



Ansible® 464 March 2026

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: **Teddy Harvia**. Available for SAE, or a good glass in the bishop's hostel in the devil's seat.

The Man of the Crowd

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* was extensively quoted in an apparently AI-generated court document – filed by a US attorney – that provoked a New York federal judge to complain about its ‘conspicuously florid prose’ and terminate the case, mainly because of said lawyer’s (or rather, it would seem, his AI’s) repeated use of fake legal citations. (*American Bar Association Journal*, 9 February) [F770]

Gay Haldeman is to receive this year’s Kevin O’Donnell, Jr. Service to SFWA Award at the 2026 Nebula ceremony.

George Méliès's long-lost sf film *Gugusse et l'Automate* (1897) has come to light in the USA: a 45-second slapstick melodrama. Méliès himself winds up a Pierrot automaton which promptly starts thumping him; retaliation with a comically huge sledgehammer follows. It’s arguably the first ever robot film.... (Library of Congress blog, 26 February) [AJW]

Michael Moorcock was in the news with *Uncut's* review of the 50th anniversary reissue of his ‘apocalyptic space-boogie record’ *New Worlds Fair* by The Deep Fix (MM, Steve Gilmore, Graham Charnock), described as a ‘singular, strange and charmingly gauche album’. (5 February) [F770] Another view is ‘dolorous and kaleidoscopic’. (*Quietus*, 22 January) [JL]

John Shirley's ‘guide to wrecking your career in science fiction’ is an uninhibited memoir of self-destructiveness and such bad career moves as (at a Clarion workshop) hiding in a tree and dropping on to the back of a highly unamused Harlan Ellison. (BoingBoing, 25 February) [PDF]

Michael Swanwick on the working of karma: ‘The guy who walked into my bank with my social security number and tried to talk them into giving him my account number (security tip: only bank where one of the officers grew up next door to you) has been sentenced to five years and six months, followed by three years’ probation.’ (Facebook, 17 February)

Conny Wabble

Until 19 Apr • **Thunderbirds and Space: 1999** (exhibition), Museum of Brands, London. 10am (Sun 11am)-5pm. See museumofbrands.com.

5-7 Mar • **Frightfest** (film), Glasgow Film Theatre, Rose Street. Fri/Sat pass £88; for single tickets see frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents/.

7 Mar • **Picocon 43**, Imperial College, London. Tickets £10; Imperial students £8; ICSF members £6. See www.imperialcollegeunion.org/activities/a-to-z/science-fiction-and-fantasy-for-ticket-sales.

SOLD OUT 13-15 Mar • **MinamiCon** (anime), Novotel Hotel, Southampton. £70 reg; waiting list for registration at www.minamicon.org.uk.

19-22 Mar • **Camp SFW**, Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth. £95 Fri-Sat or £130 Thur-Sat at www.scifiweekender.com.

22 Mar • **SF, Comic & Toy Fair**, Leigh Sports Village. 11am-4pm. Tickets £3, children £1. See www.mseevents.co.uk/.

26 Mar - 8 Sep • **Star Trek at 60** (exhibition), Science Museum, London. See www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/star-trek-60.

27 Mar - 23 Aug • **Fairy Tales** (exhibition), British Library, London. £13.50 peak; £11.50 off-peak. See events.bl.uk/exhibitions/fairy-tales.

27 Mar • **Haunted Woods and Grimm Tales** with Philip Pullman and Sam Leith, opening the above BL exhibition. 7-8:30pm. £15; online £5. See events.bl.uk/events/haunted-woods-and-grimm-tales.

27-28 Mar • **TFnation** (*Transformers*), Pendulum Hotel, Manchester. Adults £15 Fri, £40 Sat; under-18s £10 and £25; accompanied under-16s (up to 3 per adult) free. See tfnation.com/TFN-Manchester-2026.

29 Mar • **Chorley Comic Con**, Town Hall, Chorley PR7 1DP. 11am-5pm. See www.mseevents.co.uk/.

3-6 Apr • **Iridescence** (Eastercon), Birmingham NEC Hilton. £90 reg; £50 concessions; under-18s £20; under-7s free; £40 supporting or virtual. See eastercon2026.org.

