

# Ansible



## Ansible 266 September 2009

From Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU. Web [news.ansible.co.uk](http://news.ansible.co.uk). Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816 (print) 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad Foster. Available for SAE or full set of *Life* by Baron Bodissey.

**Anticipation.** You read it here last: the Montréal Worldcon happened.

- **Hugos.** NOVEL Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*. NOVELLA Nancy Kress, 'The Erdmann Nexus' (*Asimov's* 10/08). NOVELETTE Elizabeth Bear, 'Shoggoths in Bloom' (*Asimov's* 3/08). SHORT Ted Chiang, 'Exhalation' (*Eclipse Two*). RELATED BOOK John Scalzi, *Your Hate Mail Will be Graded*. GRAPHIC STORY Kaja & Phil Foglio (colours: Cheyenne Wright), *Girl Genius, Volume 8: Agatha Heterodyne and the Chapel of Bones*. DRAMATIC, LONG WALL-E. DRAMATIC, SHORT *Doctor Horrible's Sing-Along Blog*. EDITOR, SHORT Ellen Dalow. EDITOR, LONG David G. Hartwell. PROFESSIONAL ARTIST Donato Giancola. SEMIPROZINE *Weird Tales*. FANZINE *Electric Velocipede*. FAN WRITER Cheryl Morgan. FAN ARTIST Frank Wu. JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD (new writer) David Anthony Durham.
- Steven H Silver brags: 'I accepted the Hugo for WALL-E. At the Hugo Losers Party, when someone asked if she could hold it, I jokingly told her it would cost a \$5 donation to the fan funds. She went for her wallet and by the end of the evening, I wound up raising \$217 for the fan funds'.
- **Hugo Rules** attracted unusual attention. The semiprozine category had sparked a campaign against its scheduled abolition—whose ratification by the business meeting was defeated, so the award continues. This buzz may be why the perennial winner *Locus* was topped by *Weird Tales*. The Graphic Novel Hugo was confirmed. John Klima's *Electric Velocipede*, a fiction magazine that pays its contributors but was able to evade the semiprozine category, had deliberately campaigned for the Fanzine Hugo as a soft target. Online fanzine activity was confirmed as Hugo-eligible (will four blog posts count as the required four published issues?). Jeremy Kratz won the competition to design an official Hugo logo, now adopted.
- **Oddments.** Anticipation recorded 3,921 people present, 4,497 total memberships. The *Plotka* cabal did a fine job with the daily newsletter. The Big Heart fan award went to Andrew I. Porter, who refused to confirm that he will keep it pickled in alcohol in a jar on his desk.
- **Renovation** (Reno) won the 2011 Worldcon bidding, unopposed.

### September Gothic

**Ellen Asher** is this year's recipient of the World Fantasy Lifetime Achievement Award, along with someone else whom I forget.

**Margaret Atwood** told her Edinburgh Book Festival audience that she doesn't write 'sci-fi' because her books don't contain (all together now!) 'talking squid'. Rather more cunningly, Marina Lewycka stated that she was not clever or imaginative enough to write 'sci-fi'. [JD]

**J.G. Ballard** was awarded a posthumous doctorate (in literature) by the Royal Holloway University of London on 15 July; Adam Roberts of RHUL wrote and delivered a suitable citation.

**Ray Bradbury's** interview in the summer *Strand* opened with a touch of *Fahrenheit 451*, or *Fahrenheit Silicon*: 'The Internet should be destroyed! I hate the Internet! I hate computers! And, warming further to the computer theme: 'We should get rid of them, yeah!' [DL]

**Diana Wynne Jones** had a tumour and part of her left lung removed in July. Successful op and good prognosis—but Diana's usual bad luck with hospitals led to a catalogue of horrors including pneumonia, allergies, infection and starvation, 'not helped by the mad woman in the next bed who thought Diana was her private servant and called on her at all hours for attention.... And she wasn't even a Fani D couldn't escape, because while the other patient was on the loose, D was tied down with tubes to both her arms.' [CB] She is now recovering at home, with her sense of humour steadily returning. Get well soon....

