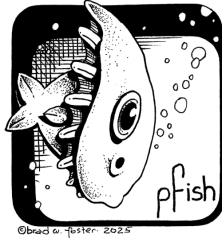


# ansible



## Ansible® 461 December 2025

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, hodmandods, Magimuck, flaked corns, or stercoraceous dungarees.

### When Things Get Out of Hand

**Joe Hill**, son of Stephen King, was one of three horror authors who withdrew from the British Library's 'Tales of the Weird' event on 1-2 November, in sympathy with BL workers on strike owing to 'poverty wages'. 'I have to eat a Thanksgiving dinner with Tabitha King and if I cross a picket line to sell a book, it's not going to be a good one.' V. Castro and Keith Rosson also pulled out. (*Guardian*, 31 October)

**N.K. Jemisin** is the latest author to be honoured by SFWA with the Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award. (SFWA, 16 November)

**R.F. Kuang** should set her sights higher, according to her husband: 'Yeah, sure, the Hugo is nice. But what about a Booker? I can see it for her.' (Bennett Eckert-Kuang, *The New Yorker*, 25 August) [MM]

**Jeanette Winterson's** *One Aladdin Two Lamps* puzzled reviewer Craig Brown: 'Some of the cultural references are laboriously spelled out, while others are left to fend for themselves. The reader, for example, is expected to have heard of Joni Mitchell and Paul Simon, but needs a bit of help with "fantasy writer Terry Pratchett", "poet Ted Hughes" and, best of all, "Irish poet WB Yeats".' (*Private Eye*, 28 November)

### Convally

5 Dec • **Tolkien Seminar Lecture**, Magdalen College, Oxford. 5pm. 'No registration is required.' See [tolkien50.web.ox.ac.uk](http://tolkien50.web.ox.ac.uk).

5-8 Dec • **Grimmfest Online** (film). Full pass £55.50 or tickets at £6.50 for each film. See [www.grimmfest.com/grimmfest-online](http://www.grimmfest.com/grimmfest-online).

11-13 Dec • **Talos SF Theatre Festival**, Bread & Roses Theatre, 68 Clapham Manor St, London. Thursday/Friday evening, all day Saturday. £12/performance; concessions £10. See [www.cyborphic.com/talos-2025](http://www.cyborphic.com/talos-2025).

12 Dec • **BSFA Xmas Social**, The Doric Arch pub, Euston. 7-9pm. See [www.bsfa.co.uk/event-6444410](http://www.bsfa.co.uk/event-6444410).

17 Dec • **London Xmas Meeting** (additional to First Thursdays), The Bishop's Finger, 9-10 West Smithfield, EC1A 9JR. All evening.

29 Dec - 1 Jan • **Steampunk New Year**, Belmont Hotel, Leicester. See [www.ministryofsteampunk.com/steampunknewyear2025](http://www.ministryofsteampunk.com/steampunknewyear2025).

30 Dec • **The Female Man** online discussion panel, 7pm. Details on Facebook event sign-up at [fb.me/e/3F0xoFwPh](https://fb.me/e/3F0xoFwPh).

16-18 & 23-25 Jan 2026 • **Horror-on-Sea** (film festival), Park Inn Radisson Palace Hotel, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 2AL. Tickets £80 for either weekend or £130 for both at [the-white-bus-limited.sumupstore.com](http://the-white-bus-limited.sumupstore.com).

5-7 Mar 2026 • **Frightfest** (film), Glasgow Film Theatre, Rose Street. Tickets and line-up awaited at [frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents/](http://frightfest.co.uk/filmsandevents/).

18-19 Apr 2026 • **For the Love of Horror**, BEC Arena, Manchester. Tickets at various rates from [www.fortheloveofhorroruk.com](http://www.fortheloveofhorroruk.com).

22-24 May 2026 • **MCM Comic Con**, London ExCel. Tickets from £97; day rates at [www.mcmcomiccon.com/london/en-us.html](http://www.mcmcomiccon.com/london/en-us.html).

23-24 May 2026 • **Steam Trains and Fairytales** (steampunk), Midland Railway Trust, Butterley. See [www.ministryofsteampunk.com](http://www.ministryofsteampunk.com).

24-27 Jul 2026 • **Continuum** (RPG), Cranfield University CMDC. Ticket sales expected 'early 2026' at [continuumconvention.co.uk](http://continuumconvention.co.uk).

