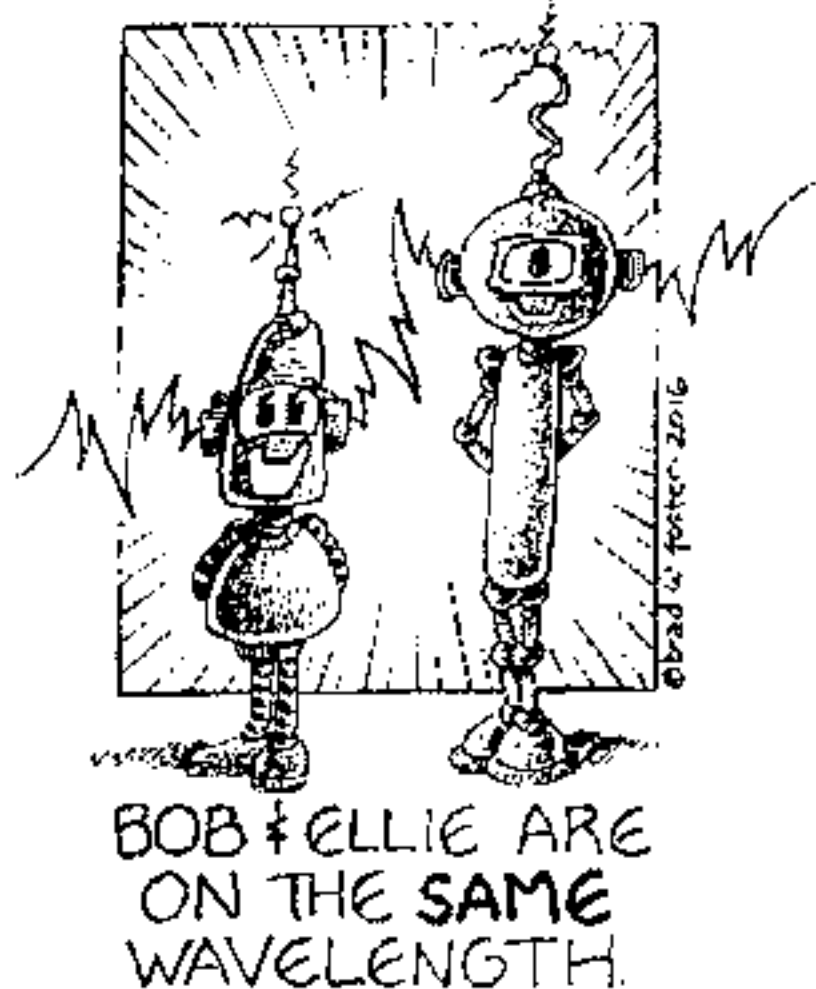


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From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Website news.ansible.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE or the which of the what-she-did.

All Over. *SFX* #274, published in late April, carried the magazine's 274th and last Langford column. To mark the occasion I've prepared an expanded ebook edition of *The SEX Column and Other Misprints* (2005), containing the first 128 instalments plus various other special features written for *SFX*. See, if you dare, ae.ansible.uk/?t=sexcolumn. Further columns are collected in *Starcombing* (2009, ebook coming soonish) and the final Götterdämmerung of *The Last SFX Visions* (in preparation).

The State of the Art

Iain Banks would surely have been thrilled by SpaceX's first successful tail-down landing of a booster rocket, on one of two robot ocean platforms named for his Culture starships: *Of Course I Still Love You*. The other recovery barge is called *Just Read the Instructions*. (8 April)

Kelly Link's collection *Get in Trouble: Stories* was one of the two finalists that didn't quite win the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Alistair McDowall, according to a BBC report, 'doesn't regard *X* [his play set on Pluto] as science fiction.' He explains: 'It's a play set in space but I don't think it's a space play. I think of it more as a psychological drama. Like a lot of science fiction, it's not about space or Pluto. It's about people on Earth.' However, 'I was very aware of its space setting and its genre tropes, so I tried to ground myself as much as possible and wrote it with pen and paper.' (BBC, 7 April) [KM]

David A. Riley withdrew from the HWA's Bram Stoker Awards anthology jury in the wake of considerable muttering about his past (long past, he insists) membership of the racist UK National Front.

Andy Weir was grilled by lady interviewer Michelle Z. Donahue about his astonishing choice of protagonist for a forthcoming sf novel: 'Your next book will have a woman as the central character. Given that "gender wars" in science fields is still a contentious topic, why did you decide to go with a lady lead?' (Smithsonian.com, 19 April) Oh dear.

