

# ansible



Ansible® 458 September 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: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE or any tool kit that includes a crabwick, a fawlpin and a gult.

**SEATTLE WORLDCON NEWS.** The seattlein2025.org demographics page listed 7739 members as of 9 August, including 5594 adults, 1170 WSFS-only (supporting) and 663 virtual. At-the-door membership counts are still awaited. ● To no one's surprise, the unopposed bid for Montréal was voted in as the official 2027 Worldcon with 605 out of 682 valid ballots (16 write-in, 16 no preference, 45 'none of the above'). More in the events list below. ● The traditional con newsletter, this year innovatively titled *Daily 'Zine*, can be read at seattlein2025.org/program-and-events/daily-zine/. The regular 'Overheard' department includes such random quotes as 'Are you feeling introverted or extroverted about your death?'

**Hugo and Related Awards.** NOVEL *The Tainted Cup* by Robert Jackson Bennett. NOVELLA *The Tusks of Extinction* by Ray Nayler. NOVELLETTE 'The Four Sisters Overlooking the Sea' by Naomi Kritzer (*Asimov's* 9/24). SHORT 'Stitched to Skin Like Family Is' by Nghi Vo (*Uncanny* 3/24). SERIES *Between Earth and Sky* by Rebecca Roanhorse. GRAPHIC STAR TREK: *Lower Decks: Warp Your Own Way* by Ryan North and Chris Fenoglio. RELATED WORK *Speculative Whiteness: Science Fiction and the Alt-Right* by Jordan S. Carroll. DRAMATIC, LONG. *Dune: Part Two*. DRAMATIC, SHORT. *Star Trek: Lower Decks: 'The New Next Generation'*. GAME *Caves of Qud*. EDITOR, SHORT FORM Neil Clarke. EDITOR, LONG FORM Diana M. Pho. PROFESSIONAL ARTIST Alyssa Winans. SEMIPROZINE *Uncanny Magazine*. FANZINE *Black Nerd Problems*. FANCAST *Eight Days of Diana Wynne Jones*. FAN WRITER Abigail Nussbaum. FAN ARTIST Sara Felix. POEM 'A War of Words' by Marie Brennan (*Strange Horizons* 9/24) LODESTAR *Sheine Lende* by Darcie Little Badger. ASTOUNDING AWARD Moniquill Blackgoose.

**Other Awards.** *Big Heart*: Frank and Millie Kalisz. ● *First Fandom*: HALL OF FAME Vincent Docherty, Damon Knight, Kate Wilhelm. SAM MOSKOWITZ ARCHIVE AWARD Rob Hansen. ● *Sidewise* (alt-history): LONG *Sargassa* by Sophie Burnham. SHORT 'A Brother's Oath' by L. Briar (in *A Bit of Luck: Alternate Histories in Honor of Eric Flint* ed. Lisa Mangum).

**Future Worldcons.** The Czech Republic launched a bid with flyers promising a traditional Thursday to Sunday Worldcon in Prague, followed by organized tourism Monday-Wednesday, and a special train to Brno on Thursday for a book fair plus a comic convention running from Friday to Sunday. 'Date: end of October, year 20??' [TC] 2050? 2099?

## The Reboantic Norns

**Michael Dirda** made a nice point on the Readercon 'Originals and Responses' panel: 'If you read Tolkien and then Old English literature, Old English literature seems like primitive Tolkien. If you read Old English literature and then Tolkien, Tolkien seems like just watered-down Old English literature. The order in which you read is important.' [BD]

**Julia Donaldson** of *The Gruffalo* fame is the first author to pass 50 million UK sales 'since accurate records began', according to NielsenIQ BookScan. J.K. Rowling languishes with a mere 47.8 million; trailing in third-place ignominy is the mighty James Patterson fiction factory at 31.6 million. (*The Bookseller*, 26 August) [SF²C] BookScan was launched in 2001, which is presumably when 'accurate records began'. Tough luck on Dickens and Tolkiens whose big sales are lost in the mists of prehistory.