26-27 Sep 2026 • **Norcon** (media), Norfolk Showground Arena. 9:30am-4pm. Tickets £43.25 (£34.25 for 10:30am entry); under-14s £27 (£23); family £132.50 (£106.25). See [www.nor-con.co.uk](http://www.nor-con.co.uk).

17 Oct 2026 • **PictCon2**, Salutation Hotel, 30-34 South St, Perth, Scotland. GoH Neil Williamson. £30 reg; £20 concessions, under-18s £11.55. Tickets available at [tinyurl.com/242ya33b](https://tinyurl.com/242ya33b).

24-25 Oct 2026 • **BristolCon**, Hilton DoubleTree Hotel, Bristol. GoH Cheryl Morgan, Trip Galey. Registration awaited at [www.bristolcon.org](http://www.bristolcon.org).

6-8 Nov 2026 • **Armadacon**, Future Inns, Plymouth. GoH Mike Collins, Andy Lane. £50 reg; £40 concessions. More at [www.armadacon.org](http://www.armadacon.org).

6-8 Nov 2026 • **Novacon 55**, Palace Hotel, Buxton. GoH Una McCormack. £55 reg; under-17s £12; under-13s free. More at [novacon.uk](http://novacon.uk).

26-29 Mar 2027 • **Unconfined** (Eastercon), Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. Now £105 reg, £70 concessions, £25 under-27s, £10 under-13s – as of 1 December. See [easterconglasgow.org](http://easterconglasgow.org).

21-25 Apr 2027 • **Dead by Dawn** (horror film festival), Filmhouse, Lothian Road, Edinburgh – returning after a long gap since 2019. Further

details and ticket sales to follow in late 2026 at [deadbydawn.co.uk](http://deadbydawn.co.uk).

11-13 Jun 2027 • **FunCon Two**, Palace Hotel, Buxton. £55 reg first 50 members; £65 next 40; £70 thereafter; £50 unwaged. See [funcon.lol](http://funcon.lol).

**Rumblings.** *LAcon V* (Worldcon 2026) will continue the convenient if not strictly constitutional practice of online WSFS business meetings. • *Montréal Worldcon 2027*: membership rates increases expected on 1 December 2025 have been deferred to January. • *Brisbane in 2028*: this Worldcon bid (Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, 27-31 July) is accepting AUD donations from \$20 and pre-memberships – not including WSFS – at \$50 (virtual), \$250 (full), \$125 (under-25s) or a \$550 'Best Mates' option. More at [brisbane28.org](http://brisbane28.org). • *Nuremberg in 2028* is a newly announced bid for a German Worldcon in July 2028 ('August is rainy'). • *Glasgow in 2034*, yet another Worldcon bid, has provisionally booked the SEC for 3-6 or 10-13 August and cites Glasgow's vibrant food culture.

### Infinitely Improbable

**The Uses of Literacy.** *New York Times* headline: 'Sex Had Become a Chore. Then They Started Reading Romantasy. / The wildly popular fiction genre allows readers to talk openly about yearning, sex and desire. And it's spilling over into their bedrooms.' (17 November) [AIP]

**Awards.** *Aldiss* (worldbuilding): inaugural presentation to *The Dance of Shadows* by Rogba Payne. • *British Fantasy*. ANTHOLOGY *Bury Your Gays* ed. Sofia Ajram. ARTIST Kelly Chong. AUDIO *Breaking the Glass Slipper*. COLLECTION *Elephants in Bloom* by Cecile Cristofari. ROBERT HOLDSTOCK (fantasy novel): *Masquerade* by O.O. Sangoyomi. AUGUST DERLETH (horror novel): *My Darling Dreadful Thing* by Johanna van Veen. INDEPENDENT PRESS Flame Tree Press. MAGAZINE / PERIODICAL *ParSec*. SYDNEY J. BOUNDS (newcomer): Frances White for *Voyage of the Damned*. NON-FICTION *Queer as Folklore* by Sacha Coward. NOVELLA *The Last to Drown* by Lorraine Wilson. SHORT 'Loneliness Universe' by Eugenia Triantafyllou (*Uncanny*). KARL EDWARD WAGNER (special): Rosemary 'Ro' Pardoe. • *Goldsmiths Prize* (£10,000 for a mould-breaking UK/Irish book): *We Live Here Now* by C.D. Rose. • *World Fantasy*. NOVEL *The Tainted Cup* by Robert Jackson Bennett. NOVELLA *Yoke of Stars* by R.B. Lemberg. SHORT 'Raptor' by Maura McHugh (in *Heartwood* below). ANTHOLOGY *Heartwood: A Mythago Wood Anthology* ed. Dan Coxon. COLLECTION *A Sunny Place for Shady People* by Mariana Enriquez, trans Megan McDowell. ARTIST Liv Rainey-Smith. SPECIAL – PROFESSIONAL *Mapping New Stars: A Sourcebook on Philippine Speculative Fiction* by Gabriela Lee, Anna Felicia Sanchez and Sydney Paige Guerrero. SPECIAL – NON-PROFESSIONAL Steve J. Shaw for *Black Shuck Books*.

