

# ansible



## Ansible 263 June 2009

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: Atom. Available for SAE or map location of the Terrestrial Paradise.

### The Dark of the June

**J.G. Ballard** was in *The New Yorker* in May with another apparently new story, 'The Autobiography of J.G.B.'—which like the *Guardian's* 'The Dying Fall' had been in *Interzone* in 1996, as 'The Secret Autobiography of J. G. B\*\*\*\*\*', and before that in *Ambit* in 1984. [ED] (Yes, Mr Pringle, we know it first appeared in French in 1981.)

**Harlan Ellison** turned down his home town's Cleveland Arts Prize for life achievement, after discovering that not only was he expected to pay all travel and accommodation expenses but he would be allowed only a three-minute acceptance speech and, by the way, did he know any Clevelanders who could help with event sponsorship by buying an ad in the souvenir book? (Cleveland.com 'The Plain Dealer', 8 May) [TJ]

**Diana Wynne Jones** has been suffering tiresome and exhausting medical tests, and may yet need to go into hospital for an operation. She's very sorry that she had to cancel her guest-of-honour appearances at Plokta.con (May) and the conference on her works (July; see below).

**Ursula K. Le Guin** reacted splendidly to the editorial explanation that J.G. Ballard didn't write sf ('But that's like calling *Brave New World* science fiction, or 1984.'—see A262.) 'Every time I read this sentence it suggests more parallels: / "But that's like calling *Don Quixote* a novel." / "But that's like calling *The Lord of the Rings* a fantasy." / "But that's like calling *Utopia* a utopia ...' (Ursulakleaguin.com, 6 May)

**Rog Peyton**, hero sf book dealer—late of Andromeda Book Co and now trading as Replay Books—warns that the *End Times* are closing in: 'I'm desperately trying to fully retire at the end of the year (honest!) ... Novacon 39 [Nov 2009] will be the last convention I sell books at.'

### Conferrumination

3 Jun • **Story of London**, Conference Centre, British Library. 6:30pm. With Iain Sinclair. £6, £4 concessions. Box office 01937 546546.

6 Jun • **PKD-Day 3** (Dick), Nottingham Trent University, George Eliot Building, Clifton Campus, Clifton Lane, Nottingham. 10am-5pm. Free, but request a place: john dot goodridge at ntu dot ac dot uk.

11 Jun • **British Fantasy Society Open Night**, Cask & Still pub, 154 Hope St, Glasgow. 7pm onward. All welcome.

24 Jun • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5/6pm onward. With Ian Whates.

27 Jun • **BSFA/SF Foundation event**, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. 10:30am-7:55pm (then to pub). Including both BSFA and SFF AGMs, plus other programme items. All welcome.

25-28 Jun • **The Perelandra Project**, Oxford. Swann/Marsh opera (long embargoed) of C.S. Lewis novel in Kettle Collage Chapel on 25th, £20; Sheldonian Theatre 26th, £10-£37; book via Tickets Oxford box office, 01865 305305. Also colloquium at St Stephen's House, 26-27 June, with Walter Hooper; £100 residential, £65 non-residential, both inc opera ticket. Contact admin at perelandraproject dot org.

29 Jun • **Story of London**, Conference Centre, British Library. 6:30pm. Michael Moorcock in conversation with Alan Moore, introduced by Iain Sinclair. £6, £4 concessions. Box office 01937 546546.

3 Jul • **British Fantasy Society Open Night**, The George, Fleet Street (pedantically, 213 Strand), London, WC2R 1AP. 6-10pm. Free.

3-5 Jul • **Diana Wynne Jones** conference. GoH Sharyn November, replacing Diana Wynne Jones, who had to withdraw as noted above. £200 (students £168) inc room for 2 nights and meals. Day, inc food: Fri £30 (£22), Sat £70 (£55), Sun £50 (£37). Contact 23 Ranelagh Road, London, N17 6XY; farah dot sf at gmail dot com.