**Greer Gilman** on that same 'Originals and Responses' panel: 'There are books where the writer is going, "Take that, C.S. Lewis!"' [BD]

**Paula Guran**, after long delay occasioned by 'the fluctuating status and future of both series', announced the end of her annual anthologies *The Year's Best Fantasy* (3 volumes) and *The Year's Best Dark Fantasy and Horror* (15 volumes, renumbered 2020 so the latest is 'Volume 5'). [ED]

**Robert Rankin** knows the way of the world: 'Yep, seven months ago I officially opened Brentford's first and only bookshop, it has now officially gone out of business. That makes the third one I have opened that has closed within a year. Do NOT ask me to open your bookshop. Any arms dealers who would like me to open a new branch for them, I shall be more than pleased.' (Facebook, 14 August)

**Robert Silverberg** has the mature experience to handle a mere Worldcon panel audience: 'I'm Robert Silverberg and if I have to say more than that then one of us is at the wrong convention.' [DZ]

**Martha Wells** on ART, the formidable spaceship AI in her Murderbot series: 'It's like Skynet, but with an academic job and a family.' [DZ]

## Conversazione

4-7 Sep ● **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), St Anne's, Oxford. £130 reg; other rates at [www.tolkienociety.org/events/oxonmoot-2025](http://www.tolkienociety.org/events/oxonmoot-2025).

6 Sep ● **Ruby-Con** (games), St Paul's Church, Long Lane, London. Free, with charity fundraising sales. See [tinyurl.com/rubycon25](http://tinyurl.com/rubycon25).

13 Sep - 4 Jan ● **Designing Terry Pratchett's Discworld** (Paul Kidby exhibition, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum. 10am-4pm Tuesday-Saturday; 10am-3pm Sunday. See [www.paulkidby.com/events](http://www.paulkidby.com/events).

13-14 Sep ● **Middle-earth Festival**, Norton Lane, Wythall B47 6HA (new field venue). See [middleearthfestival.wordpress.com](http://middleearthfestival.wordpress.com).

20 Sep ● **Edge-Lit 11**, QUAD Centre, Market Place, Derby. £35 reg plus £1 booking fee. See [www.derbyquad.co.uk/events/edgelit11/](http://www.derbyquad.co.uk/events/edgelit11/).

26 Sep - 4 Oct ● **Festival of Words**, East Riding Libraries, Yorkshire. SF/fantasy talks (£7 each) and workshop (£10) in Beverley Library on 28 September: see [www.eastridinglibraries.co.uk/festival-of-words/](http://www.eastridinglibraries.co.uk/festival-of-words/).

26-28 Sep ● **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Bowness-on-Windermere. £25 (£15 concessions) at [www.comicartfestival.com](http://www.comicartfestival.com).

27 Sep ● **Innsmouth Literary Festival**, Kings House Centre, 245 Ampthill Rd, Bedford MK42 9AZ. 10am-5pm. £30 reg. Further details at [innsmouthgold.com/innsmouth-literary-festival](http://innsmouthgold.com/innsmouth-literary-festival).

27-28 Sep ● **Nor-Con** (media), Norfolk Showground Arena. Adult tickets £17 or £21 early entry; other rates at [www.nor-con.co.uk](http://www.nor-con.co.uk).

1 Oct - 2 Nov ● **London Month of the Dead**, various venues and events, a few of great interest: see [londonmonthofthedead.com](http://londonmonthofthedead.com).

9-12 Oct ● **Grimmfest** (film), Odeon Great Northern, Manchester. Weekend pass (not Thursday) £96.54; other options at [grimmfest.com](http://grimmfest.com).

12-13 Oct ● **Octocon**, Maldron Hotel, Tallaght, Dublin. €40 reg; concessions €25; under-22s €10; under-13s free; supp/online €20. In-person convention on Saturday; online only on Sunday. See [octocon.com](http://octocon.com).

17-20 Oct ● **Irish Discworld Convention**, Cork International Hotel, Cork. €95 reg; concessions €60; under-18s €20; under-7s free. Further details at [idwcon.org](http://idwcon.org).

8 Nov ● **Douglas Adams** celebration, Royal Geographical Society, London. 7:30pm. Tickets from £49.95. See [tinyurl.com/25ble5tz](http://tinyurl.com/25ble5tz).

2-6 Sep 2027 ● **Montréal Worldcon 2027**, Montréal, Canada. GoH announced in PR0: Jo Walton, Yves Menard, Chris Barkley; since added, Jeph Jacques. All rates CAD: adults \$250 (inc \$70 WSFS membership), under-31s \$200 (ditto), under-18s \$90, under-13s \$45, accompanied under-8s free. Rates may rise in December 2025. See [montreal2027.ca](http://montreal2027.ca).

**Rumblings.** *Eurocon 2027* is Fórum Fantástico, Lisbon, Portugal. 2028: a bid from Croatia. 2030: BSFA Eastercon/Eurocon bid planned.

