



Ansible® 471 October 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: **Brad W. Foster**. Available for SAE, or the real truth about the Flaming Ghoulies.

I Got Socks

M. John Harrison's definitely *sf* *The End of Everything* has made it to the six-book shortlist for this year's Booker Prize. [PS-P]

David McCallum's birthplace in Kersland Street, Glasgow, was marked by a blue plaque unveiled by the Lord Provost in September. [JBa]

Salman Rushdie is to receive the US National Book Foundation's 2026 medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. Past honorees include Ursula K. Le Guin. [L]

J. Michael Straczynski vents about 'the flood of announcements from official sponsors of podcasts, livestreams, mini-cons celebrating the 40th anniversary of *The Real Ghostbusters* in releases and invitations citing not just the cast (amazing people) shuttled in for events, but going granular in noting the producers, the executives, the folks at Hasbro, the staff at DIC... / And in not one of these notices have I seen a single mention of the writers. Not a word, not a syllable, not a jot or tittle... nada. Forget me in this equation, I'm talking about omitting ALL the writers on this show, from Linda Woolverton (who went on to write *Beauty and the Beast*), Michael Reeves, Larry DiTillio, David Gerrold. JM Dematteis, Keith for chrissakes Giffen and a ton of others.' (Facebook, 13 September)

Meryl Streep's casting as the voice of Aslan in a new production of *The Magician's Nephew* caused much frothing and gibbering among the US 'Christian' Right: 'profaning Christ with the divine feminine' ... 'creative vandalism' ... 'deliberate mockery of Christianity'. As the *Guardian* asked, don't they have more pressing issues? (*Guardian*, 25 September) [F770]

Tommy Tuberville, the US Republican Senator, shared a hot new conspiracy theory with the Senate: the airline industry has been infiltrated by furry fandom! '[M]any Airline pilots, flight attendants, and air traffic controllers are part of the furry community ... lord help us... It's terrifying when you think about this. When you walk on to a commercial flight, it's possible that the pilot flying your plane could have a deranged fetish of dressing up like an animal.' (Daily Kos, 24 September) [MR/JG]

Conceptus

Until 1 Nov • **London Month of the Dead**, various venues and events, a few of genre interest: see londonmonthofthedeath.com.

2-10 Oct • **Festival of Words**, East Riding Libraries, Yorkshire. Some fantasy items: see eastridinglibraries.co.uk/festival-of-words/.

2-4 Oct • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Bowness-on-Windermere. £25 reg (£20 concessions) at www.comicartfestival.com.

3-4 Oct • **Octocon**, Clayton Hotel, Cork, Ireland (*new venue*) and online. £80 reg; £50 concessions; under-22s €25; accompanied under-13s free; online €20 or €10 concessions. Registration at octocon.com.

3 Oct • **Oh!Con** (comics), Stornoway, Lewis and Harris, Outer Hebrides. Tickets £8; under-16s £5; under-5s free. See ohcon.info.

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

9-11 Oct • **Birmingham Anime Film Festival**, Mockingbird Cinema, Custard Factory, Birmingham. Tickets at www.baff.uk.

9-11 Oct • **Fantasycon**, Crowne Plaza, Glasgow. £100 reg; £70 concessions; £55 child. (BFS members £85, £55, £45.) Further details at britishfantasycommunity.org/events-calendar/fantasycon-2026.

17-18 Oct • **Cymera Loves Romantasy** (festival), The Pleasance, 60 Pleasance, Edinburgh. See www.cymerafestival.co.uk/romantasy.

17 Oct • **PictCon2**, Salutation Hotel, 30-34 South St, Perth, Scotland. £30 reg; £20 concessions, under-18s £10. See tinyurl.com/242ya33b.

22-25 Oct • **Celluloid Screams** horror film festival, Sheffield. Weekend pass £125; this and other tickets at celluloidscreams.com.

23-25 Oct • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Pendulum Hotel, Sackville St, Manchester. £120 reg. Day rates at fantastic-films.uk.

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

24-25 Oct • **BristolCon**, Hilton DoubleTree Hotel, Bristol. £70 reg; £55 concessions/under-18s; under-14s free. See www.bristolcon.org.