Concettism

Until 24 Jul • **The Great British Graphic Novel** (exhibition), Cartoon Museum, London. £7; £5 unwaged. See www.cartoonmuseum.org.

7 May • **Stars of Time** (film/comics), Helicopter Museum, Locking Moor Rd, Weston-super-Mare, BS24 8PP. £12.50; £7.50 concessions and children. Bookings 01934 635227, www.starsofetime.co.uk or at door.

20-29 May • **Bradford Literature Festival**, with some sf, comics and graphic novel content. See www.bradfordliteraturefestival.co.uk.

25 May • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Justina Robson. Free.

27-30 May • **Supernova** sf film festival, Odeon Printworks, Manchester. Tickets £50. See grimmfest.com/grimmupnorth/.

28-29 May • **Satellite 5**, Marriott Hotel, Glasgow. £55 reg; 12-17s £20; 5-11s £5; under-5s £2. Advance booking closes 14 May; £60 or £30/day (12-17s £20 or £10/day) at the door. See satellite5.org.uk.

28 May • **Wonderlands**: The U.K. Graphic Novel Expo, Cityspace, Chester Road, Sunderland, SR1 3SD. See www.wonderlands.org.uk.

29 May • **Triffid Alley** plaque anniversary (see A333). 11:30am at drinking fountain, South End Green, London, NW3 2DG. David Ketterer will unveil his evidence that John Wyndham met George Orwell.

25 Jun • **BSFA/SF Foundation AGMs & mini convention**, Lecture Theatre 1, Blackett Laboratory, Imperial College, London, SW7 2AZ. GoH David A. Hardy, Liz Williams. 9:30am-4:30pm. Free; all welcome.

28-29 Jun • **Science for Fiction**, Imperial College, London. Science presentations for published authors only. Circa £30, inc lunch on 29th. Contact Dave Clements, d_dot_clements@imperial.ac.uk.

28-30 Jun • **SFRA/CRSF Conference**, Rendall Building, Liverpool University. £169.99 inc banquet. See tinyurl.com/hdryznq.

30 Jun - 29 Aug • **Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick** (exhibition), Somerset House, London. 10am-6pm. £12.50; £9.50 concessions.

23-25 Jul • **SF Foundation Masterclass in SF Criticism**, Royal Observatory, Greenwich. £200 reg; registered postgraduates £150. For fuller details see www.sf-foundation.org/masterclass.

12-15 Aug • **Continuum 2016** (RPG), John Foster Hall, Leicester

University. £35 reg; also day rates. See continuumconvention.co.uk.

25-29 Aug • **Frightfest** (horror film festival), VUE Shepherds Bush, London. Bookings: www.frightfest.co.uk or 020 8296 0555.

9-10 Sep • **Andromeda 2**, Moseley All Services Club, 91 Church Rd, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 9EA. £30 reg inc Fri evening buffet; £25 Sat only (£100 for five); 12-16s £10. See ac2.greatbritishhorror.com.

17-18 Sep • **Futurefest** (futuresology), Tobacco Dock, London. Now £80 reg; day tickets to be available in June. See futurefest.org.

4-6 Nov • **Armadacon 28**, Future Inns, Plymouth. £35 reg; day £20 Sat, £15 Sun (concessions £30, £15, £10). Contact Moor Cottage, Cardinham, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL30 4BR; or see www.armadacon.org.

5-6 Nov • **Comic Con** (comics), Leeds. As usual this is part of Thought Bubble, the Leeds Comic Art Festival, running 1-6 November. Ticket prices TBA. More at thoughtbubblefestival.com.

10-12 Feb 2017 • **Conrunner 4** (conrunning), Park Inn, Nottingham. £35 reg rising to £40 on 1 June. Contact 56 Jackmans Place, Letchworth Garden City, Herts, SG6 1RH. See www.conrunner.co.uk.

24-26 Feb 2017 • **Redemption '17** (multimedia), Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield. Now £65 reg (day £40); under-18s £25 (day £15); under-3s free; £15 supp. Contact 61 Chaucer Rd, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 8SP. See www.redemption-convention.org.uk.

14-17 Apr 2017 • **Innominate** (Eastercon), Hilton Metropole, NEC, Birmingham. Now £60 reg; £45 YA/unwaged; £20 child; £1 infants. Cheques to Eastercon 2017 c/o 3 Deveron Rd, Halfway, Sheffield, S20 8GE. Online registration and more at www.eastercon2017.uk.

