



## Ansible® 449 December 2024

From **David Langford**, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website [news.ansible.uk](http://news.ansible.uk). ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: **Dan Steffan**. Cartoon: **Brad W. Foster**. Available for SAE or any reliable charm against being seasonally scrobbled.

### The Wolves Are Running

**Josh Brolin** targeted the Thog Hall of Fame with his poetic captions for a book of *Dune* photos taken by Greig Fraser. One shot of Timothée Chalamet inspired the deathless 'Your cheekbones jump toward what are youth-laden eyes that slide down a prominent nose and onto lips of a certain poetry.' One response: 'It is less a traditional poem and more the sort of thing ChatGPT would blurt out if you asked it to describe a crayon drawing of a melting Cabbage Patch Kid.' (*Guardian*, 22 November) [DA]

**Samantha Harvey**, whose novel *Orbital* is set on the International Space Station and involves various near-future developments, explained to radio listeners that this is not at all science fiction but 'space realism'. Asked whether there were other books in that specialist genre, the author confessed she wasn't sure and didn't herself know of any. (BBC Radio 4, *Front Row*, 5 November) [SF²C] *Orbital* was the only genre or near-genre novel on the Booker Prize shortlist, and has since won that prize. *New Scientist* tactfully calls it 'space pastoral'. [RH] There are no talking squid.

**Stephen King** found the horror too much: 'I'm leaving Twitter. Tried to stay, but the atmosphere has just become too toxic.' (14 November)

**Linda Moorcock** gives warning to the world: 'EDITIONS L'ATALANTE: This French company continues to sell books by Michael Moorcock ILLEGALLY. All Moorcock contracts have expired. Editions L'Atalante were refused renewal requests earlier this year after they illegally reprinted and put on sale one of the books they no longer had rights to. / If you are doing business with this company, at least be aware of how they have behaved towards Michael. We have repeatedly asked them to stop all sales and they continue to ignore us.' [CP]

**Terry Pratchett** would surely have chortled at the news that his Discworld novel *Night Watch* is to be reissued in April 2025, with learned annotations, as a Penguin Modern Classic. (*The Bookseller*, 1 November)

### Conacaste

7-8 Dec • **Darkness in the Fields** (folk horror), online. £36 reg, £20 Sat/Sun only, plus fees. See [tinyurl.com/5n95jeuc](http://tinyurl.com/5n95jeuc).

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

19 Dec • **Christmas Meeting** in the London First Thursday pub (Bishop's Finger, West Smithfield). See [news.ansible.uk/london.html](http://news.ansible.uk/london.html).

29 Dec - 1 Jan • **Steampunk New Year**, Belmont Hotel, Leicester. See [www.ministryofsteampunk.com/steampunknewyear2025](http://www.ministryofsteampunk.com/steampunknewyear2025).

22-23 Feb 2025 • **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See [bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivials](http://bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivials). Further 2025 events take place on 24-25 May, 2-3 August and 25-26 October.

6-8 Mar 2025 • **Frightfest** (film), Glasgow Film Theatre, Rose Street. Tickets in January from [www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents/](http://www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents/).

30 Mar 2025 • **Bloomsbury Ephemera Fair**, Holiday Inn Bloomsbury, Coram St, London. 9:30am-3pm. £3 entry. Apparently not including the Paperback & Pulp Book Fair. See [etcfairs.com/ephemera-fairs/](http://etcfairs.com/ephemera-fairs/).

18-21 Apr 2025 • **Reconnect** (Eastercon), Hilton Lanyon Place Hotel and ICC, Belfast. £90 reg, rising to £100 on 1 January and £120 at the door; Eastercon first-timers and fans living in Ireland now £70; £40 under-18s, concessions; £25 supporting. See [easterconbelfast.org](http://easterconbelfast.org).

5 Jul 2025 • **Comic Con Aintree**, Aintree Racecourse. 10am-5pm. Adult tickets £12; other rates at [www.ljeventsentertainment.com](http://www.ljeventsentertainment.com).

8-10 Aug 2025 • **TfNation** (*Transformers*), Hilton Birmingham Metropole near the NEC. Ticket sales awaited at [tfnation.com/2025](http://tfnation.com/2025).

26-28 Sep 2025 • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Bowness-on-Windermere. Ticket sales awaited at [www.comicartfestival.com](http://www.comicartfestival.com).

