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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 the latest information on what, this season, is gromgorru.

IRIDESCENCE. The 2026 UK Eastercon in the Birmingham NEC Hilton has ... happened! • *Future Eastercons*. 2028 will be CONtract with the same venue: see events list. The 2029 bid Chronologicon (Crowne Plaza Hotel, Chester, 30 March - 2 April) was launched, with website chronologicon.uk (not yet live). A 2030 BSFA bid – NEC hotel again – hopes to combine the event with Eurocon. • *BSFA Awards*: NOVEL *When There Are Wolves Again* by E.J. Swift. SHORTER FICTION (novella/novelette): ‘The Apologists’ by Tade Thompson (*Clarkesworld*). SHORT ‘Godzilla as a Young Man Named Mike’ by E.M. Faulds (*PodCastle*). ANTHOLOGY *Blood in the Bricks* ed. Neil Williamson. FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS *Doctor Who: The Robot Revolution* by Una McCormack. NONFICTION (LONG) *Colourfields: Writing About Writing About Science Fiction* by Paul Kincaid. NONFICTION (SHORT) ‘Spec Fic and the Politics of Identity: Finding the Self by Eugen Bacon (*Strange Horizons*). TRANSLATED SHORT FICTION Anita Moskat for ‘Liecraft’ (*Apex*). ARTWORK *Fractal Series* (12-book tessellated cover) by Nick Wells. AUDIO FICTION *The Dex Legacy Series 3* by Emily Inkpen. • *Doc Weir Award*: James ‘Jt’ Turner. • *The Fiery Chicken* (con newsletter) can be read at eastercon2026.org/newsletter. • The fan funds auction raised about £860 of the total £1,100+ reported by the League of Fan Funds. [SB/CB] • Attendance: 813 fans collected their badges in person, there were 46 virtual logins, and the total membership was 940. The whole thing was kept going by more than 100 volunteers. (*Post Convention Update*, 17 April) Sharing the NEC hotel with an anime event (HaruhiCon; see haruhicon.co.uk) worked very well, with the reciprocal access to dealers’ rooms etc. appealing to members of both. *HaruhiCon secretary*: ‘The Eastercon guys are so nice [...] This is us but when we’re older!’

The Blue Guul

Ray Bradbury is yet again remembered in the naming of a new SF bookshop in Hay-on-Wye: Bookshop 451 (www.bookshop451.co.uk).

C.J. Cherryh sadly announced her retirement from writing fiction: ‘I drop stitches. Not many. No problems with daily life or doing creative stuff or enjoying life in general. But the ability to control narrative is just not what it was, and it’s just not going to be there.’ (Facebook, 25 April)

Ursula K. Le Guin now has her own font, designed by Flora de Carvalho of Brazil and called ‘Ursula’. (Letterform Archive, 27 March) [JDB]

Stephanie Meyer’s sparkly vampire romance *Twilight* is ranked number one in a Goodreads poll of The Worst Books of All Time. (*Parade*, 1 April) [PDF] Other ‘Twilight Saga’ instalments occupy the next three slots, with *Fifty Shades of Grey* at #5 and L. Ron Hubbard’s *Scientology: The Fundamentals of Thought* at #8. By way of context, further down this list of 100 you can find *The Golden Compass*, *Animal Farm*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Dune*, *1984* and *Brave New World*. (Goodreads, ongoing) Have these youngsters never studied the classic Badger Books?

Mary Shelley became another victim of the AI backlash when a report by you-know-what announced that the opening of chapter 5 of *Frankenstein* is ‘100% AI GPT-generated’. (Facebook, 4 April) [ChB] It has also been revealed that *Hamlet* consists largely of quotations.

Andy Weir was mentioned in a rare *Private Eye* sf film review, of *Project Hail Mary*: ‘Sci-fi novelist Andy Weir has carved out an intriguing and lucrative niche for himself selling Hollywood upbeat tales about annoying tw*ts who get cast adrift in space. In [...] *The Martian*, Matt Damon was abandoned in a barren, hostile terrain. You’d think this would be a horrific ordeal, but he was so upbeat, go-getting and obnoxiously perky you half suspected they left him there on purpose.’ (3 April)

Contumacity

2-3 May • **Portmeirion Steampunk**, Portmeirion. Day tickets at the gate only: £15.50; under-15s £11; under-5s free. See steampunk.wales.