25 Oct • **Stars of Time** (comics), LC, Swansea. 9am-4pm. £11.55 (under-14s £7.21) at www.starsoftime.co.uk/swanseacomiccon.

30-31 Oct • **Frightfest Halloween** (film), Odeon Luxe, West End, London. Two-day pass £85; more at frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents/.

30 Oct • **Steampunk Halloween**, County Assembly Rooms, Lincoln. See www.ministryofsteampunk.com/halloween2026.

31 Oct • **Tales of the Weird**, British Library, London (and online). £30. 11am-6:30pm. See events.bl.uk/events/tales-of-the-weird-festival.

1 Nov • **Comic Con**, Mercure Hotel, St Helens, Merseyside. 10am-10:30pm. Adults £5.89. More at www.ljeventsentertainment.com.

8 Nov • **Paperback & Pulp Book Fair**, Holiday Inn, Coram St, London. 9:30am-3pm. £4 entry. See tinyurl.com/2s49aucn.

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

21 Nov - 9 May • **Tove Jansson** exhibition, Quentin Blake Centre, London. See qbcentre.org.uk/exhibitions/tove-jansson-and-her-families.

26-28 Mar 2027 • **HaruhiCon** (anime), Birmingham NEC Hilton. £75 reg; no under-18s. See www.haruhicon.co.uk.

2-4 Apr 2027 • **Ainmhicon** (furry), Clayton Hotel Liffey Valley, Dublin. Tickets from €50 per day at ainmhicon.ie.

15-16 May 2027 • **Lawless** (UK comics), Hilton Doubletree, Bristol. Ticket sales open on 23 January 2027 at lawlesscomiccon.co.uk.

30 May 2027 • **Sci-Fi Collectors Expo**, Cymru Promenade, Llandudno. 10am-4pm. Tickets awaited at www.mseevents.co.uk.

16-18 Jul 2027 • **Fantasy Forest** (cosplay), Sudely Castle, Cheltenham, with camping options. Tickets awaited at fantasyforest.co.uk. Also 3-5 September at Hatfield House, Hatfield.

31 Jul - 1 Aug 2027 • **EM-Con** (media), Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham. Tickets £38 (11am entry) or £50 (10am). See www.em-con.co.uk.

9-12 Sep 2027 • **Brandywine Festival** ('immersive' hobbit LARP), Weston Park, Telford. See thebrandywinefestival.com.

8-9 Oct 2027 • **Starbase 24 Charity Banquet** (*Star Trek*), Holiday Inn West, Peterborough. See starbase24.co.uk/Banquet.html.

Rumblings. *ConZealand2*: this Worldcon bid for Wellington, New Zealand, has yet to reveal its target year. See www.conzealand2.co.nz. • *An Evening with Michael Moorcock* at the London King's Road Waterstones on 21 October has, alas, sold out. Details at tinyurl.com/25wts8ep.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Rank Us. 'Stephen King is recognized as one of the greatest writers of all time, alongside literary icons like Dickens, Tolstoy, Rowling, Shakespeare, and more.' (Mental Floss, 20 September) [JBo]

Awards. *Aldiss* (worldbuilding) shortlist: *A Resistance of Witches* by Morgan Ryan, *City of All Seasons* by Oliver K. Langmead and Aliya Whiteley, *Shroud* by Adrian Tchaikovsky, *The Grimoire Grammar School Parent Teacher Association* by Caitlin Rozakis, *The Isle in The Silver Sea* by Tasha Suri. To be presented at Fantasycon: see events list. • *Sturgeon Memorial* (short story): 'We, the Fleet' by Alex T. Singer (*Clarkesworld*). [F770]

The Way We Live Now. A simulated fruit-fly nervous system called Stonkfly is trading in cryptocurrency online. 'Dopamine neurons are stimulated when the fly makes profit. Neuron activity controls buy/sell decisions and makes trades on coinbase. Will the fly get rich?' (*The Register*, 11 September) If only it had been a Stross-homage lobster.