18 Jul • **Bristol Beer & Blake's 7** open meeting, Knight's Temple, Unit 1, Temple Square, Temple Quay, BS1 6DG. 12:15pm-7pm.

25-26 Jul • **Satellite 2**, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. Now £45 reg. Advance booking closes 17 July: £50 at the door. Day: £25 at the door only. Contact 33b Hardridge Rd, Corkerhill, Glasgow, G52 1RH.

31 Jul - 2 Aug • **Constitution** (sf, fantasy, RPG, Unicorn) hosting **HarmUni 4** (filk), Murray Edwards College, Cambridge. £25 reg, rising to £30 on 1 July; under-18s £10; under-11s £5; under-5s free. Contact

207 Campkin Rd, Cambridge, CB4 2LE; info at constitution-con.org.uk.

6-10 Aug • **Anticipation** (67th Worldcon), Palais des congrès de Montréal, Montréal, Canada. Membership rates until 15 July: \$Can240/\$US210/£135/€150/¥en20,000 reg; upgrade supporting to full membership, \$Can185/\$US160/£105/€115/¥en15,000; supporting \$Can55/\$US50/£30/€35/¥en5,000. Hugo voting (online or mail) closes 3 July. Contact PO Box 105, Station NDG, Montréal, QC, H4A 3P4, Canada.

18-20 Sep • **Fantasycon**, Britannia Hotel, 1 St James St, Nottingham. Added GoH Gail Z. Martin. £60 reg (BFS members £50) until 30 June; £70 (£60) thereafter. £30 Sat only; banquet £35. Contact Beech House, Chapel Lane, Moulton, Cheshire CW9 8PQ.

10-11 Oct • **Octocon 2009**, Camden Court Hotel, Camden St, Dublin 2: this is a new venue as predicted. GoH Mike Carey, Dave Lally. Membership rates still awaited. Contact octocon2009 at gmail.com.

26 Feb - 1 Mar 10 • **AKFT 15** (*Trek*), Tintagel Castle Hotel, Cornwall—not yet confirmed. Registration is expected to cost £25, with £5 increases on 1 Sep and 1 Dec. Contact address TBA.

5-7 Mar 10 • **Phoenix Con (P-Con) 7**, Central Hotel, Exchequer St, Dublin. GoH Iain M. Banks. €30 reg, students €15, supp €10. Rates to be reviewed after October. Cheques to Peter McClean. Contact c/o 6 Weston Ave, Lucan, County Dublin, Ireland.

19-21 Mar 10 • **Corfu Cobalt**, Winchester Hotel, Winchester. Now £45/\$65 reg until 16 Jan; £10/\$15 supporting, as before. Sterling to 45 Kimberley Gardens, London, N4 1LD. US dollars to Robert Lichtman, 11037 Broadway Tce, Oakland, CA 94611-1948, USA.

CANCELLED: 25-27 Sep 10 • **Albacoon**, Holiday Inn, Glasgow Airport. 'We have not achieved our advance membership targets ...' with reportedly only 40 members: 'After much deliberation [...] we have opted to cancel now as the financial risk is too great, particularly considering the current economic climate.' Refunds should be now be progress. Contact 1/2 10 Holmlea Rd, Glasgow, G44 4AH.

**Rumblings** • More cancellation reminders: Aethica (19-21 Jun, Chester) and Sectus 2009 (26-29 Jun, N. Wales) are not happening.

### Infinitely Improbable

As *Others See Star Trek*. 'Who likes this stuff? Forty-year-old nerds who still live with their parents, for a start. [...] The most devoted of them are compelled to decorate their homes in Star Trek motifs, dress up in exact replicas of Starfleet uniforms, attempt to reconcile inconsistencies between episodes, and assimilate hoards [sic] of trivia questions ...' (*The Week*, 16 May) [JB] • *Dept of Added Metaphor*. 'Star Trek is a boisterous adventure incorporating that most reliable of plot devices, a black hole, which allows the filmmakers to ride roughshod over the past' (*Richmond and Twickenham Times*, 15 May) [YH]

