



## Ansible® 459 October 2025

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: **William Rotsler** via Bill Mallardi. Available for SAE, usable Thoggerly or an eidolon named Night.

### On a Black Throne

**C.J. Cherryh** is bemused by the aftermath of Melania Trump's speech which in a children's-toys context babbled that 'Great minds have turned marbles into microchips, paper airplanes into drones and kites into satellites' – a line promptly flagged by 'AI Overview' as coming from Cherryh's *Downbelow Station* (1981). But no one can find it there. (24 September)

**P.A. Cornell** is another author who has given up on *Analog* (and its sister magazines) after months of attempted contract negotiation with the new regime. Despite an initially friendly response – 'It's the company's mission to help writers, so if that doesn't feel like what this contract is doing, it would be useful to us to hear about it ...' – it became clear that the company's mission was to enforce the party line regardless. Cornell gloomily reports: 'I wish I could say I finally received a contract from Must Read Magazines that I found reasonable and was happy to sign. Unfortunately, that's not the case.' (*P.A. Cornell's Newsletter*, 4 September)

**J.K. Rowling** 'has broken through the £29.99 ceiling!' gasps *Private Eye*. Her new Robert Galbraith novel is officially priced at £30, which 'leaves the big male beasts trailing – Dan Brown, Lee Child and Stephen King's latest thrillers are available for a mere £25 [...] – and must be a UK record for a standard edition of a non-illustrated novel.' (19 September)

**George Saunders**, winner of the Booker Prize for his fantasy *Lincoln in the Bardo*, received a Distinguished Contribution to American Letters Medal from the US National Book Foundation. [L]

### Consuetude

Until 2 Nov • **London Month of the Dead**, various venues and events, a few of genre interest: see [londonmonthofthedeath.com](http://londonmonthofthedeath.com).

2 Oct • **Annie Bot vs The Tech Bros** ('sf/AI origin stories' panel), online. 1-2pm. Free, with booking required at [tinyurl.com/ye247bzu](http://tinyurl.com/ye247bzu).

4 Oct - 21 Mar • **The Future Was Then** (exhibition; sf predictions in comics), Cartoon Museum, London. More at [www.cartoonmuseum.org/whats-on-exhibitions/the-future-was-then](http://www.cartoonmuseum.org/whats-on-exhibitions/the-future-was-then).

4 Oct • **Something Monstrous** (BFS), online. 10am-6:30pm. £5; free to members, with registration still required at [tinyurl.com/5cwp2ej7](http://tinyurl.com/5cwp2ej7).

9-12 Oct • **Grimmfest** (film), Odeon Great Northern, Manchester. Weekend pass (not Thursday) £96.54; other options at [grimmfest.com](http://grimmfest.com).

10 Oct - 6 Dec • **The Word for World: The Maps of Ursula K. Le Guin** (exhibition), AA Gallery, 36 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3ES. 11am-7pm. Free. Further details at [tinyurl.com/ms4nackb](http://tinyurl.com/ms4nackb).

12-13 Oct • **Octocon**, Maldron Hotel, Tallaght, Dublin. €40 reg; concessions €25; under-22s €10; under-13s free; supp/online €20. In-person convention on Saturday; online only on Sunday. See [octocon.com](http://octocon.com).

SOLD OUT 17-20 Oct • **Irish Discworld Convention**, Cork International Hotel, Cork. €95 reg; concessions €60; under-18s €20; under-7s free. Waiting list for cancelled memberships at [idwcon.org](http://idwcon.org).

18-19 Oct • **Tolkien Society Seminar**: 'Arda's Entangled Bodies', Glasgow and online. Free. See [www.tolkienesociety.org/events/](http://www.tolkienesociety.org/events/).

23-26 Oct • **Celluloid Screams** horror film festival, Sheffield. Weekend pass £121.50; this and other tickets at [celluloidscreams.com](http://celluloidscreams.com).

23-26 Oct • **Edinburgh Horror Festival**, Banshee Labyrinth and Lauriston Castle. See [www.edhorrorfest.co.uk](http://www.edhorrorfest.co.uk); many separately ticketed events are listed at [www.edhorrorfest.co.uk/2025-programme](http://www.edhorrorfest.co.uk/2025-programme).

24-26 Oct • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Pendulum Hotel, Manchester. £120 reg. Day rates: £30 Friday, £55 Saturday, £45 Sunday. See [fantastic-films.uk](http://fantastic-films.uk).

