



Ansible® 448 November 2024

From **David Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website news.ansible.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Ian Gunn**, 1990s. Available for SAE or the secret plans hidden by Erihsbrad under the Wollip.

The Furtive Feasters

Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki was removed from the SFWA Board of Directors – a recent ‘Director-at-Large’ appointment on 1 July – after public complaints regarding his professional ethics. (SFWA, 28 October; *File 770*, 26 October; see also Erin Cairns, ethicsreport.tiiny.site)

Alan Moore can see both sides of the issue: ‘I believe that fandom is a wonderful and vital organ of contemporary culture, without which that culture ultimately stagnates, atrophies and dies. At the same time, I’m sure that fandom is sometimes a grotesque blight that poisons the society surrounding it with its mean-spirited obsessions and ridiculous, unearned sense of entitlement.’ (*Guardian*, 26 October)

Elon Musk, along with Tesla and Warner Bros Discovery, is being sued by the makers of *Blade Runner 2049* (Alcon Entertainment) for allegedly using AI-generated imagery based on that film at the launch event for Tesla’s robotaxi – after Alcon ‘specifically denied a request from Warner Bros to use material from the film’. (BBC, 22 October) [SF^C]

Katherine Rundell revealed the secret of making children’s books ‘shine’ by pruning unnecessary detail. ‘The greatest children’s books pull off this balancing act, per Rundell: To this day, she can recount, exactly and with absolute confidence, the hair color of the Pevensies of Narnia, “but they are never described in the book.”’ (*Washington Post* interview, 10 September). Bibliophiles are now eagerly seeking the rare edition of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* without the mentions in Chapter 17 of Susan’s long black hair and golden-haired Lucy. [AL]

Robert Runte had a soul-searing insight: ‘You know you’re taking too long to finish your novel when you started at the same time as *Last Dangerous Visions* and it comes out first.’ (Facebook, 5 October)

Bram Stoker is in the news for ‘Gibbet Hill’, a rediscovered short story from a Christmas supplement to the *Dublin Daily Express* on 17 December 1890. (BBC, 19 October) A ‘first’ book edition was announced for November, but Wildside Press released their version in October.

Condylotomy

Until 4 Jan • **The Lost Worlds of Ray Harryhausen**, Lauriston Gallery, Waterside, Sale, Manchester. See tinyurl.com/2jbbwxcw.

1-3 Nov • **Armadacon**, Future Inns, Plymouth. £45 reg; £35 concessions; single day £25. More at www.armadacon.org.

1-2 Nov • **Frightfest** (film), London, Odeon Luxe, Leicester Square. Two-day ticket £79; more at www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents/.

1-3 Nov • **Glasgow 2024, Back to Our Futures**, free online for Glasgow Worldcon attending or virtual members: tinyurl.com/2earcc4d.

8-10 Nov • **Novacon 53**, Palace Hotel, Buxton. £53 reg; couples £106; under-17s £12; under-13s free. Day rates at novacon.uk. *The hotel no longer accepts cash in the bar or restaurants – card payments only.*

9 Nov • **Cymera Writers’ Conference**, Edinburgh/online. £75; concessions/virtual at www.cymerafestival.co.uk/writers-conference.

9-10 Nov • **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivials.

9-10 Nov • **Women in Horror Weekend**, Waterstones, Nottingham. £18; day rates £10 Sat, £8 Sun. See tinyurl.com/mr3spmz2.

16 Nov • **Winter Haunts 3** (Gothic etc), online. See <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/winter-haunts-2024-tickets-998430531597>.

16 Nov • **Writing and Mental Health** (BFS event), online with panels, interviews and readings. See tinyurl.com/bfs-mental-health.

23-24 Nov • **Christopher Tolkien** centenary conference, online: www.tolkiensociety.org/events/christopher-tolkien-centenary-conference/

25-26 Nov • **DarkFest 6** (film), Genesis Cinema, 93-95 Mile End Rd, London, E1 4UJ. £55. See infinitymagazine.co.uk/product/darkfest-6/.

30 Nov • **Dragonmeet** (gaming), Novotel Hammersmith, London. 9am-11pm. Tickets £15.50 (under-18s £8) at www.dragonmeet.co.uk.