As Others Quote Us. 'Asimov said, "Above a certain level, technology is indistinguishable from magic."' (*Alien: Earth* episode 4, 2025) [DA]

R.I.P. *Alla Akhundova* (1939-2026), Azerbaijani Russian-language poet who scripted the children's fantasy film *Tam, na nevedomykh dorozh-kakh* (*Along Unknown Paths*, 1982), died on 17 September aged 86. [AM]

• *Angry Anderson* (1947-2026), Australian composer – soundtrack credits include *The Time Guardian* (1987) – and actor in *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* (1985), died on 21 September aged 79. • *Philippa Baker* (1932-2026), Australian actress in *Young Einstein* (1988), died on 26 September.

• *Mark Boley* (1964-2026), US make-up and effects artist for *Mortal Kombat* (1995), *Blade II* (2002), *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (2005), *I Am Number Four* (2011) and others, died on 16 September aged 62. • *John Bruce* (1938-2026), UK tv drama director whose genre credits include *Miss Morison's Ghosts* (1981), has died aged 88. [AIP] • *Joshua Cassara* (1980-2026), US comics artist who began drawing for *Ansible*

2016 and was best known for his work on *X-Force*, *X-Men* and *Deadpool/Wolverine*, died on 22 September aged 46. [SH] ● **Stephanie Cole** (1941-2026), UK *Coronation Street* actress whose genre credits include *The Return of the Antelope* (1986-1988), died on 18 September aged 84. ● **Natalia Danilova** (1955-2026), Russian actress in *Pokhisheniye charodeya* (*Abduction of the Wizard*, 1981) and the Wells-based *Chelovek-nevidimka* (*The Invisible Man*, 1985) died on 8 September aged 70. [AM] ● **Elliot Graham** (1976-2026), US film editor for *Superman Returns* (2006), *Captain Marvel* (2019) and *No Time to Die* (2021), died on 19 September aged 50. [AIP] ● **Gerrit Graham** (1949-2026), US actor in *Beware! The Blob* (1972), *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974), *Strange New World* (1975), *Demon Seed* (1977), *Chud II* (1989), *Martians Go Home* (1989), *Child's Play 2* (1990), *Now and Again* (1999-2000) and many others, died on 15 September aged 76. [SG] ● **Thore Hansen** (1942-2026), Norwegian author of 50+ books and illustrator of many more, a major voice in Norwegian sf/fantasy, died on 8 September aged 84. [CP/J-HH] ● **Richard Harrison** (1936-2026), US actor in *Kronos* (1957), the Verne-based *Master of the World* (1961), *Perseus Against the Monsters* (1963), other sword-and-sandal epics and many ninja films, died on 18 September aged 90. ● **Dennis Haskins** (1950-2026), US actor in *The Boy with the X-Ray Eyes* (1999), *Up on the Wooftop* (2015), *Shark Shock* (2017) and genre tv series, died on 27 September aged 75. ● **Olu Jacobs** (1942-2026), Nigerian actor in *The Third Eye* (1983-1985), *Baby: Secret of the Lost Legend* (1985), *Rapture* (1998), *Beauty and the Beast 1/2/3* (2008) and others, died on 16 September aged 84. [SG] ● **Carla Jeffery** (1993-2026), US actress in the Disney *Zombies* (2018 plus sequels and spinoffs including 2024 animated series), died on 1 September aged 33. [AIP] ● **Chris Langham** (1949-2026), UK scriptwriter for *The Muppet Show* (48 episodes 1978-1981 plus sequels and spinoffs) who played the title role in the documentary *John Wyndham: The Invisible Man of Science Fiction* (2005), died on 24 June aged 77. [AIP] ● **Georgina Lightning** (1963-2026), US actress in *DreamKeeper* (2003) and *Department of Paranormal Affairs* (2024), died on 5 September aged 63. [SG] ● **Mike McFarland** (1970-2026), US voice actor in English dubs of the *Dragon Ball/Dragon Ball Z* franchise, *Attack on Titan* (2013-2023) and others, died on 10 September aged 56. [AIP] ● **Bob Mackie** (1939-2026), US costume designer whose genre credits include *Brigadoon* (1966), *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1966), *The Star Wars Holiday Special* (1978), *Mrs. Santa Claus* (1996) and *Terror Toons 2* (2007), died on 14 September aged 87. [LP] ● **Kathy Mar** (1951-2026), noted US filker who won many Pegasus awards, entered the Filk Hall of Fame in 1996 and was a 2008 Worldcon GoH, died on 23 September aged 75. [F3] ● **Peter May** (1951-2026), Scots author and screenwriter best known for crime fiction, whose sf novel was *A Winter Grave* (2023), died on 25 September aged 74. ● **Victor Miller** (1940-2026), US screenwriter for *Friday the 13th* (1980) plus a great many sequels and spinoffs, died on 31 August aged 86. [AIP] ● **Richard O'Sullivan** (1944-2026), UK actor in *The Haunted House of Horror* (1969) and *The Giftie* (1988), died on 4 September aged 82. [SG] ● **Dai Owen**, Welsh artist and CND worker who in consultation with Alan Garner drew the 2010 map of Alderley Edge as in *The Weirdestone of Brisingamen*, died on 8 August aged 82. ● **Zlatko Petkov**, Bulgarian fan, collector and bibliographer who was a founder of the sfbg.us site and co-wrote a massive 2022 bibliography of Bulgarian sf/fantasy, died on 5 August. [AM] ● **Dmitry Shulkin** (1941-2026), Russian stunt coordinator for the Strugatsky-based *Gadkie lebedi* (*Ugly Swans*, 2006) died on 20 September. [AM] ● **Jeremy Thomas** (1949-2026), UK producer of *The Shout* (1978), *Naked Lunch* (1991), *Crash* (1996), *Tideland* (2005), *High-Rise* (2015) and others, died on 11 September aged 77. [AIP] ● **Valentin Tublin** (1934-2026), Russian author of a YA fantasy based on Greek myths, *Zolotyeye yabloki Gesperid* (*Golden Apples of the Hesperides*, 1976), died on 6 September aged 92. [AM] ● **Marina Vlady** (1938-2026), French actress in *Sleeping Beauty* (1954, in the title role), *The Bermuda Triangle* (1978), *The Thief of Baghdad* (1978), *The Games of Countess Dolingen* (1981) and *The Vampire* (1991), died on 24 September aged 88. [SJ] ● **David Worth** (1940-2026), US director of *Warrior of the Lost World* (1983), *Shark Attack 2* (2000 plus sequel) and *House at the End of the Drive* (2014) – plus numerous genre credits as cinematographer – died on 7 September aged 86. [SJ] ● **June Wyndham-Davies** (1929-2026), UK tv producer/director whose credits include *Christmas Spirits* (1981) and *Shades of Darkness* (1986), died on 9 September aged 97. [AIP]