**We Are Everywhere.** The Ansible Café, a science-fiction-themed coffee shop in Chengdu, China, opened on 28 October. [F770]

**R.I.P.** *Celeste Rita Baker* (1958-2025), New York-born Virgin Islands author active since 2010 whose genre collection is *Back, Belly, & Side: True Lies and False Tales* (2015) and who won a 2021 World Fantasy Award for best short story, died on 30 October aged 67. [L] • *Carl Ciarfalio* (1953-2025), US actor/stuntman in Roger Corman's unreleased *The Fantastic Four* (1994, as The Thing) and other genre tv/film productions, died on 19 November aged 72. • *Pauline Collins* (1940-2025), UK actress in *Doctor Who* (1967, 2006), *From Time to Time* (2009) and *The Last Dragonslayer* (2016), died on 6 November aged 85. [RH] • *Sergey Desnitsky* (1941-2025), Russian actor in the Lem-based *Doznaniye pilota Pirksa (Pilot Pirx's Inquest)*, 1979), died on 19 November aged 84. [AM] • *Jonathan Farwell* (1932-2025), US actor in *Frankenstein General Hospital* (1988), *C.H.U.D. II* (1989), the Poe-based *The Haunting of Morella* (1990) and *Watchers II* (1999), died on 22 November aged 93. [SJ] • *Leslie Fish*, US fan active since the 1960s in filk and early *Star Trek* fandom, who was honoured for her musical work with multiple Pegasus awards and entry to the Filk Hall of Fame in 1995, died on 29 November. [O] Many of her songs are collected as *The Incomplete Leslie Fish* (2001). • *Jill Freud* (1927-2025), UK actress who in WW2 was evacuated to Oxford and there stayed with C.S. Lewis, inspiring (he later told her) Lucy in the Narnia books, died on 24 November aged 98. [AIP] Her genre credits include narration and voice parts in *Torchy, the Battery Boy* (52 episodes 1959-1961). • *Sue Granquist* (1966-2025), US reviewer and blogger whose weekly horror-themed 'Goth Chick' column had appeared in *Black Gate*

