

# ansible



## Ansible 277 August 2010

From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Web news.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Steve Stiles. Available for SAE, or the location of the Great Silver Vet.

### August for the People

**Samuel R. Delany** and **Harlan Ellison** will receive, respectively, the 2010 and 2011 Eaton Awards for life achievement in sf. [GF]

**Frank Frazetta's** famous 1971 painting for *Conan the Destroyer* sold for \$1.5 million at the San Diego Comic Convention in July. [PDF]

**Michael Moorcock** spills the beans on his vast new nonfiction collection *Into the Media Web*, edited by John Davey: 'Some early embarrassments in there! I didn't see it until it appeared in print and probably wouldn't have chosen everything John chose. Also, I've had to employ a sturdy boy to carry it around and hold it for me on his back when I want to read it. Still, sturdy boys are easily acquired in the Marais. The least Savoy could have done for the older reader would have been to include a free wheelbarrow with every copy.'

**George Pal**, producer/director whose sf films include *The War of the Worlds* (1953), and Percy Greg—author of the utterly famous Mars-trip novel *Across the Zodiac* (1880)—are commemorated in the latest naming of Martian craters: Pal (79km diameter) and Greg (68km). [BH] Authors who've already received this honour are Isaac Asimov, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Robert A. Heinlein, Kurd Lasswitz, Alexei Tolstoy, Stanley G. Weinbaum and H.G. Wells. Not Ray Bradbury, since living people don't qualify; nor Leigh Brackett, excluded from this all-male list because a lunar crater has been named for a different Brackett.

**H.G. Wells** inspired a £1000 story competition for under-25s (linked with the Wells Festival—see below or [www.wellsfestival.com](http://www.wellsfestival.com)), which had no entries owing to two strict requirements: handwritten submissions and no horrid science fiction. 'Last year there were plenty of entries because the competition was open to writers of all ages and stories could include science fiction, depicting ghastly invasions of our everyday lives by all sorts of nameless horrors,' complained contest setter Reg Turnill (94). He has since dropped the unpopular conditions and extended the 20 July deadline. (Kentnews.co.uk, 18 July) [JM]

**Jane Yolen** is this year's SF Poetry Association Grand Master.

### Conditaneous

2-31 Aug • **Film Science: Future Human Part 2** (sf film season), BFI Southbank, London. Various prices. See [tinyurl.com/35c4zr5](http://tinyurl.com/35c4zr5).

10 Aug • **The Final Programme** (film) and Michael Moorcock Q&A, NFT1, BFI Southbank. 8:30pm. £9. Book at [www.bfi.org.uk](http://www.bfi.org.uk)

13-29 Aug • **Edge of the Wild** (Tolkien art show), Redesdale Hall, Moreton-in-Marsh, GL56 0AW. 9am-5pm. Free. See [adcbbooks.co.uk](http://adcbbooks.co.uk)

13-15 Aug • **Festival in the Shire** (Tolkien), Y Plas, Machynlleth, Wales. Many complex price tiers; some or all discounts ceased in June. See [www.festivalintheshire.com](http://www.festivalintheshire.com) for more. Bookings 0800 6125469.

25 Aug • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Antelope, 22 Eaton Terrace, London, SW1W 8EZ. 5pm for 6pm. With Dan Abnett.

26-29 Aug • **Tricon** (Eurocon), Cieszyn/Cesky Tesin, Polish/Czech border. Nov €25 reg. All booking details at <http://tricon.info/>.

26-30 Aug • **Frightfest** (film), Empire Cinema, Leicester Square, London. £150 reg; day £24 Thu, £50 Fri, £48 Sat or Sun, £42 Mon; individual films £11. Bookings 08 714 714 714; [www.frightfest.co.uk](http://www.frightfest.co.uk).

27-30 Aug • **Diseworld Convention**, Birmingham NEC: SOLD OUT. Waiting list for possible cancellations: membership at [dwccon.org](http://dwccon.org).