The Weakest Link. *Bradley Walsh*: ‘The Wisconsin Glaciation was a period on which planet?’ Contestant: ‘Venus.’ (ITV, *The Chase*) [RJ]

Who Goes There? A news headline to chill the blood: ‘BBC Boss Matt Brittin Says He Has Seen A Doctor Who Episode Entirely Generated By AI: “It Was Pretty Good”’. (Deadline, 29 September) The Director General is quoted as adding, somewhat ambiguously, ‘I mean it’s not

going to replace humans but we’ll come on to that.’ But the headline was apparently misleading: ‘it was a spec *Who* script someone had used AI to animate/illustrate, so not “AI generated” at all.’ (Bluesky, 30 September)

Random Fandom. *LAcon V* issued an apology for accessibility problems, in particular an access ramp for the main stage – ‘a third-party vendor issue’ – that was a nightmare for users of mobility scooters. See www.lacon.org/2026/09/11/accessibility/. LAcon also released the convention Souvenir Book in PDF form via its website Member Portal, at first downloadable by both physical and virtual attending members *but not* by supporting/WSFS-only members, who according to the WSFS constitution also have the right to receive all publications. Excluding the latter was reportedly a deliberate decision, causing much concern; but after internal committee discussion the Souvenir Book is now generally available, even to non-members, at portal.lacon.org. Hooray!