2-3 May • **Portsmouth Comic Con**, Guildhall, Portsmouth. Tickets £37 plus fee; concessions and day rates at portsmouthcomiccon.com.

8-9 May • **Norncon**, Hilton Lanyon Place, Belfast. £35 reg; £20 concessions. Online registration at norncon.org.

9-10 May • **Lawless** (UK comics), Hilton Doubletree, Bristol. Weekend tickets £75.60; £37.80 per day. See lawlesscomiccon.co.uk.

13-15 May • **GIFCon** (U of Glasgow conference), ‘The Technologies

of the Fantastic’, online. See tinyurl.com/yfdbvdwj.

13-17 May • **Sci-Fi London** (film), Rich Mix, Shoreditch, London. ‘All access’ pass £120; other options at sci-fi-london.com.

16-17 May • **Amikon** (anime/manga), Dublin City University Glasnevin Campus. €25 reg; €15 per day. See amikon.me.

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

22-24 May • **MCM Comic Con**, London ExCel. Tickets from £97; day rates at www.mcmcomiccon.com/london/en-us.html.

SOLD OUT 22-24 May • **Satellite 9**, Clayton Hotel, Glasgow. £75 reg; under-25s £60; under-18s £20; other rates at nine.satellitex.org.uk.

23 or 24 May • **Peter Cushing Celebration**, Whitstable. £75 for either day – same programme both days. See renownfilms.co.uk.

23-24 May • **Steam Trains and Fairytals** (steampunk), Midland Railway Trust, Butterley. See www.ministryofsteampunk.com.

29-30 May • **Lolly Willowses** centenary conference (Sylvia Townsend Warner Society), University College, London. £75 reg or £50 concessions booked in advance only. See townsendwarner.com/the-society/news.

29-31 May • **UK Games Expo**, Birmingham NEC. £54; under-17s £36; other rates at www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk.

30-31 May • **Sarehole Festival** (Tolkien Society), Sarehole Recreation Ground, Birmingham. Replaces the ailing (non-TS) Middle-earth Festival which was cancelled in 2025 with no explanation given. More awaited at www.tolkiensociety.org/events/sarehole-festival-2026.

5-7 Jun • **Cymera** – Scotland’s Festival of SF, Fantasy & Horror Writing, Edinburgh and online. Rates at www.cymerafestival.co.uk.

6-7 Jun • **HorrorCon UK**, Magna, Sheffield. Weekend ticket £63; early entry £78; other rates at horrorconuk.com.

27-31 Aug • **Frightfest** (film), Leicester Square & West End Odeons, London. Tickets from mid-June at frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents.

9-13 Sep • **Brandywine Festival** (‘immersive experience’ hobbit LARP), Weston Park, Telford. Tickets £229; price rises with every 400 sales. For costumed role-players only. See thebrandywinefestival.com.

3 Oct • **Oh!Con**, Stornoway, Lewis and Harris, Outer Hebrides. Ticket sales awaited at ohcon.info.

30-31 Oct • **Frightfest Halloween** (film), Odeon Luxe, West End, London. Tickets later this year at frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents.

26-29 Mar 2027 • **Unconfined** (Eastercon), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. *New rates from 1 May*. £120 reg (£80 concessions); £40 (£25) virtual; £30 under-27s; £10 under-13s. See easterconglasgow.org.

3-4 Apr 2027 • **Horrorfied 3** (horror): venue announcement and ticket sales awaited at horrorfied.co.uk.

10 Apr 2027 • **Bedford Who Charity Con** (*Doctor Who*), King’s House, Amptill Road, Bedford, MK42 9AZ. 10am-5:30pm. Tickets £56.75; under-15s £26.25. See bedfordwhocharitycon.co.uk.

17-18 Apr 2027 • **Sci-Fi Scarborough** (multimedia), The Spa, Scarborough. Weekend pass £35; other rates at scifiscarborough.co.uk.

28-31 May 2027 • **Jodiworld** (Jodi Taylor), Leonardo Hotel, Hinckley Island. £140 reg; £40 supp; under-13s free. See jodiworld.co.uk.

