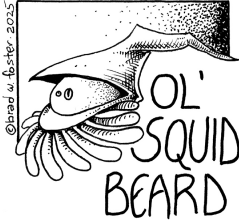


# ansible



## Ansible® 467 June 2026

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 a map showing where to find the Sage of Dissolution.

### A Game with Shifting Mirrors

**Ian McKellen** was confronted with the greatest critical challenge of his entire acting career: ‘Who would win a fight between Gandalf and Dumbledore?’ ‘Why on earth would they be fighting? But Gandy, of course, would win. The original wizard.’ (*Guardian*, 7 May)

**Charles Platt** plans to launch a new sf magazine later this year, with an irregular schedule, POD production and the interesting name *New Words*. ‘Since the title is somewhat similar to that of another magazine, it has been trademarked with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.’ All enquiries to [newwordседitorial@gmail.com](mailto:newwordседitorial@gmail.com). (Email, 5 May)

**Terry Pratchett**’s works are apparently teetering on the brink of oblivion, according to someone called Helen Lewis: ‘One of England’s funniest writers is in danger of being lost to history.’ (*The Atlantic*, May)

**Lynne M. Thomas** and **Michael Damian Thomas** of *Uncanny Magazine* fame were amicably divorced on 2 April, leaving *Uncanny* solely owned by the latter. [L]

**Richard van der Voort**’s estate hopes to sell the stock of his bookshop At the Sign of the Dragon in Wigtown, Scotland: ‘over 33,000 items’ including sf/fantasy books, magazines and comics plus general-interest books and DVDs. Enquiries to [transformerbooks0@gmail.com](mailto:transformerbooks0@gmail.com). [SB]

### Connachan

4 Jun • **Digital Futures Institute: Festival of Storytelling** speech by Samira Ahmed (‘Analogue tech: Our storytelling saviour or nostalgic retreat?’) followed by the Clarke Award shortlist announcement. 5pm-6:20pm. Free booking at [www.tickettailor.com/events/dfistory/2193072](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/dfistory/2193072).

5-7 Jun • **Cymera** – Scotland’s Festival of SF, Fantasy & Horror Writing, Edinburgh and online. Weekend pass £85 (£60 virtual); day rates £55 Saturday, £40 Sunday; more at [www.cymerafestival.co.uk](http://www.cymerafestival.co.uk).

6-7 Jun • **HorrorCon UK**, Magna, Sheffield. Weekend ticket £63; early entry £78; other rates at [horrorconuk.com](http://horrorconuk.com).

13-14 Jun • **EM-Con** (media), Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham. Tickets £36 (11am entry) or £48 (10am). See [www.em-con.co.uk](http://www.em-con.co.uk).

20 Jun - 13 Sep • **Cracking Exhibition Gromit**: 50 Years of Aardman in Bristol, M Shed, Bristol. 10am-5pm. See [tinyurl.com/3eczs7kp](http://tinyurl.com/3eczs7kp).

20 Jun • **Stars of Time** (comics), Steam Museum, Swindon. Tickets £17.50; £14 concessions; more at [www.starsofetime.co.uk/swindon](http://www.starsofetime.co.uk/swindon).

2-5 Jul • **MetropolCon** (Eurocon), ‘silent green’ Kulturquartier, Berlin. €95 reg; reduced €75; under-12s €5. See [www.metropolcon.eu](http://www.metropolcon.eu).

23-25 Oct • **MCM Comic Con**, London ExCel. Tickets from £98; day rates at [www.mcmcomiccon.com/london/en-us.html](http://www.mcmcomiccon.com/london/en-us.html).

14-15 Nov • **For the Love of Horror**, BEC Arena, Manchester. Weekend tickets £53.90; other rates at [www.fortheloveofhorroruk.com](http://www.fortheloveofhorroruk.com).

16-18 Apr 2027 • **Portmeiricon** (*Prisoner*), Portmeirion, Gwynedd. Six of One club membership (£27.50 UK; more elsewhere) is required. Registration opens on 1 July 2026 at [sixofone.co/convention](http://sixofone.co/convention).

1-2 May 2027 • **Portsmouth Comic Con**, Guildhall, Portsmouth. Tickets £34.50; concessions and day rates at [portsmouthcomiccon.com](http://portsmouthcomiccon.com).

**Rumblings**. *LAcon V* (Worldcon 2026): Hugo voting opened in May and closes on 8 August. See [www.lacon.org/hugos](http://www.lacon.org/hugos). • *Worldcon 2028*: the Nuremberg bid has withdrawn, with hopes of bidding again for a later year. Detailed statement by the bid chairs at [nuremberg2028.de](http://nuremberg2028.de).