24-26 Oct • **Steampunk Halloween**, County Assembly Rooms, Lincoln. See [www.ministryofsteampunk.com/halloween-2025](http://www.ministryofsteampunk.com/halloween-2025).

25-26 Oct • **BristolCon**, Hilton DoubleTree Hotel, Bristol. £65 reg; £50 under-18s, concessions, disabled; under-14s free; £20 supporting only. Day rates and registration page at [www.bristolcon.org](http://www.bristolcon.org).

25-26 Oct • **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See [bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivial](http://bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivial).

26 Oct • **Stars of Time** (comics), LC, Swansea. 10am-5pm. £11.55 (under-14s £7.21) at [www.starsoftime.co.uk/swanseacomicon](http://www.starsoftime.co.uk/swanseacomicon).

30 Oct • **Queer Fantasy** (panel discussion), British Library, London.

7pm-8:30pm. In-person tickets SOLD OUT; online £15 or £10 (your choice); concessions £5. Bookings at [events.bl.uk/events/online-queer-fantasy](http://events.bl.uk/events/online-queer-fantasy).

30 Oct - 2 Nov • **World Fantasy Convention**, Metropole, Brighton. £200 reg; £75 online; other rates at [worldfantasy2025.co.uk](http://worldfantasy2025.co.uk).

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

31 Oct - 1 Nov • **Frightfest Halloween** (film), Odeon Luxe, Leicester Square, London. See [www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents/](http://www.frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents/).

1 Nov • **Sonic Con UK** (Sonic the Hedgehog), Novotel London West. Tickets £35.37 inc fee; other rates at [www.sonicconuk.com](http://www.sonicconuk.com).

23 Nov • **SF, Comic & Toy Fair**, Leigh Sports Village. 11am-4pm. Tickets £3, children £1. See [www.mseevents.co.uk/](http://www.mseevents.co.uk/).

30 Dec • **The Female Man** online discussion panel, 7pm. Details on Facebook event sign-up at [fb.me/e/3F0xoFwPh](http://fb.me/e/3F0xoFwPh).

28-29 Mar 2026 • **Horrorfied** (horror), K2 Hotel, Crawley (new venue). Tickets inc. fees £53.42; day rate £31.86. See [horrorfied.co.uk](http://horrorfied.co.uk).

24-26 Apr 2026 • **Portmeiricon** (Prisoner), Portmeirion, Gwynedd. Six of One membership (£27.50 UK; more elsewhere) required. £46 reg; Sat and Sun £41; Sat or Sun only, £29. See [sixofone.co/convention](http://sixofone.co/convention).

13-17 May 2026 • **Sci-Fi London** (film), Rich Mix, Shoreditch, London. Submissions are now open at [sci-fi-london.com](http://sci-fi-london.com).

9-11 Oct 2026 • **Fantasycon**, Crowne Plaza, Glasgow. £80 reg; £50 concessions; £35 child. (BFS members £65, £35, £25.) Further details at [britishfantasycon.org/events-calendar/fantasycon-2026](http://britishfantasycon.org/events-calendar/fantasycon-2026).

**Rumblings**. *Middle-earth Festival*: this mid-September UK event was cancelled because 'something has come up'. No further explanation. • *Iridesence* (Eastercon 2026) hotel booking opened in September.

### Infinitely Improbable

**Space Rations**. 'This is more than a dinner. It's a multi-sensory journey through the cosmos, from the quiet stillness of the moon to the chaos of a black hole.' (Six By Nico restaurant chain advertisement) [PE]

**Awards**. *Dwarf Star* (SFPA short verse): 'Perish and Live Forever' by Pedro Iniguez (*Mexicans on the Moon*). • *SFRA Lifetime Contributions to SF Scholarship* (formerly the Pilgrim Award): Takayuki Tatsumi. [L]

**Galactology**. Archie Goodwin's regular consumption of milk in the Nero Wolfe thrillers never seemed sinister to me, but in my innocence I'd failed to think of Stanley Kubrick: 'Grown men drinking milk has always been laden in symbolism, the blend of nurture and eroticism evocative of a sexual infantilization [*sic*]. It is why so many films from A Clockwork Orange to Babygirl centre milk as a poison beyond a place of regular intoxication.' (Sam Wolfson, *The Guardian*, 4 September)