**Ursula K. Le Guin**, reviewing Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*, seizes on the key point which makes this novel Definitely Not Science Fiction: 'It is no comfort to find that some of the genetic experiments are humanoids designed to replace humanity. Who wants to be replaced by people who turn blue when they want sex, so that the men's enormous genitals are blue all the time? Who wants to believe that a story in which that happens isn't science fiction?' (*Guardian*)

**Michael Moorcock** reports more largesse: 'The committee awarding the Jack Trevor Story Memorial Cup for humorous writing this year

presented the cup to an American for the first time. Meeting at its traditional venue, L'Horizon, rue Saint Placide, Paris, the Committee [...] unanimously agreed to give the Jack Trevor Story Memorial Cup, together with a \$1000 prize, to Howard Waldrop.' Note that 'The usual conditions will apply: that the money be spent within two weeks and the recipient have nothing to show for it by the end of that period.'

**John Wyndham**, if a fan campaign succeeds, could be voted the honour of a place in the utterly famous Walk of Stars on Broad Street, Birmingham. ('Better than Hollywood!'—Mayor of Birmingham.) [AS]

**Jane Yolen** may just possibly not kill me if I hastily add that she too is to receive a World Fantasy Lifetime Achievement Award this year.

### Confetter

5 Sep • **We Love Comics Con** (comics), Travelling Man Leeds, 32 Central Rd, Leeds, LS1 6DE 1-4pm. Free. Contact 0113 2436461.

11-13 Sep • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. Now £39 reg or various day rates; there will probably be no memberships available at the door. Online booking (£1 surcharge): [steampunk.synthasite.com](http://steampunk.synthasite.com).

11-13 Sep • **Reunion 7** (media), De Vere Staverton Park, Daventry. Advance tickets £87 standard, £120 priority, plus usual day and child rates (all may rise at the door). Bookings: [www.sfbal.com/reunion/](http://www.sfbal.com/reunion/).

23 Sep • **BSEA Open Meeting**, Antelope, 22 Eaton Tce, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 6pm. With Claire Brialaye & Mark Plummer.

25-27 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. £40.50 reg; members £35.50; discount for under-16s. Advance booking closes 4 September. Contact 29 Tockley Rd, Burham, Bucks, SL1 7DQ; bookings at [tolkiensociety.org](http://tolkiensociety.org); [www.oxonmoot.org](http://www.oxonmoot.org).

26 Sep • **Bristolcon** (sf) & **Browcoat Ceilidh** (*Firefly*), Mercure Holland House Hotel, Redcliffe Hill, Bristol, BS1 6SQ. General sf mini-con 2:30-5:30pm, dances etc 5:30pm-1am. Tickets £20 to Kumara Conventions, c/o 5 Manor House Rd, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 9DE.

3-4 Oct • **BICS 2009** (comics), Thinktank, Curzon St, Birmingham. Tickets £20, child £10; day £12/£6. Payment to International Comic Shows, 30a Keelinge St, Dudley Port, Tipton, W Midlands, DY4 8UQ.

12 Oct • **Beyond our Ken: The Multiverse of Ken Campbell**: tribute show, National Theatre. £5. Box office 020 7452 3000.

16-17 Jan 10 • **ConRunner 2**, Mercure St Paul's Hotel, Sheffield. £35 reg, rising to £40 on 1 October; £45 in 2010. B&B £70 double, £65 single. Contact 56 Jackmans Place, Letchworth GC, Herts, SG6 1RH.

2-6 Sep 10 • **Aussiecon 4** (68th Worldcon), Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre. New rates from 1 September 2009: \$A275/\$US225/\$CAN255/€165/£140/¥en22,500 full adult reg; \$A70/\$US50/\$CAN50/€35/£25/¥en4,900 supp as before. Contact GPO Box 1212, Melbourne, Vic 3001, Australia; info at [aussiecon4.org.au](http://aussiecon4.org.au).

