

# ansible



## Ansible 321 April 2014

From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Web news.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-842X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE or a soirée with Lady Constance de Coverlet.

**Editorial.** Sorry, I won't be at Eastercon this year, for reasons too tedious even to concoct an April Fool joke about. Loncon 3, definitely.

### The Electric Time Trousers

**Isaac Asimov**, as fans know but journalists don't, did not write 'The Man who Sold the Moon': 'For a long time the idea of commercial space was an eccentric billionaire's pipe dream. A fanciful desire of those with a penchant for Isaac Asimov novels.' (Izabella Kaminska on the commercialization of space, *Financial Times*, 15 March) [MMW]

**Diana Gill**, head of Harper Voyager US, moves to Ace/Roc/Berkley today to replace Ginjer Buchanan (now retired) as executive editor. [J]

**Michael Moorecock** unleashed a spate of LinkedIn invitations after incautiously allowing this site to 'search for contacts' (i.e. 'let LinkedIn spam everyone in your address book'). 'I appear to have fumbled the keys again. Another downside of neuropathy. 1500 replies...' Oops.

**Bryan Talbot** has boldly ventured beyond the fields we know: 'I'm just back from a furry con in Sweden, where I was the only guest of honour, because of my work on the Grandville series of course. It wasn't half as weird as I'd feared and we raised lots of money for charity. Only about a third of the attendees were "fursuiters"; and furies, as a whole, seem very highly educated. Practically everyone I spoke to was either doing a PhD or already had one, or was a high-level software geek or a solicitor or something. At one point, someone asked me if it was any different from SF or comic conventions. I realised then that the biggest difference was this: members of SF and comic cons are of any and all character types. Hence, you'll always get a proportion who are grumpy, cynical, overbearing or otherwise objectionable. The furies all seem to be universally, almost unbearably, nice, and are at the con following only one agenda: to be with like-minded people and to have fun. Lots of inter-furry hugging was involved. What went on in the private room parties, though, is beyond my ken but one of the night's con food buffets was titled "Sausage Fest".'

### Conza

Until 13 Apr • **Brainstorm** (Bryan Talbot exhibition), The Muse at 269 Portobello Road, London, W11 1LR. Noon-6pm, Thursday-Sunday.

Until 22 Jun • **Science Fiction: New Death** (exhibition), FACT, 88 Wood St, Liverpool, L1 4DQ. Free. www.fact.co.uk/whats-on.aspx.

5-6 Apr • **Sci Fi Scarborough** (comics, media), The Spa, Scarborough. 10am-10pm. £35 reg; child £17.50. Day £20 Sat, £15 Sun (child £10, £7.50). See www.scifiscarborough.co.uk.

8-10 Apr • **London Book Fair**, Earls Court. Terry Pratchett is Author of the Day for 8 April. See www.londonbookfair.co.uk.

12-13 Apr • **QED** (science/skeptics), Palace Hotel, Oxford St, Manchester, M60 7HA. £99 reg; £60 concessions. See www.qedcon.org.

18-21 Apr • **Satellite 4** (Eastercon), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. £65 reg; £50 unwaged; £20 supp/junior (12-17); £5 child (5-11); £1 infant. Rates rise after 4 April to at-the-door levels: £75 reg (day £20 Fri or Mon, £30 Sat or Sun), £60 unwaged (day £15/£25), £30 junior (day £10), £15 child (day £5), £3 infant (day £1). Contact c/o Flat 2/1, 691 Shields Rd, Pollokshields, Glasgow, G41 4QL; www.satellite4.org.uk.

23 Apr • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Arthur's Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Anne Perry. Free.

24-27 Apr • **Dead by Dawn** (horror film festival), Filmhouse, Edinburgh. Box office 0131 228 2688; see www.deadbydawn.co.uk.

