



## Ansible 255 October 2008

From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU. Web news.ansible.co.uk. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816 (print) 1740-942X (e). Logo: **Dan Steffan** Cartoon. **Sue Mason**. Available for SAE or bandicoots with thalassaemia.

### The Blast of the Book

**Ray Bradbury** mourns the impending closure on 18 October of his favourite bookshop, Acres of Books in Long Beach, Los Angeles, recently acquired for city redevelopment. 'If this place could be kept here, if you're going to build a mall, they should build it around here. They should be the center of the mall. They should be a shrine. They should have a crucifix up in front. I will come and bless the goddamn place. And I mean that. I want this store to remain here and they can build a mall around it ... It should be surrounded by other fascinating stores. It shouldn't be moved.' (*LA Observed*) [PY] No chance, it seems.

**Einon Colfer** is to write a sixth novel in the late Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series. [DKMK] Oh dear.

**Harlan Ellison** is reportedly suing Paramount for failing to pass on income from licensing of his *City on the Edge of Forever* storyline for a Simon & Schuster tie-in trilogy by David R. George III. Did *Courthouse News Service* really have to headline this story 'Harlan Ellison Wants Paramount To Beam Up Royalties For "Star Trek"?' Of course they did.

**Marc Gascoigne**, late of Games Workshop's Solaris and Black Library operations, is to run a new sf imprint for HarperCollins: 'Angry Robot', to provide the global science fiction/fantasy community with new content both in physical and digital form. 'Angry Robot' should publish 2-3 books per month from July 2009. *Ansible* imagines a corporate brainstorm session which—after noting that Paranoid Android had been used by some other guy—considered Mad Meclanoid, Grumbling Golem, Enraged Replicant and Surly Cyborg before inspiration came.

**Boris Johnson's** 2008 Tory conference speech remembered past appearances there. '2006 when I was physically pelted with pork pies by the press corps or last year when my speaking style was criticized by Arnold Schwarzenegger. / And it was a low moment, my friends, to have my speaking style denounced by a monosyllabic Austrian cyborg.' Nevertheless, 'Ken Livingstone was terminated.' (*The Register*, 29 Sep)

**George Takei** and his long-time partner Brad Altman were married as they'd planned on 14 September, with Walter Koenig and Nichelle Nichols as best man and matron of honour. (Associated Press)

### Conck

3 Oct • **Sci-Fi London Oktoberfest** (film), Apollo West End Cinema, Lower Regent St, London. Box office 020 7451 9944.

11-12 Oct • **NewCon 4**, The Fishmarket, Bradshaw Street, Northampton, NN1 2HL. £40 reg. (BSFA members £35). £10 supporting, £20 per day. Contact 16 Albany Road, Northampton, NN1 5LZ.

15 Oct • **Brian Aldiss** lectures on 'Science and Civilisation'. Jack Leggatt Theatre, Victoria Bldg, U of Liverpool. 5 pm, Admission free.

17-19 Oct • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Day's Hotel, Sackville St, Manchester. £70/\$140 reg, £30/\$60 day. Under-17s £30; under-13s £20. Contact 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN.

18-19 Oct • **Octocon**, Royal Dublin Hotel, O'Connell St, Dublin. €30 reg to 12 Oct; students €12; under-18/supp €10. Octocon 2008 c/o Electric Dragon, 19a Main St, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

22 Oct • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm/6pm onward. With John Clute.

25 Oct • **Teledexxi** (pub event), London. CANCELLED. Because.

1-2 Nov • **UnCon 2008** (Fortoana), University of Westminster, 309 Regent St, London, W1B 2UW. £36 advance reg, £20 day. Booking on-line only, it seems: <http://www.wegotickets.com/1/319>

3-9 Nov • **Shipping Lines** (Liverpool Literary Festival) includes Philip Pullman on 'The Elementary Particles of Narrative', 7 Nov, 6.30-7.30pm, Sherrington Lecture Theatre Two: £5 (£3 concessions). Pullman reappears 'In Conversation', 8 Nov, 8.9pm, same venue and cost.

7-9 Nov • **Alt.Fiction Horror Writing Weekend**, Dove Valley Centre, nr Buxton. Workshop: £150 reg including 2 nights full board. Contact Alex, 07768 635293, or alexdavisvents at hotmail co uk.

