen'*, *Fringe: 'Letters of Transit'*, *Game of Thrones: 'Blackwater'*. ● EDITOR—SHORT (526) John Joseph Adams, Neil Clarke, Stanley Schmidt, Jonathan Strahan, Sheila Williams. ● EDITOR—LONG Form (408) Lou Anders, Sheila Gilbert, Liz Gorinsky, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Toni Weiskopf. ● PRO ARTIST (519) Vincent Chong, Julie Dillon, Dan Dos Santos, Chris McGrath, John Picacio. ● SEMIPROZINE (404) *Apex Magazine*, *Beneath Ceaseless Skies*, *Clarkesworld*, *Lightspeed*, *Strange Horizons*. ● FANZINE (370) *Banana Wings*, *The Drink Tank*, *Elitist Book Reviews*, *Journey Planet*, *SF Signal*. ● FANCAST (346) *The Coode Street Podcast*, *Galactic Suburbia Podcast*, *SF Signal Podcast*, *SF Squeecast*, *StarShipSofa*. ● FAN WRITER (485) James Bacon, Christopher J Garcia, Mark Oshiro, Tansy Rayner Roberts, Steven H Silver. ● FAN ARTIST (293) Galen Dara, Brad W. Foster, Spring Schoenhuth, Maurine Starkey, Steve Stiles. ● JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD (476; \* marks second and final year of eligibility) Zen Cho\*, Max Gladstone, Mur Lafferty\*, Stina Leicht\*, Chuck Wendig\*.

**Crystal Balls.** John W. Campbell opines, 1945: 'Television may never reach the stage of being in everyone's home, as radio receivers are now ... It can't be unobtrusive; you have to watch it. But you can't watch it if you're doing housework, paying bills, playing bridge, or reading ... My own hunch is that too few people will buy the expensive, four hundred dollar television receivers to support the commercial advertiser's very expensive show.' (*Astounding SF*, June 1945) [MMW]

**Outraged Letters.** Martyn P. Jackson: 'BBC Radio 5 Live's coverage of the Cheltenham Festival has been enlivened by commentators and pundits taking part in a daily round of Call My Bluff [based on racehorse names]. Today's horse was Bougler and comedian Kevin Day stated that it was the french word for "hobbit"—the word "hobbit" being too close to a rude french word, so it was changed to "bougler" for publication in France. Sadly this turned out to be a bluff.' (14 March)

● *Andre Paine* on the V&A's David Bowie exhibition (see events list above): '[This] includes a section on "inner space" with J.G. Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition* on display. The catalogue is also full of SF references—it quotes Brian Aldiss's *My Country 'Tis Not Only Of Thee: A Story Of The World After The Vietnam War*—and it seems Bowie was obsessed with SF.' The catalogue commentary on Bowie's 1976-1979 album covers wanders nostalgically into 'As Others See Us' territory: 'Their harsh visual bleakness was irresistible to a generation of NME-reading sad young men (and they generally were young men) whose imaginative parameters were sketched out by the novels of J.G. Ballard, the music of Kraftwerk and the films of Nicolas Roeg.' Poor chaps!

**The Dead Past.** *20 Years Ago*, punctuation was already in decline. 'Apostrophe Watch. Erstwhile "quality" imprint Picador says of Jim Crace's *Arcadia*: "... a celebration of the city, it's energy, it's optimism, it's scale and it's capacity to re-generate itself despite the deprivations which flourish in it's secrets.'" (*Ansible* 69, April 1993)

**More Awards.** *The Barftas* (British Academy of Rubbish Films and Terrible Acting; the UK Razzies) had one genre winner at the inaugural presentation, Nicholas Cage as worst actor for his lead role in *Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance*. (Independent, 1 March) [MPJ]

**Random Fandom.** *Chris Bell and Roger Burton West*, according to the Eastercon newsletter *FourCubed*, are now married. Congratulations.

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Flowing Speech Dept.* 'His accent slipped off his tongue like water.' (Lisa Mangum, *The Hourglass Door*, 2009) [PB] ● *Dept of Permeability.* 'Indescribable things rushed through him.' (Brian W. Aldiss, *Cryptozoic! aka An Age*, 1967) [PB] ● *Eyeballs in the Sky.* 'Sprawling out on the floor of the bar, Elvis's eyes fell on the underside of a nearby table ...' (Stephen Bury [Neal Stephenson with J. Frederick George], *Interface*, 1994) [CM]

Ansible 309 © David Langford, 2013. Thanks to Mike Ashley, Paul Barnett, Barbara Barrett, Bill Burns, Jonathan Clements, Paul Di Filippo, Ahrvid Engholm, Steve Green, Rob Hansen, David G. Hartwell, Martyn P. Jackson, Steve Jones, David Levine, Chryse Moore, Andrew I. Porter, SF Site, Jim Steel, Gordon Van Gelder, Sean Wallace, Martin Morse Wooster, and our Hero Distributors: Dave Corby (Birmingham SF Group), SCIS/Prophecy, Alan Stewart (Australia).  
6 April 2013