27-28 Sep 2025 • **Nor-Con** (media), Norfolk Showground Arena. Adult tickets £17 or £21 early entry; other rates at [www.nor-con.co.uk](http://www.nor-con.co.uk).

31 Oct - 2 Nov 2025 • **Armadacon**, Future Inns, Plymouth. £47 reg; £40 concessions. More at [www.armadacon.org](http://www.armadacon.org).

7-9 Nov 2025 • **Novacon 54**, Palace Hotel, Buxton. GoH Emily Tesh. Now £54 reg; under-17s £12; under-13s free. More at [novacon.uk](http://novacon.uk).

22-24 May 2026 • **Satellite 9**, Glasgow. Venue, rates, guests and other details awaited at [nine.satellitex.org.uk](http://nine.satellitex.org.uk).

**Rumblings**. *Eastercon 2026*. The Iridescence bid has the Birmingham NEC Metropole as planned venue, and a website at [eastercon2026.org](http://eastercon2026.org). • *Eastercon 2027*. A Glasgow bid is announced: see [easterconglasgow.org](http://easterconglasgow.org). • *Worldcon 2030*. The bid for Edmonton (Alberta, Canada) revealed its website in November: see [www.edmontonin2030.org](http://www.edmontonin2030.org).

### Infinitely Improbable

**Silver Lining**. 'Sales surge for dystopian books after Trump election victory ... The Handmaid's Tale has risen more than 400 places on bestseller charts since Wednesday.' (*Guardian*, 7 November) [AIP]

**Awards**. *Forry* (LASFS, for life achievement): Hayao Miyazaki. • *Ignyte* novel winners: ADULT *The Saint of Bright Doors* by Vajra Chandrasekera. YA *I Feed Her to the Beast and the Beast Is Me* by Jamison Shae. MIDDLE GRADE *Abeni's Song* by P. Djèlí Clark. • *Kitschies* (final year of presentation, alas): NOVEL *Julia* by Sandra Newman. DEBUT *The Centre* by Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi. COVER ART Arnold J. Kemp (art) and Janay Nachel Frazier and Stuart Wilson (design) for *Out There Screaming* edited by Jordan Peele. SPECIAL Kieron Smith, digital director of Blackwell's (the sponsor) as a 'tireless champion of small presses'.

**As Others Credit Us**. An article on 'The rise of the floating breakfast, travel's most insufferable flex' (i.e. breakfast on a floating tray in the hotel swimming pool, argh) notes its prediction by 'Science fiction writer John Varley [in] his 1998 book *The Golden Globe*'. Immortality is assured! (Natalie B. Compton, *The Washington Post*, 3 November) [PL]

