



## Ansible 213 April 2005

From **Dave Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU. <http://ansible.co.uk>. Fax 0705 080 1534. ISSN 0265-9816 (print) 1740-942X (online). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Atom**. Available for SAE, or for *hrónir* of the eleventh degree.

**Paragon2.** Once again the UK Eastercon took place in the eerily familiar surroundings of what is now called the Hinckley Island Hotel (formerly known as the Hanover International, Howling Wilderness, A Junction on the M69, etc). ● **BSFA Awards.** NOVEL Ian McDonald, *River of Gods*. SHORT Stephen Baxter, 'Mayflower 2'. ARTWORK Stephan Martinière, Tor US cover of *Newton's Wake* by GoH Ken MacLeod. ● Most terrifying con newsletter quote, ascribed to the bar staff: 'You don't drink as much as the Discworld folk.' O tempora, O mores. ● **More Awards.** *Phlosque*, for cute but significant artwork: Bridget Bradshaw. *Doc Weir*, for unsung good folk: Dave Lally, plus a special for Faldo the retiring guide dog (see *A210*). *Hall Costume*: Ian Watson(!). ● **Eastercon 2007.** The shock horror lack of any bid left UK fandom strangely unperturbed. Could this be the end of Eastercon, or of two-year bidding? A bid for Croydon is rumoured: 'Possibly apocryphal sources suggest that James Bacon is involved.' [PT] Meanwhile, Chris Bell and others are planning a bid provisionally titled *Convoy*, using the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool: 'They would love us to go back ...' ● **Hugo Nominations** were also revealed and caused much stir at Easter. We apologize to Ian 'Ansible is all bloody boring award lists' Sorensen:

NOVEL (424 nominating ballots): Iain M. Banks, *The Algebrast*; China Miéville, *Iron Council*; Charles Stross, *Iron Sunrise*; Susanna Clarke, *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*; Ian McDonald, *River of Gods*. ● NOVELLA (249) ● Charles Stross, 'The Concrete Jungle' (*The Atrocity Archives*); Charles Stross, 'Elector' (*Asimov's* 09/04); Bradley Denton, 'Sergeant Chip' (*F&SF* 09/04); Michael A. Burstein, 'Time Ablaze' (*Analog* 6/04); Lois McMaster Bujold, 'Winterfair Gifts' (*Irresistible Forces*). ● NOVELLETTE (215) Benjamin Rosenbaum, 'Biographical Notes to "A Discourse on the Nature of Causality, with Air-Planes" by Benjamin Rosenbaum' (*All-Star Zeppelin Adventure Stories*); Michael F. Flynn, 'The Clapping Hands of God' (*Analog* 7/04); Kelly Link, 'The Faery Handbag' (*The Faery Reel*); Paolo Bacigalupi, 'The People of Sand and Slag' (*F&SF* 2/04) Christopher Rowe, 'The Voluntary State' (*Sci Fiction* 5 May 04). ● SHORT (269) James Patrick Kelly, 'The Best Christmas Ever' (*Sci Fiction* 26 May 04); Michael A. Burstein, 'Decisions' (*Analog* 1/04); Mike Resnick, 'A Princess of Earth' (*Asimov's* 12/04); Robert J. Sawyer, 'Shed Skin' (*Analog* 1/04); Mike Resnick, 'Travels with My Cats' (*Asimov's* 2/04). ● RELATED BOOK (263) Pat and Dick Lupoff, *The Best of Xero*; Edward James & Farah Mendlesohn, *The Cambridge Companion to SF*; William Tenn, *Dancing Naked*; David A. Hardy & Patrick Moore, *Futures*; **Peter Weston**, *With Stars in My Eyes*. ● DRAMATIC—LONG (340) *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *The Incredibles*, *Sky Captain and The World of Tomorrow*, *Spider-Man 2*. ● DRAMATIC—SHORT (161) *Stargate SG-1* 'Heroes' 1&2, *Angel* 'Not Fade Away', *Lost* Pilot Episode, *Angel* 'Smile Time', *Battlestar Galactica* '33'. ● PRO EDITOR (296) Ellen Datlow, Gardner Dozois, David G. Hartwell, Stanley Schmidt, Gordon Van Gelder. ● PRO ARTIST (232) Jim Burns, Bob Eggleton, Frank Kelly Freas, Donato Giancola, John Picacio. ● SEMI-PROZINE (238) *Ansible*, *Interzone*, *Locus*, *The New York Review of SF*, *The Third Alternative*. ● FAN WRITER (241) Claire Brialey, Bob Devney, David Langford, Cheryl Morgan, Steven H Silver. ● FANZINE (218) *Banana Wings*, *Challenger*, *Chunga*, *Emerald City*, *Plokta*. ● FAN ARTIST (179) Brad Foster, Teddy Harvia, Sue Mason, Steve Stiles, Frank Wu. ● WEB SITE (311) *eFanzines*, *Emerald City*, *Locus Online*, *Sci Fiction*, *Strange Horizons*. ● JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD for new writers (187; not a Hugo; asterisks mark second and final year of eligibility) Elizabeth Bear\*, K.J. Bishop\*, David Moles\*, Chris Roberson\*, Steph Swainston.