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Us**. On an all-male US book club: ‘Whoever is hosting chooses the book, and on this day it was Michael Slott’s turn. The only rules are that the book is generally available at the library and ideally no more than 400 pages long. Slott broke both with his choice of the obscure 1974 science fiction novel *The Mote in God’s Eye*, by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle (592 pages in some editions!) / ‘It’s my job to lower the bar,’ Slott joked ...’ (Maggie Penman, *The Washington Post*, 4 May) [PL]

**Awards**. *British Book Awards* (‘Nibbies’) sf/fantasy category winner: *Alchemised* by Sen Lin Yu. • *Climate Fiction Prize*: *Hum* by Helen Phillips. • *Locus*: SF NOVEL *Death of the Author* by Nnedi Okorafor. FANTASY NOVEL *The Everlasting* by Alix E. Harrow. HORROR NOVEL *The Buffalo Hunter*

*Hunter* by Stephen Graham Jones. YA NOVEL *Starstrike* by Yoon Ha Lee. FIRST NOVEL *Sour Cherry* by Natalia Theodoridou. TRANSLATED NOVEL *On the Calculation of Volume III* by Solvej Balle, trans Sophia Hersi Smith & Jennifer Russell. NOVELLA *The River Has Roots* by Amal El-Mohtar. NOVELLETTE ‘We Begin Where Infinity Ends’ by Somto Ihezue (*Clarkesworld*). SHORT ‘In My Country’ by Thomas Ha (*Clarkesworld*). ANTHOLOGY *We Will Rise Again* ed. Karen Lord, Annalee Newitz & Malka Older. COLLECTION *Uncertain Sons* by Thomas Ha. MAGAZINE *Clarkesworld*. PUBLISHER Orbit. EDITOR Neil Clarke. ARTIST John Picacio. ART BOOK *The Space Cat* by Nnedi Okorafor & Tana Ford. NONFICTION *Enshittification* by Cory Doctorow.

**The Long 19th Century**. ‘Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) was written two centuries before the works of Wells and Verne....’ (Catherine Riley and Lynne Pearce, *Feminism and Women’s Writing*, 2018) [RB] • On shaven armpits in the new *Wuthering Heights* film: ‘Per Gillette UK, English women began removing hair from their face and body with safety razors in the early 1900s, after the First World War – several centuries after Brontë’s novel was published in 1847.’ (People.com, 25 May) [RB]

**Publishers and Sinners**. Gollancz’s SF Gateway, the vast ebook sales website launched in 2011 along with the online *SF Encyclopedia*, has stagnated for years (latest ‘news’ post August 2021; ‘random’ SFE sample entry stuck on Michael Scott Rohan since 2018, even after SFE links were officially severed in October 2021) and seems to have died. The last valid Internet Archive snapshot – normally three or four every month – was on 8 March 2026. *Ansible* asked Orion/Gollancz if this was the end: no reply as yet. Where will eager readers find digital Badger Books now?

**The Way the Future Was**. ‘It was a square metal cabinet that held every scientific book and monograph of value that had ever been published, reduced to microfilm which could be read through a special apparatus.’ (Edmond Hamilton, *Calling Captain Future*, 1967) [BA]

**R.I.P.** *Dion Anderson* (1938-2026), US actor in *UFO Cafe* (1990), *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) and genre tv series, died on 26 April aged 87. [SJ] • *David Burke* (1934-2026), UK actor best loved as Watson in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1984-1985), whose genre credits include M.R. James adaptations (2005-2006), the Wyndham-based *Random Quest* (2006) and *The Woman in Black* (2012), died on 10 May aged 91. • *Charles Cioffi* (1935-2026), US actor in *Time After Time* (1979) and genre tv series including *The X-Files* (1993-1997), died on 22 May aged 90. [AIP]

• *Tom Clegg* (1957-2026), US-born editor, publisher, critic, and translator long resident in France – where he acquired much translated English-language science fiction for Bragelonne SF – died on 5 May aged 68. [L]

• *Kelly Curtis* (1956-2026), US actress (sister of Jamie Lee Curtis) in *Magic Sticks* (1987), *The Devil’s Daughter* (1991) and genre tv series including *The Sentinel* (7 episodes 1996), died on 30 May aged 69. [AIP]