7-8 Dec • **Women in the Black Fantastic** (SFF conference), online. £30; £15 unwaged. See www.sf-foundation.org/fresh-about.

29 Dec - 1 Jan • **Steampunk New Year**, Belmont Hotel, Leicester. See www.ministryofsteampunk.com/steampunknewyear2025.

21-23 Feb 2025 • **UK Ghost Story Festival**, Museum of Making,

Derby. In-person ticket sales awaited. Also online 14-16 February, £50 plus fee. See www.ukghoststoryfestival.co.uk.

18-21 Apr 2025 • **Reconnect** (Eastercon), Hilton Lanyon Place Hotel and ICC, Belfast. *Now £90 reg, rising to £100 on 1 January and £120 at the door; £40 discounted (under-18s, concessions, Eastercon first-timers and fans living in Ireland, with the last two rising to £70 on 14 November); £25 supporting.* Hotel bookings have opened. See easterconbelfast.org.

26-27 Apr 2025 • **Sci-Fi Scarborough** (multimedia), The Spa, Scarborough. £30 reg; students £20; ‘kids’ £10. See scifiscarborough.co.uk.

8 Nov 2025 • **PictCon1**, Salutation Hotel, 30-34 South St, Perth, Scotland. *Date changed from 18 October 2025.* £30 reg; £20 concessions. See www.facebook.com/events/1186045639366253/.

Rumblings. *Worldcon 2025 (Seattle)*: hotel bookings are open; members have been emailed. See www.seattlein2025.org. • *Worldcon 2030* now has a bid from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. (Bluesky, 30 October)

Infinitely Improbable

SF Predictions Dept. ‘A large statue in green marble loomed [...] He recognized it as belonging to the Progress of Man series which lined the tenth-floor main corridor. This one represented John W. Campbell.’ (Poul Anderson & Gordon Dickson, *Earthman’s Burden*, 1957)

Awards. *British Fantasy*. HOLDSTOCK (fantasy novel) *Talonsister* by Jen Williams. DERLETH (horror novel) *Don’t Fear the Reaper* by Stephen Graham Jones. NOVELLA *The Last Dragoners of Bowbazar* by Indra Das. SHORT ‘The Brazen Head of Westinghouse’ by Tim Major. COLLECTION *Jackal, Jackal* by Tobi Ogundiran. ANTHOLOGY *Out There Screaming* ed. Jordan Peele. INDEPENDENT PRESS *Flame Tree*. NONFICTION *Writing the Future*, ed. Dan Coxon & Richard V. Hirst. MAGAZINE *Shoreline of Infinity*. ARTIST Asya Yordonova. AUDIO *The Tiny Bookcase* by Nico Rogers & Ben Holroyd-Dell. BOUNDS (newcomer) Teika Marija Smits. KARL EDWARD WAGNER Ramsey Campbell. LEGEND OF FANTASYCON (non-BFS) Debbie Bennett. • *Rhysling* (poetry): LONG ‘Little Brown Changeling’ by Lauren Scharhag (*Aphelion*). SHORT ‘No One Now Remembers’ by Geoffrey Landis (*F&SF*). • *Royal Society Trivedi Science Book Prize: A City on Mars* by Kelly and Zach Weinersmith. • *Ursula K. Le Guin Prize: It Lasts Forever and Then It’s Over* by Anne de Marcken. • *World Fantasy: NOVEL The Reformatory* by Tananarive Due. NOVELLA ‘Half the House Is Haunted’ by Josh Malerman (*Spin a Black Yarn*). SHORT ‘Silk and Cotton and Linen and Blood’ by Nghi Vo (*New Suns 2*). ANTHOLOGY *The Book of Witches* ed. Jonathan Strahan. COLLECTION *No One Will Come Back for Us* by Premea Mohamed. ARTIST Audrey Benjaminsen. SPECIAL/PRO Liza Groen Trombi, for *Locus*. SPECIAL/NON-PRO Lynne M. Thomas and Michael Damian Thomas, for *Uncanny*.