13-15 May • **GIFCON** (University of Glasgow conference), ‘The Technologies of the Fantastic’, online. See tinyurl.com/yfbdvdwj.

19 May • **Tolkien Lecture** by Brandon Sanderson, Oxford Town Hall, Oxford. 6pm. See tolkienlecture.org.

11 Jul • **Frances Hardinge** symposium, King’s College, London (*NB venue change; now a one-day event*). 9:30am-5pm. Tickets £50 or £35 concessions, with lunch; £25 without lunch. See tinyurl.com/5aabu9d2.

16-17 Jul • **Current Research in Speculative Fiction** (conference), University of Liverpool. See crsfhome.home.blog.

1 Aug • **Northern Horizon** (*Blake's 7*), Copthorne Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne. 10am-4pm. £25; ‘VIP’ £80. See nufcmatters.co.uk/shop/.

1 Aug • **Rebel Base North East** (*Star Wars*), Newcastle upon Tyne. 10am-4pm. £20; ‘VIP’ £75. *Same hotel and website as the above*.

5 Sep • **Whooverville 17** (*Doctor Who*), QUAD Centre, Derby. From 10am. Tickets £60; concessions £50; accompanied under-13s £20. Guests and tickets at www.derbyquad.co.uk/events/whooverville17/.

19 Sep • **Hi Vis Comic Con**, Kings Heath, Birmingham. 10am-9pm. Tickets £11.55. See highviscomic-con.com.

8-11 Oct • **Grimmfest** (film), Odeon Great Northern, Manchester. Weekend pass (not Thursday) £84.99; other options at grimmfest.com.

24-25 Oct • **BristolCon**, Hilton DoubleTree Hotel, Bristol. Online registration was to open on 1 March but remains closed for full memberships; supporting membership available at £20. See www.bristolcon.org.

28 Nov • **Dragonmeet** (gaming), London Excel. 9am-10pm. Ticket sales awaited at www.dragonmeet.co.uk.

29-31 Jan 2027 • **Contabile 37** (filk), Wensum Valley Hotel, Norwich. £45 reg; £35 concessions; under-18s £1 per year of age when the convention starts. See www.contabile.org.uk/c37/. The same hotel has already been booked for Contabile 38, 28-30 January 2028.

5-8 Feb 2027 • **Scotiacon** (furry), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. Kaiju theme. Registration awaited at www.scotiacon.org.uk.

Rumblings. *Worldcon 2028*: the bid for Nuremberg in Germany has a website at nuremberg2028.de and has chosen 13-17 July as its proposed dates. The ConKigali bid for Rwanda has been withdrawn owing to ‘on-going immigration changes in the USA and around the world’ which had made in-person campaigning virtually impossible. The remaining bid for Brisbane in Australia (27-31 July) continues: see brisbane28.org.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Search For Us. Douglas Adams would doubtless mutter about the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation if he could see this Bing search engine report: ‘The Amalgamated Union of Sages, Philosophers, Luminaries and Other Thinking Persons (AUPSLOTP) is a fictional organization in Arthur C. Clarke’s “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy.”’ [D]

Awards. *BAFTAs*: *Zootropolis 2* won as animated film. • **Jack Gaughan** (new artist): Abigail Larson. • **Robert A. Heinlein** (writing inspirational for space exploration): Andy Weir. • **Skylark**: Keith R.A. DeCandido.