## Infinitely Improbable

**Words, Words, Words.** Among the 6,000+ words to be added to the *Cambridge Dictionary* this year is 'skibidi', which has apparently entered the language as a nonsense term that might mean 'cool' or 'bad' or 'this is a placeholder for something actually funny' – introduced and made famous by Alexey Gerasimov's surreal YouTube animated sf sequence *Skibidi Toilet*, in which singing human-headed toilets battle camera-, speaker- and tv-headed humanoids in an ever-escalating arms race. (BBC, 18 August) *The Plain People of Fandom*: Too much information!

**Awards.** *Aldiss* (speculative fiction worldbuilding) inaugural shortlist: *Dreadful* by Caitilin Rozakis, *Kavithri* by Aman J. Bedi, *Saints of Storm and Sorrow* by Gabriella Buba, *Shigidi and the Brass Head of Obalufon* by Wole Talabi, *The Dance of Shadows* by Rogba Payne, *When Among Crows* by Veronica Roth. One might have expected a few worldbuilding examples in the Aldiss/Helliconia sf vein, but all the above are fantasy. ● *Gaelic Literature*: the four 2025 fiction finalists include *Draoidh Druidhteach Oz* by L. Frank Baum (trans Zachary Wallace), *A' Hobat* by J.R.R. Tolkien (trans Moray Watson) and *Inneal na Time* by H.G. Wells (ditto). [SF²C] ● *Mythopoeic*: ADULT *The Melancholy of Untold History* by Minsoo Kang. YA *The Isles of the Gods* duology by Amie Kaufman. CHILDREN'S *Island of Whispers* by Frances Hardinge illus Emily Gravett. SCHOLARSHIP/INKLINGS *The Collected Poems of J.R.R. Tolkien* ed. Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond. SCHOLARSHIP/OTHER *Urban Fantasy: Exploring Modernity*

through *Magic* by Stefan Ekman. ● **YA Book Prize** (UK/Ireland, set up by *The Bookseller* in 2014): the dystopian *Songlight* by Moira Buffini. [SF<sup>2</sup>C]

**As Others Learn From Us.** ‘In the nineties, DNA was the stuff of science fiction – I first heard about it in *Jurassic Park* – but here it was something real, with real-life consequences.’ (Jennifer Wilson, *The New Yorker*, 25 August 2025) [PL]