As Others See Us. ‘Playground [by Richard Powers] belongs in the commercial sci-fi tradition, where outsiders can see themselves reflected in the characters and enjoy the warm glow of wish fulfilment. [...] These are the syrupy consolations of genre fiction, a category usually overlooked by prestigious literary prizes but cleverly laundered here by judicious engagement with weighty themes.’ (*Sunday Times*, 22 September) [VS]

R.I.P. *John Amos* (1939-2024), US actor in *Dance of the Dwarfs* (1983), *Hologram Man* (1995), *Dr. Dolittle 3* (2006) and *Voodoo Moon* (2006), died on 21 August aged 84. [LP] • *Roger Browne* (1930-2024), US actor in *Vulcan Son of Jupiter* (1962), *Venus Meets the Son of Hercules* (1962), *Argoman the Fantastic Superman* (1967) and others, died on 11 October aged 94. [SJ] • *Pierre Christin* (1938-2024), French comics writer best known in English for the *Valerian* space opera saga created with Jean-Claude Mézières in 1966 and adapted as a 2017 Luc Besson film, died on 3 October aged 86. [JA] • *Scott Connors*, editor of critical anthologies on Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith – also, with others, Smith’s collected fantasies, letters and definitive bibliography – reportedly died in October. [LP] • *Robert Coover* (1932-2024), noted US author of much literary fantasy, metafiction and fabulation including *The Universal Baseball Association Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop.* (1968) and stories in his first collection *Pricksongs & Descants* (1969), died on 5 October aged 92. [PDF] • *William Crain* (1949-2024), US director of *Blacula* (1972) and *Dr. Black, Mr. Hyde* (1976), died on 22 June aged 75. [SJ] • *Ron Ely* (1938-2024), US actor who starred in *Tarzan* (1966-1968 tv) and *Doc Savage: The Man*