7-9 Nov • **ArmadaCon XX**, Royal Fleet Club, 9-12 Morrice Square, Devonport, Plymouth, PL1 4PQ. £35 reg, £30 concessions. Contact 20

Pinewood Close, Plympton, Devon, PL17 2DW

8 Nov • **Music from the 21st Century**. Barry Gray (*Thunderbirds* and other Gerry Anderson music) centenary concert, Royal Festival Hall, South Bank, London. Tickets: [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

11 Nov 08 - 4 Jan 09 • **Science Fact & Science Fiction** exhibition, National Space Centre, Exploration Drive, Leicester, LE4 5NS. Contact info at spacecentre.co.uk; phone 0116 261 0261

14-16 Nov • **Novacon 38**, Quality Hotel, Bentley, Walsall. £38 reg; £42 at the door. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ

14-15 Feb 09 • **Hi-Ex** (comics), Eden Court, Bishop's Rd, Inverness, IV3 5SA. Tickets (prices to follow) from [www.hi-ex.co.uk](http://www.hi-ex.co.uk) or the venue box office: 01463 234 234. Contact [hiex dot comics at gmail dot com](mailto:hiex dot comics at gmail dot com).

10-13 Apr 09 • **LXcon** (Eastercon), Cedar Ct Hotel, Bradford. £50 reg, £30 concessions/under-25s, £20 under-17s, £5 under-12s, under-5s free. Contact 379 Myrtle Rd, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. Dirk Maggs had to drop out as a Go! Main hotel and dealers' room both full. A free shuttle bus (two at peak times) will run half-hourly between the main hotels.

23-25 May 09 • **plokta.con 4.0**, Sunningdale Park, Berks. £30 reg, under-17s £15, under-12s free. Cheques to *Plokta c/o* 13 Collette Court, Eleanor Close, London, SE16 6PW; PayPal to [mike at plokta dot com](mailto:mike at plokta dot com).

19-21 Jun 09 • **Aetherica** (fantasy), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Chester. £35 reg until 16 Nov, £20 supp; under-18s £25; under-5s £5. Contact membership at [aetherica dot org](mailto:aetherica dot org) for booking form, or join online.

25-26 Jul 09 • **Satellite 2**, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. £40 reg, *this rate extended to 31 Dec 08*; £10 supp/junior (5-14), £1 infant (0-4). Contact 33b Hardridge Road, Cokerhill, Glasgow, G52 1RH.

31 Jul - 2 Aug 09 • **Constitution** (sf, fantasy, RPG), New Hall, Cambridge, is also the 2009 Unicorn. Still £20 reg. Contact 207 Campkin Rd, Cambridge, CB4 2LE; info at [constitution-con.org.uk](mailto:constitution-con.org.uk)

2-6 Sep 10 • **Aussiecon 4** (68th Worldcon), Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre. SA160/SUS155/SCAN155/€100/£80 reg until 3 Nov 08, discount information at [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)

25-27 Sep 10 • **Albacon**, Holiday Inn, Glasgow Airport. £30 reg until 16 November 08; £20 concessions; £10 supp; under-12s £15, under-5s free. Go! Liz Williams, Peter F Hamilton. Contact 1/2 10 Holmla Rd, Glasgow, G44 4AH

*Rumblings* • **Discworld Convention**. The next in this biannual series is planned for August 2010, and against all expectation the guest of honour will be Terry Pratchett. More to follow at [www.dwcon.org](http://www.dwcon.org)

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us**. HMV, having consulted newspaper style manuals, knows how to woo sf fans: 'Welcome to our first ever sci-fi newsletter, boldly [sic] going where no email has gone before. If you love all things sci-fi, know your Star Wars from your Gargate and hide behind the sofa when the Daleks are on telly, then this one's for you ... So strap on your Spock ears and let hmvc.com get you closer to sci-fi.' [PT]

**Awards**. *David Gemmell Legend Award*: new memorial award to be first presented in 2009 for the best heroic fantasy of 2008. On-line voting for the shortlist opens at [gemmellaward.com](http://gemmellaward.com) on 26 December.

**R.I.P. P.C. Bartrum** (1907-2008), scholar of Welsh genealogy and the earliest versions of the Arthur legend (in *The Mabinogion* etc), died on 14 August aged 100. (*Independent*) • **Bill Melendez** (1916-2008), Mexican-born US animator—with Disney 1938-1941—who created 75+ *Peanuts* specials through his own production company and directed the animated *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Warner 1979), died on 2 September aged 91. [SD] • **Paul Newman** (1925-2008), legendary US film star, died on 26 September aged 83. Like most long-time actors he had accumulated a few sf and fantasy credits, including *Quintet* (1979) and *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994). • **Brian Thomsen** (1959-2008), US, writer, anthologist and sf/fantasy consulting editor at Tor, died from a heart attack on 21 September; he was 49. [ML] Thomsen co-wrote Julius Schwartz's autobiography, *Man of Two Worlds: My Life in Science Fiction and Comics* (2000). • **David Foster Wallace** (1962-2008), US novelist,

essayist and professor of creative writing best known for the long and surreally funny sf novel *Infinite Jest* (1996), hanged himself on 12 September. He was 46 [GVG] • **Joan Winston**, US fan who co-organized the first *Star Trek* convention in 1972 and wrote *The Making of the Trek Conventions 1977*, died on 11 September aged 77 [JM]