2 May - 19 Aug • **Comics Unmasked**: Art and Anarchy in the UK (exhibition), PACCAR Gallery, British Library, London.

19 Jul • **Edge-Lit 3**, Cinema One, QUAD Centre, Derby. 11am-midnight. GoH Joe Abercrombie, Charles Stross, more TBA. Tickets £25. Book online at www.derbyquad.co.uk/special-event/edge-lit-3.

12-21 Aug • **SF Linkcons**, various venues. See www.sflinkcons.org but note that events from 27 August (SFLC-D to SFLC-F) are CANCELLED.

14-18 Aug • **Loncon 3** (72nd Worldcon), ExCel centre, London Docklands. £125 reg; £280 family; £65 YA; £30 child (6-15); £2 infant (0-5); £25 supp. See www.loncon3.org for innumerable further details.

22-24 Aug • **Shamrokon** (Eurocon), Burlington Hotel, Dublin. €35 reg, rising to €40 on 1 August; concessions €25; under-22s €10; supp €10. Online booking and further information at www.shamrokon.ie.

30 Aug • **CamCon** ('geek culture'), The Junction, Cambridge. Tickets £15; students £13; under-16s £11; under-10s £1 booking fee; £17, £15, £13 and free at door. Online booking at thecamcon.com.

12-14 Sep • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. £21 'early bird' tickets sold out; more to come at £24. See steampunk.synthasite.com.

13 Sep • **TitanCon**, Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast. £15 reg; £5 supp. Join at titancon.com (PayPal only, with booking surcharge).

11-14 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. See www.tolkienesociety.org/events/oxonmoot-2014/.

3 Oct - 27 Jan • **Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination** (exhibition), British Library, London. More details to follow.

**Rumblings**, *Hugo Nominations* closed on 31 March. • **Worldcon 2016**: an anti-Beijing-bid site has appeared at beijing2016.org.

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us**. In a 'Game Of Thrones ... from A to Z' newspaper spacefiller: '**Dragons** Were the show ever to devolve into silliness (what? "devolve" you say? Oh shush) ...' (*Independent*, 31 March) [MPJ]

**Awards**. *Arthur C. Clarke Award* shortlist: Kameron Hurley, *God's War*; Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Justice*; Phillip Mann, *The Disestablishment of Paradise*; Ramez Naam, *Nexus*; Christopher Priest, *The Adjacent*; James Smythe, *The Machine*. • *Hans Christian Andersen Awards* for life achievement in children's fiction: AUTHOR Nahoko Uehashi; ARTIST Roger Mello. [L] • *Ken Kesey Award for Fiction*: Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Unreal and The Real*. • *Pilgrim Award* for life achievement in sf studies: Joan Gordon. • *World Horror Convention Grand Master*: Brian Keene.

**Publishers & Sinners**. Hodder & Stoughton, owned by the world-bestrident Hachette, offered £12.6 million for Quercus, which (including its Jo Fletcher Books genre imprint) was put on sale early this year. The deal should be finalized by the end of this month. [L]

**As Others See Us II**. The Hugo award is a vaguely dildo-shaped silver rocketship ...' (Hayley Campbell, *New Statesman*, 4 March)