23-26 Sep 2027 • **Eurocon Lisbon 2027**, Lisbon, Portugal. €60 reg. Registration is open at forumfantastico.org/eurocon/.

14-17 Apr 2028 • **CONtract** (Eastercon), Birmingham NEC Hilton. £90 reg; £50 concessions; £40 supp/online. Guests include Adam Roberts, Aliya Whiteley and Chris Lintott (science). See eastercon2028.org.

Rumblings. *Edinburgh Horror Festival*: there will be no October 2026 event, but perhaps a return in 2027. See www.edhorrorfest.co.uk/hiatus.

Infinitely Improbable

Simile Corner. “GB News landed like an asteroid and is wiping out every dinosaur and detractor in its way,” declared the station’s editorial director Michael Booker last month, boasting of his channel’s ability to render the majority of life extinct and make the planet uninhabitable for thousands of years.’ (*Private Eye*, 3 April)

Awards. *Compton Crook* (debut): *The Book of Lost Hours* by Hayley Gelfuso. • *Hans Christian Andersen* (children’s): WRITING Michael Rosen. ILLUSTRATION Cai Gao. • *Horror Writers Association* life achievement:

Jonathan Maberry and Lisa Morton. ● *Philip K. Dick* (pb original): *Outlaw Planet* by M.R. Carey. ● *SFWA Grand Master* (poetry): Ruth Berman. ● *SFWA Infinity Award* (posthumous Grand Master): Roger Zelazny.

As Others Explain Us. ‘Bjo [Trimble] became famous for her fashion shows at the World Science Fiction Convention, which was an early form of Comicon.’ (BBC Future, 18 July 2025) [LD]

