



Ansible® 456 July 2025

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: **Ulrika O'Brien**, 'Moon Girl'. Available for SAE, a terrible torch of tin, or a tower of turbulent toast.

A Hundred Hollow Horses

Pat Barker, the noted UK novelist whose work includes historical fantasies set in the Trojan War era, was made a Dame for services to literature in the UK King's Birthday honours.

Nelly Ben Hayoun-Stépanian, film-maker and 'designer of experiences', has a mission to show that 'space travel is queer'. According to her *Guardian* profile, 'In Ben Hayoun-Stépanian's mind, space exploration forces us to reimagine everything. "It's queer. It's decolonial. It's pluralistic."' (*Guardian*, 29 May) [PE] Someone should tell Elon Musk.

John Clute's sf collection is now open to the public, by appointment, as the Clute Science Fiction Library in Telluride, Colorado. He donated the 13,700+ volumes in 2017 to the Telluride Institute co-founded by John and Pamela Lifton-Zoline. See tellurideinstitute.org/clute-science-fiction-library for further details. (*Telluride News*, 21 June)

Gary David Crew and **Garth Nix** received Medals of the Order of Australia for services to literature in the King's Birthday honours. [L]

Yoko Shimomura is the first videogame music composer (*Street Fighter*, *Final Fantasy*, *Super Mario* and over 70 more) to receive a BAFTA fellowship, the academy's highest honour. (*Guardian*, 20 June)

Keith Stuart on recent videogame retellings of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, the latter as *Grand Theft Hamlet*: 'I think if Shakespeare was magically reincarnated in the first quarter of the 21st century, there is only one genre he'd be working in: the open-world role-playing adventure. Here, he'd have the time and space to weave complex narratives involving dozens of characters and diverse environments. King Lear's moors would become a desolate explorable wasteland, much like the post-apocalyptic hellscapes of *Fallout* or *Death Stranding*.' (*Guardian*, 28 May) [PE] Critics brought up on *Doom* have long felt the plays' action could be streamlined by a judicious sprinkling of chainsaws, plasma guns and rocket launchers.

Concrement

5 Jul • **Comic Con Aintree**, Aintree Racecourse. 10am-5pm. Adult tickets £12; other rates at www.ljeventsentertainment.com.

5-6 Jul • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, Glasgow and online. Free. See www.tolkienociety.org/events/. Postponed to 18-19 October.

5-6 Jul • **The Town That Never Was** (steampunk), Blists Hill, Telford. See www.ministryofsteampunk.com. Tickets/passes from £27 (child £15.50) for one day: www.ironbridge.org.uk/plan/ticket-prices/.

13 Jul • **BFS/BSFA Social**, Waterstones, Piccadilly, London. 2:30-5pm. Free tickets available at tinyurl.com/mvt4sek6.

SOLD OUT 18-20 Jul • **Fantasy Forest** (cosplay), Sudely Castle, Cheltenham. No tickets but a waiting list sign-up option at fantasyforest.co.uk.

19 Jul • **Small Press Day**, various events throughout the UK and Ireland, and online. See smallpressday.co.uk.

25-28 Jul • **Continuum** (RPG), Cranfield University CMDC. £60 reg; day pass £25; under-17s free. See continuumconvention.co.uk.

2-3 Aug • **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See 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/swanseacomiccon.

22 Nov • **TFN: Mini-Con** (*Transformers*), Reading University. £40; under-18s £25; under-16s free. See tfnation.com/mini-con-reading-25.

16-18 & 23-25 Jan 2026 • **Horror-on-Sea** (film festival), Park Inn Radisson Palace Hotel, Church Rd, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 2AL. Tickets awaited on 31 October at the-white-bus-limited.sumupstore.com.

11 Apr 2026 • **Bedford Who Charity Con** (*Doctor Who*), King's House, Ampthill Road, Bedford, MK42 9AZ. 10am-5:30pm. Tickets £49.50; under-14s £20. See bedfordwhocharitycon.co.uk.

9-10 May 2026 • **Lawless** (UK comics), Hilton Doubletree, Bristol. Ticket sales should open 'in early 2026' at lawlesscomiccon.co.uk.

29-31 May 2026 • **UK Games Expo**, Birmingham NEC. Ticket sales awaited at www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk.