### The Sect of the Phoenix

**Iain M. Banks** (yes, that's what the official announcement calls him, with the Middle Initial of Space Opera) will receive a honorary DLitt degree from the University of Glasgow on 15 June, for being an 'Acclaimed author and ambassador for Scotland's literary culture'. [JK]

**Samuel R. Delany** had an emergency appendectomy on 5 March, followed by complications—a split suture leading to infection though luckily not peritonitis—requiring further hospital treatment. He is still

recovering and would like to do so in private (no messages, please).

**Michael Swanwick** offers a soothing 'As Others See Yet Others' encounter: 'As part of my campaign to fight self-pity in my chosen genre, I went to a brunch with E.L. Doctorow at Kelly Writers House here in Philadelphia, where the great man denied that he wrote historical fiction. "*The Scarlet Letter* was set 150 years in Hawthorne's past," he pointed out. "Does that make it historical fiction?" Well ... yes. / Doctorow has just turned in a new novel, incidentally. *The March* takes place during the Civil War but is by no means you-know-what.'

**Dave Wolverton** has been outed. From the copyright page of *Worlds of the Golden Queen* (advance reading copy, forthcoming from Tor): 'This omnibus edition comprises *The Golden Queen* and *Beyond the Gate* by David Farland, which were originally published under Mr. Farland's pseudonym Dave Wolverton.' [GF] Next, it will be revealed that Stephen King is actually Richard Bachman.

### Conure

11 Apr ● **Reading at Borders**, Oxford St, London. Top floor, 6:30pm. With Pat Cadigan and guests TBA.

16 Apr ● **Looking Upwards** (BSFA/SF Foundation), Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1. 10:30am-5pm. GoH: BSFA Ian McDonald, SFF Karen Traviss. Admission free. Includes both AGMs.

27 Apr ● **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Star pub, West Halkin Mews, London, SW1. 6pm on; fans in bar from 5pm. With Susanna Clarke.

4 May ● **British Fantasy Society** open night, Walkers of Holborn, 9 Norwich St, London, EC4A 1EJ. From 6.30pm. All welcome.

11 May ● **Clarke Award Ceremony**, English Heritage Lecture Theatre, London. By invitation.

3-5 Jun ● **Construction V** (yet another Interaction staff weekend). Location TBC but most likely to be Stevenage, Herts.

29-31 Jul ● **Precursor 2: The Smithcon** (relaxacon), Quality Hotel, Walsall. £25 reg to 8 The Orchard, Tonwell, Herts, SG12 8HG, or \$44 to Jae Leslie Adams, 621 Spruce St, Madison, WI 53715, USA.

4-8 Aug ● **Interaction** (63rd Worldcon), SECC, Glasgow. £110/\$195/€165 reg to 30 Jun. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

11-15 Aug ● **The Ring Goes Ever On** (Tolkien Soc): Aston U, Birmingham. Now £60/\$115/€103 reg; society members £55/\$105/€95. Contact 28 Loverock Crescent, Rugby, CV21 4AR.