**Awards**. *Compton Crook* (first novel): Paul Melko, *Singularity Ring*. • *Guardian Children's Fiction Prize*: Julia Eccleshare, chair of the longest judges, says, 'We haven't really got any fantasy. There is still a lot of fantasy around, but exceptional fantasy has always been rather hard to find'. The longest includes alternate history (Terry Pratchett, *Nation*) and post-apocalyptic sf (Bernard Beckett, *Genesis*). (*Guardian*, 23 May)

**Magazine Scene**. *Paradox: The Magazine of Historical & Speculative Fiction*, ed. Christopher M. Gevasco, ceased with its 13th (May) issue.

As *Others Compare Us*. 'When writing the goals and objectives section of a foundation grant proposal, grant seekers are like sci-fi writers. They envision the future. Of course, there is one critical difference: whereas sci-fi writers generally present fantasy, grant seekers discuss what is realistic and feasible.' (Cheryl A. Clarke, *Storytelling for Grantseekers*, 2001) [PL]

R.I.P. Wayne Allwine (1947-2009) US actor who voiced Mickey Mouse for Disney since 1977, died on 18 May. As sound effects editor he worked on *Star Trek V*, *The Black Cauldron* and other genre films. (SFS). John Atkins (1916-2009), UK author of some fantasy and sf including the future-historical *Tomorrow Revealed* (1955), died on 31 March aged 92. [JC] • John Blankeney (1919-2009), US theatre designer and director who as resident designer for Ray Bradbury's

Pandemonium Theatre Company had been working on an Autumn 2009 production of *The Martian Chronicles*, died on 1 April; he was 89. [AIP] • **Mickey Carroll** (1919-2009), four-foot-three US actor who built a career on his Munchkin roles in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), died on 7 May aged 89. [BB] • **Dom DeLuise** (1933-2009), popular US comedy actor with parts in several Mel Brooks films—including the voice of Pizza the Hutt in *Spaceballs* (1987)—and assorted genre TV series, died on 4 May aged 75. [BB] • **Abigail Frost** (1951-2009), UK fan and arts critic active in fanzines (and later convention newsletters) from 1979 to the mid-1990s, died from an undiagnosed heart problem at the end of April; she was 57. Roz Kaveney writes: 'You should all have known her at her best, jabbing away with a perpetual cigarette, cracking wise as if she was at the Algonquin, slightly tipsy and slightly out of control and combining her part-Italian heritage with a very English dryness.' • **Alan Keeley**, UK horror movie fan who as 'Mister Damage' coedited the 1992-3 spoof fanzine *Horrorshow* with Steve Green ('Eddie Trenchcoat'), died on 22 May. He was 52. [SG] • **Kaoru Kurimoto** (Sumiyo Imaoka, 1953-2009), Japanese author of the 126-volume *Guin Saga* fantasy (and latterly anime) sequence plus many other novels, died on 26 May aged 56. [PDF] • **James Kirkup** (1918-2008), UK-born writer and poet who was long embarrassed by the notoriety and (successful) blasphemy prosecution of his 1976 *Gay News* poem about Christ, died on 10 May; he was 91. Kirkup published two fantasy plays and an eccentric sf satire, *Queens Have Died Young and Fair* (1993). [JC] • **Robert Loutit** (1944-2009), French sf editor and critic who translated *Crash* and other J.G. Ballard novels (plus work by Graham Greene, Robert Silverberg and others), died on 13 May aged 64. [RS/DP] Authors published by his Dimension SF imprint included Philip K. Dick and Christopher Priest—who writes: 'Robert made my career in France, buying *Inverted World* at a time when I'd lost confidence in it (lousy reviews in the UK and US), treating it like a classic in the making, going for it, and some 35 years later it's still in print. And he remained a valued friend for all that time.' • **Jane Randolph** (1915-2009), US actress best remembered for *Cat People* (1942) and its sequel *The Curse of the Cat People* (1944), died on 4 May aged 93. [PDF] • **A. Langley Searles** (1920-2009), editor of the respected scholarly fanzine *Fantasy Commentator* (1943-1953; second series 1978-2004) and long-time member of FAPA, died on 7 May. He was 88. [B] via [SG] • **Joan A. Stanton** (1915-2009), who as Joan Alexander wrote Lois Lane in the 1940s radio *Adventures of Superman*, died on 18 May aged 94. [PDF]