of *Bronze* (1975), died on 29 September aged 86. [SF2C] ● **Bob Foster** (1943-2024), US comics writer and animation artist who wrote the *Toy Story* and *Hercules* graphic novels, died on 30 September aged 80. Animation work for tv included *Godzilla* (1978-1979), *Spider-Man* (1981-1983) and *Incredible Hulk* (1982-1983). [SG] ● **Teri Garr** (1944-2024), US actress in *Young Frankenstein* (1974), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), *Oh, God!* (1977), *Mom and Dad Save the World* (1992), *Batman Beyond* (1999-2000) and others, died on 29 October aged 79. [CB] ● **Art Henderson** (1942-2024), US fan and book dealer at many East Coast conventions, died on 12 October aged 82. [PDF] ● **Greg Hildebrandt** (1939-2024), noted US fantasy artist whose many paintings with his brother Tim (1939-2006) include work based on Tolkien, *Shannara*, *Star Wars* and *Magic: The Gathering*, died on 31 October aged 85. [SHS] ● **Ken Howard**, songwriter (with Alan Blaikley as Howard Blaikley) of many chart-topping hits, documentary director, film composer and novelist whose *Follow Me: A Quest in Two Worlds* (2017) is SF, died on 24 September 2024 aged 84. [SH] ● **John Lasell** (1928-2024), US actor in *Dark Shadows* (1967) and *Deathmaster* (1972), died on 4 October aged 95. [LP] ● **Ed McLachlan** (1940-2024), noted UK cartoonist active from the early 1960s in *Punch*, *Private Eye* and many other magazines and newspapers – often with surreal or fantastic images like the famous giant hedgehog running across a motorway crushing cars – died on 29 September aged 84. I loved his work. ● **Elisa Montés** (1934-2024), Spanish actress in *Faustina* (1967), *Island of the Doomed* (1967), *The Girl from Rio* (aka *Future Women*, 1969) and others, died on 9 October aged 89. [SJ] ● **Mario Morra** (1935-2024), Italian film editor for *Queens of Evil* (1970), *Black Belly of the Tarantula* (1971), *The Humanoid* (1979) and many more, died on 11 October. [SJ] ● **Paul Morrissey** (1938-2024), US director of *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1973, which he also co-wrote) and *Blood for Dracula* (1974), died on 28 October aged 86. [SHS] ● **Karl Mostert**, South African comics artist who worked on various Batman titles (DC) and drew the strips *The Man Who F#&%ed Up Time* (Aftershock Comics) and *Concrete Jungle* (Scout Comics), died on October aged 43. [SH] ● **Lynda Obst** (1950-2024), US producer with credits for *Helix* (2014-2015) and *Interstellar* (2014), died on 22 October aged 74. ● **Nobuyo Ōyama** (1933-2024), Japanese actress best known for voicing the robot title character of the anime *Doraemon* (1979-2005), died on 16 October aged 90. [AIP] ● **Ken Page** (1954-2024), US actor in the *Broadway Cats* (1982), *All Dogs Go to Heaven* (1989), *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993 plus spinoffs) and others, died on 30 September aged 70. [SJ] ● **Christopher Penfold** (1941-2024), UK scriptwriter/story consultant whose credits include *Space: 1999* (1975-1976), *Alien Attack* (1976) and *The Tripods* (1985), died on 29 July aged 83. [SH] ● **Dick Pope** (1947-2024), UK cinematographer whose credits include *Inseminoid* (1981), *Whoops Apocalypse* (1982) and *1984* (1984), died on 22 October aged 77. [SJ] ● **Nicholas Pryor** (1935-2024), US supporting actor in *Omen II: Damien* (1978), *Hunger Games: Mockingjay 1* (2014), *Doctor Sleep* (2019) and others, died on 7 October aged 89. [SJ] ● **Alvin Rakoff** (1927-2024), Canadian film/tv director – genre films include *King Solomon's Treasure* (1979) and *A Haunting Harmony* (1993) – and author of the sf novel *The Seven Einsteins* (2013), died on 12 October. [JC/SHS] ● **Robert J. Randisi** (1951-2024), US author best known for thrillers and Westerns who collaborated with Warren Murphy on some genre novels in the Destroyer series, died on 4 October aged 73. [JC] ● **Fred Smith** (1927-2024), long-time Scots fan who was a 1952 founder member of Glasgow's New Lands SF Club (the first such club in Scotland), published the fanzine *Haemoglobin* 1953-1959, and after a long gap returned to fannish activity in the 1990s, died on 2 October aged 97. [MP] ● **Nancy St. John**, visual effects producer for *Babe* (1995 plus sequel), *I, Robot* (2004), *Total Recall* (2012), *Ender's Game* (2013) and many more, died on 23 October aged 70. [SJ] ● **Sam Strangis** (1929-2024), US producer/production manager whose credits include *Batman: The Movie* (1966), *The Immortal* (1969-1971), *The Six Million Dollar Man* (1974) and *War of the Worlds* (1988-1989), died on 23 July aged 95. [AIP] ● **Jeri Taylor** (1938-2024), US screenwriter, producer and showrunner with credits for most of *Star Trek: TNG* (1990-1994) and *Voyager* (1995-1998) plus episodes of *DS9* (1993-1994), died on 24 October aged 86; she also wrote three *ST* novels. [MR] ● **Kevin J. Taylor** (1962-2024) prolific US erotic comics creator whose genre titles include *The Girl*, *Model by Day* (adapted for film), *Fang* and *CoEd Diaries*, died on 24 September aged 61. [SM] ● **Larry S. Todd** (1948-2024), US writer and illustrator for *Galaxy*, *If* and *Worlds of Tomorrow* in the 1960s – later known for comics including his own *Dr. Atomic* and work in *Heavy Metal* – died on 28 September aged 76. [SH] ● **Bruce Townley** (1954-2024), US fan, fan artist and fanzine publisher active from 1970, member of WSFA and the Southern Fandom Confederation and a later contributor to email lists, died on 17 October aged 70. [CS] ● **Valery Verkhovskiy** (1969-2024), Ukrainian writer who translated *Ender's*

Game and *Connie Willis's Doomsday Book*, died on 23 October. [AM] ● **Robert Watts** (1938-2024), UK producer of *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981 plus sequels), *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988) and others, died on 30 September aged 86. [CM] ● **Bob (Brayton) Yerkes** (1932-2024), US stuntman in *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* (1979-1981), *Poltergeist* (1982), *Return of the Jedi* (1983), *Back to the Future* (1985), *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988) and many more, died on 2 October aged 92. [SJ]

The Weakest Link. Q. 'Which famous potter has a statue erected in his honour in Stoke-on-Trent?' A. 'Beatrix.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE]

Awards II. The UK Kitschies will be presented for the last time in June 2025, for 2023/2024 work in the usual categories. Novel finalists are *Infinity Gate* by M.R. Carey, *In Ascension* by Martin MacInnes, *Julia* by Sandra Newman, *Jungle House* by Julianne Pachico and *The Premonition* by Banana Yoshimoto as translated by Asa Yoneda. Announcement and the other shortlists at blackwells.co.uk/bookshop/editorial/Kitschies.