17-21 Aug 11 • **Renovation** (69th Worldcon), Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, NV, USA. GoH Ellen Asher, Charles N. Brown (*in memoriam*), Tim Powers, Boris Vallejo. \$140 reg, \$50 supp, under-17s \$75, under-7s free; see [www.renovations.org](http://www.renovations.org) for prepress/site selection voter discounts. All rates good to 30 April 2010. Contact PO Box 13278, Portland, OR 97213-0278, USA; or info at [renovationsf.org](http://renovationsf.org).

16-20 Aug 12 • **Of the Ring** (Tolkien Society), Loughborough University. £60 reg, £50 child/concessions, £20 supp, £1 babes in arms. Online registration only: [www.returnofthering.org](http://www.returnofthering.org). Contact 2012 dot bookings at [tolkiensocietydot.org](http://tolkiensocietydot.org).

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us.** 'Vampire-lust tales will rot your brain' is the subhead of a *Register* story on how the press misinterprets US Navy research as 'making jet fuel from seawater' since no one now reads hard sf authors like H. Beam Piper: 'People would have known all this in the old days, because they read proper science fiction [...]' Sci-fi fans used to read writers like Piper: now they mainly read about vampire lust, seemingly. (Lewis Page, 20 August) [FM] Have writers simply learned to disguise their terrifying hardness? 'Connie Willis is a brilliant science fiction writer—one so brilliant that readers are only gradually aware

that they are reading Hard Science.' (*Finding Wonderland* blog) [RF]

**Magazine Scene.** *Jim Baen's Universe*, after four years of publication, is to fold with the April 2010 issue. Editor Eric Flint reports sadly that although 'we came close', there were never enough paying subscribers to achieve stability. *JBU* is now closed to submissions. ● *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, revived in book format by Winston Engle two years ago, has closed again after just two issues (2007 and 2009).

**Big Biz.** Disney hopes to buy Marvel Entertainment for \$4 billion.

**R.I.P. Anne Braude**, US fan, co-editor of Ed Meskys' *Niekas*, early SCA member and author of several published stories, died on 25 August. [AIP] ● **Harvey Frank** (1940-2009), US tv producer of the recent *Battlestar Galactica*, the 1980s *Twilight Zone* and much else, died on 23 July; he was 68. [AIP] ● **Donald M. Grant** (1927-2009), US small-press publisher and editor of early sf bibliography, critical anthologies and handsome editions of Robert E. Howard, Lovecraft and others, died on 19 August. He was 82. [RB] ● **John Hughes** (1950-2009), US film-maker who wrote and directed *Weird Science* (1985), died on 6 August aged 59. Other genre credits include the remakes *Miracle on 34th Street* (1994), *101 Dalmatians* (1996) and *Flubber* (1997). [PDF] ● **Stephen Robinett** (1941-2004), whose 1969 *Analog* debut story and other early work was published as by Tak Hallus, is reported to have died on 16 February 2004. His sf novels are *Stargate* (1976) and *The Man Responsible* (1978). [AIP] ● **Harry Alan Towers** (1920-2009), UK-born producer and screenwriter (sometimes writing as Peter Welbeck) whose genre work included *Night of the Blood Monster* (1970), several *Fu Manchu* films and the 1989 *Phantom of the Opera*, died on 31 July. He was 88. [AIP] ● **Gene Van Troyer** (1950-2009), US teacher, author, translator and poet active in SFWA and the SF Poetry Association, died on 17 July aged 58. He edited the 2007 anthologies *Collaborations* (poetry) and *Speculative Japan* (translated sf, with Grania Davis). [SFWA]