15-16 Oct ● **Octocon**, Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth, Ireland. Guests TBA. €20 reg, student €15, under-18 €10 until 1 May, to Octocon, Basement Flat, 26 Longford Tce, Monkstown, Co. Dublin. Sterling £15, £10, £7 to 'Dave Lally #2 A/C', 64 Richborne Tce, London, SW8 1AX.

28-31 Oct ● **Cult TV 2005**, Birmingham. Various guests. £99 reg, £49 child (10-15). Contact PO Box 1701, Wolverhampton, WV4 4WT.

23-25 Feb 07 ● **Redemption 07** (B7/B5/general), Hinckley Island Hotel, Leics. £40 reg to 15 Apr 05, £45 to 9 Aug; £50 to 31 Aug 06; £55 to 9 Feb 07; £60 at door. Day: £35, £40 at door. Under 18s £15; day £10. Under 3s free. 26 Kings Meadow View, Wetherby, LS22 7FX.

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us.** Susan Mitchell knows what's fiction and what isn't: 'Read any good novels lately? Read any bad novels lately? My guess is that if you've read anything, for pleasure or interest, it hasn't been fiction. Book sales of fiction, particularly literary fiction, are down. By fiction I don't mean fantasy, as in Harry Potter or *Lord of the Rings*, I mean a story about our lives created from an author's imagination.' (*Weekend Australian Financial Review*, 19-20 Mar) [DW] ● Mark Lawson, connoisseur of fantasy, reports the news that Ian McKellen will feature in *Coronation Street*: 'The explanation for Sir Ian's soap debut may simply be that he wanted to speak some proper dialogue after appearing in all that Tolkein [sic] trog tosh ...' (*Guardian*, 12 March)

**Group Gropes.** *London First Thursdays*: Eastercon flyers announced a move to Walkers of Holborn, 9 Norwich St, EC4A 1EJ (near Chancery Lane tube), which has been booked for 7 April and beyond. [PT]

**Even Still Yet More Awards.** *Dick Award*: Gwyneth Jones, *Life*;

also special citation to Lyda Morehouse for *Apocalypse Array*. • *Tiptree*: Honours for best 'gender-bending' sf of 2004 went to two novels, Joe Haldeman's *Camouflage* and Johanna Sinisalo's *Troll: A Love Story*, the US translation of her Finlandia Prize-winner *Ennen pääivanlaskua ei voi* (2000; UK *Not Before Sundown*, 2003). • *ICFA Awards*. At this year's International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts, the William L. Crawford Award for best new fantasy writer went to Steph Swainston for *The Year of Our War*, while Damien Broderick received the Distinguished Scholarship Award. • *SF Hall of Fame*: latest additions are Philip K. Dick (token print-media person), Steven Spielberg, Ray Harryhausen, and Chesley Bonestell. • *The Sir Arthur C. Clarke Awards* or 'Arthurs', first presented on 2 April 2005 for British contributions to rocketry and space, should not be confused with the established 'Clarkes' for sf novels published in Britain. But they will be. [PT]

**Marmite Ads** homaging *The Blob* have terrified young children and earned the disapproval of the Advertising Standards Authority. (BBC News) I too was terrorized by Marmite when little, but the callous media ignored my sufferings. Today's brats have it too easy. Harrumph!