• *Jill Curzon* (1938-2026), UK actress in *Daleks’ Invasion Earth 2150 A.D.* (1966) and genre tv series, died in April aged 87. • *John Dowd* (1952-2026), UK fan since the 1970s who worked (usually as treasurer) for the Sheffield fan group, many Eastercons and the 2014 London Worldcon, died on the night of 15/16 May. [FD] He and his wife Fran Dowd (to whom all sympathy) were fan guests of honour at the 2010 Eastercon. • *Piper J. Drake* (Lalana Dararutana, 1976-2026), US author of *Heart’s Sentinel* (2011) as P.J. Schnyder and others as Drake, died on 18 May aged 49. [L]

• *Maureen Duffy* (1933-2026), noted UK author and campaigner for gay and authors’ rights whose novels include the sf *Gor Saga* (1981) and *In Times Like These* (2013), died on 27 May aged 92. • *George Eastman* (Luigi Montefiori, 1942-2026), Italian actor in 1990: *The Bronx Warriors* (1982), *The New Barbarians* (1983), *Ironmaster* (1983), *Hands of Steel* (1986) and others, died on 19 May aged 83. • *Donald Gibb* (1954-2026), US actor in *Transylvania 6-5000* (1985), *Amazon Women on the Moon* (1987), *Breakfast of Aliens* (1993) and genre tv series, died on 12 May aged 71. [RB] • *Rupert Harvey*, US producer of *Android* (1982), *Critters* (1986 plus sequels; director of #4), *The Blob* (1988), *A Nightmare on Elm Street: The Dream Child* (1989), *End of the World* (2013) and others, died on 26 April aged 81. [SJ]

• *Hermann Huppen* (1938-2026), Belgian comics creator best known for his post-apocalyptic *Jeremiah* (40 volumes since 1979; tv adaptation by J. Michael Straczynski 2002-2004), died on 22 March aged 87. [SH] • *Greg Hyman* (1947-2026), US inventor