**As Someone Sees Some of Us**. 'People think Dr Who fandom and conventions are a bunch of nerds talking about Daleks. I've never known such a bunch of alcoholic bed-hoppers. Debauchery.' ('Anon Opin' scuttlebutt, Mastodon.social, 23 September) [DS]

**R.I.P.** **Giorgio Armani** (1934-2025), Italian fashion designer whose film credits include *The Dark Knight* (2008) and *Elysium* (2013), died on 4 September aged 91. [SG] • **S.L. Bhyrappa** (1931-2025), Indian Kannada language author, philosopher and screenwriter whose sf novel was *Yaana* (2014), died on 24 September aged 94. [AM] • **Jean-Pierre Bouyxou** (1946-2025), French actor (films include *Female Vampire* 1973), novelist (*Frankenstein de filles en aiguille*) and critic (*Frankenstein*, 1969; *La Science-fiction au cinéma*, 1971), died on 2 September aged 79. [SJ] • **'Brandy'** (Ildebrando José Rodríguez Rossetti), Spanish actor/stuntman in *Dracula*, *Prisoner of Frankenstein* (1972), *The Werewolf and the Yeti* (1975) and others, died on 22 August aged 85. [SJ] • **Gregorio C. Brillantes** (1932-2025), noted Filipino author most of whose short sf is collected in *The Distance to Andromeda* (1960) and *The Apollo Centennial* (1980), died on 26 September aged 92. [AW] • **Joe Bugner** (1950-2025), Hungarian boxer and actor in *The Sheriff and the Satellite Kid* (1979) and genre tv series, died on 1 September aged 75. [SJ] • **Renato Casaro** (1935-2025), Italian artist whose many genre film posters include *King Kong* (1966), *Night of the Living Dead*, *Flash Gordon* (1980), *Conan the Barbarian*, *Dune* (1984), *The Princess Bride* and *The Neverending Story*, died on 29 September aged 89. [SJ] • **Stuart Craig** (1942-2025), Oscar-winning UK art