20 Jun 2026 • **Stars of Time** (comics), Steam Museum, Swindon. Tickets awaited at www.starsoftime.co.uk/swindon.

27-31 Aug 2026 • **LAcon V**, Anaheim Convention Center and hotels

in Anaheim, California. Now \$230 full adult membership. For the other rates, all unchanged, see www.lacon.org.

Rumblings. *Seattle Worldcon 2025*: Hugo voting closes on 23 July. Virtual WSFS business meetings will be held on 4 July, 13 July, 19 July and 25 July. See July links at news.ansible.uk for the vast (146pp) agenda document plus a 15pp guide to using the virtual meeting platform. • 2027 *Worldcon* site selection voting has opened, and will close on 15 August; the Montréal in 2027 bid is running unopposed.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Confabulate Us. A mention on a fan mailing list that Ted White was once headlined in the *Washington Daily News* (1957) as the owner of '10,000 COMICS!' led to a web search and a bibliographical surprise from Google's now-integrated AI: 'The title "The Boy with 10,000 Comic Books" refers to the character Teddy White, a character created by author Ted White. This character is featured in Ted White's science fiction novel, also titled "The Boy with 10,000 Comic Books". The story centers around a young man who finds solace and escape in his vast collection of comic books.' [LB] Now it only remains for Ted to write it.

Awards. *ActuSF Prize for Uchronia* (France, alternate history): the *Grandville* series by Bryan Talbot won the 2025 graphic novel category. • *Arthur C. Clarke: Annie Bot* by Caragh M. O'Brien writing as Sierra Greer. • *Infinity* (SFWA posthumous Grand Master award): Frank Herbert. • *Locus*. SF NOVEL *The Man Who Saw Seconds* by Alexander Boldizar. FANTASY NOVEL *A Sorceress Comes to Call* by T. Kingfisher. HORROR NOVEL *Bury Your Gays* by Chuck Tingle. YA NOVEL *Moonstorm* by Yoon Ha Lee. FIRST NOVEL *Someone You Can Build a Nest In* by John Wiswell. NOVELLA *What Feasts at Night* by T. Kingfisher. NOVELETTE 'By Salt, By Sea, By Light of Stars' by Premee Mohamed (6/24 *Strange Horizons*). SHORT 'Why Don't We Just Kill the Kid in the Omelas Hole' by Isabel J. Kim (2/24 *Clarkesworld*). ANTHOLOGY *The Black Girl Survives in This One* ed. Desiree S. Evans & Saracia J. Fennell. COLLECTION *Lake of Souls* by Ann Leckie. MAGAZINE *Clarkesworld*. PUBLISHER Subterranean Press. EDITOR Neil Clarke. ARTIST Charles Vess. NONFICTION *Afro-Centered Futurisms in Our Speculative Fiction* ed. Eugen Bacon. ILLUSTRATED/ART BOOK *The Last Unicorn* by Peter S. Beagle illus. Tom Kidd. SPECIAL Ignite Awards. • *Nebulas*. NOVEL *Someone You Can Build a Nest In* by John Wiswell. NOVELLA *The Dragonfly Gambit* by A.D. Sui. NOVELETTE 'Negative Scholarship on the Fifth State of Being' by A.W. Prihandita (11/24 *Clarkesworld*). SHORT STORY 'Why Don't We Just Kill the Kid in the Omelas Hole' by Isabel J. Kim (2/24 *Clarkesworld*). CHILDREN'S/YA *The Young Necromancer's Guide to Ghosts* by Vanessa Ricci-Thode. GAME WRITING *A Death in Hyperspace*. DRAMATIC *Dune: Part Two*. • *Stokers* (horror, novel categories only). MAIN *The Haunting of Velkwood* by Gwendolyn Kiste. DEBUT *The Eyes Are the Best Part* by Monika Kim. CHILDREN'S (tie) *There's Something Sinister in Center Field* by Robert P. Ottone; *The Creeping of Dogwood House* by Eden Royce. YA *Clown in a Cornfield 3: The Church of Frendo* by Adam Cesare. Full list at locusmag.com/2025/06/2024-stoker-awards-winners.