2-6 Sep • **Aussiecon 4** (68th Worldcon), Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. \$A310/\$US280/\$CAN290/£190/€215/Yen 26,200 reg; \$A70/\$US50/\$CAN50/£25/€35/Yen 4,900 supp; register online at [www.aussiecon4.org.au](http://www.aussiecon4.org.au). Contact GPO Box 1212, Melbourne, Vic 3001, Australia; info at [aussiecon4.org.au](http://aussiecon4.org.au). The deadline for 2012 site selection ballots sent by post has been extended to 9 August.

3-6 Sep • **Cineology Live** (cult tv), Pontin's, Lowestoft, Suffolk: CANCELLED without explanation. No mention of refunds at [cineology.net](http://cineology.net).

10-12 Sep • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. £43 reg (£53 inc ball; under-16s £5; under-12s free. Day rate £22). Online booking only: [steampunk.synthasite.com](http://steampunk.synthasite.com). Contact [majortinker@aol.com](mailto:majortinker@aol.com).

10-12 Sep • **Reunion 8** (media), DeVere Staverton Park, Daventry.

£97 reg; VIP £145; child, day, etc. options at [www.sfball.com](http://www.sfball.com).

17-19 Sep • **Fantasycon 2010**, Britannia Hotel, 1 St James St, Nottingham. £75 reg (BFS members £55); £45 (£35) for Saturday only. Online booking only: [www.fantasycon.org.uk](http://www.fantasycon.org.uk).

17-19 Sep • **H.G. Wells Festival**, The Grand, The Leas, Folkestone, CT20 2XL. Free receipt 6-8pm Friday; variously priced events Saturday; £25 all-day ticket Sunday. Contact 01 303 222 222.

24-26 Sep • **Da'Con** (steampunk/alt-history), Park Inn Hotel, Thurrock. CANCELLED since only 14 people joined. Refunds are promised.

24-26 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. £33 reg (members £28); under-16s £17 (£15); under-11s £1; under-7s free. Bookings close 3 September. See [www.oxonmoot.org](http://www.oxonmoot.org) or contact 69 Malletts Close, Stony Stratford, Bucks, MK11 1DG.

23-24 Oct • **Unconvention** (Fortean), U of Westminster, 35 Marylebone Rd, London, NW1 5LS. 10am-5pm. £50 reg; £30/day. Booking (unspecified fee): [www.forteanimes.com/uncon2010](http://www.forteanimes.com/uncon2010). 'To pay by cheque please call 020 7907 6112.' An address would be too easy.

12 Dec • **H.P. Lovecraft** event, Reading Central Library, 12 noon to 6pm. £3 (members £2). Contact info at [readinglibraries.org.uk](http://readinglibraries.org.uk).

3-5 Feb 11 • **SFX Weekender 2**, Pontin's Holiday Park, Gamber Sands, E Sussex. Charged by accommodation; shared chalets only; no single rooms. See [www.sfxweekender.com](http://www.sfxweekender.com). Contact 08700 110034.

25-27 Feb 11 • **Redemption '11** (multimedia sf), Britannia Hotel, Fairfax St, Coventry, CV1 5RP. £50 reg, rising to £60 on 31 August; £65 at door. Under-18s and supp £15; under-3s free. Contact 61 Chaucer Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 8SP.

17-21 Aug 11 • **Renovation** (69th Worldcon), Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, NV, USA. \$160 reg, rising to \$180 on 1 October. Unchanged: \$50 supp; \$100 under-21s; \$75 under-17s; under-7s free. Contact PO Box 13278, Portland, OR 97213-0278, USA.