Rumblings. *Irish Discworld Convention 5*: announced for 6-9 October 2017, with details to appear at 2017.idwcon.org on 25 May 2016.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Game of Thrones. 'The Seven Kingdoms are divided into nine regions, with a logic that will be familiar to all fans of fantasy, and even to a few normal people.' (*New Yorker*, 18 April) [LG] 'Research reveals that there have been 60 flashes of female breasts in the HBO show so far, but only a pair of penises'. (*Guardian*, 23 April) [AIP]

Awards. *Arthur C. Clarke* shortlist: Becky Chambers, *The Long Way to a Small Angry Planet*; Dave Hutchinson, *Europe at Midnight*; Nnedi Okorafor, *The Book of Phoenix*; Iain Pears, *Arcadia*; J.P. Smythe, *Way Down Dark*; Adrian Tchaikovsky, *Children of Time*. • *Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award* for life achievement in children's literature: Meg Rosoff, best known for her YA future-war novel *How I Live Now* (2004). [AE] • *Hugo Shortlist* (novels): Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Mercy*; Jim Butcher, *The Cinder Spires: The Aeronaut's Windlass*; N.K. Jemisin, *The Fifth Season*; Neal Stephenson, *Seveneves*; Naomi Novik, *Uprooted*. For the full list see midamericon2.org/home/hugo-awards-and-wsfs/. • *Prometheus* (libertarian) shortlist: Pierce Brown, *Golden Son*; Ramez Naam, *Apex*; Neal Stephenson, *Seveneves*; Jo Walton, *The Just City*; Gene Wolfe, *A Borrowed Man*. • *Retro Hugo Shortlist* for 1940 work (novels): E.E. Smith, **Gray Lensman*; T.H. White, *The Ill-Made Knight*; Karin Boye, *Kallosain*; Jack Williamson, **The Reign of Wizardry*; A.E. van Vogt, **Slan* (*magazine appearances). Again, for the full list of all categories see the MidAmeriCon II link above. • *Robert A. Heinlein Award* (US National Space Society): Jerry Pournelle. [F770] • *Tiptree Award* (sf/f gender exploration) winners: Eugene Fischer, 'The New Mother' (*Asimov's* 4/2015); Pat Schmatz, *Lizard Radio*.

Hugo Aftermath. Several categories were swept by 'Rabid Puppies' slate-voting; as in 2015, No Award is likely to be a popular choice. But besides political axe-grinding and self-promotion for the Arch-Rabid's publishing venture Castalia House, this year's RP slate includes 'human shield' selections that could have reached the final ballot unaided. Novella examples are *Penric's Demon* by Lois McMaster Bujold and *Slow Bullets* by Alastair Reynolds, both authors having asked in vain to be removed from any slate; likewise, Neil Gaiman's and J.H. Williams III's *Sandman: Overture* (Graphic Novel) and Mike Glycer's *File 770* (Fan Writer, Fanzine) hardly needed Puppy assistance. Of course Rabids will claim victory whether such finalists win ('har har, our slate worked!'),

don't win, or finish below No Award ('har har, we have manipulated you into denying this worthy thing a Hugo!'). Better not to be manipulated and to vote on actual merit. • Tom Mays withdrew his 'The Commuter' after learning that all the other Short Story finalists were also from the Rabid slate: 'Rather than eat a shit sandwich, I choose to get up from the table.' (Improbableauthor.com, 26 April) • The 'E Pluribus Hugo' nominations counting algorithm, specifically designed to reduce the power of Hugo bloc-voting, needs WSFS Business Meeting ratification at MidAmeriCon II this year in order to take effect in 2017. • The *Guardian* coverage of this Hugo shortlist provoked all too many online comments, perhaps the most cogently argued being 'Is it too late to nominate my favourite author, Spacey McSpaceface?' (26 April) [PB]

In Typo Veritas. 'George R.R. Martin has been given an honorary dungaree from Texas A&M University.' (*SF² Concatenation*, Summer)