R.I.P. **Danny Boyd** (1956-2026), US film-maker who directed *Chillers* (1988) and *Strangest Dreams: Invasion of the Space Preachers* (1990), and comics writer who with William Bitner wrote *Death Falcon Zero vs the Zombie Slug Lords* (2008), died in February aged 69. [SG] • **Bobby J. Brown**, US actor best known for *The Wire* whose genre film was *From Within* (2008), died on 26 February. • **Vernon Brown**, long-time UK fan who was a founding member and past chair of the Birmingham SF Group, edited its newsletter, chaired the first Novacon in 1971 and was fan GoH at Novacon 38, died on 4 or 5 February. [CG] He was one of only four fans to have attended every Novacon. [CM] • **Robert Carradine** (1954-2026), US actor in *Wavelength* (1983), *Escape from L.A.* (1996), *Ghosts of Mars* (2001), *Sharktopus vs Pteracuda* (2014) and others, died on 23 February aged 71. He was also the producer of *Lycanthrope* (1999). [SF²C] • **Jeffrey A. Carver** (1949-2026), US author of many complex space operas beginning with *Seas of Ermathe* (1976), which opened his popular ‘Star Rigger’ series, died on 6 February aged 76. [PDF] • **Bud Cort** (1948-2026), US actor in *Brewster McCloud* (1970), *Electric Dreams* (1984), *Brain Dead* (1990), *Theodore Rex* (1995), *Dogma* (1999), *The Little Prince* (2015) and others, died on 11 February aged 77. [LP] • **Eric Dane** (1972-2026), US actor in *Feast* (2005), *Painkiller Jane* (2005), *X-Men: The Last Stand* (2006), *The Last Ship* (starring in 56 episodes 2014-2018) and others, died on 19 February aged 53. [SJ] • **Shelly Desai** (1935-2026), Indian-born US actor in *Q: The Winged Serpent* (1982), *Project X* (1987), *Demon Cop* (1990), *Barb Wire* (1996), *Escape from L.A.* (1996) and others, died on 10 February aged 90. [SJ] • **Robert Duvall** (1931-2026), Oscar-winning US actor in *THX-1138* (title role, 1971), *The Handmaid’s Tale*

(1990), *Phenomenon* (1996), *Deep Impact* (1998), *The 6th Day* (2000) and genre tv series, died on 16 February aged 95. [LP/MR] ● *Felix Eldemurov* (1957-2026), Russian occultist, cartomancer and author of the Tarot-based fantasy *Ptichka na tonkoi vetke* (*A Bird on A Thin Branch*, 2015), died on 9 February. [AM] ● *Rob Grant* (1955-2026), famed co-creator and writer of *Red Dwarf* with Doug Naylor, who besides *Dwarf* spinoffs (some jointly as Grant Naylor) and solo tv series (*Dark Ages*, *The Strangers*) published standalone sf novels beginning with *Colony* (2000), died on 25 February aged 70. [AR] ● *Joseph (Joe) Green* (1931-2026), US author active since 1962, whose early books included *The Loafers of Refuge* (1965), *Gold the Man* (1971 vt *The Mind Behind the Eye*) and *Conscience Interplanetary* (1972), and whose latest was a 2021 collection, died on 20 February aged 95. [BP] ● *Alun Harries* (1956-2026), Welsh-born London fan active since the 1978 Novacon, a founder member of Frank's APA in 1983, died in February aged 69. [SB] Another old pal gone. ● *Natalya Klimova* (1938-2026), Russian actress in *Giperboloid inzhenera Garina* (*The Hyperboloid of Engineer Garin*, 1965) and the Andersen adaptation *Snezhnaya koroleva* (*The Snow Queen*, 1967) died on 25 February aged 87. [AM] ● *Nikolay Komyagin* (1987-2026), Russian rock singer and actor in the historical fantasy series *Karamora* (2022), died on 20 February aged 39. [AM] ● *Bob Layzell* (1940-2026), UK artist whose debut was in *Science Fiction Monthly* (1974) and who painted many effective hard-sf book covers for Corgi, Futura/Orbit, NEL, Pan, Panther/Granada, Sphere and others, died on 29 January aged 85. [PS-P] ● *Sondra Lee* (1928-2026), US actress in the Broadway *Peter Pan* (1954), died on 23 February aged 97. [AIP] ● *Dmitry Mikhailov* (1958-2026), Yakut actor in the horror films *Setteekh sir* (*Cursed Ground*, 1996) and *Ichchi* (*Spirit of Itchi*, 2020) died on 22 February aged 67. [AM] ● *Tom Noonan* (1951-2026), US actor in *Wolfen* (1981), *The Monster Squad* (1987), *Last Action Hero* (1993), *Robocop 2* (1999), *12 Monkeys* (2015-2018 tv) and others, died on 14 February aged 74. [SJ] ● *Anna Ranalli* (1942-2026), Italian actress who played Andromeda in *Perseus Against the Monsters* (1963), died on 14 February aged 84. [SJ] ● *Dan Simmons* (1948-2026), noted US author whose novel debut was *Song of Kali* (1985), a World Fantasy Award winner, and whose best known sf is the grand-space-opera 'Hyperion Cantos' sequence opening with the Hugo winner *Hyperion* (1989), died on 21 February aged 77. [LP] Other awards include Stokers for his vampire novel *Carrion Comfort* (1989) and the collection *Prayers to Broken Stones* (1991), International Horror Guild for *The Terror* (2007) – which became a tv series – and World Horror Convention Grand Master for life achievement in 2013. ● *Hudson Talbott* (1949-2026), US children's author and illustrator whose *We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story* (1987) became a 1993 animated film, and whose *Into the Woods* (1988) adapted the Sondheim musical for young readers, died on 22 January aged 76. [AIP] ● *James Van Der Beek* (1977-2026), US actor in *The Plague* (2006), *Eye of the Beast* (2007), *Mrs. Miracle* (2009) and *Vampirina* (69 episodes 2017-2021), died on 11 February aged 48. [SG] ● *Richard Van der Voort*, UK sf bookseller who with his wife Marion (died 2007) traded as At the Sign of the Dragon – for many years in East Sheen, from 2002 in Wigtown – and was a long-time stalwart of the UK convention circuit and dealers' rooms, died over the Christmas period last year. [O] ● *Lesley Walker* (1945-2025), UK film editor for *Mary Reilly* (1996), *The Brothers Grimm* (2005), *Tideland* (2005) and others, died on 2 December aged 80. [AIP] ● *Tatjana Wood*, German-born US comics artist/colourist (married to Wally Wood 1950-1966) for EC and then DC as DC's main cover colourist along with much interior work, died on 27 February aged 99. [SJ]