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us.** The *Guardian* attacks the very great evil of tie-dye clothing: 'It's Terry Pratchett books and Games Workshop. It's the implication that elsewhere in your wardrobe there may lurk a T-shirt that says "SMEG HEAD" and that, on occasion, when someone asks what you're having in the pub, you smirkingly ask for a Pan-Galactic Gargle Blaster. / Under the circumstances, perhaps dip-dye is the answer. It's tie-dye's cooler brother and arrives free of the inference of chakra-realignment or Red Dwarf fandom.' (Alex Petridis, 10 July) [PW]

**Awards.** *Brit Writers*, published author category: Terry Pratchett, *Nation*. • *Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery* (unsung authors): Mark Clifton. • *John W. Campbell Memorial*: Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl*. • *Prometheus* (libertarian): Dani and Eytan Kollin, *The Unincorporated Man*. Hall of Fame: Poul Anderson, 'No Truce with Kings' (1963 *F&SF*). • *Rhysling* (poetry): LONG Kendall Evans and Samantha Henderson, 'In the Astronaut Asylum' (*Mythic Delirium* #20). SHORT Ann K. Schwader, 'To Their' (*Strange Horizons* 9/09). • *Scribe* (tie-in novels), Speculative Fiction category: Kevin J. Anderson, *Enemies & Allies*; Greg Cox, *Terminator Salvation: Cold War* (tie). • *Shirley Jackson* (suspense/horror): NOVEL Victor LaValle, *Big Machine*. NOVELLA Nick Antosca, *Midnight Picnic*. NOVELLETTE Stephen King, 'Morality' (*Esquire*). SHORT STORY Karen Joy Fowler, 'The Pelican Bar' (*Eclipse* 3). COLLECTION Kevin Wilson, *Tunneling to the Center of the Earth*; Robert Shearman, *Love Songs for the Sky and Cymical* (tie). ANTHOLOGY Ellen Datlow, *etc.*, *Poe*. • *Surgeon* (short story): James Morrow, *Shambling Towards Hiroshima*. • *James White* (unpublished short story): James Bloomer, 'Flock, Shoal, Herd'.

**Publishers & Sinners.** Liz Williams was not the only author to complain in public about Night Shade Books: no royalty statements, unauthorized ebook editions, general unresponsiveness. This was picked up by the *PW* Genreville blog in July, leading to an official Night Shade apology for shortcomings: 'We screwed up'. SFWA jumped in with a ruling that Night Shade sales won't count as SFWA membership qualifications for one year from 9 July, a fearful sanction which has brought many an erring publisher to its knees. Liz herself, though pleased to get

a personal apology plus royalties and rights reversion, is 'a touch cynical' that problems which for her go back to 2007 weren't admitted or addressed until the bad publicity became impossible to ignore.

**As Others See Us II. IT technician:** 'Jen, everyone knows you don't need to be a geek to know you need a browser to access the internet.' **Manager:** 'Yes you do, because as soon as you know something like that it pushes out something important, and before you know it you're painting little figurines from *The Lord of the Rings*.' (*The IT Crowd* sitcom episode 'Bad Boys', Channel 4, 23 July) [MPJ] ● German board-gaming conventions are more salubrious than British ones, says Warfrog games designer Martin Wallace: 'If you go to a games convention in the UK, you're generally surrounded by fat, smelly people with no social skills. That's not true here.' (*Financial Times*, 20 July) [MMW]

**R.I.P. Stephen Gilbert** (1912-2010), Irish businessman and author who wrote four novels with fantastic elements—the best-known being *Ratman's Notebooks* (1968, reissued and filmed as *Willard*)—died on 23 June aged 97. He is frequently listed as a pseudonym of Gilbert Ralston (1912-1999, also born in Co. Down), who wrote the *Willard* screenplay under his own name. [JC] ● **James P. Hogan** (1941-2010), UK-born writer of mostly hard sf who began publishing with *Inherit the Stars* (1977), died on or before 12 July; he was 69. [GVG] Other enjoyable sf novels include *Voyage from Yesteryear* (1982) and *Code of the Lifemaker* (1983). Despite embracing some eccentric theories like Velikovskianism in later life, he was a reliably convivial presence at sf conventions. ● **Frank K. Kelly** (1914-2010), US journalist and nonfiction author whose ten sf stories (three of them collected in his 1979 *Starship Invincible*) appeared in US magazines from 1931 to 1935, died on 11 June—one day short of his 96th birthday. [GVG]