**Science Corner.** A CERN physicist explains *Angels & Demons* to the *Daily Mirror*: 'Would anti-matter really cause an explosive device? *Dr Shears*: Yes it could in theory. "If you made a Tom Hanks and an anti Tom Hanks you would not be able to tell them apart. But if you put them together we would all be annihilated."' (Mirror.co.uk, 15 May) [TL] Having to keep one of them in vacuum to avoid the annihilation reaction with air might offer a clue as to which was which.

**Sidewise Awards** (alt-history) shortlist: LONG George Mann, *The Affinity Bridge*; Terry Pratchett, *Nation*; Chris Roberson, *The Dragon's Nine Sons*; Adam Roberts, *Swiftly*; Jo Walton, *Half a Crown*. • SHORT Tobias Buckell, 'The People's Machine' (*Sideways in Crime* [SiC] ed. Lou Anders); Albert E. Cowdrey, 'Poison Victory' (*F&SF* 7/08); Paul McAuley, 'A Brief Guide to Other Histories' (*Postscripts* #15); T.L. Morganfield, 'Night Bird Soaring' (*Greatest Uncommon Denominator* #3); Mary Rosenblum, 'Sacrifice' (SiC); Kristine Kathryn Rusch, 'G-Men' (SiC).

**We Are The Norm?** 'It's unthinkable for an American male of my age to say this, but it's true: I do not, as a rule, care for science fiction. / I learned years ago not to air this singular lapse at parties. People don't take it well. They insist, horrified, that I cannot be serious, as though I'd confessed a fondness for kicking stray dogs or pushing old ladies into traffic.' (Franklin, *The Panopticon* blog, 12 May) [RF]

**Publishers & Sinners.** The latest by Japanese horror author Koji Suzuki deals with deep unpleasantness in a public toilet and is printed on toilet paper. (*Telegraph*, 25 May) [AIP] *Must ... restrain ... comment.*

**As Others Date Us, or, Wasn't That Hal Clement In The 1950s?** 'It was in the 1960s and 1970s, for example, that science fiction enjoyed probably its greatest flourishing, and 'hard' sf—speculative fiction with its roots in established science and maths as opposed to the pseudo-magical apparatus of ray guns and force fields—became established as a form.' (Sam Leith, *Financial Times*, 9 May) [MMW]

**Mythopoeic Awards** shortlist: ADULT LITERATURE Carol Berg, *Flesh and Spirit and Breath and Bone*; Daryl Gregory, *Pandemonium*; Ursula K. Le Guin, *Lavinia*; Patricia A. McKillip, *The Bell at Sealey Head*; Gene Wolfe, *An Evil Guest*. • CHILDREN'S Kristin Cashore, *Graceling*; Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*; Diana Wynne Jones, *House of Many Ways*;

Ingrid Law, *Savvy*; Terry Pratchett, *Nation*. • SCHOLARSHIP/INKLINGS Gavin Ashenden, *Charles Williams: Alchemy and Imagination*; Verylín Flieger & Douglas A. Anderson, eds. Tolkien on *Fairy-stories: Expanded Edition*; John Rateliff, *The History of the Hobbit, Part One: Mr. Baggins*; Part Two: *Return to Bag-end*; Michael Ward, *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis*; Elizabeth A. Whittingham, *The Evolution of Tolkien's Mythology: A Study of the History of Middle-earth*. • SCHOLARSHIP/OTHER Charles Butler, *Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper*; Jason Marc Harris, *Folklore and the Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*; Farah Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*; Marek Oziewicz, *One Earth, One People: The Mythopoeic Fantasy Series of Ursula K. Le Guin, Madeleine L'Engle and Orson Scott Card*; Richard Carl Tuerk, *Oz in Perspective: Magic and Myth in the Frank L. Baum Books*.