**R.I.P.** *Jim Abrahams* (1944-2024), US director, producer and screenwriter who co-wrote *Airplane!* (1980) and *Scary Movie 4* (2006), died on 26 November aged 80. [LP] • *Rod Barzilay*, founder member of The Eagle Society who revived *Dan Dare* in his *Spaceship Away* (2003-2010), scripting new stories drawn by original Hampson studio artists, died in August aged 77. [SH] • *Bruce Boston* (1943-2024), US author and poet active since the early 1970s, winner of many Rhysling Awards for poetry and honoured in 2000 as the first Rhysling Grand Master, died on 11 November aged 81. [PDF] • *Marshall Brain* (1961-2024), US author of the *How Stuff Works* books and founder of the related website, whose sf novel was *Manna* (2003), died on 20 November aged 63. • *Colin Chilvers* (1945-2024), Oscar-winning UK special effects director whose films include *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), *Superman* (1978 plus sequels), *Saturn 3* (1980), *Condorman* (1981) and *X-Men* (2000), died on 19 November aged 79. [SJ] • *Giovanni Cianfriglia* (1935-2024), Italian actor/stuntman who starred (as Ken Wood) in *Superargo vs. Diabolikus* (1966 plus sequel) and whose many often uncredited stunt appearances include *Ladyhawke* (1985), *Frankenstein Unbound* (1990) and *Angels & Demons* (2009), died on 30 October aged 89. [SJ] • *Paul Engelen* (1949-2024), UK makeup designer whose many credits include *Moonraker* (1979), *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986), *Highlander II* (1991), *Frankenstein* (1994) and *The Phantom Menace* (1999), died on 3 November aged 75. [SJ] • *Al Ferrara* (1939-2024), US actor in *Batman* (1967-1968), *Mansion of the Doomed* (1976) and *Zoltan... Hound of Dracula* (1977), died on 15 November aged 84. [SJ] • *Jonathan Haze* (1929-2024), US actor in *It Conquered the World* (1956), *Not of This Earth* (1957), *Little Shop of Horrors* (1960) and others, died on 2 November aged 95. [LP] • *Dan Hennessey* (1941-2024), Canadian voice actor in *X-Men* (1992-1997), *Inspector Gadget* (1983), *Jayce and the Wheeled Warriors* (1985-1986), *Beetlejuice* (1989), *Tintin* (1991-1992), *Redwall* (1999 plus film) and more, died on 13 November aged 83. [AIP] • *Kate Hepburn* (1947-2024), UK artist and graphic designer who worked with Terry Gilliam on *Monty Python* animations and designed the cover of *The Brand New Monty Python Bok* (1973), died on 26 July aged 77. [AIP] • *Earl Holliman* (1928-2024), US actor in *Forbidden Planet* (1956), *The Six Million Dollar Man: Wine, Women and War* (1973), *NightMan* (1997) and genre tv series – he was the star of the very first episode of *The Twilight Zone* (1959) – died on 25 November aged 96. [LP] • *Song Jae-rim* (1985-2024), South Korean actor in *Ingyeogongjoo* (*The Idle Mermaid*, 2014), died on 12 November aged 39. • *Richard D. James*, Emmy-winning US production designer for *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1988-1994) and *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001), died on 11 November aged 88. [SJ] • *Quincy Jones* (1933-2024), noted

US composer and producer whose credits include *The Wiz* (1978), *Michael Jackson: Thriller* (1983), *Austin Powers in Goldmember* (2002) and *X-Men: Days of Future Past* (2014), died on 3 November aged 91. [SJ] ● **Zoe Kaplan** (1996-2024), US short-story author since 2021, and publisher with Tor and then Simon & Schuster/Saga Press, died on 9 October aged 28. [L/P-SP] ● **Peter Maddocks** (1928-2024), UK cartoonist who drew the 'Four D. Jones' sf strip for the *Daily Express* 1955-1965, died on 20 November aged 96. ● **Daive Mana** (1967-2024), Italian sf/fantasy author active since 2011 whose first collection was *The Hand of Isfet* (2014), died in November. [JLG] ● **Tony Mirrcandani**, Indian actor in *The Curse of King Tut's Tomb* (2006) and *Ender's Game* (2013), died on 3 November. ● **István Nemere** (1944-2024), Hungarian author of some 750 books under 46 pseudonyms in multiple genres, including 60 sf novels, died on 15 November aged 80. [AM] ● **Alan Rachins** (1942-2024), US actor in *Time Walker* (1982), *Terminal Voyage* (1995), *Monster Night* (2006), *Angels on Tap* (2018) and genre tv series, died on 2 November aged 82. [SJ] ● **Phil Rickman** (1950-2024), UK author active since 1991, best known for the 'Merrily Watkins' supernatural-tinged mystery series beginning with *The Wine of Angels* (1998), died on 29 October aged 74. [L] ● **Scott L. Schwartz** (1959-2024), US actor in *Lost in Oz* (2000), *Journey to Promethea* (2010), *Joe Dirt 2* (2015) and genre tv series, died on 26 November aged 65. ● **Ken Shorter** (1945-2024), Australian actor in *Dragonslayer* (1981) and *Dragonheart: A New Beginning* (1999), died in November aged 79. ● **Tim Sullivan** (1948-2024), US author, actor, editor and director whose first stories appeared in the late 1970s and whose first-written novel was *Destiny's End* (1988), died on 10 November aged 76. He scripted and acted in several genre films including *Twilight of the Dogs* (1995). [GVG] ● **Tony Todd** (1954-2024), US actor whose many genre credits include *Candyman* (1992, title role and sequels), *The Crow* (1994), *The Man from Earth* (2007) and tv series such as *Star Trek* (1990-2001) and *The Flash* (2015-2023), died on 6 November aged 69. [OC/CM] ● **Kazuo Umezu** (1936-2024), Japanese manga writer/artist best known for his horror and sf series 'Hyoryu Kyoshitsu' [The Drifting Classroom], 'Watashi wa Shingo' [My Name is Shingo] and 'Fōtīn' [Fourteen], died on 28 October aged 88. [SH] ● **Vic 'Waddy' Wadmore**, UK Discworld fan who ran the unofficial Discworld-themed Wadfest camping event from 2002 to 2017 (skipping 2012), died on 26 November. ● **Timothy West** (1934-2024), UK actor whose genre credits include *Beowulf* (1998), *102 Dalmatians* (2000), *The Fall of Gondolin* (2019) and various tv/podcast series, died on 12 November aged 90. [SJ] ● **Eiji Yanagisawa** (1967-2024), Japanese voice actor whose many anime credits include *Mobile Suit Gundam I* (1981), *Digimon Frontier* (2002) and *Evangelion: 1.0 You Are (Not) Alone* (2007), died on 12 November aged 57.