**Thog's Science Masterclass.** "The Selans' invisibility is not quite perfect. Blue colour is not affected by their electronic fields. I got the idea that a pair of blue glasses would permit me to see them. So I took Ephony's, poured common ink on them ..." Instant success! (Clarence Granoski, 'Ephony's Spectacles', *Science Fiction Quarterly*, 1941) [BA]

**Publishers & Sinners II.** The Hachette Book Group offices in Park Avenue, New York, were closed on 22-23 July to allow spraying of an alien infestation occupying three floors: bedbugs. (Gawker.com) [AIP]

**Library of Babel.** Phil Stephenson-Payne learned the secrets of joined-up librarianship at the British Library's reference collection in Boston Spa, Yorks. Naive researchers might think that the local Reading Room would be the ideal place to consult this archive: but no. A BL official explains: 'The Reading Room at Boston Spa is designed to allow access to our loan collection, and consequently has a slightly lower level of security measures.' To consult (say) pulp magazines from the Boston Spa reference stacks, you must ask for these fragile items to be shipped 200 miles to the 'secure' Reading Room at St Pancras, London; after which, they travel north again. This is known as Green Energy Policy. Some pulps apparently went missing during the initial move north....

**Tell Me the Old, Old Story.** Dr Brian Greene, physicist author of the children's sf story 'Icarus at the Edge of Time', introduced a multimedia adaptation of his work at the Royal Festival Hall on 3 July (with original music by Philip Glass, no less): 'I don't think of my story as science fiction. I prefer to think of it as science ... in fiction.' [PC]

**As Others See Us III.** Before the admission that certain fantasy blockbusters now being adapted for tv are 'very, very good', *Guardian* house style requires a preliminary put-down: 'For the uninitiated—that is, people who don't gleefully buy 600-page books from the nerd section of Waterstone's—A Game of Thrones is the first book in the A Song of Ice and Fire series.' (Mathilda Gregory, TV & Radio Rice, 23 July) [GD]

**'I Never Drink ... Communion Wine.'** Anne Rice's public renunciation of Christianity—or rather, Catholicism—attracted considerable comment, especially on the point that it apparently took her twelve years to notice that the Catholic hierarchy is not all that liberal about things like feminism, birth control or gay rights.

**Outraged Letters.** **Richard E. Geis** on the flaw of A276: 'I note the missing name of Geis in the issue, but as I fade into history I'm getting used to it. / My cataract surgery went well and sooner or later my right eye will see the same fate. / I continue to write male-oriented sex fiction for a niche market that no longer exists, proving something or other about writers and idioy. [...] Anyway, it keeps me off the streets in my wheelchair.' ● **Barry N. Malzberg** traces arcane links: 'Recently found: Wikipedia discloses that the composer Steve Reich and Jonathan Carroll are half-brothers. (The performer June Carroll's first and second marriages.)' ● **Farah Mendlesohn** claims Right of Reply to Diana Wynne Jones in A276: 'The initial conversation began when someone suggested it would be fun to choose t-shirt slogans. It was only when someone

suggested printing them in bulk and selling them, that I pointed out that this might be a breach of copyright, and I suggested that someone contact Diana for permission. This was corroborated by Roger Burton West. Diana sent a message to the list granting permission.'