• **Chog's Big Science Masterclass**. "The Large Hadron Collider—basically, a big-bang simulator—opens in Switzerland next week. There's been much talk of the possibility that it could create a lethal black hole, so perhaps it's worth emphasising how unlikely that is. One estimate put the chance at 1 in 1,019. To put that in context, you have a one in 1,011 chance of spontaneously evaporating while you shave." (Archie Bland, *Independent*, 6 September; figures strictly sic.) Clearly I've been pushing my luck with all those years of Extreme Shaving. • LHC background information: "Europe's most eminent scientists are trying to recreate, in laboratory conditions, the atmosphere millions of years ago that led to earth's existence in the first place during the "big bang"" (Helen Stanley, *Bournemouth Daily Echo*, 10 September) [GD]

• **Court Circular Redux**. US Judge Robert P. Patterson decided in favour of Warner and J.K. Rowling in their suit against RDR and its intended print edition of Steve Vander Ark's *Harry Potter Lexicon*: "Ultimately, because the Lexicon appropriates too much of Rowling's creative work for its purposes as a reference guide, a permanent injunction must issue to prevent the possible proliferation of works that do the same and thus deplete the incentive for original authors to create new works. [...] Defendant's publication of the Lexicon (Doc. No. 22) is hereby permanently enjoined, and Plaintiffs are awarded statutory damages of \$6,750." (8 September) The judgment, read in context, doesn't attack the principle of fair use or threaten such reference books in general, but concludes that this specific Lexicon "copies distinctive original language from the Harry Potter works in excess of its otherwise legitimate purpose of creating a reference guide." One clinching point was the use of material from Rowling's *Quidditch Through the Ages* and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, already structured as reference books. With this guidance, the Lexicon could presumably be re-edited into acceptable form. RDR's Roger Rapoport (who happily 'said the legal tangle has boosted business for his company.—*Detroit Free Press*, 15 September) has also made noises about an appeal. Steve Vander Ark can't discuss this, not being a party to the suit, but writes: "I don't feel bad about the decision, actually. I think it was very well thought out and fair. My only real regret is that we couldn't come to a settlement, which I think would have been by far the best solution, as it would have shown that both sides honestly wanted to work together to solve this problem amicably." (email, 26 September)

• **As Others See Us II**. "Diora Baird is beaming onto the big screen in J.J. Abrams' upcoming *Star Trek*. "I play the green girl. There you have it," Baird tells *Maxim* in the Oct. issue. "It hasn't quite hit me, because I've never been a big sci-fi fan. I'm not a horror fan, either, and then, with [*Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning*], suddenly I was at these conventions with really scary people. Combine that with the *Star Trek* stuff and I'm going to have the perfect psychopath as my fan." (*New York Daily News*, 26 September, quoting from *Maxim*) [DB]

• **British Fantasy Awards**. NOVEL: Ramsey Campbell, *The Grin of the Dark*. NOVELLA: Conrad Williams *The Scalding Rooms*. SHORT: Joel Lane, 'My Stone Desire' (*Black Static* 1). COLLECTION: Christopher Fowler, *Old Devil Moon*. ANTHOLOGY: Stephen Jones, *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror 18*. SMALL PRESS: Peter Crowther, PS Publishing. ARTIST: Vincent Chong. NON-FICTION: Peter Tennant, *Whispers of Wickedness* website reviews. SPECIAL: Ray Harryhausen. NEWCOMER: Scott Lynch.

• **Censorship Update**. After 28 years of repression, Torbay Council has lifted its ban (actually, X-rating) and allowed local Devon cinemagoers to watch *Monty Python's Life of Brian*. (*Telegraph*, Sept) [MP]

• **Outraged Letters**. Steve Sneyd vs BBC Radio 4: 'Just a Minute' (Sept 1) had Science Fiction as a topic. Chris Addison started, saying sf was genre for those who can't find girlfriends. Sue Perkins challenged, and went into a riff that sf is for folk who want to explore brand new worlds while failing to understand there's one here that they're living in now. Julian Clary in turn challenged, and gave as an e.g. of sf Mr Gobbledeook walking down the road and turning into a frog: Paul Merton challenged for deviation on basis that wasn't sf, though would have been if Mr Gobbledeook had turned into a spaceship. Sue Perkins then got in and summarized what she said was a Vonnegut tale, re Marians depriving humans of voiceboxes/ability to speak. Finally Julian Clary got back in v. briefly to try again at an example of sf, giving as that Daleks came in a spaceship but when its door opened, out popped a four-foot Welshman. Clearly missionary work is required!