Publishers & Sinners. Transworld and Fairylot revealed the name of their new collaborative fantasy imprint, suitably evocative of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn: Wayward TxF. (*Bookseller*, 23 June) [SF²C]

R.I.P. Aki Aleong (1934-2025), Trinidadian/US actor in *V* (1984-1985), *Dragonflight* (1990), *Superhero Movie* (2008) and others, died on 22 June aged 90. • Michael Allaby (1933-2025), UK author – and actor in *Doctor Who* (1964) – who co-wrote *The Greening of Mars* (1984) with James Lovelock, died on 4 May aged 91. [SHS] • Jack Betts (1929-2025), US actor in *Batman Forever* (1995), *Spider-Man* (2002) and others, died on 19 June aged 96. [SJ] • Marilyn 'Mattie' Brahen, US author whose work includes the novel *Baby Boy Blue* (2010) and the collection *Seastruck and Other Fantasies* (2019), died on 9 June. She was also known as a convention book-dealer with her husband Darrell Schweitzer, to whom all sympathy. [DS] • Roland Curram (1932-2025), UK actor in *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1975, as Coleridge), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1980), *Artemis 81* (1981) and others, died on 1 June aged 92. • Rebekah Del Rio (1967-2025), US singer/songwriter and actress whose credits include *Mulholland Drive* (2001), *Southland Tales* (2006) and *The Winter Soldier*

(2017), died on 23 June aged 57. [SJ] ● **Frances Doel** (1942-2025), UK producer/screenwriter who worked for many years and made significant contributions (often uncredited) at Roger Corman's New World Pictures, died on 26 May aged 83. Film credits include *Deathsport* (1978), *Starship Troopers* (1997) and *Dinocroc* (2004). [AIP] ● **Taina Elg** (1930-2025), Finnish-US actress in *Hercules in New York* (1970), died on 15 May aged 95. [JH] ● **Barbara Ferris** (1939-2025), UK actress in the Wyndham-based *Children of the Damned* (1964), died on 23 May aged 85. [AIP] ● **Frederick Forsyth** (1938-2025), best-selling UK thriller author who published one supernatural fantasy and a few near-future novels with sf elements, died on 9 June aged 86. ● **Leanne Frahm** (1946-2025), Ditmar-winning Australian author of short fiction since 1980 – some stories collected as *Borderline* (1996) – died on 10 June aged 79. [JHW] One of the people I was very glad to meet on my only visit to Australia. ● **Allan Freeman** (1937-2025), US film marketing executive whose promotional campaigns included *The Stepford Wives*, *The Omen*, *Star Wars*, *Superman*, *Monty Python's Life of Brian* and *The Shining*, died on 6 June aged 88. [AIP] ● **José Luis Galicia** (1930-2025), Spanish set decorator/production designer whose nearly 200 films include *Satanik* (1968), *The Night of the Devils* (1972) and *Count Dracula's Great Love* (1973), died on 5 June aged 95. [SJ] ● **Lynn Hamilton** (1930-2025), US actress in *Brother John* (1971), *Baby's Breath* (2003) and genre tv series, died on 19 June aged 95. [SJ] ● **Prentis Hancock** (1942-2025), UK actor in various *Doctor Who* series (1970-1978), *Space: 1999* (1975-1976), *The Monster Club* (1981), *Jekyll & Hyde* (1990) and others, died on 30 May aged 83. [SJ] ● **Rick Hurst** (1946-2025), US actor in *The Cat from Outer Space* (1978), *Earth Girls Are Easy* (1988), *Venomous* (2001) and *Return of the Killer Shrews* (2012) died on 26 June aged 79. [SJ] ● **Clifton Jones** (1937-2025), Jamaican actor in *Space: 1999* (23 episodes 1975-1976), *1990* (6 episodes 1997) and *Water-ship Down* (1978), died on 4 June aged 87. [SJ] ● **Jonathan Joss** (1965-2025), US actor in *The Forever Purge* (2021) and *Abduction of the Fourth Kind* (2022) – plus voice work in sf videogames – was shot and killed by a Texas neighbour on 1 June; he was 59. [LP] ● **Pik Sen Lim** (1944-2025), Malaysian-born UK actress in *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* (2019) and genre tv series including *Doctor Who* (1971) and *Vampire Academy* (2022), died on 9 June aged 80. [SJ] ● **Barry B. Longyear** (1942-2025), popular US author who began to publish sf in 1978, won the 1980 John W. Campbell award as best new writer, and received Hugo, Locus and Nebula awards for his 1979 novella 'Enemy Mine', died on 6 May aged 82. [RJS] That best-known story was filmed as *Enemy Mine* (1985), which he deprecated. ● **Valerie Mahaffey** (1953-2025), US actress in *The Lost Souls* (1993, based on Kipling's 'They'), *Witch Hunt* (1994) and *The Witch Files* (2018), died on 30 May aged 71. [SJ] ● **Beans Morocco** (Dan Barrows, 1934-2025), US actor in *Where Have All the People Gone?* (1974), *Once Bitten* (1985), *Wes Craven's New Nightmare* (1994) and others, died on 29 May aged 90. [SG] ● **Susan Beth Pfeffer** (1948-2025), US author of many children's/YA books including the bestselling post-disaster sf sequence opening with *Life as We Knew It* (2006), died on 23 June aged 77. [AIP] ● **Chris Robinson** (1938-2025), US actor in *Beast from Haunted Cave* (1959, as the Beast), *Sweet, Sweet Rachel* (1971) and others, died on 9 June aged 86. [SJ] ● **Gailard Sartain** (1943-2025), US tv horror host and actor in *Wishman* (1992), *Sandman* (1993), *Existo* (1999) and the Laurel & Hardy tribute *For Love or Mummy* (1999, as Hardy), died on 19 June aged 81. [SJ] ● **Lalo Schiffrin** (1932-2025), Argentinian composer whose many music credits include *Mission: Impossible* (1966-1973), *The President's Analyst* (1967), *The Cat From Outer Space* (1978), *Return from Witch Mountain* (1978), *The Amityville Horror* (1979 plus sequel) and *Back to the Planet of the Apes* (1980), died on 26 June aged 93. [LP] ● **David Schleinkofer** (1951-2025), US artist who produced many sf book covers from 1976 to the 1990s, died on 20 April aged 74. [L] ● **Jim Shooter** (1951-2025), US comics writer, penciller, editor and publisher who first worked for DC in the mid-1960s, was the successful though often controversial editor-in-chief at Marvel 1978-1987, and went on to found other comics imprints, died on 30 June aged 73. [LP/MR] ● **Loretta Swit** (1937-2025), US M*A*S*H actress in *It's a Bird... It's a Plane... It's Superman!* (1975 tv film), *Whoops Apocalypse* (1987) and *Forest Warrior* (1996), died on 30 May aged 87. [LP] ● **Valentina Talyzina** (1935-2025), Russian actress who starred in the fantasy film *Koltza Almanzora* (*Almanzor's Rings*, 1977), died on 21 June aged 90. [AM] ● **Rodger Turner** (1947-2025), Canadian fan, dealer and webmaster who was a founder in 1997 of SFsite.com, co-owner of the House of Speculative Fiction bookshop in Ottawa and long-time World Fantasy Convention board member/awards administrator, died on 16 June aged 77. [CDL/AIP] ● **Renée Victor** (1938-2025), US actress in *The Prophecy 2* (1998), *Paranormal Activity: The Marked Ones* (2014), *Snowpiercer* (2020-2021) and *Green Ghost and the Masters of the Stone* (2021), died on 30 May aged 86. [SJ] ● **G. Peter Winnington** (1944-2025), noted