of electronic toys who co-created the giggling plush Muppet ‘Tickle Me Elmo’ that was a surprise bestseller in 1996, died on 1 May aged 78. [AIP] ● **Tom Kane** (1962-2026), US voice actor in *Iron Man* (13 episodes 1995-1996), *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* (2008 film and 132 tv episodes 2008-2020, as Yoda and others), *Lego Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Out* (2012), *The Powerpuff Girls* (69 episodes 2016-2019) and many more, died on 18 May aged 64. [F770] ● **Michael Keating** (1947-2026), UK actor in *Doctor Who* (‘The Sun Makers’, 1977), *Blake’s 7* (all 52 episodes 1978-1981, as Vila Restal) and others, died in May aged 79. ● **Gary Kelley** (1945-2026), distinguished and often-honoured US artist who illustrated fairytales, *Frankenstein*, Poe’s *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, Edward Lear, Ray Bradbury and much else, died on 12 April aged 81. [F770] ● **Marcia Lucas** (1945-2026), US film editor married to George Lucas 1969-1983, who worked on his *THX 1138* (1971), *Star Wars* (1977, for which she shared an Oscar) and *Return of the Jedi*, died on 27 May aged 80. [LP] ● **Biljana Mateljan** (1956-2026), Croatian sf author/illustrator who won her country’s Sfera Award in both capacities, died on 19 March aged 70. [AM] ● **Dick Matena** (1943-2026), Dutch comics writer/artist whose credits include the sf series *Storm* (1978-1980; art by Don Lawrence) died on 26 April aged 83. [SG] ● **Yoshihiro Nishimura** (1967-2026), Japanese director of *Vampire Girl vs. Frankenstein Girl* (2009), *Helldriver* (2010), *Mutant Girls Squad* (2010), *Zombie TV* (2013) and others, died on 25 May aged 59. ● **Kenji Ōba** (1955-2026), Japanese actor/stuntman in many sf films since *Gamera: The Giant Monster* (1965), who voiced the title role in *Space Sheriff Gavan* videogames and starred in spinoff films (2012 plus sequels), died on 6 May aged 71. [SJ] ● **Michael Pennington** (1943-2026), UK actor in *Return of the Jedi* (1983) and *Raised by Wolves* (2022), died on 10 May aged 82. [LP] ● **Rex Reed** (1938-2026), US film critic who played himself in *Superman* (1978), died on 12 May aged 87. [RB] ● **Ann Robinson** (1929-2025), US actress who starred as Sylvia van Buren in *The War of the Worlds* (1953) and played characters with that name in *Midnight Movie Massacre* (1988), *War of the Worlds* (2005 tv) and *The Naked Monster* (2005), died on 26 September aged 96; this went unreported until May. [F770] Other credits include *Rocky Jones, Space Ranger* (6 episodes 1954), *My Lovely Monster* (1991) and *Tales of Frankenstein* (2018). ● **Donald Sidney-Fryer** (1934-2026), US poet, editor, critic and Clark Ashton Smith scholar who published poems about Atlantis, *Emperor of Dreams: A Clark Ashton Smith Bibliography* (1978) and uncollected works by Smith and Ambrose Bierce, died on 2 May aged 91. [LP] ● **Michael P. Spradlin** (1960-2026), US author of the ‘Spy Goddess’ (2005-2006) and ‘Killer Species’ (2013-2014) series, died on 12 April aged 65. [L] ● **Frank Stack** (1937-2026), US artist and academic who as Foolbert Sturgeon published the pioneering underground comic *The Adventures of Jesus* (1964; continued in *Jesus Comics* 1969-1972 and elsewhere), died on 12 April aged 88. [AIP] ● **Larry Stark** (1932-2026), US journalist and theatre reviewer, noted early EC Comics fan also active in 1950s and 1960s sf fandom – belonging to FAPA, OMPA and The Cult and publishing *Stellar* (1956-1958) with Ted White – died on 1 May aged 93. [SB] ● **Beau Starr** (1944-2026), US actor in *Halloween 4* and *5* (1988, 1989), *Angels in the Infield* (2000), *Time and Again* (2007) and others, died on 24 April aged 81. [SJ] ● **Alan Barrie Stewart** (1944-2026), UK fan active in the 1970s, publishing *Till the Cows Come Home* (3 issues 1974) with his wife Elke (1948-2013) and *London SF* (1 issue 1977) solo, died on 12 May aged 81. As BSFA administrator 1976-1977, he edited the 1976 *BSFA Yearbook*. [MP] ● **Howard Storm** (1931-2026), US director of *Mork & Mindy* (59 episodes 1978-1981) and episodes of other genre tv series, died on 26 May aged 94. ● **Kōji Suzuki** (1957-2026), Japanese author best known for his supernatural horror novel *Ring* (1991) plus sequels and media spinoffs including the film *Ring* (1998), died on 8 May aged 68. [JonC] ● **Jack Taylor** (1926-2026), US actor in *Dr. Jekyll vs. The Werewolf* (1972, as Jekyll), *The Fabulous Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1977), *Conan the Barbarian* (1982), the *Turn of the Screw* adaptation *Presence of Mind* (1999) and many more, died on 12 May aged 99. [SJ] ● **John Thiel** (1945-2026), US fan active from the late 1950s and long involved with the NSF, whose best known fanzine was *Pablo Lennis* (1975-2024), died on 25 March aged 80. [F770] ● **Jonathan Tiersten** (1965-2026), US musician and actor in nonfantastic slasher films plus *Terror Tales* (2019) and *Toilet Zombie Baby Strikes Back* (2021), died on 5 May aged 60. [SJ] ● **Barrie Tomlinson** (1938-2026), UK group editor for comics at IPC who was involved with *2000 AD*, *Scream*, *Wildcat*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Eagle* (1982 relaunch), died on 21 April aged 88. [SF<sup>2</sup>C] ● **Ted Turner** (1938-2026), US founder of CNN, WTBS, TNT and the Cartoon Network, whose one-off Turner Tomorrow Fellowship award of \$500,000 for a novel offering ‘creative solutions to humanity’s urgent problems’ went to Daniel Quinn in 1991 for his sf *Ishmael*, died on 6 May aged 87. [LP] ● **Yuri Ustinov** (1954-2016), Russian production designer whose films

include *The Master and Margarita* (1994, released 2011) and the surreal sf *Lyubov i drugie koshamary* (*Love and Other Nightmares*, 2001), died on 17 May. [AM] ● **Ted White** (1938-2026), long-time US fan (his many fanzines included the co-edited *Void* 1958-1969, *Pong* 1980-1992 and *Blat!* 1993-1994, the last a FAAn winner), con-runner, professional editor (*F&SF* 1963-1968 as assistant, *Amazing* and *Fantastic* 1969-1979, *Heavy Metal* 1979-1980, *Stardate* 1985-1986) and author whose first novel under his own name was *Android Avenger* (1965), died on 24 May aged 88. [SB] Ted won the fanwriter Hugo in 1968, was a GoH at Aussiecon Two in 1985, and received the FAAn Award for life achievement in 2010. He wasn’t just a friend but an essential part of the fandom I grew up in. Our loss is great. ● **Albert Wolsky** (1930-2026), Oscar-winning French costume designer for *Beauty and the Beast* (1976), *Meteor* (1979), *Tempest* (1982), *Galaxy Quest* (1999), *The Manchurian Candidate* (2004), *Ad Astra* (2019) and others, died on 24 May aged 95. [SJ]

**By Any Other Name.** Q: ‘In anagrams, the name of which Greek god is an anagram of “rose”?’ A: ‘Athena.’ (BBC1, *The Weakest Link*) [PE]

**Awards in Progress.** *British Fantasy* shortlists have been released: see [britishfantasy.org/the-british-fantasy-awards-2026-shortlists/](http://britishfantasy.org/the-british-fantasy-awards-2026-shortlists/).