R.I.P. **Stewart H. Benedict** (1924-2014), US journalist, author and playwright who edited the 1963 anthology *Tales of Terror and Suspense*, died on 19 March. [SFS] • **Richard Coogan** (1914-2014), US actor who first played the lead role in the early tv sf series *Captain Video and his Video Rangers* (1949-1955), died on 12 March; he was 99. [JHB] • **Philippe Eby** (Jacques Gouzou, 1920-2014), French author of many sf shorts and novels that sold over two million copies since 1971 and were translated into several languages, died on 1 March aged 93. Popular series included 'Les Conquerants de l'impossible' ('The Fantastic Conquerors'), 'Les Evades du temps' ('The Time Runaways') and 'Les patrouilleurs de l'an 4003' ('The 4003 Patrol'). [DS] • **James Ellis** (1931-2014), Belfast-born actor whose genre credits include *Re-Animator* (1985), *Doctor Who* (1989), *Leapin' Leprechauns!* (1995) and *Dragonworld: The Legend Continues* (1999), died on 8 March aged 82. [AW] • **Donald Malcolm** (1930-2013), Scots author of short sf in *Nebula*, *New Worlds* and *New Writings in SF* 1957-1976—plus two 1976 novels for Laser Books, *The Unknown Shore* and *The Iron Rain*—died on 9 November 2013. [SFS/MA] • **Derek Martinus** (1931-2014), UK tv director responsible for 26 early *Doctor Who* episodes 1965-1970—including the debut of the Cybermen and the first storyline shot in colour—died on 27 March aged 82. [MPJ] • **Steve Moore** (1949-2014), UK writer who scripted comics for *2000 AD*, *Doctor Who Weekly*/Monthly and *Warrior*, was an editor of *Fortean Times* and *Fortean Studies*, novelized the film *V for Vendetta* (2006) and published the 2011 fantasy *Somnium*, died on 14 March aged 64. [DVB] • **Oswald Morris** (1915-2014), Oscar-winning uk cinematographer whose films include *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1974), *The Wiz* (1978), *The Great Muppet Caper* (1981) and *The Dark Crystal* (1982, his last), died on 17 March; he was 98. [MMW] • **Kate O'Mara** (1939-2014), UK actress who played that villainous 'Time Lady' the Rani in *Doctor Who* (1985, 1987), died on 30 March aged 74.

She also appeared in the films *The Horror of Frankenstein* and *The Vampire Lovers*, both 1970. [DVB/GW] • **James Rebhorn** (1948-2014), US actor whose genre credits include *Independence Day* (1996), *From the Earth to the Moon* (1998 tv), *The Adventures of Pluto Nash* (2002) and *The Box* (2009), died on 21 March; he was 65. [SG] • **Alan Rodgers** (1959-2014), US author—mainly of horror but also of some sf—who won a Stoker award for his debut story 'The Boy who Came Back from the Dead' (1987), died on 8 March aged 54. [GVG] He had been associate editor of *Twilight Zone* magazine 1984-1987 and sole editor of *Night Cry* 1985-1987. • **Peter Ruber** (1940-2014), Australian-born author, editor and critic who was editor at Arkham House 1997-2004 and edited collections by H. Russell Wakefield and Seabury Quinn for Ash-Tree Press, died on 6 March. [RB] • **Jonathan Schell** (1943-2014), bestselling US nonfiction author whose *The Fate of the Earth* (1982) inspired the nuclear-holocaust film *The Day After* (1983), died on 25 March aged 70. [AIP] • **Lorenzo Semple Jr.** (1923-2014), US screenwriter whose films include *King Kong* (1976 remake), *Flash Gordon* (1980) and *Never Say Never Again* (1983), died on 28 March aged 91; his most utterly memorable contribution to sf was the 1960s Adam West *Batman* tv series. [O] • **Michael Shea** (1946-2014), US author of much fine dark fantasy and sf/horror—often echoing Jack Vance as in the World Fantasy Award-winning *Niffit the Lean* (1982), or H.P. Lovecraft as in *The Color Out of Time* (1984)—died unexpectedly on 16 February; he was 67. His novella 'The Growlmb' (January 2004 *F&SF*) was another WFA winner. [SHS] • **Lucius Shepard** (1943-2014), US author of much richly styled sf and fantasy flavoured with magic realism—a note established in his 1984 debut novel *Green Eyes*—died on 18 March at the age of 70. His many awards include the 1985 Campbell for best new writer, a Nebula for the 1986 'R&R'—incorporated into *Life during Wartime* (1987)—and a Hugo for 'Barnacle Bill the Spacer' (1992). [RFA] A personal favourite, from the Dragon Grialale fantasy sequence, is *The Scalehunter's Beautiful Daughter* (1988). • **John Rowe Townsend** (1922-2014), UK academic and author of young-adult novels—several sf, beginning with *Noah's Castle* (1975)—died on 24 March. He was 91. [JC] • **David A. Trampier** (1954-2014), writer and artist for TSR Inc in the 1970s-1980s, best remembered for his 1978 *Advanced D&D Players Handbook* cover art, died on 24 March. [SFS] • **Ken Utsui** (1931-2014), Japanese actor who played his country's first film superhero Super Giant aka Starman in short films released from 1957 and edited into US features beginning with *Atomic Rules of the World* (1964), died on 14 March aged 82. [PDF] • **Wu Ma** (1942-2014), Taiwanese actor, director, producer and writer, died on 4 February aged 71. *Kari Sperring* writes: 'His long film career included many genre credits works, most famously the Taoist ghosthunter in *A Chinese Ghost Story*; others are *Encounters of the Spooky Kind* (actor), *The Dead and the Deadly* (dir, actor), *Portrait of a Nymph* (dir, actor), *Fox Legend* (dir, actor), *Magic Cop* (actor) and *Deadful Melody* [sic] (actor).'