R.I.P. *Arthur Anderson* (1922-2016), US actor whose genre credits include *Gnomes* (1980 voice), *Zelig* (1983) and *Courage the Cowardly Dog* (2002 voice) but who is best remembered for 29 years as Lucky the Leprechaun in US Lucky Charms cereal ads, died on 9 April; he was 93. [MMW] • *Erik Bauersfeld* (1922-2016), US actor who voiced Admiral Ackbar in *Return of the Jedi* (1983) and *The Force Awakens* (2015), died on 3 April aged 93; another voice credit was *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* (2001). [AW] • *Adrian Berry* (1937-2016)—Viscount Camrose since 2001—UK science journalist and spaceflight advocate whose books included the pop-science *The Next Ten Thousand Years* (1974) and *The Iron Sun: Crossing the Universe through Black Holes* (1977) plus the sf novel *Koyama's Diamond* (1982), died on 18 April; he was 78. [DP] • *Jill Calvert*, formerly Jill Moorcock (née Riches), died on 3 April from kidney failure; she was 63. Mike Moorcock writes: 'She illustrated a number of my books including covers for *An Alien Heat* and *Gloriana* and interiors for *My Experiences in the Third World War*, *Legends from the End of Time* and *The Condition of Muzak*. She later worked with Robert Calvert in various sf orientated stage productions.' • *Rod Daniel* (1942-2016), US director and producer whose films include *Teen Wolf* (1985), *Like Father Like Son* (1987) and *Things That Go Bump* (1997), died on 16 April aged 74. [PDF] • *Mike Docherty*, Scots comics artist who drew various Conan the Barbarian storylines for Marvel, plus the graphic novel *Conan: The Horn of Azoth* (1990, written by Roy Thomas), died on 19 January. [PDF] • *Ed Dravecky III* (1968-2016), well-known US convention runner who co-founded FenCon (2004) and WhoFest (2013), died on 23 April at the 2016 WhoFest. [F770] • *Gallieno Ferri* (1929-2016), Italian artist who from 1961 drew the fantastically Western superhero comic *Zagor* (scripted by Sergio Bonelli), died on 2 April aged 87. [PDF] • *Peggy Fortnum* (1919-2016), UK children's book illustrator who first and definitively drew Paddington Bear for the famed children's stories by Michael Bond, died on 28 March; she was 96. [MMW] • *Lars Gustafsson* (1936-2016), major Swedish author, poet and academic who used fantastic themes in novels and published both essays on sf and short sf stories—notably in *The Strange Beast from the North and other Science Fiction Tales* (1999)—died on 3 April; he was 79. [J-HH] • *Guy Hamilton* (1922-2016), UK director of the James Bond films *Goldfinger* (1964), *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971), *Live and Let Die* (1973) and *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1974), died on 20 April; he was 93. PDF • *Peter Janson-Smith* (1922-2016), UK literary agent who represented Ian Fleming and (for *A Clockwork Orange*) Anthony Burgess, died on 15 April aged 93. [AIP] • *Philip Edward Kaldon*, US physicist, academic and author of several genre stories beginning with 'The Gravediggers' (2004 *CrossTIME Anthology III*), died on 20 April. [PDF] • *Scott Nimerfro*, US film/tv producer and writer whose credits include *Tales from the Crypt* (1993-1995), *Perversions of Science* (1997), *X-Men* (2000), *Pushing Daisies* (2007-2009), *The Gates* (2010) and *Once upon a Time* (2014-2016), died on 18 April. [PDF] • *Madeleine Sherwood* (1922-2016), US actress whose genre credits include *The Flying Nun* (1967-1970 tv), *The Changeling* (1980) and *The Electric Grandmother* (1982), died on 23 April aged 93. [PDF] • *Gareth Thomas* (1945-2016), Welsh actor who played Blake in *Blake's 7* (1978-1981), died on 13 April aged 71. Other genre credits include *Star Maidens* (1976), *Children of the Stones* (1977), *Knights of God* (1987), *Merlin* (1998) and *Torchwood* (2006). [O] • *Kit West* (1936-2016), UK special effects expert who worked on *First Men in the Moon* (1964), *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981, for which he shared an Oscar), *Return of the Jedi* (1983), *Dune* (1984), *Universal Soldier* (1992) and many more, died on 16 April. [PDF]

As Others See Us. Gemma Chan of *C4's Humans* on the series' appeal: 'I think someone called it sci-fi for non sci-fi fans ... It was more thoughtful.' (*Radio Times*, 30 April) [SG] • 'To call *The X-Files* "science

fiction" is to degrade it and to elevate Sci-fi to a standard it doesn't deserve.' (Christopher Loring Knowles, *Secret Sun*, August 2015) [LH]

Court Circular. The \$800,000 defamation suit filed by America Star Books (formerly the infamous PublishAmerica) against Victoria Strauss and Writer Beware, on the basis of WB blog posts about ASB/PA exploitation of naive authors, was settled out of court on condition that WB seeks no recovery of legal fees. (Writer Beware, 23 March)