Interesting Times. On 10 February the BSFA Awards' online voting form (which generates the final shortlist) was spammed in a single hour with 10,000 bot-generated votes, with a significant though unrevealed pattern of preferences. All were deleted. (BSFA Discord, 10 February)

Awards in Progress. *Bram Stoker* novel finalists: *Witchcraft for Wayward Girls* by Grady Hendrix, *King Sorrow* by Joe Hill, *The Buffalo Hunter Hunter* by Stephen Graham Jones, *The Bewitching* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia, *Girl in the Creek* by Wendy N. Wagner. For all categories see tinyurl.com/bsfinal2026. ● BSFA novel finalists: *The Salt Oracle* by Lorraine Wilson, *Edge of Oblivion* by Kirk Weddell, *When There Are Wolves Again* by E.J. Swift, *Project Hanuman* by Stewart Hotston, *A Granite Silence* by Nina Allan. Other categories at bsfa.co.uk/bsfa-awards-shortlist. ● *Compton Crook* (debut sf/f/h novel) finalists: *All the Water in the World* by Eiren Caffall, *The Book of Lost Hours* by Hayley Gelfuso, *The Raven Scholar* by Antonia Hodgson, *Sleeping Worlds Have No Memory* by Yaroslav Barsukov, *A Song of Legends Lost* by M. H. Ayinde, *Splinter Effect* by Andrew Ludington. ● *ESFS Awards* nominations opened in February and close on 3 April. See www.esfs.info/2026/02/06/nominations-for-the-2026-esfs-awards/. ● *Hugo Nominations* opened on 11 February and will close on 28 March. See www.lacon.org/hugos/.

Random Fandom: Corflu 43. A cartoon homage to *Peanuts* proved unwise: 'Regrettably we have no t-shirts to offer. Apparently our logo is too close to something trademarked by a famous cartoonist's estate for Cafe Press to allow it.' (*Progress Report* 4, 16 February) ● Jerry Kaufman's name emerged from the hat as GoH. ● *FAAn Awards*: GENZINE *Idea* ed. Geri Sullivan. PERZINE *This Here ...* ed. Nic Farey. SPECIAL *Dancing to Architecture* ed. Doug Bell. FANWRITER Nic Farey. FANARTIST Brad W. Foster. LETTERHACK Leigh Edmonds. COVER Jeanne Gomoll for *Idea* 15. LIFE ACHIEVEMENT Bill Burns. ● *FWA Past President*: Jeanne Gomoll. ● The 2027 Corflu will be in Vancouver, BC, Canada, 26-28 February (dates TBC): see corflu.org. ● *Overheard at the Con*: 'But if I had suction cups coming out of my armpits, that would be cool.' (Corflu Discord, 1 March)