**The Weakest Link.** *Jeremy Vine*: 'Who wrote *I, Robot*? Contestant: 'William Burroughs' (BBC2, *Revenge of the Egghead*, 12 March) [JL]

**Court Circular.** The forgotten 1970s Scots band Bilbo Baggins (see A312) is doomed to remain forgotten. After an objection from the dread Saul Zaentz Company, their court appeal was shut down by an IPO judge who was unimpressed by the band's cunning compromise of re-branding with the erstwhile manager's name: 'Henry Spurway's Bilbo Baggins'. SZC doesn't always get its way, though: 'Last year, however, it failed to stop the London-based marketing firm Ocean Outdoors from offering advertising space on two towers on either side of a motorway despite SZC's claim that this was similar to the title of one of the volumes of the Lord of the Rings trilogy.' (*Independent*, 31 March) [MPJ] If Elvis Presley ever makes a comeback, he too will be in trouble.

**Outraged Letters.** *Simon R. Green* takes up the tale: 'Ginjer Buchanan is indeed retiring, after being my editor on and off for almost twenty-five years. I was made redundant in 1985, at the age of thirty, and went on the dole for the first time in my life. During the next three and a half years, I couldn't find a job to save my life, so I decided that this was the time to be taking my writing seriously. I wrote seven novels, all of which were rejected. Many repeatedly. I finally got a job working at Bilbo's Bookshop, in Bath. I started work on the Monday; on the Wednesday I got a letter from Ginjer. Saying that she wanted to buy my Hawk & Fisher novel. And would I be interested in writing five more books, featuring the same characters? And that was the start of my career. Now that is an editor.' (27 March)

**Fanfundery.** *DUFF* 2014 voting ended on 31 March and the results are now awaited. • *TAFF* voting ends on 22 April (so that's the last reminder here); *GUFF* voting on 9 June. See [taff.org.uk](http://taff.org.uk) for ballots.

**Bode's Law.** Genre references creep insidiously into music reviewing, or at least its fashion notes: '... when Ellie Goulding saunters onto the stage wearing a flesh-tinted mesh, gold and black basque topped off with imitation yak-fur capelet which falls uncomfortably between Barbarella and the Night's Watch from *Game Of Thrones*, it does not bode well.' (Emily Mackay, *Independent*, 10 March) [MPJ]

**Magazine Scene.** John Klima is the new editor of *SFWA Bulletin*.

**Random Fandom.** *Milt Stevens* offered a chilling follow-up to the 'Wossgate' uproar briefly mentioned in A320: 'Shall we start the rumor that Loncon is replacing Ross with Orson Scott Card?' (*File 770*, March)