Random Fandom. *Sandra Bond* observes: 'I have been hearing about certain sub-optimal aspects of the Fantasycon 2024 hotel, but let's just say I have never been asked before now if I wanted ice in my pint of craft beer.' (Discord, 13 October) ● **Bill Higgins**, Former Beam Jockey, on the end of an era: 'I retired from Fermilab in June, so my long-time address (higgins@fnal.gov) will no longer reach me.' ● **Northumberland Heath SF Society:** fan meetings on the second Thursday of each month have moved to The Royal Oak, 270 Bexley Road, Erith, Kent, DA8 3HB. [SF2C]

Magazine Scene. The TTA Press online shop, selling back issues of *Interzone*, *Black Static* and *Crimewave*, closed down in October.

Orwellian Horror! 'Multipack bags of crisps are only five grams heavier than the reduced chocolate rations handed to surveilled citizens in George Orwell's nightmare, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Is 25g all our appetite is worth?' (Natalie White, *Crunch: An Ode to Crisps*, 2024) [PE]

Court Circular. A Russian court ruled that Google owes Russia's media \$20,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (\$20 decillion) for blocking their content – more money than exists on Earth. Google, no longer active in Russia, seems untroubled. (*The Register*, 29 October)

The Dead Past. *50 Years Ago* at Novacon 4: 'Peter Weston gave a good rambling account of his recent TAFF trip, which was supposed to be illustrated with the aid of an extraordinary epidiascope that looked more like a mimeograph. The first picture put into the machine was burnt to a cinder, and the bulb then fused, so the talk was perforce without pictures.' (*Checkpoint* 56, November 1974) ● *30 Years Ago:* 'You thought Kim Stanley Robinson's *Green Mars* was hard sf? Not so, implies the write-up in *Fire and Water* (HarperCollins newsletter), explaining how to reach this particular Mars: "Cross the astral belt ...".' (*Ansible* 88, November 1994) ● *20 Years Ago,* Ceefax TV Choice offered its best argument for *Battlestar Galactica* on Sky One: 'Take it on trust and watch anyway – Galactica is genuinely exceptional and the less you like science fiction, the more you'll love this new US drama.' (*Ansible* 208, November 2004)

SFWA. Following resignations and a 'special election' for new leadership, Kate Ristau is now the president of SFWA. (SFWA, 29 October)

Fanfunder. *TransAtlantic Fan Fund.* Sarah Gulde is home from her long TAFF trip and has taken over as NA administrator: Mike Lowrey can retire at last. The next westbound TAFF race will be to the 2025 Seattle Worldcon: nominations open 11 November 2024, closing 20 December; voting from early January to just after Eastercon; candidates are now sought. See taff.org.uk. [SB/ML] ● *TAFF Ebooks:* our 100th title is *Harrison Country* (2007) by Steve Stiles, reporting without indecent haste on his 1968 TAFF trip. [GS] With much help from Irwin Hirsh, the library now includes GUFF reports by John Foyster (first ever GUFF trip, 1979), Ian Gunn & Karen Pender-Gunn (1995), Eric Lindsay & Jean Weber (2001), Pat McMurray (2004), James Shields (2010), Gillian Polack (2014), Donna Maree Hanson (2017), Marcin 'Alqua' Kłak (2018) and Simon Litten (2019). Latest additions at taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?all&chron.

Thog's Masterclass. *Neat Tricks.* 'Paula Ray, in a chair a few feet away was sleeping, her head on her breast.' (Edmond Hamilton, 'The Stars, My Brothers', 1962) [BA] ● *Again and Again.* '[J.R.R. Tolkien] was taken away from the blaze of his African life when he was very young ... and he never saw his father, who died a year later, again.' (William Ready, *The Tolkien Relation*, 1981) [LG] ● *Eyeballs in the Sky.* 'The blood-laced eyes of Ruthlen Beauson bagged gibbously behind their horn-rimmed lenses.' (Richard Matheson, 'The Doll That Does Everything', 1954) [BA]

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