director and production designer whose credits include *Superman* (1978), *Greystoke* (1984), *The Secret Garden* (1993), and all the 'Harry Potter' and 'Fantastic Beasts' films, died on 7 September aged 83. [SJ] ● **Michael Dryhurst** (1938-2025), UK producer whose credits include *The Terminal Man* (1974), *Excalibur* (1981) and *Never Say Never Again* (1983), died on 9 September aged 87. [SJ] ● **Tony Edwards**, UK fan associated with the MaD (Manchester and District) Group, co-editor of *Alien* 1963-1964, Knight of St. Antony (inducted 1970) and co-founder of the Festival of Fantastic Films, died on 1 September aged 83. [SF²C] ● **Ru Emerson** (1944-2025), US fantasy author whose first novel was *The Princess of Flames* (1986), died on 15 August aged 80. She also used the pseudonym Roberta Cray for *The Sword and the Lion* (1993). [L] ● **Ron Friedman** (1932-2025), US screenwriter for *Transformers: The Movie* (1986), *Bionic Six* (which he created; 65 episodes 1987), *Fantastic Four* (13 episodes 1994) and *Iron Man* (ditto), died on 15 September aged 93. [SJ] ● **Philippe Goddin** (1944-2025), Belgian critic and Tintin scholar ('Hergé-ologist') whose works include the monumental *Hergé – Chronologie d'une oeuvre* (7 volumes 2005-2011), died on 8 September aged 81. ● **Vasili Golovachyov** (1948-2025), Russian sf author who published 150 novels and won 17 genre awards, died on 7 September aged 77. [AM] ● **Graham Greene** (1952-2025), Canadian actor in *The Green Mile* (1999), *Atlantic Rim* (2013), *Winter's Tale* (2014), *Loch Ness Monster of Seattle* (2022) and others, died on 1 September aged 73. [TM] ● **Takaya Hashi** (1952-2025), Japanese voice actor in *Fist of the North Star* (51 episodes 1985-1987), *Metropolis* (2001) and many more films, series and videogames, died on 27 August aged 72. [SJ] ● **Polly Holliday** (1937-2025), US actress in *Gremlins* (1984), died on 9 September aged 88. [AIP] ● **Simon J. James** (1971-2025), UK academic and Wells scholar who edited *The Wellsian* 2009-2015, wrote *Maps of Utopia: H. G. Wells, Modernity and the End of Culture* (2012) and edited four Wells novels for Penguin Classics, died in June. [JC] ● **John Christopher Jones** (1948-2025), US actor in the Broadway *Beauty and the Beast* musical and *The Village* (2004), died on 15 September aged 77. [AIP] ● **Marilyn Knowlden** (1926-2025), US 1930s child actress who was in the vampire film *Condemned to Live* (1935), died on 15 September aged 99. [SJ] ● **Harri Kumpulainen** (1948-2025), Finnish author, editor, publisher, music producer and one of the first Finnish professional sf writers (as Harri Erkki), died on 29 August. [JH] ● **Amy Blanc Lacy**, script supervisor for *The Walking Dead* (137 episodes 2011-2020), *Loki* (2021) and other genre series, was killed by a hit-and-run driver on 5 September aged 62. [AIP] ● **Jon Lasser** (1975-2025), US author of short sf (since 2014) and Clarion West board member, died on 23 September aged 49. [L] ● **Antony Maitland** (1935-2025), UK children's author and illustrator who created covers for genre titles including *A Wrinkle in Time* (1963 UK) and *The Giant Under the Snow* (1971), died on 15 September aged 90. ● **Ted Mann** (1952-2025), Canadian writer/producer for *Space Truckers* (1996), *Millennium* (1996-1997) and *Total Recall 2070* (1999), died on 4 September aged 72. [AIP] ● **Dan Semyonovich Markovich** (1940-2025), Russian author of the dystopian satire *LChK* (1991) – acronym for *Likvidatsiya Chernykh Koshek* (*Liquidation of Black Cats*) – died on 26 September aged 84. [AM] ● **John Masius** (1950-2025), Emmy-winning US screenwriter for *Touched by an Angel* (as creator: 211 episodes 1994-2003) and *Dead Like Me* (2003-2004), died on 13 September aged 75. [AIP] ● **Eusebio Poncela** (1945-2025), Spanish actor in *Pastel de sangre* (*Cake of Blood*, 1971), the Lovecraftian *The Valdemar Legacy II* (2010) and others, died on 27 August aged 79. [SJ] ● **Daniel Postgate** (1964-2025), son of Oliver Postgate who with Peter Firmin revived *The Clangers*, writing 27 episodes (2015-2019), and contributing voice performances, died on 27 June aged 61. [NJ] ● **Derry Power** (1935-2025), Irish actor in *Warlords of Atlantis* (1978) and genre tv series including *Super Gran* (1985), died on 5 September aged 90. ● **Robert Redford** (1936-2025), Oscar-winning US actor whose rare genre films include *Charlotte's Web* (2006), *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (2014) and *Pete's Dragon* (2016), died on 16 September aged 89. [MR] ● **Salli Sachse** (1943-2025), US actress in *Dr. Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine* (1965 plus sequel), *Sergeant Dead Head* (1965) and others, died on 8 September aged 82. [LP] ● **Sergio Salvati** (1938-2025), Italian cinematographer whose films include Lucio Fulci's *Young Dracula* (1975), *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (1979), *City of the Living Dead* (1980) and *The Beyond* (1981), died on 17 September aged 87. [SJ] ● **Paula Shaw** (1941-2025), US actress in *To Hex with Sex* (1969), *Chatterbox!* (1977), *Communion* (1989), *Freddy vs. Jason* (2003) and others, died on 10 September aged 84. [SJ] ● **Yuri Shaygardanov** (1954-2025), Russian cinematographer who was director of photography for the Bulgakov-based *Sobachie serdtse* (*Heart of a Dog*, 1988), died on 20 September aged 71. [AM] ● **Scott Spiegel** (1957-2025), US screenwriter and actor in *The Evil Dead* (1981), *Evil Dead II* (1987, which he co-wrote) and others, died on 1 September aged 67.

[AIP] ● **Neil Summers** (1944-2025), UK actor/stuntman in *Harry and the Hendersons* (1987), *RoboCop* (1987), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Bedazzled* (2000 remake) and others, died on 4 September aged 81. ● **David Weitzner**, US film marketing executive whose PR campaigns included those for *Star Wars* (1977), *E.T.* (1982) and *Cocoon* (1985), died on 1 September aged 86. [AIP] ● **Chelsea Quinn Yarbro** (1942-2025), prolific and admired US sf/fantasy/horror author best known for the lengthy 'Count of Saint-Germain' historical vampire series opening with *Hôtel Transylvania* (1978), died on 31 August aged 82. She received the World Horror Convention Grandmaster (2003), International Horror Guild Living Legend (2005), Bram Stoker (2009) and World Fantasy (2014) awards for life achievement, and was a 2018 Worldcon guest of honour. [LP]