since 2009, died on 18 November aged 59. [PS-P] ● **Adam Greenberg** (1937-2025), Polish-born US cinematographer for *The Terminator* (1984 plus sequel), *Ghost* (1990), *Alien Nation* (1998), *Sphere* (1998) and others, died on 30 October aged 88. [SJ] ● **Tchéky Karyo** (1953-2025), Turkish-born French actor in *The Core* (2003), *Utopia* (2003) and *Mermaid in Paris* (2020), died on 31 October aged 72. [AIP] ● **Udo Kier** (1944-2025), German actor in *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1973, as Baron von Frankenstein) plus several vampire films, and voice actor in genre games and animations, died on 23 November aged 81. ● **Sally Kirkland** (1941-2025), US actress whose many genre films include *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* (1981), *Brave New World* (1988), *The Visitor from Planet Omicron* (2013), *The Haunting of Hell Hole Mine* (2023) and *Woods Witch* (2023), died on 11 November aged 84. [SJ] ● **Pete Knifton** (1959-2025), UK sf/fantasy/comics artist who illustrated Games Workshop's *Blood Bowl*, Fighting Fantasy books, fantasy wargames, heavy metal record covers and Transformers comics, and appeared in *Omni* and *New Worlds*, died on 29 October aged 66. [MG] ● **Jorga Kotrbová** (1947-2025), Czech actress who played the title role in the fairytale film *Zlatovláska (Princess Goldilocks)*, 1973), died on 24 November aged 78. ● **Diane Ladd** (1935-2025), US actress in *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1983), *Carnosaur* (1992), *Kingdom Hospital* (2004), *Grave Secrets* (2013) and others, died on 3 November aged 89. [LP] ● **Gerry Lively**, UK cinematographer for *Waxwork* (1988 plus sequel), *Lobster Man from Mars* (1989), *Hellraiser III* (1992 plus sequel), *Children of the Corn III* (1995) and several more, died on 7 November. Director credits include two D&D films (2005, 2012) and *All Saints Eve* (2015). [SJ] ● **Dan McGrath** (1964-2025), Emmy-winning US screenwriter who scripted 50 episodes of *The Simpsons* (1992-1994) and was consulting producer for 20 more (1996-1998), died on 14 November aged 61. [AIP] ● **Tatsuya Nakadai** (1932-2025), noted Japanese actor in *Kwaidan* (1964), *Illusion of Blood* (1965), *The Face of Another* (1966), *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya* (2013) and others, died on 8 November aged 92. [SJ] ● **Alexander 'Sasha' Okun** (1949-2025), Israeli author writing in Russian whose YA novel *Placebo* (2007; reissued as *Uchenik aptekarya [Apothecary's Apprentice]*) is fantasy, died on 6 November. [AM] ● **Danny Seagren** (1943-2025), US actor in *Sesame Street* (1969-1986), *The Great Santa Claus Switch* (1970) and – as the first live-action Spider-Man – *The Electric Company* and *Spidey Super Stories* (both 1974-1977), died on 10 November aged 81. [SHS] ● **Ralph Senensky** (1923-2025), US director whose credits include *Star Trek* (7 episodes 1967-1968) and the fixup film *Treachery and Greed on the Planet of the Apes* (1980), died on 1 November aged 102. [SJ] ● **Jack Shepherd** (1940-2025), UK actor in *The Bed Sitting Room* (1969), *Count Dracula* (1977) and *The Golden Compass* (2007), died on 25 November aged 85. [SJ] ● **Ken Smookler** (1929-2025), long-time Canadian fan who was a founder of the Ontario SF Club in 1966 (and its first president) and worked on the successful Toronto in 1973 Worldcon bid, died on 11 November aged 96. [MM] ● **Tom Stoppard** (1937-2025), distinguished Czech-born UK playwright and Oscar winner, several of whose stage plays – notably *Jumpers* (1972) – had sf/fantasy elements, died on 29 November aged 88. Genre cinema script work included *Brazil* (1985), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989, uncredited but openly acknowledged by Spielberg) and *Revenge of the Sith* (2005, uncredited). [AW] ● **Lee Tamahori** (1950-2025), New Zealand director of *The Ray Bradbury Theatre* (3 episodes 1990-1992), *Die Another Day* (2002) and *Next* (2007), died on 7 November aged 75. [SJ] ● **John Russell Taylor** (1935-2025), UK author, critic and biographer of Alec Guinness, Alfred Hitchcock – with the authorized *Hitch: The Life and Times of Alfred Hitchcock* (1978) – Orson Welles and others, died on 18 August aged 90. [AIP] ● **Ron Tiner** (Ronald Charles Tickner, 1940-2025), UK artist whose work – besides much illustration and comics art – includes *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy & Science Fiction Art Techniques* (1996 with John Grant) and the text for *Mass: The Art of John Harris* (2000), died on 18 October aged 85. He was a contributing editor of *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (1997). [SH] ● **Jean-Louis Trudel** (1967-2025), Canadian author who wrote in French and published some 30 sf novels and collections (both adult and YA) beginning with *Aller simple pour Saguenal* (1994), died in November aged 58. [PDF] ● **Peter Watkins** (1935-2025), UK filmmaker who wrote and directed the unforgettable Oscar-winning docudrama *The War Game* (1966) – about a nuclear attack on Britain – died on 30 October aged 90. [AIP] His other genre films are *Privilege* (1966), *The Gladiators* (1968 aka *The Peace Game*) and *Punishment Park* (1971).

**The Weakest Link.** *Alexander Armstrong*: 'Fill in the movie title missing word. It's a mythical creature, and we've given you the first letter.' (*The Little M*\_\_\_\_, 2023) Contestant: 'Mouse.' (BBC1, *Pointless*) [PE/AR/FD] ● **Bradley Walsh**: 'The Rubens painting *The Wrath of Achilles* depicts a scene from which war?' Contestant: 'World War 2.' (ITV, *The Chase*) [PE]

**Auction Comics.** Here we go again: a 1939 first issue of *Superman*

found last year in a California attic sold through Heritage Auctions on 20 November for a record \$9.12 million. (ABC7news.com, 26 November) [LB] Meanwhile a mint copy of the first ever *Ansible* has been valued at 12p.