• **Magazine Scene**. The on-line *Helix SF* is to cease with its tenth (Fall 2008) issue, for reasons of general editorial exhaustion and not-quite-adequate reader support. Co-editor William Sanders writes: "As of the end of this year the magazine will no longer exist, except as a fond memory (Anybody for whom the memory isn't a fond one can blow me)." There is, he insists, no connection with the recent *Helix SF* mini-controversy reported in A253. More at [HelixSF.com](http://HelixSF.com). • **Oddlands**, another web magazine, has also closed after editor Omar Singleton's embarrassing mishap: "... my computer imploded. I have lost ALL submissions, correspondence, personal work, etc. I simply never backed everything up on a regular basis. I would file this under TOTAL STUPIDITY." The five published issues are at [oddlandsmagazine.com](http://oddlandsmagazine.com).

• **Fundfundery**. TAFF reminder: 2009 race nominations close on 5 November. Fuller details in A254 and at [taff.org.uk](http://taff.org.uk). Administrator Chris Garcia dynamically announces a current US TAFF kitty of some \$9,500.

• **Random Fandom**. *James Bacon* is promoting sf cons with flyers and free books at events like Collectormania in Milton Keynes: "If any of your readers are having a clear-out and want a good home for their books we will even collect them if possible and use them as lures for new con-goers." (piglet at indigo dot ie) • *David V. Barrett* broke his left arm in two places in a fall on 24 September: "I'm thinking of suing my local council for the state of their pavements." • *Steve Green & Martin Tudor* plan to relaunch their newszine *Critical Wave* in November as an on-line monthly of 'convention reports, brief news, fanzine listings, etc.' CW's first series ran from 1987 to 1996. • *Terry Jeeves* is home again, with four visiting carers, and so can be reached at the old address: 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, YO12 5RQ. [SH/J] • *Teresa Nielsen Hayden* suffered a minor heart attack on 12 September and spent a few days in hospital, mostly undergoing tests; the general prognosis seems good.

• **The Dead Past**. 25 Years Ago, Charles Platt reported from the New York Forbidden Planet convention: "I did an interview with Phil Farmer as a substitute for a GoH speech. He gave me a list of questions to ask him, including "if you had never been born, where would you be now?" He said he didn't know the answer, but after a moment's reflection came up with one. There is a large reservoir of souls (he said), far more than there are available bodies. Surplus souls are allotted individual body parts. "So if I had been reincarnated as one of those souls," said Philip José Farmer, "I would like to have been Ronald Reagan's cock. Then whenever he wanted to have sex, I could say, uh-uh, sorry Ron. That way, he would never have been elected because no one's going to vote for an impotent President." (*Anisble* 35, October 1983)

• **C.o.A.** *Keith Brooke*, 2 Pylon Court, Elmstead Road, Wivenhoe, Essex, CO7 9JX.

• **Call It Please, 'Research'**. Stephen James Walker's *Something in the Darkness*, his second unofficial *Torchwood* guide, annoyed a number of fans whose LiveJournal reviews were excerpted as 'Fan Comment'—reportedly some 5,000 words in all. Walker responded graciously to LJ complaints that doing this without asking permission was naughty: "I've been pretty much put off LiveJournal for life now, and no-one need have any fear that I'll be quoting from it or even reading it again."

• **A254 Updates**. Warner's lawsuit against the non-fantasy Bollywood film *Hari Puttar—A Comedy of Terrors* was thrown out by Judge Reva Khetrapal of the Delhi High Court on 22 September. (*Times of India*) • Despite the obits, Mornington Crescent reportedly existed years before Geoffrey Perkins introduced it to *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*. [BC/SS]

• **Chog's Masterclass. Creature Features Dept**. "Brown John studied her smile as it performed about her face." "She seemed to be frowning, but it was difficult to tell. Her firm smooth forehead was barely cooperating." "Her eyes were large, beautiful, wet wounds." "She twisted, rolled again until she was a ball of soft shadows exposing only a pink earlobe, warm, tender and inviting." "It was as if her lips were a perch where a soldier could stand guard." (*James Silk, Death Dealer: Prisoner of the Horned Helmet*, 1988) [AR] • **Dept of Constructive Metaphor**. "She takes grains of truth and builds them into vast deserts." (Brian Herbert & Kevin J. Anderson, *Paul of Dune*, 2008) • **Dept of Neat Tricks with Your Arms Securely Trussed in a Straitjacket**. "Percy yipped with pain and began rubbing his lips. He tried to speak, realized he couldn't do it with a hand over his mouth, and lowered it." (Stephen King, *The Green Mile*, part six of the original serial version, 1996) [SK]

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