**Which SF Story Was That?** 'The sci-fi scenario of a text-speak generation communicating largely with its thumbs is the stuff of parents' nightmares.' (E. Jane Dickson, *Independent*, 2 May)

**Immortality.** A €15m museum devoted to Hergé's 80-year-old creator Tintin opens in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, on 2 June. [AIP]

**Outrageous Letters.** *Fred Lerner* offers another view of the editorial comment mocked in *A262* and by Ursula K. Le Guin above: 'It depends upon how you define "science fiction". If your approach is thematic, or based on narrative strategy, then of course most of Ballard—as well as *Brave New World* and *1984*—are science fiction. But if you use the definition-by-provenance approach—"science fiction is that body of literature produced within the science fiction community"—then *Brave New World* and *1984* would be excluded. You may have read my arguments for that approach to definition in *Logfearnost* (or in "A Bookman's Fantasy"); I'll just say here that there are a lot of things that can meaningfully be said about the literature that Our Gang produces that isn't applicable to Huxley and Orwell.' Crushed again.

C.O.A. Wm. Brending, PO Box 961, Dellsview, WV 26531, USA. *Lillian Edwards*, 41a Montgomery Rd, Sheffield, S7 1LN.

**Random Fandom.** *James Bacon* repeated his uncannily convincing impersonation of Bob Shaw reading one of his Serious Scientific Talks (at Plokta con). • *Ann Green* (1961-2008) is now commemorated at her old workplace, Solihull Hospital, with the monthly Green Star cash award for exceptional staff who 'make a difference'. [SG] • *Kim Huett* has begun an online archive of the first ever Australian sf fan newsletter, *Futurian Observer* (1940-1942). See [efanzines.com/FutObs/](http://efanzines.com/FutObs/)... • *Sue Jones* has been out of things since 2007 with what proved to be thyroid trouble, now effectively treated; she apologizes to readers holding their breath for the 25th issue of her fanzine *Tortoise*. • *Ian Sorensen's* latest fan musical—again at Plokta con—was titled *Hary Plotka and the Half-Cut Prince*. I haven't seen more for fear of lawsuits.

**The Universe Next Door.** 'There's been widespread condemnation of North Yorkshire's decision to carry out an underground nuclear test.' (BBC Radio Five Live, reporting on [actually] North Korea) [BBU] Fear and trembling somehow failed to afflict the ancient enemy, Lancashire.

**Fanfunding.** *GUFF*: Pat McMurray's 2004 trip report is available, either as b/w hardcopy for £4 (\$8 AUS) or password-protected colour PDF (6.38 mb) for £2 (\$4 AUS). Cheques to GUFF c/o Ang Rosin, 26 Hermitage Grove, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 6DR. PDF buyers should give an email address for the password. Paypal option available. • *DUFF*: Emma Hawkes won the 2009 northbound race from Australasia to this year's Worldcon in Canada. The other candidates were Chris Nelson, David Cake & Grant Watson (joint), and Alison Barton.

**Whog's Masterclass.** *Athletics Dept.* 'Astro's foot continued in a perfect arc over his head, throwing him in a heap on the ground.' (Carey Rockwell, *Stand By For Mars*, 1952) [AR] • *Dept of Laser Vision.* 'His eyes were cutting into Russell's face, peeling off layer after layer of misleading mannerism and bussing the naked fear in the man.' (Algis Budrys, 'First to Serve', *Astounding*, May 1954) [CG] • *When Things Go Runny Dept.* 'Embarrassment is something I can feel in my flesh, like a handful of sun-warmed mud clapped on my head. ... The embarrassment had turned runny. It was horrifying my scalp along a spreading frontier.' (Neal Stephenson, *Anathem*, 2008) [DL]

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