Opportunity Knocks. 'We at ITV are making a brand new studio based entertainment show to be hosted by Stephen Mulhern and broadcast on Saturday nights on ITV1. We're on the hunt for amazing people with unique skills and talents to take on a challenge with the chance to win a cash prize! Skills can be as serious or as daft as you like but the show promises to be fun, exciting and at all times nail biting! / I was wondering if you knew any guys that have such an in-depth knowledge of comic books/movies or superheroes that they could feel confident taking on a challenge. Maybe they'd be confident answering questions on Batman or being able to name the comic from seeing a small picture or piece of text? Maybe you collect figures or memorabilia, all of these things could make for a great challenge!' [MH]

SF Hall of Fame. This year's choices will be decided by popular vote from shortlists of ten creators—Douglas Adams, Jorge Luis Borges, Neil Gaiman, Aldous Huxley, Stephen King, Stan Lee, Terry Pratchett, Nichelle Nichols, J.K. Rowling and Lana & Lilly Wachowski jointly—and ten creations, for which see empmuseum.org/vote. Deadline: 11 May.

The Weakest Alien Link. *Host:* 'In this film, John Hurt had to get something off his chest.' *Contestant:* 'What is *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*?' (*Jeopardy*, 13 April) [AIP]

Random Fandom. *Linda Bushyager's* 1974-1978 fannish newszine *Karass* has been placed online at fanac.org, as images rather than searchable text: fanac.org/fanzines/Karass/. • *Dragon Con* announced its very own Dragon Awards in many categories, with free online voting from anywhere in the world (what could possibly go wrong?). Several pundits were quick to announce the imminent death of the Hugos. • *H.P. Lovecraft* is on the Retro Hugo ballot as Best Fan Writer of 1940 despite having died in 1937. 'That is not dead which can eternal lie ...'

Outraged Letters. *Liz Counihan* is sad: 'Visited Forbidden Planet (Shaftesbury Ave) last week to (attempt to) buy some sf mags. They've never heard of *Asimov's* and were surprised to find they did stock *F&SF* which they had never heard of either. I saw *Locus*. Nil else. Haven't been there for several years but they used to stock *Interzone* and even dear departed *Scheherazade* as well as the American magazines. Sad!'

The Dead Past. *20 Years Ago:* 'H.G. Wells has become a theme pub: HG's in Peterborough. In homage to Wells's most famous sf creations, the PR company had the new pub opened by Jon Pertwee and a brace of Daleks (since "Tom Baker was too expensive"), while its press release credits Wells with *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. According to CAMRA spies, the quality of research accurately reflects that of the beer.' (*Ansible* 106, May 1996) 'Science Masterclass (from a Voyager flyer about *Blue Mars*): "Ten things you didn't know about the red planet. [...] 9. Mars is the only planet in the solar system that could sustain human life.'" (*Ibid*) • *40 Years Ago,* activities at the US Lunacon included 'two pie-in-the-face attacks on Ted White. The second was paid for and instigated by, we are told by Spy X, Charles Platt.' [AIP] (*Checkpoint* 69, May 1976) 'David Gerrold has announced that he will sever all connection with fandom other than normal paid appearances and keeping in touch with friends.' (*Karass* 21, April/May 1976)

Fanfundery. *DUFF 2016.* Final reminder from *Ansible*: the voting deadline in the current one-horse race from Australasia to MidAmeriCon II is 16 May. See ozfanfunds.com/duff/DUFF_onlineballot2016.html.

Thog's Masterclass. *Gastric Anomaly Dept.* 'His stomach came up and shook hands with his throat ... Fear forced it back again.' ('Lionel Roberts', *The In-World*, 1960) • *Eyeballs in the Sky.* '... their eyes shifted uneasily, sliding off Perrin's.' (Robert Jordan, *The Shadow Rising*, 1992) [AR] • *Dept of Rising Elevation in Zero G.* 'Tom had fastened himself to the examining table and sliced his throat. Clouds of burgundy bubbles rose from his neck [...] The table was tilted to elevate his head.' (Sarah Zettel, 'Kinds of Strangers', 1999 *Analog*) [KB] • *Craft Brewery Dept.* 'I made a cup of tea in my undershorts and drank it while watching the news.' (Mark Pryor, *Hollow Man*, 2015) [PB]

Ansible 346 © David Langford, 2016. Thanks to Paul Barnett, Karl Bunker, Paul Di Filippo, Ahrvid Engholm, File 770, Stuart Gale, Lisa Goldstein, John-Henri Holmberg, Lyle Hopwood, Mike Hubbard, Ken MacLeod, Omega, Andrew I. Porter, David Pringle, Adam Roberts, Andrew Wells, Martin Morse Wooster, and as always our Hero Distributors: Dave Corby (Brum Group), SCIS/Prophecy, Alan Stewart (Australia). 29 April 2016