**In Typo Veritas.** The Anticipation programme book listed David Hartwell's interview as 'On Editing'. [JWM]

**Outraged Letters.** *THE* David A. Hardy dissociates himself from a David A. Hardy who writes stories for *Dark World* magazine. 'A fake David A. Hardy? I've had this name for 73 years; who is this pretender? Can any of your readers throw any light upon this travesty?' (Your editor's Cosmic Mind is quite able to imagine a real David A. Hardy II. The net is littered with other David Langfords.) ● **Jim Steel** covers the sf angle on a nasty current news story: 'The Garrido kidnapping is fascinating the newspapers and the *Guardian* is no exception. Today's (Monday) has all the expected stuff about Stockholm syndrome, etc, and naturally has a fair number of photographs. One of them is of Jay-cee's book case. There are a couple by Asimov, a couple by Greg Bear, a couple by Brian Lumley, a Dan Brown, a David Eddings and quite a few that I can't make out but most look like well-thumbed genre paperbacks. Most revealing are the dozens of copies of Dean R. Koontz's books. Given that most of Koontz's plots seem to feature a youngster in danger who has to be rescued by the protagonist, one has to wonder who supplied Jay-cee with the books.' ● **Dr Bryan Talbot** cannot be doing with mere stethoscopes: 'Thanks for the mention of the doctorate. Becoming a doctor does have a noticeable effect. At the San Diego Comicon last week I felt compelled to buy a sonic screwdriver.'

**As Others See Forbidden Planet.** *Hannah Pool*: Do you think radio is sexist? *Lauren Laverne*: Radio's not really sexist. It's just run by boys so it's the most socially maladjusted industry that you could ever wish to be involved in. I love it. [...] It's for geeks and I'm a geek so it completely resonates with me and I've loved it from day one. But it's run by people who haven't left a studio in decades. Those kinds of boys just don't know what to do with girls; it's just a bit like [comic shop] *Forbidden Planet*. Would you want to go in there? It smells weird and sells funny stuff. That's what radio studios are like. Ladies just walk past.' (*Guardian* interview, 13 August) [JG]

**C.o.A. Analog**, *Asimov's*, *Alfred Hitchcock's* and *Ellery Queen's*, Dell Magazines, 267 Broadway, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10007-2352, USA.

**The Hero with a Thousand Facebooks.** I was intrigued to find a 'Greg Egan' Facebook page with the sf author's bibliography but a photo of the Other Greg Egan (see *A265*). 'Our' Egan was not amused. Then Ray Bradbury—whose love of the net is so notorious—asked me to become his Facebook friend. So did a second Ray Bradbury, using a different photo of the real Bradbury.... Now I await an impassioned Facebook friendship plea from eager social networker Harlan Ellison.

**Vanity of Vanities.** Robert M. Fletcher, dodgy agent and vanity publisher, lost his nuisance lawsuit against Victoria Strauss and Ann Crispin of Writer Beware, who had warned would-be authors against his Literary Agency Group and other fronts. The action was dismissed with

prejudice on 31 July; the judge noted: 'The plaintiffs have exhibited extreme bad faith in bringing this frivolous lawsuit for the sole purpose of causing great expense and harassment to Crispin and Strauss.'

**Random Fandom.** *Karen Anderson* evacuated from her Tujunga house to a Burbank hotel owing to the Station Fire, one of several LA-area wildfires. [AIP] ● *Charles N. Brown's* death during an air flight had an aftermath he would have relished: '... the most Charles-worthy ironic twist of the whole week: an e-mail from Virgin Airways—addressed to Charles—apologizing for the inconvenience caused by the delay in deplaning following the recent flight from Boston, explaining that a passenger had become seriously ill, and hoping his plans worked out well anyway.' (*Locus Roundtable*, 27 July) [DM] ● *David Langford*, miffed that BeWrite planned to put his and John Grant's *Earthdoom!* out of print, muttered on Facebook about 'bastard scum publishers' and very soon learned that his Facebook friends include 'Neil Scum Marr (Bastard in Chief, BeWrite Books)'. Oops. ● *Andrew Stephenson* has what I hope will be the last word on *A264's* cover story: 'Is it entirely coincidental that "JUSTINE LARBALESTIER" can be anagrammatized as "TUT" ANSIBLE LIAR JEERS? Is such a mephitic and possibly flagitious insight even useful? Let's just add that Bloomsbury US later revamped the offending jacket to make JL's protagonist black (though not short-haired) as in the text. ● *Pete Young* reports glad news: 'Miles Tanat Young was born on 4 August 2552 (that's not the distant future, that's the Thai calendar), in Bangkok, weighing 3.75kg. Named after Miles Davis and not Miles Vorkosigan, no matter what Del Cotter thinks.'