**R.I.P.** *Karen Wynn Fonstad* (1945-2005), US cartographer who created *The Atlas of Middle-Earth* (1981) and other fantasy and sf map-books, died on 11 March. [SFS] • *Willis Hall* (1929-2005), UK playwright and children's fantasy novelist, died on 7 March aged 75. His TV work included many scripts for *Worzel Gummidge*. [JE] • *Debra Hill* (1950-2005), US screenwriter and producer who worked on various *Halloween* films from 1978, *The Fog* (1980), and *Escape From New York* (1981), died on 7 March. She was 54. [GW] • *Brian Kelly* (1931-2005), US actor of *Flipper* fame and executive producer of *Blade Runner* (1982), died on 12 February. He was 73. • *David Kossoff* (1919-2005), UK writer and actor whose genre credits included *Journey Into Space* (BBC radio 1953-5), *The Mouse That Roared* (1955) and *The Mouse on the Moon* (1962), died on 23 March aged 85. • *Raylyn Moore* (1928-2005), US author who was married to Ward Moore (1903-1978) and whose one novel is *What Happened to Emily Goode After the Great Exhibition* (1978), died on 27 February; she was 77. [L] • *Andre Norton* (1912-2005), US author who needs no introduction, died on 17 March at age 93, following long illness and weeks of hospice care at home. She published over 130 books, from a 1934 historical debut to a final solo sf novel awaiting publication this month (Tor rushed her an early copy), and in 1984 became the first woman to be honoured as SFWA Grand Master. Her many sf series, most famously 'Witch World', were formative influences on countless younger readers. • *Redmond A. Simonson*, who with James Dunnigan founded Simulations Publications Inc (SPI), publishers of many sf/fantasy board games, died on 9 March. He was 62. SPI began in 1969 and was bought by TSR in 1982. [AIP]

**Thog's Critical Masterclass.** Trenchant opinions from the creator of a certain new *Doctor Who* series: 'It pisses me off when purists say: "Why have Disney done *The Little Mermaid* and changed the ending?" Well, they've reinvented it so that many more millions of children than have ever read the original Oscar Wilde story can come to know and love *The Little Mermaid*.' (*Independent*, 14 March) • '[Marion Zimmer] Bradley's husband, Leigh Brackett, wrote *The Darkover Concordance: A Reader's Guide* (1979) to help sort out the complexities of the series.' (Applewhite Minyard, *Decades of Science Fiction*, 1998) [DL]

**Fanfunding.** *Trip Report Bounty*. Joe Siclari announces that FANAC has donated \$200 to TAFF to mark the appearance of Peter Weston's 1974 report (in *With Stars In My Hugo Nomination*), and James Bacon's 2004 report *WorldConNomicon* (available from him: £5/€7/\$9 inc post, to 211 Blackhorse Ave, Dublin 7, Ireland). STOP PRESS: Tobes Valois's 2002 TAFF report tortured out of him in marathon Eastercon session! • *GUFF* (Australasia to Interaction): voting deadline is 29 April 2005.

**List to Starboard.** Nice to see that the Scottish Book Trust's '100 Best Scottish Books of All Time' list features several genre titles, not only classics like *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and *The Wind in the Willows*, but such cult oddities as David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus*. Selections by living authors include Alasdair Gray's *Lanark*, Iain Banks's *The Wasp Factory*, and the ubiquitous *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone of Scone* (in America, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Cookie*). Particularly surprising is the appearance of 1984 by that braw, sonsie lad George Orwell, on the flimsy basis that he wrote it on the Isle of Jura. (Justifying the inclusions of *Heart of Darkness* and *From Russia With Love* is left as an exercise for readers.) • Another list, of inspirational war-related books, is maintained by the US Marines and was recently (Feb 2005) purged of its 1996 sf selections *Starship Troopers* and *Ender's Game*. [JD] Our whistleblower mysteriously attributes this change to the War on Terror.

**Who's This?** From a newspaper feature on dud predictions (*Sunday Express*, 27 March): 'Another expert—respected sci-fi author Howard Harrison—predicted in 1979 that a severe food shortage of natural produce would cripple Britain. He reckoned we'd be eating Weetabix "three times a day".' [KF] Harry, was that you ...?