**The Dead Past.** 50 Years Ago, Ron Bennett reported on a movie that the world would little note nor long remember: 'Bob Bloch's book, *PSYCHO*, now butchered into film version by Hitchcock is in London and has been widely panned.' (*Skyrack* 22, August 1960)

**No Moore Superheroes.** In a recent music-paper interview, Alan Moore was once again lukewarm about traditionally Spandex-clad comics heroes: 'I've had some distancing thoughts about them recently. I've come to the conclusion that what superheroes might be—in their current incarnation, at least—is a symbol of American reluctance to involve themselves in any kind of conflict without massive tactical superiority. I think this is the same whether you have the advantage of carpet bombing from altitude or if you come from the planet Krypton as a baby and have increased powers in Earth's lower gravity. That's not what superheroes meant to me when I was a kid. To me, they represented a wellspring of the imagination. Superman had a dog in a cape! He had a city in a bottle! It was wonderful stuff for a seven-year-old boy to think about. But I suspect that a lot of superheroes now are basically about the unfair fight. You know: people wouldn't bully me if I could turn into the Hulk.' (*The Stool Pigeon* 27, Summer 2010) [AIP]

**The Perennial Booker Whinge.** Andrew Motion explains that genre-tainted pariahs were not excluded from the 13-novel Booker Prize longlist; it merely chanced that right across the board, by a multiple happy coincidence, they failed to be included. Here's the *Guardian*: 'There are no first novels—which have become a feature at longlist stage in the last few years, and there is no genre fiction. Motion said they had not consciously set out to exclude genre but stressed that the Man Booker prize was an award for literary fiction and there were plenty of prizes for crime and sci-fi.' (Mark Brown, 27 July)

**It Is Written.** Sign seen in Waterstone's, Reading, while stock was being rearranged: 'Science Fiction and Fantasy are now separated / This is Science Fiction.' (They have since been reunited.) [JB]

**Random Fandom.** **Edwina Harvey** announces that, owing to the ravages of real life, her and Ted Scribner's newsletter *The Australian SF Bullshead* entered 'indefinite hiatus' after issue 101 in August 2010.

**Magazine Scene.** The 200th issue of *SFX*, dated October 2010, appears on 25 August. Am I the only contributor to be in all 200?

**C.o.A.** **Rog Peyton's** email has changed; the fsnet address is dead. Seekers after books should try rog dot peyton at btinternet dot com.

**Pink List.** The annual *Independent on Sunday* listing of Britain's 101 most influential gay/lesbian folk included several from *Doctor Who*: John Barrowman (see also *Torchwood*) at #17, Mark Gatiss (also co-creator of the BBC's new *Sherlock*) at #38, Russell T. Davies at #64 (down from #14 since his *Who* departure) and Russell Tovey (seen in the Xmas *Who* special 'Voyage Of The Damned'; better known as the werewolf in BBC3's series *Being Human*) at #87. (1 August) [MPJ]

**Thog's Masterclass. Strange Pleasures Dept.** 'Half-heartedly, he unhinged the hand already soldered to his rigid member.' (Maurice G. Dantec, *Babylon Babies*, 1999; trans Noura Wedell 2005) [AK] ● **One Two Many Dept.** 'It was a thin but heavy book, almost the length of two of his hands ...' (Bernard Knight in *The Lost Prophecies* by 'The Medieval Murderers', 2008) [SJ] ● **Eyeballs in the Haberdashery.** 'Detective O'Conner's voice was a nasal baffle. His eyes bulged under the brim of his soft felt hat.' (Paul Chadwick, 'Doctor Zero' in *Ten Detective Aces*, 1933) [DL] ● **Naughty Parts Dept.** 'Still growling, Katov took a small tool from his groin pouch and dropped to his knees ...' **Later:** 'Penway longed for the tool Katov had carried in his groin pouch. Perhaps it would have sufficed.' (Paul W. Fairman, *I, The Machine*, 1968) ● **Dept of Speech Therapy.** "'Please forgive my voice, Denny,'" his hoarse whisper came at last. "But once in the dungeon, when I was nearly dead with thirst and begging for anything to drink, Sorainya had molten metal poured down my throat. ... "They found us on the ledge," breathed the voiceless man.' (both Jack Williamson, *The Legion of Time*, 1938) [PB] ● **Deep Throat Dept.** 'She felt a scream curling somewhere down in her stomach, growing as it wormed its sick way around and around, working its way up her throat ...' (Tony Ballantyne, *Divergence*, 2007) [CB]