**R.I.P.** **Loni Anderson** (1945-2025), US actress in *The Magnificent Magical Magnet of Santa Mesa* (1977), *All Dogs Go to Heaven* (1989), *Munchie* (1992) and genre tv series, died on 3 August aged 79. [LP] ● **Chris Bidmead** (1941-2025), UK *Doctor Who* script editor (1980-1981) and writer (14 episodes 1981-1984, plus later audiobooks and podcasts), died on 6 August aged 84. ● **Tor Åge Bringsværd** (1939-2025), pioneer and grand old man of Norwegian sf – active since the 1960s, winner of many awards, and responsible with his friend Jon Bing for introducing sf to a wide audience in Norway – died on 4 August aged 85. [CS] ● **Ray Brooks** (1939-2025), UK actor in *Daleks' Invasion Earth 2150 A.D.* (1966) and tv series including *Jackanory* (30 episodes 1969-1978) and *Mr Benn* (14 episodes 1971-2005), died on 9 August aged 86. [CM] ● **Joe Caroff** (1921-2025), US graphic designer who created the 007/pistol logo for *Dr No* (1962) – used with modifications for many more James Bond franchise films – died on 17 August aged 103. [AIP] ● **Franklin Domínguez** (1931-2025), Dominican actor in *Rat Man* (1988), *Raiders of the Magic Ivory* (1988) and *Killer Crocodile* (1989), died on 26 August aged 94. [SJ] ● **Norman Eshley** (1945-2025), UK actor in the Dennis Wheatley-based *The Lost Continent* (1968) and genre tv series, died on 2 August aged 80. [SJ] ● **Marc Estrin** (1939-2025), US author whose sf novel is the Kafka quasi-sequel *Insect Dreams: The Half Life of Gregor Samsa* (2002), died on 10 August aged 86. ● **David Gullen**, South Africa-born UK author (active from 1995) and Milford stalwart whose first sf novel was *Shopocalypse* (2013), died on 14 August. [LW] ● **Ann Harris**, US publisher's editor who worked on William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist* (1971) while at Harper & Row, died on 1 June aged 99. [AIP] ● **Greg Iles** (1960-2025), US author whose thrillers included the supernatural *Sleep No More* (2002) and the sf *The Footprints of God* (2003, aka *Dark Matter*), died on 15 August aged 65. [TM] ● **Tom Jeffers**, Toronto fan and filker who entered the Filk Hall of Fame in 2012, died on 6 August. [RR] ● **David Ketchum** (1928-2025), US screenwriter and actor in *Get Smart* (13 episodes 1966-1967 as Agent 13), *Love at First Bite* (1979) and others, died on 10 August aged 97. ● **Ivan Krasko** (1930-2025), Russian actor whose credits include *Gibel 31-go otdela* (1985, based on Per Wahlöo's sf *Murder on the 31st Floor*) and *The Hobbitt* (1985 tv), died on 9 August aged 94. [AM] ● **Floyd Levine** (1932-2025), US actor in *Cellar Dweller* (1987), *Repossessed* (1990), *Pterodactyl Woman from Beverly Hills* (1996), *Babylon 5: Thirdspace* (1988) and other, died on 24 August aged 93. [SJ] ● **Guy H. Lillian III** (1949-2025), long-time US fan who received US Southern Fandom's Rebel Award in 1984, won DUFF in 2003 with his wife Rose-Marie, and whose many fanzines included *Challenger* (1993-2022, a multiple Hugo nominee), *Spartacus* (2013-2024) and *The Zine Dump* (2006-2024), died on 23 August aged 76. [JG] ● **Enrico Lucherini** (1932-2025), Italian ‘press officer to the stars’ who promoted many genre films from *Medea* (1969) and *Queens of Evil* (1970) until well into the new century, died on 28 July aged 92. [SJ] ● **Stanley McGeagh** (1936-2025), Northern Irish actor in *The Land That Time Forgot* (1974) and genre tv series including *Doctor Who* and *UFO*, died on 5 August aged 88. ● **Kelley Mack** (1992-2025), US actress in *The Walking Dead* (2018-2019) and *Broadcast Signal Intrusion* (2012), died on 2 August aged 33. [AIP] ● **Terry A. Murray** (1953-2025), US collector and bibliographer whose *Science Fiction Magazine Story Index, 1926-1995* (1999) covers more than 30,000 stories, died on 7 August aged 72. [L] ● **Frank Price** (1930-2025), US tv/film executive who as 1970s head of Universal TV developed or supervised *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *The Bionic Woman*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Battlestar Galactica* and others, died on 25 August aged 95. [SJ] ● **Lorna Raver** (1943-2025), US actress in *Drag Me to Hell* (2009), *Sinbad: The Fifth Voyage* (2014) and tv series – often playing judges as in *Star Trek: Voyager* (2001) – died on 12 May aged 81. [KF] ● **Tristan Rogers** (1946-2025), Australian/US actor in *The Rescuers Down Under* (1990), *Soulmates* (1992), *Raven* (2010) and genre tv series, died on 15 August aged 79. [SJ] ● **Ronnie Rondell Jr.** (1937-2025), US actor/stuntman whose many credits include *They Live* (1988), *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996) and *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003), died on 12 August aged 88. [SJ] ● **Eduardo Serra** (1943-2025), Portuguese cinematographer whose genre films include *Unbreakable* (2000) and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2010, 2011), died on 19 August aged 81. [AIP] ● **Michael Sloan** (1946-2025), US writer, story editor and producer whose credits include *Battlestar Galactica* (1978-1979), *Mission Galactica: The Cylon Attack* (1979), *Starfleet* (1980-1981), *Return of the Six Million Dollar Man* and *the Bionic Woman* (1987) and *Bionic Showdown* (1989),

died on 13 August aged 78. [SJ] ● **Leonid Smirnov** (1960-2025), Russian author of 18 sf novels and an award-winning 7-volume bibliography of Russian sf (2006-2021), died on 28 August. [AM] ● **Terence Stamp** (1938-2025), UK actor in *The Mind of Mr. Soames* (1970), *Superman* (1978 + sequel), *The Thief of Baghdad* (1978), *Alien Nation* (1988), *The Phantom Menace* (1999), *Smallville* (23 episodes 2003-2011), *The Adjustment Bureau* (2011) and many others, died on 17 August aged 87. [SG] ● **James Whale** (1951-2025), UK broadcaster and actor in *Cold and Dark* (2005), died on 4 August aged 74. [SG] ● **Robert Wilson** (1941-2025), US stage director and playwright whose fantastic/surreal credits include three operatic collaborations with Philip Glass – *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), *White Raven* (1998) and *Monsters of Grace* (1998) – died on 31 July aged 83. [LP/LH]