**The Weakest Link.** Q: 'The Three Broomsticks is a fictional pub in a series of books by which writer?' A: 'I think I know the name C.S. Lewis – from *Fifty Shades of Grey* ...' (ITV, *Tipping Point*) [PE]

**Dirty Work Online.** Victoria Strauss of Writer Beware, which famously exposes publishing frauds, is being impersonated by a scammer asking four-figure sums to recover money lost to an allegedly different scammer, about whose doings the impersonator is suspiciously well-informed. (Writer Beware, 15 November) George R.R. Martin warns that the apparent GRRM presence on Bluesky is not him (from his Not A Blog, 18 November); there's also a false Peter F. Hamilton on that platform. Two fake Ken MacLeods are issuing friend requests on Facebook, which has ignored reports of this in favour of more urgent work like banning links to the *SF Encyclopedia* 'What's New' page – because, they claim, it secretly contains nudity. Finally, a moving plea from a very familiar face on Instagram: 'Hey it's me Queen Elizabeth, I am not dead, Charles sent me to a st helena island so he could be queen. I don't have access to my royal money so please cashapp me £300 so I can get back to the UK.'

**We Are Everywhere.** 'Ennui is The Thing: welcome to the death-football of late-stage capitalism [...] Light and heat without content. Football as something empty and frictionless, humans in coloured shirts waiting for life to happen. J.G. Ballard-ball.' (Barney Roney on Manchester United versus Chelsea, *The Guardian*, 3 November) [PE]

**Sanity Clause.** Simon Groth has an exemplary LLM statement on his 2023 copyright page from publishers Tiny Owl Workshop of Brisbane: 'No part of this book may be used as data for "training" any large language model or as part of any machine learning or neural network architecture. Human creativity cannot be replicated by doing maths with stolen art. Altman, Andreessen and all their cronies can get fucked.' [CB]

**The Dead Past.** *40 Years Ago*, John Brosnan dived into the slushpile and found 'a classic line: "She was a fish out of water in a man's arms." Aren't we all?' (*Ansible* 41, December 1984) ● *30 Years Ago*, Ian Watson bewailed his popularity: 'Alarmed by the complete sell-out of all copies of *IW's Warhammer 40,000: Harlequin* available at Games Day, Games

Workshop have forbidden this particular hardback to be on sale in any GW shop in case customers buy it instead of a game. Stunned publishers Boxtree are protesting vehemently.' (*Ansible* 89, December 1994) ● *20 Years Ago*, Lucy Lawless revealed all: 'I was known at school as Unco, for uncoordinated, so it was a horrible shock to do all the fight scenes in *Xena: Warrior Princess*. I don't watch fantasy or sci-fi, I'm just not into it. I'm into real people and exploring humanity. I will always watch Judi Dench rather than people with pointy ears.' (Interview in *The Big Issue* #1642, 18-24 November 2004) [KM] ● *10 Years Ago*, a scholarly insight was noted: "'I believe that [Sax] Rohmer's texts aim at effects that differ fundamentally from the effects that high modernist literature aspires to.'" (Ruth Mayer, *Serial Fu Manchu – The Chinese Supervillain and the spread of Yellow Peril ideology*, 2014)' (*Ansible* 329, December 2014)

**Outraged Letters.** *Rob Jackson* on the Ken Howard obit in *A448*: 'He and Alan Blaikley were also the producers and writers of an sf concept album called *Ark 2* by Flaming Youth, which featured among others a very young Phil Collins.' (Email, 3 November)

**Fanfunding.** *TransAtlantic Fan Fund*. Nominations for the TAFF race to the 2025 Seattle Worldcon close on 20 December; voting is expected to begin in early January and to continue until just after Eastercon in Belfast. See [taff.org.uk](http://taff.org.uk) for the official newsletter with the announcement.