Peake scholar who wrote *Vast Alchemies: The Life and Work of Mervyn Peake* (2000) and other studies, reportedly died in April aged 80. [DAA] ● **Harris Yulin** (1937-2025), US actor in *Ghostbusters II* (1989) and others, died on 10 June aged 87. [MR] ● **Manuel Zarzo** (1932-2025), Spanish actor in *Encounters of the Deep* (1979), *Nightmare City* (1980) and others, died on 17 June aged 93. [SJ]

The Weakest Link. Cinema Dept – *Roman Kemp*: 'The flag of Uzbekistan contains 12 what?' *Contestant*: 'Monkeys.' (BBC1, *The Finish Line*) [PE] ● *Hollow Horses Dept* – *Kemp*: 'In which war was the mythical hero Hector killed?' *Contestant*: 'The First World War.' (*Ibid*) [PE]

Court Circular. Chris Barkley's legal quest to prise his 2023 Hugo Award from the sinister clutches of that year's Hugo administrator Dave McCarty led to a court encounter in Chicago on 26 June, in which the judge told McCarty to deliver the trophy (or fragments thereof, the bases having reportedly been damaged in transit from China) to Barkley before a further 'continuance' hearing on 22 September. With characteristic charm, McCarty informed the court that 'he would neither receive or accept any emails, text messages, phone calls or any other form of communication regarding the issue'. [F770] Keep watching the skies!