● **Arthur C. Clarke:** there’s a record-length submissions list of 132 books from 52 eligible imprints and independent authors. The shortlist will be revealed on 4 June (see events list).

**One Coin to Rule Them All.** To mark a vital anniversary in British civic history – 25 years since Peter Jackson’s first *Lord of the Rings* film – the Royal Mint has released a 50p coin ‘Forged not in the fires of Mount Doom but in Wales’, featuring the One Ring, its lettering, and the Eye of Sauron. Six more will follow. (BBC, 20 May) What next? Donald Trump?

**The Dead Past.** *10 Years Ago*, from the critical heritage: ‘People buy romance novels, sci-fi and other genres because they know they will encounter no unhappiness, no depression, no angst, no killings, no family conflict, etc., the way they will in all of modern fiction. (*New York Times Book Review*)’ ... ‘*The Handmaid’s Tale* was a dystopia about the oppression of women by a feminist Canadian novelist from outside of the genre. (*Foundation*)’ (*Ansible* 347, June 2016) ● **70 Years Ago**, Eric Frank Russell rebutted a hideous slur: “‘Vargo Statten’ is not (repeat: NOT), never was and never will be (repeat: NEVER) a pen-name of Eric Frank Russell.’ For safety’s sake he also denied in similar terms that Eric Frank Russell was a pen-name of Vargo Statten. (*Fantasy Times* 248, June 1956)

**Random Fandom.** *Fanac.org* has moved its photo archive to a new subsite at [photos.fanac.org](http://photos.fanac.org), currently with more than 8,500 images. [MP]

**Fanfundery.** *European Fan Fund:* Hephæstion Christophoulos of Greece won the five-candidate race to the Berlin Eurocon, MetropolCon on 2-5 July 2026 ([effund.github.io](http://effund.github.io), 4 May). No voting figures have been released. ● **TAFF Ebook Library.** The latest title, added in a fit of nostalgia and self-indulgence, is Charles Platt’s humorous *Micromania: The Whole Truth about Home Computers* (1984, as adapted by me for the UK), with a brand-new Platt foreword and Langford afterword. Free PDF download at [taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Micromania](http://taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Micromania). Illustrations by Carl Lundgren. For those who prefer hard copy there’s also a TAFF-benefit paperback.

**Magazine Scene.** *Sci-Fi Ireland* edited by Mark Mullan, an sf short story magazine to be published twice a year, was launched in May: see [www.sci-fi-ireland.com](http://www.sci-fi-ireland.com). ● Another May debut is Rachel Cordasco’s *Small Planet: The SF in Translation Magazine*, free at [www.sfintranslation.com](http://www.sfintranslation.com). ● **FIYAH: Magazine of Black Speculative Fiction** is ‘going on hiatus indefinitely’ after issue #40, for financial reasons. (Bluesky, 21 May) [F770]

**Chog’s Masterclass.** *Risus Sardonicus.* ‘Don’s smile was a lemon twist.’ (Emil Petaja, *The Nets of Space*, 1969) ● **Frothy Dept.** ‘Lucael staggered back against the wall of the building beside them, his face working like yeast.’ (Keith Laumer, *Retief’s Ransom*, 1971) [BA] ● **The Eureka Moment.** “‘It’s worked at last,” he shouted. “At last I’ve discovered a magnet which will attach itself as near as possible to gravity when electrified.”’ (Desmond Wilcox, *Into Existence*, 1941) ● **Eyeballs in the Sky.** ‘Guin clicked the tab shut and pushed herself back from the counter. Let her eye run out the windows and on to the high far frill of upper Manhattan.’ (Melissa Albert, *The Children*, 2026) [GVG] ● **Advice on Good Parenting.** ‘It is related that a father plunged his infant babe, only a few hours old, into the water for several minutes, and repeated this operation daily, until the child could remain under water twenty minutes, moving and playing without harm, like a fish. Parents should remember this and learn how to develop their children properly on dry land.’ (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health*, 1875; final edition of 1910)

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