R.I.P. Mario Adorf (1930-2026), Swiss-German actor in *When Women Lost Their Tails* (1972), *The Tin Drum* (1979), *Little Dodo* (2008) and others, died on 8 April aged 95. [SJ] ● Desmond Barrit (1944-2026), UK actor in *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1998), *A Christmas Carol* (1999) and the long-running West End musical *Wicked* (as one of several who played the Wizard), died on 21 March aged 81. [AIP] ● Gerry Conway (1952-2026), US comics writer for Marvel (Spider-Man; co-creator of the Punisher) and DC (Justice League), sf/fantasy novelist, screenwriter and producer, died on 27 April aged 73. [RH] ● Mariclare Costello (1936-2026), US Waltons actress in *Let's Scare Jessica To Death* (1971) and *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension* (1984), died on 17 April aged 90. [AIP] ● Vadim Denisov (1959-2026), Russian sf author who published 27 novels from 2003, died on 20 April aged 66. [AM] ● Alla Dokuchayeva (1935-2026), Russian author of the sf novel *Sud Bozhii* (*God's Judgement*, 2005), died on 9 April. [AM] ● Richard Donat (1941-2026), Canadian actor in genre tv series including *Lexx* (1996-1997) and the Stephen King-based *Haven* (61 episodes 2010-2015), died on 28 March aged 84. [SJ] ● Margaret Edgar, Scots fan active in various media fandoms in the 1970s and 1980s, died on 12 April. [O] ● Rosemary Edghill (formerly eluki bes shahar; 1956-2026), US sf/fantasy author whose first novel was *Hellflower* (1991), opening a space opera trilogy, and who published much more – collaborating with Andre Norton and others – died on 7 April aged 69. [SL] ● Stan Eling, UK fan active from 1971 and long associated with the Birmingham SF Group, who worked on Novacons (committee member in 1976 and 1981) and the 1978 Eastercon committee, died on 3 April aged 90. [RP] I gratefully remember Stan making me feel welcome at my first Novacon in 1973. ● John Flanagan (1944-2026), Australian author of the lengthy ‘Ranger’s Apprentice’ children’s fantasy series that began with *The Ruins of Gorlan* (2004) and continued for 20 years, died on 7 February aged 81. [AIP] ● Boris Goloschchapov (1949-2026), Russian actor who dubbed the anime films *Princess Mononoke*, *Cowboy Bebop: The Movie* and *Rebuild of Evangelion* 1-2, died on 15 April aged 76. [AM] ● Yuri Gorbachev (1961-2026), Belarussian author who wrote in Russian as Yuri Yulov– novels *Piyany materik* (*Drunken Continent*, 1999) and *Po doroge na piknik* (*On the Way to the Picnic*, 2012) – and in Belarussian as Yuras Neratok, with story collections in both languages, died on 10 April. [AM] ● John Guidry (1944-2026), US fan who was a charter member of the New Orleans SF Association (1967), founded the Edgar Rice Burroughs-centred ERB-apa in 1984 and chaired the 1988 Worldcon, died on 10 April aged 81. [AIP] ● Joy Harmon (1940-2026), US actress in *The Loved One* (1965), *Village of the Giants* (1965) and genre tv series, died on 15 April aged 85. ● Rif Hutton (1955-2026), US actor in *Wavelength* (1983), *The Borrower*, (1991), *Star Trek: Generations* (1994), *The Thirteenth Floor* (1999) and others, died on 18 April aged 70. [SJ] ● Sid Krofft (1929-2026), US creator with his brother Marty (1937-2023) of the tv series *H.R. Pufnstuf* (1969), *Land of the Lost* (1974-1977), *Far Out Space Nuts* (1975-1976) and others, died on 10 April aged 96. [AIP] ● Steve Maslow (1944-2026), US sound engineer for many genre films, who won sound-editing Oscars for *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), died on 27 April aged 81. [SHS] ● Yelena Mikheeva (1951-2026) Russian actress in the children’s urban fantasy film *Dva dnya chudes* (*Two Days of Miracles*, 1970) died on 26 April aged 74. [AM] ● Tera Mitchel (1951-2026), US filker, filk organizer and promoter who produced several compilation albums, died on 29 March aged 74. [F770] ● Desmond Morris (1928-2026), UK ethologist and zoologist best known for pop-science works like *The Naked Ape* (1967), whose one novel was the sf *Inrock* (1983), died on 19 April aged 98. ● Alexander Morton (1945-2026), UK actor in *Valhalla Rising* (2009), who played Jekyll & Hyde (both roles) and Dracula for BBC Radio, plus voice work in genre videogames including *The Witcher*, died on 14 April aged 81. ● Patrick Muldoon (1968-2026), US actor in *Dead Weekend* (1995), *Starship Troopers* (1997), *Ice Spiders* (2007), *Little Dead Rotting Hood* (2016) and others, died on 19 April aged 57. [SJ] ● John Nolan (1938-2026), UK actor in *Doomwatch* (1970-1971), *Terror* (1978), *Batman Begins* (2005) and *The Dark Knight Rises* (2010), died on 11 April aged 87. [LP] ● Arne Olsen, US screenwriter for *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie* (1995), *All Dogs Go to Heaven 2* (1996), *Repeaters* (2010) and others, died on 4 April aged 64. [AIP] ● Angela Pleasence (1941-2026), UK actress in *From Beyond the Grave* (1974), *A Christmas Carol* (1984), *Your Highness* (2011) and genre tv series, died on 10 April aged 84. [SJ] ● Paul Seed (1947-2026),

UK tv director and actor in *Doctor Who* (4 episodes 1978), died on 7 March aged 78. [AIP] ● Gordon Snell (1932-2026), UK children’s author whose books include the sf ‘Tom’s Amazing Machine’ series (1988-1992), died in April aged 93. ● Len Strazewski (1955-2026), US comics writer who worked on DC’s *Starman*, *Flash*, *Justice Society of America* and others, died on 27 April aged 71. ● Roger Sweet (1935-2026), US toy designer who as a lead designer at Mattel co-created the *He-Man/Masters of the Universe* action figures (1982), died on 28 April aged 91. ● Michele Massimo Tarantini (1942-2026, aka ‘Michael E. Lemick’), Italian director and co-writer of *Sangraal, la spada di fuoco* (1982) and *Cannibal Ferox II* (1985), died on 3 April aged 83. [SJ] ● Thomas Tessier (1947-2026), US horror and dark fantasy author of several novels beginning with *The Fates* (1978), plus five collections, died on 26 March aged 78. [GVG/LP] ● Ian Watson (1943-2026), prolific and erudite UK author active from 1969, whose first novel *The Embedding* (1973) was much discussed and whose second *The Jonah Kit* (1975) won a BSFA Award, died on 13 April aged 82. He published many more novels and stories, often brilliant; the European SF Society named him as European Grand Master in 2024. Ian had been a friend since the 1970s – I was proud to release his nonfiction collection *Watto’s Wisdom* in 2025 – and was active, witty, playful and provocative to the last. ● Lou Zocchi (1935-2026), US dice maker and games designer/publisher whose unauthorized *Star Trek Battle Manual* (1972) was reworked for legal reasons as *Alien Space* (1973) and again as the licensed *Star Fleet Battle Manual* (1977), died on 15 April aged 91. [JDN]