The Dead Past. *90 Years Ago*: ‘H.G. Wells wrote his own obituary in *The Listener* of July 15th wherein he reckons to die in Paddington Infirmary at the age of 97, having been assaulted by Fascists in ’38 and interned in a Communist Concentration Camp during the short Dictatorship of ’42.’ (John Carnell, *Novae Terrae* 7, October 1936) ● *30 Years Ago*: ‘Harlan Ellison’s hot new publication is his 1960s *Star Trek* script *The City on the Edge of Forever*, with a “blistering” 25,000-word introduction describing how the version screened in 1967 was “eviscerated” in such a “fatally inept” fashion that it won a Hugo.’ (*Ansible* 111, October 1996) ● *10 Years Ago*, class distinctions were made: ‘Say what you like about nurses, garbage collectors, or mechanics, it’s obvious that they were to vanish in a puff of smoke, the results would be immediate and catastrophic. A world without teachers or dock-workers would soon be in trouble, and even one without science fiction writers or ska musicians would clearly be a lesser place. (Economics.com)’ (*Ansible* 351, October 2016)

Without Comment. ‘The Great Polden Hills Mangelwurzel Day will see vegetables judged in categories like “Biggest Girth”, “Best Looking Legs”, and looking “Most like Donald Trump”.’ (BBC, 18 September)

Fanfundery. *TAFF Library*. Rob Hansen explores another byway of fan history in *OMPA: The Rise and Fall of the First UK APA*, currently with the proofreader and coming soonish to taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?all&chron.

Technology Corner. *Lord Curryfin*. Well, then, what say you to the electric telegraph, by which you converse at the distance of thousands of miles? Even across the Atlantic, as no doubt we shall yet do. [...] *The Rev. Dr. Opimian*. I have no wish to expedite communication with the Americans. If we could apply the power of electrical repulsion to preserve us from ever hearing anything more of them, I should think that we had for once derived a benefit from science.’ (Thomas Love Peacock, *Gryll Grange*, 1861) Who will commission James D. Nicoll to review this book?

Magazine Scene. David Riley’s *Beyond* (3 issues 1995) will relaunch as a print quarterly in January 2027. (Parallel Universe, 1 August) [PS-P]

Anthropic Copyright Settlement. The Authors Guild has heard from all too many pirated writers whose books have been out of print for decades and whose rights effectively reverted long ago, but whose publishers are still claiming half the payout and – the Guild argues – should withdraw that claim. The Guild also reckons that publishers who failed to register US copyright when legally required to – thus making their authors ineligible for Anthropic money – should issue compensation payments. (*Publishers Weekly*, 28 September) [AIP] Some hope!

Thog’s Masterclass. *Eyeballs in the Sky*. ‘Rosalie’s blue eyes moved, rolling along her top eyelid, not coming to rest on Cassandra, but slipping back to look outside.’ (Derek Künsken, *The Quantum Dawn*, 2026) [AR] ‘Lucifer’s eyes grew even more serious, glow intensifying as they surveyed each other.’ (Jaysea Lynn, *Hell’s Belles 1: For Whom the Belle Tolls*, 2025) [BB] ‘I tore my eyes off her and dashed them against the card again.’ (Paul Flehr [Frederik Pohl], ‘Seven Deadly Virtues’, August 1958 *Galaxy*) [CM] ‘It was what she did with her eyes, raking her victim with them as if they were hot coals, or whips.’ (Michael Perkins, *Evil Companions*, 1968) [BA] ● *Fatal Attraction*. ‘He followed her like a sheep going off to lose his testicles.’ (*Ibid*) [BA] ● *Hazards of Space: The Cruel Gravity of Venus*. When after a crew mutiny the jets of the ‘Earth-Mars space liner’ stop firing: ‘In the dining room the Venusian pull was evident. The ship was tilted sideways, hurling crockery, tables and people to one side with earthquake effectiveness. Mirrors splintered, women screamed, the pianist died at the grand piano as it slammed into his stomach.’ (Thornton Ayre [John Russell Fearn], ‘The Golden Amazon’, July 1939 *Fantastic Adventures*)

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