**Random Fandom.** *John Bangsund* 'is making a great recovery' from his stroke, writes Sally Yeoland: 'enormous improvement ... his short term memory has now completely returned, and John is now able to finish his sentences and thoughts.' It's hoped that he can move from hospital to sheltered accommodation in mid-April. • *Richard E. Geis*, despite his famous reclusiveness, was the subject of a sympathetic Steve Duin column in *The Oregonian* for 15 March. His many Hugos for *SF Review/The Alien Critic* get an admiring mention. [KY] • *Alice Turner and Dave Field* were married in Coventry on 27 March. [SG]

**Editorial.** Let there be no unseemly, chauvinistic gloating over that all-British Hugo novel shortlist. Thanks to those who nominated me! Heroic efforts at modesty are doubtless being made by Charlie Stross and Cheryl Morgan, with three nominations apiece, and by Iain Banks and Ian McDonald, who both achieved the rare feat of having a novel shortlisted without prior US publication (forthcoming in each case).

**C.o.A.** *Chris Amies*, 18 Jemmett Close, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT2 7AJ. *Geoff & Hui Hill*, 42 Imperial Ave, Westcliffe-on-Sea, SS0 8NQ. *Naomi Saunders* (from 3 May), 603 Newmarket Rd, Cambridge, CB5 8PA. *Ian Sorensen*, 3 Portia Place, Motherwell, ML1 1EL.

**As Others See Us II.** Further reassurance regarding Kazuo Ishiguro's rip-snorting space opera about rogue clones, *Never Let Me Go*: 'This is not a book of science fiction. I doubt that Ishiguro is even particularly interested in the science or ethics of cloning. So don't go to the novel for a Peter Singer workout. What you will find is an intense, but undramatised exploration of the intricacies of human emotion and human interplay.' (Morag Fraser, *The Age*, Melbourne, 12 March) [MR] • On-line sexual advice from Nerve.com: '[Q] What do the following books say about a person's sexual characteristics: A man currently reading *The Da Vinci Code*? [A] This guy is going to be awful in bed. This is just one step up from a sci-fi reader, someone who thinks sex can't measure up to masturbation.' [HF]

**Euroclarion.** Geoff Ryman and others are raising funds to launch a European equivalent of the legendary Clarion sf writers' workshops. Keep an eye on developments at <http://www.euroclarion.org.uk/>.

**The Dead Past.** Let's raise our glasses in bicentennial appreciation of Hans Christian Andersen, born 2 April 1805, who inspired one long-cherished assessment of *Ansible*: 'As a newszine, it is the Emperor's New Clothes.' (Mike Glycer, *File 770*, 1987). • Robert Louis Stevenson, drug-crazed hippy, was allegedly high on an ergot-derived hallucinogen while writing *Jekyll and Hyde*—according to a *Times* story on 20 March.

**Outraged Letters.** *Mat Coward* enjoys another grumble: 'In *Radio Times*, 12-18 March, the intro to an article about the "Supervolcano" film: "A billion people killed and the start of a new ice age. Science fiction, right? Not according to a disturbing hi-tech thriller." Ah yes, quite—hi-tech thrillers, you can rely on them. Not like that daft fiction about science nonsense.' • *John Jarrold* feels quietly smug: 'For the second year running, a book I commissioned for the much-lamented Earthlight imprint has won the BSFA Award for Best Novel, with *River of Gods* following on from Jon Courtenay Grimwood's *Felaheen*....'

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Hazards of Spaceship Acceleration Dept.* 'Grant slept fitfully, dreaming that some giant hand was shaking him, pummeling him mercilessly. He snapped awake and found that it was no dream.' • 'Abruptly the thrusters shut off. Grant felt it like a blow to his crotch.' (both Ben Bova, *Jupiter*, 2000) [AR] • *Arithmetic Dept.* 'Caine [...] hobbled to the kitchen, closing the door behind him, 1.3 seconds before three soldiers burst into the room. ... Their names are Martin Crowe, Juan Esposito, Ron McCoy, and Charlie Rainer.' (Adam Fawer, *Improbable*, 2005) [FB] • *Dept of Supersonics.* 'The ships were so big, so vast, so fast. Faster than sound. The noise reached you after the ship made it. That was why there was never any warning.' (Nicholas Fisk, *Starstormers*, 1980) • *Theory of Numbers Dept.* 'The number of vertices of the shapes on the left-hand frame are the first four primes: one, three, five and seven.' (Alastair Reynolds, *Diamond Dogs*, 2001) [LC]

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