Fantasy Football League. On the strange powers of a footballer: ‘You may say I am overdoing it, but [Mohamed] Salah at his best was able to take us to Earthsea, to Valinor before the dimming of the lights, to the Fields of Elysium.’ (Matthew Syed, *The Times*, 24 March) [PE]

Awards in Progress. Hugo novel finalists: *A Drop of Corruption* by Robert Jackson Bennett, *Death of the Author* by Nnedi Okorafor, *Shroud* by Adrian Tchaikovsky, *The Everlasting* by Alix E. Harrow, *The Incandescent* by Emily Tesh and *The Raven Scholar* by Antonia Hodgson. 1,488 valid ballots were received, six on paper. Full list of 126 finalists in 21 categories – two technically not Hugos – plus disqualifications (4) and withdrawals (3) at www.lacon.org/hugofinalists. ● *Prometheus* (libertarian sf) finalists: *Storm-Dragon* by Dave Freer, *War by Other Means* by Karl K. Gallagher, *No Man’s Land* by Sarah Hoyt, *A Kiss for Damocles* by J. Kenton Pierce, and *Powerless* by Harry Turtledove.

Health News. Pat Cadigan gleefully announced that after eleven fraught years she is officially free of cancer. (Blog, 10 April) ● Duncan Lunan recently had a stroke but is reported to be recovering well. [SF²C] ● Ted White, alas, returned from rehab to hospital in April.

The Dead Past. 30 Years Ago: ‘H.G. Wells has become a theme pub: HG’s in Peterborough. In homage to Wells’s most famous sf creations, the PR company had the new pub opened by Jon Pertwee and a brace of Daleks (since “Tom Baker was too expensive”), while its press release credits Wells with *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. According to CAMRA spies, the quality of research accurately reflects that of the beer.’ (*Ansible* 106, May 1996) ● 10 Years Ago: ‘IN TYPO VERITAS. “George R.R. Martin has been given an honorary dungaree from Texas A&M University.” (SF² Concatenation, Summer)’ (*Ansible* 346, May 2016)

Fanfunder. *TransAtlantic Fan Fund*: the winner of the 2026 TAFF race from North America to the Berlin Eurocon (MetropolCon, 2-5 July) was announced on 12 April as Katrina ‘Kat’ Templeton with 44 votes. (Lisa Hertel 29; No Preference 3.) See taff.org.uk for official release. Kat will be in Europe, including the UK and perhaps Finland, from 23 June to 16 July. ● *European Fan Fund*: voting in the 5-candidate race to MetropolCon (as above) closed on 30 April. Result awaited at effund.github.io.

Chog’s Masterclass. *Neat Tricks*. ‘... the rather permanent smile which had remained on his face during the meal seemed to roll up from his chin through his mouth, eyes, forehead, and disappear in his hair.’ (H. Russell Wakefield, ‘Messrs. Turkes and Talbot’, *The Arkham Sampler*, Winter 1948) [CG] ‘Dorcas’s moustache revolved.’ (Robert Robinson, *Landscape with Dead Dons*, 1956) ● *Euphemism for a (Different) Moustache*. ‘The colossal spread of this hairy member ...’ (*Ibid*) ● *Very Like a Whale*. ‘The sun came up like a piece of fiery yellow butter.’ (Peter Heath, *The Mind Brothers*, 1967) ‘Wearing an aura of rugged-intellectual charm like a plastic raincoat ...’ (Sam Merwin Jr, *The Time Shifters*, 1971) ● *The Pursuit of Love*. ‘The wagon lurched forward like an armadillo trying to mate with a very fast duck.’ (James R. Silke, *Lords of Destruction*, 1989)

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