**Fanfundery.** *TransAtlantic Fan Fund*: the 2026 race will run from North America to the Berlin Eurocon (MetropolCon, 2-5 July). Nominations are now open and will close on 1 February; voting then runs to 7 April. Candidates must find nominators (3 NA, 2 Euro) and provide a platform of up to 101 words plus \$20 bond. More details at taff.org.uk. ● **TAFF Library.** Our latest release is Rob Hansen's *British SF Conventions Volume 4: 1958-1965*, exploring sf events between the first and second UK Worldcons chronicled in volumes 3 and 5. With much funny reportage from days when the guests included Kingsley Amis and Edmund Crispin, while Brian Aldiss and Michael Moorcock were not only striving pros but fans behaving badly. See taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=UKcons4.

**The Dead Past.** *20 Years Ago*, Terry Pratchett reported: 'On *Sunday AM* on BBC1 yesterday Andrew Marr was kind enough to describe me as "following in the tradition of Philip Pullman and JK Rowling." And a fine tradition it is.' (*Ansible* 221, December 2005) ● *30 Years Ago*, fandom was already everywhere: 'The *Financial Times* offered a cartoon feature showing the financial past, with a highwayman stockbroker threatening Victorian investors, and the future – symbolized by the Mekon threatening investors wearing propellor beanies.' (*Ansible* 101, December 1995)

**Outraged Letters.** *Jonathan Cowie* views with alarm: '*SF<sup>2</sup> Concatenation* news pages forthcoming books listing for Spring edition is being compiled right now. Well over a dozen imprints have sent in SF/F catalogues ... all well and good so far. But there has been a huge, HUGE, surge in fantasy, especially romantasy, and a bigger than usual decline in SF (SF always was junior to fantasy). One publisher, HarperCollins and also their Voyager imprint, has zero SF books in their catalogue!' [SF<sup>2</sup>C]

**Random Fandom.** *Dave Hicks* received the 2025 Rotsler Award for life achievement in fanzine art. [F770] ● *Novacon 54* in November had (according to *Read Me*) a generous hotel checkout time of 11pm. Alas, this was a typo for 11am – as the hotel had told the committee while, it sadly emerged, really meaning 10am. [SB] ● *Pavel A. Samsonov* explained the mysteries of the WSFS Business Meeting handbook *Robert's Rules of Order*. The First Rule goes: 'A Robert may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.' SF scholars can now deduce the Second and Third Rules. (Mastodon.social, 1 November)

**Zine Scene.** The Birmingham SF Group is feeling the pinch and has polled its members about the future of *Brum Group News* (est. 1971): should monthly printed newsletters cease, presumably to be replaced by a digital version, or go quarterly? (Email, 22 November) ● Space Cowboy Books launches a new print magazine, *Electronic Brain*, on 9 December. For this 'Cultural idiopathy' see bookshop.org/a/197/9781968958008.

**This Is The Future.** Campbell's, of soup fame, has fired an IT vice-president who was recorded saying he wouldn't touch his company's products 'because they contain "bioengineered meat" and he doesn't want to "eat chicken that came from a 3D printer".' (*The Register*, 28 November)

**The Law's Delays.** Chris Barkley withdrew his arduous Hugo recovery lawsuit against the 2023 administrator Dave McCarty (see A456, A459, A460), despite the latter's persistent failure to deliver any Hugos. The US Development Center for Chengdu Worldcon company has – as already happened in October, only to unhappen very shortly afterwards (A460) – revoked McCarty's administrator status and taken over the responsibility of getting the 2023 trophies to their winners. Phew. [F770]

**Chog's Masterclass.** *It's That Time of Year Again.* 'He's all snotted up in this like slurry in alveoli.' (China Miéville, *Kraken*, 2010) [BA] ● *But What About the Neutron Flow?* '...by reversing the drive polarity to open a quantum singularity in Bear's gravity well, then thread the aperture with negative energy so that they create a stable wormhole. After that, it's mainly a matter of expanding it to a usable size.' (Allen Steele, *Coyote Frontier*, 2005) [BA] ● *The Girl Had Guts.* 'Her jaw line began to flex and I admired the firm, strong chin she wore below the softness of her face. She had the sort of chin which goes with plenty of giblets.' (Michael Morgan, *Charity Begins at Homicide*, 1950) ● *Flowers of Rhetoric.* 'The next day dawned bright and clear on my empty stomach.' (Michael Avallone, *Meanwhile Back at the Morgue*, 1960) 'He was like a ghoulish blown out of shape through a briar thicket by a harsh wind.' (Tom Roan, *The Dragon Strikes Back*, 1936) 'I was as confused as a sterile rabbit ...' (Shell Scott, *Way of a Wanton*, 1956)

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