**More Awards.** *Sidewise* (alt-history): LONG CHRIS ROBERSON, *The Dragon's Nine Sons*. SHORT Mary Rosenblum 'Sacrifice' (*Sideways in Crime*). ● *The Age Book of the Year* (\$A20,000 Australian non-genre prize): Steven Amsterdam's post-apocalypse novel *Things We Didn't See Coming*. ● *First Fandom Hall of Fame*: Ben Indick, James Gunn and (posthumous) Walter Daugherty. ● *Seiun* (Japanese translation): NOVEL Robert Charles Wilson, *Spin*, trans Mogens Takeshi. SHORT Ted Chiang, *The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate*, trans Nozomi Ohmori.

**Burbismo.** *Longevity Dept.* Press release for *The Natural History of Unicorns* (Chris Lavers, 2009): 'Initially appearing in Mesopotamian art in the first millennium BC, Lavers illustrates how unicorns soon became immortalized in the speculative writings of Greek philosophers.' [PB]

**Group Gropes.** Tony Cullen on a former London First Thursday venue: 'It's day 1650 of the Florence Nightingale Demolition Watch. I had occasion to cycle past the place at lunchtime today and yes, the structure still appears to be intact.' (11 August)

**As Others Market To Us.** Greenpeace explained its subtle choice of voice actor for an automated phone call to all Hewlett-Packard employees (urging the phasing-out of various alleged carcinogens): 'We were trying to drive some internal conversation at the company, and the stereotype of all tech workers is someone with a science fiction background. Who doesn't want to listen to William Shatner for 30 seconds?' (*Financial Times*, 30 July) [MMW] Well, um ...

**Fanfandery.** *Lloyd Penney* has many surplus fanzines from the Anticipation fanzine lounge: samples can be had for a donation to the fan fund of your choice. List available from penneys at allstream dot net.

*Thog's Masterclass*. *Taste of Fears Dept.* 'Dorian swallowed a froth of fear that rose in his throat.' (*Rena Vale*, *Taurus Four*, 1970) [AR] ● *Dept of Logical Naming.* '... a creature which he put in his diary as a "kangarabbit". Its head was like that of the tiny lizards that darted over the rocks, its eyes hooded with a bony protuberance and its skin scaly.' (*ibid*) ● *Comparative Anatomy Dept.* or *Attack of the Vampire Lizard Birds.* 'He threw himself on the ground ... flayed at the huge body slung under the great wings—large as a six year old child's—got off a series of shots ...' (*ibid*) ● *Dept of That Word Does Not Mean What You Think It Means.* "'They must not know I here.'" She had slipped back into the illiterate speech of her tribe.' (*ibid*) ● *Something Nasty in the Fridge Dept.* 'An oppression of mortuary mystery thickened the air, and stifled him like the noisome effluvia of catacombs.' (Clark Ashton Smith, *Zothique*, 1970) [BA] ● *Dept of Lumpy Simile.* 'From Ujuk, however, a heavy, misshapen umbrage fell and lay like a prone incubus beside his chair.' (*ibid*) ● *Neat Tricks Dept.* 'He chose to ignore the violent purple stain splashing down the white robe as Lurtz's hand continued a motion his gaped mouth forgot.' (Joan Cox, *Star Web*, 1980) [NR]

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