**The Dead Past.** 40 Years Ago, sf cinema was all played out: 'William S. Burroughs: 'I understand that you may play Valentine Michael Smith in the film version of *Stranger in a Strange Land*.' David Bowie: 'No, I don't like the book much. In fact, I think it is terrible. It was suggested to me that I make it into a movie, then I got around to reading it. It seemed a bit too Flower-Powery and that made me a bit wary.' Burroughs: 'I'm not happy with the book either. You know, science fiction has not been very successful. It was supposed to start a whole new trend and nothing happened. For the special effects in *2001*, it was great. But it all ended there.' (Craig Copetas, 'Beat Godfather Meets Glitter Mainman', *Rolling Stone*, 28 February 1974) [MMW] • 50 Years Ago, one young fan was more optimistic during an open discussion at Eastercon: 'Terry Pratchett said that good sf is still being written.' (*Skyrack* 65, April 1964) • 70 Years Ago, some wartime news from August Derleth at Arkham House: 'Lovecraft's *The Outsider* and *Others* is now out of print. I continue to hope, however, that it will be reprinted in England after the war, perhaps in a less expensive edition, or perhaps, with less stories in the book. We shall see as to this once this conflict is done...' (*Futurian War Digest*, April 1944)

**Media Awards.** *Oscars*: besides *Gravity*'s multiple awards (for which see A320), *Frozen* won for animated feature and original song; *Her* won for original screenplay. • *Razzies*: three wins for *After Earth*! Worst actor, Jaden Smith; worst supporting actor, Will Smith; worst screen combo, Jaden and Will Smith. [MPJ] • *Royal Television Society*: best international programme was *Game of Thrones*.

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Hyperinflation Dept.* 'The creature sprang with a bigger snarl than any modern-day tiger ever gave out with. It came straight through the air. Those two saber teeth grew from ten inches to ten feet as the beast rocketed in.' (Lester Del Rey, *Tunnel Through Time*, 1966) [BA] • *Dept of Similes.* 'He'd yawn like a whale on a plankton hunt and swallow like he was choking down a lump of concrete, but his head got more and more like a pressure cooker no matter what he did.' 'He looked like he'd lost about twenty pounds in stature.' (Jack Harvey [Jan Rankin], *Bleeding Hearts*, 1994) [PB] 'He slammed onto the hay floor like thirty anvils dropped out of a ten-story window.' (Richard S. Meyers, *Cry of the Beast*, 1979) [BA] • *Stardrive Physics Explained.* 'Velocity was the porridge of commercial space travel. Too much or too little, and you get eaten by bears.' (M.C. Planck, *The Kassa Gambit*, 2013) [CH] • *A Suspicious Character.* 'He couldn't spread butter on toast without people checking their pockets to see if they'd been robbed.' (*Ibid*) • *Splits Dept.* 'The punch hit Westie in the stomach and sent him backwards until he hit the wall, either side of a framed canvas.' (Jan Rankin, *Doors Open*, 2010) [PB] • *Dept of Free Association.* 'Connie sorted through the different drawers in her mind, rooting through the file labeled MISCELLANEOUS. For some reason the word made her think of Sam.' (Katherine Howe, *The Physics Book of Deliverance Dane*, 2009) [PB] • *A Dark and Hungry Thog Arises (2).* 'Even if his brain had decided to pull away from her before he became helplessly enmeshed in Angus's plots, his body might have remained where it was.' 'Implications came into focus in the light as if his strong fingers held them down on the desktop for her to see.' 'With his mouth full of ash and fatality, he recognized that before long he was going to go mad.' 'His hands thrashed like dying fish at the end of his arms.' 'He'd run out of choices. His simple, reasonable, and above all secure buggery had been turned against him.' 'Locking his legs, he tried to thrust his hips up and forward. At exactly the wrong moment he stumbled.' 'Morn rose as if she were going to sail through the top of her head.' (all Stephen R. Donaldson, *The Gap into Power: A Dark and Hungry God Arises*, 1992) [AR]

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