**The Weakest Link.** Q: ‘The solar wind is a phenomenon of particles leaving which celestial body?’ A: ‘The Moon.’ (ITV, *Tipping Point*) [PE]

**Random Fandom.** *The BSFA Survey* was notable not so much for its unsurprising results as for low turn-out: ‘There were 63 responses from a membership of around 929, meaning roughly 7% of BSFA members took part.’ (29 August). ● **Bill Mallardi**, who has no computer or net access, confides a tale of woe: a 2024 basement flood destroyed the archive of his and Bill Bowers’ classic fanzine *Double:Bill* (1962-1969), excepting only the *DB Symposium*. Can anyone help with replacements? 476 East Huston Street, Barberton, OH 44203-3050, USA. ● **Mike Richards**, well known in the UK filk community, received an MBE in the recent Birthday Honours – not for musical achievement but for ‘services to National Security’. [RR]

**The Dead Past.** *80 Years Ago:* ‘I am given to understand that at a recent meeting of the BIS [British Interplanetary Society] it was suggested that recent developments made such a body hardly necessary, as inter-planetary flight will soon be here in any case.’ (D.R. Smith, *British Fantasy Society Bulletin* 23, September 1945) ● *60 Years Ago* at the second London Worldcon’s robot panel: ‘Quickly defining that a robot is but a programmed computer, [Poul] Anderson said that computers could be best employed for work not fit for human beings to do, such as garbage collection, working with radioactive materials or in subscription departments of magazines.’ (*Skyrack* 83, September 1965) ● *40 Years Ago*, an early rumour: ‘Arthur C. Clarke has been persuaded to put up a regular £1000 to fund an annual Clarke Award for best British SF novel. Twiddly details are under discussion at the Science Policy and SF Foundations (e.g. popular vote or Select Judging Panel? One SFF person incautiously cried, “Our own Booker Prize at last!”).’ (*Ansible* 44, September 1985)

**Fanfundery.** *TransAtlantic Fan Fund.* Mikołaj Kowalewski safely reached the Seattle Worldcon (huge sighs of relief from worried administrators), had a busy time there, and this month plans to attend Dragoncon (Atlanta) and Albacon (Albany NY). More details in the latest newsletter *Taffluorescence* 9 at taff.org.uk. NA administrator Sarah Gulde reports \$1,848 raised at the Worldcon Fan Funds Auction: \$500 for DUFF and the rest for the currently much more active TAFF. ● *TAFF Ebooks.* Expected soon: Jerry Kaufman’s 1983 DUFF trip report *Kaufman Coast to Coast*.

**Outraged Letters.** *Sam Long* on the A457 ‘Weakest Link’ selection: “Lochness” is the quality of being monstrous, just as “eliotness” is the quality of being untouchable.’ (Email, 2 August)

**Magazine Scene.** *F&SF*, which published only two issues in 2024, is now taking pre-orders (via product pages at the *Asimov’s* site) for Summer 2025 in printed and digital form, and promising quarterly publication. The accompanying cover image was pulled on suspicion of vile AI practices and replaced by ‘Coming Soon’; there’s now a different cover.

**Thog’s Masterclass.** *Bodeful Boding Dept.* ‘The air was surcharged with an invisible something which seemed to surround the house. Even that phlegmatic, nerve-proof group were not immune to the tuning in of the premonitory cross-currents.’ (Florence M. Pettee, *The Palgrave Mummy*, 1929) ● *Neat Tricks.* ‘He flexed his teeth together.’ (Logan Swanson [Richard Matheson], *Earthbound*, 1982) ● *Grape Expectations.* “Then know that it’s Chohlit who holds your life like a grape on the palm of his hand.” He brought his nose right next to Innowen’s, and glared. “Too bad I don’t like grapes,” he hissed.’ (Robin Wayne Bailey, *Shadowdance*, 1996) ● *Good News Dept.* ‘Suddenly there were signs in the oscilloscope screen of a promising vicissitude.’ (Nal Rafcam, *The Troglodytes*, 1961) ● *Humane Skyscraper Takedown.* ‘The atomic structural reaction of this shower of rays was harmful only to materials. Hence, persons working in and about the buildings were unaffected.’ (*Ibid*)

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