The Dead Past. *20 Years Ago*, "'The Bookseller' gave its Diagram Prize for Oddest Book Title of the Year to a self-help book about being haunted, entitled *People Who Don't Know They're Dead: How They Attach Themselves to Unsuspecting Bystanders and What to Do About It*." I think I've met a number of these people at sf conventions.' Also *The Week* (5 March) declared a 'Good Week For Science-fiction fans, after a mysterious black goo bubbled up between cracks in the streets of downtown Los Angeles, forcing the evacuation of hundreds of residents.' (*Ansible* 224, March 2006) ● *10 Years Ago*, a classic As Others See Us: "Though there are extraterrestrials, *We Are the Ants* by Shaun David Hutchinson isn't really a science fiction novel." (*Shelf Awareness*) Like so much non-sf, it "blends existential despair with exploding planets." (*Ansible* 344, March 2016)

Court Circular. Various sf writers represented by The Ethan Ellenberg Literary Agency are suing the Topps Company, a publisher which they claim 'has intentionally refused to pay its Authors royalties or provide accountings required under the publisher's contracts with the Authors. The Topps Company, Inc. has instead strong-armed the Authors and insisted that they give up their rights to future royalties so that Topps can change its business model.' (*Locus*, 16 February) Naughty, naughty.

Fanfundery. *TransAtlantic Fan Fund*: voting in the 2026 race from North America to the Berlin Eurocon (MetropolCon, 2-5 July) opened on 9 February and will close on 7 April. The candidates are Lisa Hertel and Katrina 'Kat' Templeton. See taff.org.uk for the ballot with their platforms and the online voting form. ● *European Fan Fund*: a reminder that nominations for the 2026 trip to MetropolCon (as above) close on 15 March. See effund.github.io. ● *GUFF*: the southbound race from Europe to Swancon (Perth, WA, 29 May - 1 June) began on 21 February with two candidates: Farah Mendlesohn and Misha Sumra. *Note that voting closes on 12 March!* See taff.org.uk/guff.html for links to the ballot and online voting form. ● *DUFF*: Erin Underwood, the 2020 US southbound winner who was then unable to travel, will be the DUFF delegate at Swancon as above.

Random Fandom II. *British Fantasy Society* members were bemused to receive *Poetry London* (Spring 2026) rather than the *BFS Journal*, after the printer used the wrong address labels. Replacements were sent. (Facebook, 12 February) ● *Bruce Gillespie's* Facebook account was cancelled in February for 'breaching Community Standards' by 'being an ADVERTISER' – that is, innocently answering his 120-odd birthday greetings messages. [RD] ● *Alan Stewart*, long-time hero distributor of *Ansible* Down Under via ANZAPA, has left that APA. If anyone wants to continue the tradition, PDF *Ansibles* appear on publication day at news.ansible.uk/pdf.

Chog's Masterclass. *Mediaeval Times, or How Many Cat Footsteps in an Apple Drop?* '... this process took as long as it takes for a raindrop to fall from your hair to your nose, or for a cat to hear a footstep.' 'In the time it takes for a good cook to peel an onion his coat and hat were so completely saturated that he could feel the water trickling down his skin.' '... he was washed, shaved, tonsured, respectably dressed and outside the abbot's lodgings in less time than it'd take to milk a cow.' '... a good sixth-year should be able to complete it and return to rest, sword flicked free of blood and back in the scabbard, in the time it takes for an apple to drop from a tree.' (K.J. Parker, *Shadow*, 2001) [BA] ● *How Ice Ages Begin*. 'A huge moving sheet that extended for many miles over land and sea had suddenly popped up overnight and crushed the town, leaving no survivors to tell the tale.' *So much for Alaska. Later in New York*: 'Into the residential part of the city it tore – with the roar of a thousand Niagaras, the fury of a thousand miles, and before its might man's handicraft gave way and was crushed and plowed under by ice. [...] New York had become one with Nineveh and the hoariest of pasts in fifteen minutes.' ('Marius', *The Sixth Glacier*, January 1929 *Amazing*)

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