**The Weakest Link.** *Bradley Walsh*: 'Which English explorer mapped the coast of New Zealand in the 1770s?' *Contestant*: 'Robinson Crusoe.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE] ● **Alexander Armstrong**: 'Name the Shakespeare play in which the title character meets three witches who tell him how he'll become king.' *Shazia Mirza*: 'Scrooge.' (BBC1, *Pointless Celebrities*) [PE]

**We Are Everywhere.** A piece on UK horror at current US politics opens by quoting eminent authority: 'Feminist Avedon Carol, a Maryland native who has lived in London for many years, once commented that the United States has an even closer relationship with the UK than it has with its neighbor to the north, Canada.' (MSN, 17 September) [DA]

**Jarndyce vs Jarndyce.** Chris Barkley's small-claims action to get hold of his 2023 Hugo (see A456) goes on. Dave McCarty, the man in possession, emailed on the day of the September continuation hearing to say he couldn't make it 'tomorrow' because of reasons. As Barkley learned after driving from Ohio to Chicago for a no-show, and back again. [F770]

**The Dead Past.** *40 Years Ago*, William Gibson still wrote letters to fanzines: 'the sacred waters of Not Writing *Count Zero* Any More flow over me like the grace of the living God. This is to mere gafia as Peruvian flake is to lookalike diet pills.' (*Flash Point* 7, October 1985, ed. Patrick Nielsen Hayden) ● *30 Years Ago*, a magical moment in the Intersection (1995 Glasgow Worldcon) pocket programme: 'The basic idea is that due to mass flow and back reaction, one end of a natural wormhole will become Greg Benford ...' (*Ansible* 99, October 1995) ● *10 Years Ago*, the then-new Philharmonie de Paris concert hall evoked a tasteful simile from *The New Yorker*: 'The midsection bulges out in twisting, rectilinear shapes, like the intestines of a sci-fi monster.' (*Ansible* 339, October 2015)

**This Is the Future.** 'California cops confused after trying to give ticket to self-driving car / Police in a Silicon Valley suburb were flummoxed last weekend after pulling over a self-driving Waymo robo-taxi for making an illegal turn, then finding no driver they could issue with a ticket.' (*The Register*, 29 September) Philip K. Dick is dead, alas....

**Fanfundery.** *Corflu 50* delegates to the 2026 Corflu are William Breiding, Gail Kolthoff and Kat Templeton. ● **TAFF Ebooks.** The Little Free Library's first Down Under Fan Fund report is *Kaufman Coast to Coast*, Jerry Kaufman's 1988 account of his 1983 DUFF trip – with corrections throughout, a previously omitted Harlan Ellison anecdote and a new afterword by Jerry. Download at [taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=duff1983](http://taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=duff1983).

**Outraged Letters.** *Lloyd Penney*: 'We were hoping to get to LACON V, but there are now currently 150 Canadian citizens in detention somewhere, courtesy of ICE. I do not want to add to that number. Our foreign affairs department has been asking about our citizens, and there are no answers.' (Email, 3 September)

**Magazine Scene.** *The New York Review of Science Fiction* had a long pause after #356 for February 2022, but in mid-September its online distributor invited me to download the new issue: #357 dated June 2025.

**Thog's Masterclass.** *The Suds of Tranquillity*. 'The all-embracing atmosphere of Nihvana which impregnated the deeper streaks of human minds, which spread a cloak of serenity over the budding conflicts of civilization and which bathed the personnel in the choice soap tolerance made it so that Jay almost forgot his slight brush with his wife.' (Graeme De Timms, *Split*, 1963) ● *The Syllabus*. 'Do you understand the fundamental basis of Mathematics? Biochemistry? Bioradiology? Theomylology? Theoretics? Thermonuclearfission? Genetics? Psychophilosophy? Phycology? Theoeconomics? Astrophysics? Transexology?' (*Ibid*) ● *As They Do*. 'The hovercrafts hovered.' (*Ibid*) ● *Jack of All Trades*. 'Have I not now mastered the dozen archaic languages. Am I not a master videotaponics. Am I not an atomist, a genetist and mechanic?' (*Ibid*) All spellings sic. ● *King-Size Bed*. 'The thing's so big it swallows me at night like an amoeba swallowing a microbe!' (Harry Stephen Keeler, *The Case of the 16 Beans*, 1944)

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