The Dead Past. 20 Years Ago, Brian Aldiss told us about his OBE: 'I was greatly chuffed by the award "for services to Literature" – a euphemism in this case for SF.... But when chatting to Her Majesty, I was disappointed to find she had only got as far as John Wyndham and the triffids. "What do you like about it?" I asked. She replied, "Oh, it's such a cosy catastrophe." I blushed.' (*Ansible* 216, July 2005) ● 30 Years Ago, your editor saw the shape of things to come: 'I finally got to be a virtual convention guest ... one of several at Cascon in Slovakia, via Internet Relay Chat [1 July]. Great hospitality, though vodka does not e-mail well.' (*Ansible* 96, July 1995) ● 50 Years Ago, Brian Aldiss offered yet another innovation: 'How about a new definition of science fiction? It's about things going wrong.' (*Vector* 69, Summer 1975) ● 60 Years Ago: 'Recent *Sunday Times* colour supplement featured article called "Tarzan 66" and quoted Sy Weintraub, owner of all Tarzan film and TV rights, as saying "Let's get a James Bond approach to Tarzan." The article did not mention Burroughs, but quoted Weintraub as adding "In fact, he's really English, the son of a lord, but that's all forgotten now."' (*Skyrack* 81, 10 July 1965)

Big Numbers. Frank Frazetta's artwork for a 1954 *Famous Funnies* Buck Rogers cover sold for over \$1 million. (Heritage Auctions, 27 June)

Random Fandom. Andy Hooper became Official Editor of SAPS (fandom's second oldest surviving APA) this year, and says: 'members are now permitted to send contributions electronically for printing by the OE'.

The Critical Heritage. 'From Garfield to Simon's Cat, Krazy Kat to Bagpuss and everything in between, there is a long line of iconic cartoon cats.' (London Cartoon Museum 'Cats in Cartoons' blurb) Bagpuss?

Footfall. A UK parliamentary committee was presumably unsurprised by a report that there's still no international protocol for deciding how to tackle the hypothetical future threat of a devastating asteroid impact on Earth. Apparently 'aligning governments behind any space mission needed to deflect a looming orb would be difficult, even if technically possible.' It was all so much easier in the sf films. (*The Register*, 27 June)

Fanfundery. *Fan Fund Books*: the latest Ansible Editions ebook at the TAFF site is Rob Hansen's *Approaching Xero: The SF Prehistory of Comics Fandom*. See taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Xero. Both this and the updated *TAFF Trip Report Anthology* (see ae.ansible.uk?x=TAFFanth) are also trade paperbacks with all proceeds going to TAFF. This year's Corflu fanthology – *Dancing to Architecture* edited by Doug Bell, in which many fans write about music – is a free download at taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Dancing. ● What next? In the tradition of his 1957 and 1965 Worldcon tomes, Rob Hansen is now working on 1979: *The Third UK Worldcon*. I was there!

Magazine Scene. The Australian *Andromeda Spaceways Magazine* will cease regular quarterly publication with issue 100, expected for the third quarter of 2025. 'The hull of the ship will be coasting for a while afterwards, and we'll see what shape that takes ...' [PS-P]

Thog's Masterclass. *Streaming Service*. '... his dry matter-of-fact-male-ness seeming to stream out on the wings of the storm.' (Paul J. McAuley, *Four Hundred Billion Stars*, 1988) [BA] ● *Dept of Elusive Pulchritude*. 'Miss Deary was the most beautiful woman on Earth, in fact in the entire Empire. There was something unearthly about Miss Deary's beauty, something more than of Earth. It was hard to say, even looking at her, exactly what she looked like.' (Martin Siegel, *Agent of Entropy*, 1969) [AR]

Ansible © 456 © David Langford, 2025. Thanks to Brian Ameringen, Douglas A. Anderson, Lenny Bailes, *File 770*, Charles de Lint, Steve Green, Jerry House, Steve Jones, *Locus*, Andrew Meshavkin, Lawrence Person, Andrew I. Porter, *Private Eye*, Adam Roberts, Marcus Rowland, Darrell Schweitzer, *SF Concatenation*, Steven H Silver, Phil Stephensen-Payne, Robert J. Sawyer, Jean Hollis Weber, and as always our Hero Distributors: Durdles Books (Birmingham SF Group), SCIS/Prophecy, and Alan Stewart (Australia). 1 July 2025