● **Free Ebooks.** The latest is *Motorway Dreams* by John Nielsen-Hall, a memorial collection of his fan writing with a simultaneous paperback edition. See [taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Johnny](http://taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Johnny). Donations via that page and all paperback proceeds go to his preferred fan fund, The Corflu Fund.

**SFWA's** board of directors has given the nod to new Nebula Award categories for genre comics and poetry; first presentation in 2026. [F770]

**Random Fandom.** *Alvar Appeltoff Memorial Award* (for Swedish fan activity): Karl-Johan Norén. [AE]

**Editorial: Another Year.** The free library at [taff.org.uk](http://taff.org.uk) acquired 19 new titles in 2024, for a total of 111. Besides many GUFF and TAFF trip reports available as ready-made PDFs (thanks to all who traced or created these), additions include *New Worlds Profiles 1952-1963*, *British SF Conventions Volume 2: 1952-1957* by Rob Hansen, my own critical collection *Work for Hire*, and *Motorway Dreams* as noted above. Among the TAFF titles in preparation for 2025 is a substantial (82,000 words) collection of Ian Watson's writings for fan and convention publications, which he has augustly titled *Watto's Wisdom*. Like that famous wagon in *The Phantom Tollbooth*, the relentless routine of at-least-weekly *SF Encyclopedia* updates and monthly *Ansibles* goes without saying.

**Loadsamoney.** Bidding for the first Christie's auction dedicated wholly to sf/fantasy memorabilia closes on 12 December. Eye-watering price estimates yield the interesting coincidence that a first edition of *Frankenstein* and *The Dune Bible* (storyboard for the unmade Alejandro Jodorowsky film) are each expected to fetch from £250,000 to £350,000. See [online.christies.com/s/science-fiction-fantasy/lots/3835](http://online.christies.com/s/science-fiction-fantasy/lots/3835).

**Magazine Scene.** Hiraeth Publishing's *The Martian Wave* and *The Fifth Di...* will cease with their March and April 2025 issues. [PS-P]

**Chog's Masterclass.** *Striking Similes.* 'A thick black moustache drooped on his upper lip, like a rodent pinned there by the knifelike nose.' 'His face looked like a two-minute egg.' (Ron Miller, *Palaces and Prisons*, 1991) [BA] '... a broad, pellucid expanse of water that was like a steel cuirass.' '... those grey eyes glowed from the shadowy face like noctiluculent clouds, like aurorae fizzing with electricity, like radium, like will-o'-the-wisps in a marsh enameled with midnight, and she felt herself dissolving in them like a spoonful of effervescent salts.' (Ron Miller, *Hearts and Armour*, 1992) [BA] ● *Eyeballs in the Sky.* 'Porter cocked an alarmed eye as he bit a roll.' (Ivar Jorgensen [Paul Fairman], *The Deadly Sky*, 1971) [AR] 'Her eyes keened into his.' (Eric Frank Russell, *Sentinels from Space*, 1953) ● *After Clockwork, What?* '... the thin whistle of the radium chronometer ...' (*Ibid*) ● *The Deep Purple Fix.* 'In the slow pause which dropped between these two there arose ever-changing hues of colors rare, melting now here, now there, into new and gorgeous dyes, jewel-flecked with gold and silver. Strange perfumes exuded from these colors rare, intoxicating the lovers with long-forgotten bliss.' 'Simultaneously upon the bosom of this unfathomable abyss shone milliards of scintillating sparks, each holding by its thread of light, stirring the ether with exultant throbs, and streams of joyous melody.' (Julia H. Coffin, *The Vendor of Dreams*, 1917) [LP] ● *You Know The Feeling.* 'A tremor of transport palsied outer sense.' (Richard Matheson, 'Pattern For Survival', May 1955 *F&SF*) [BA]

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