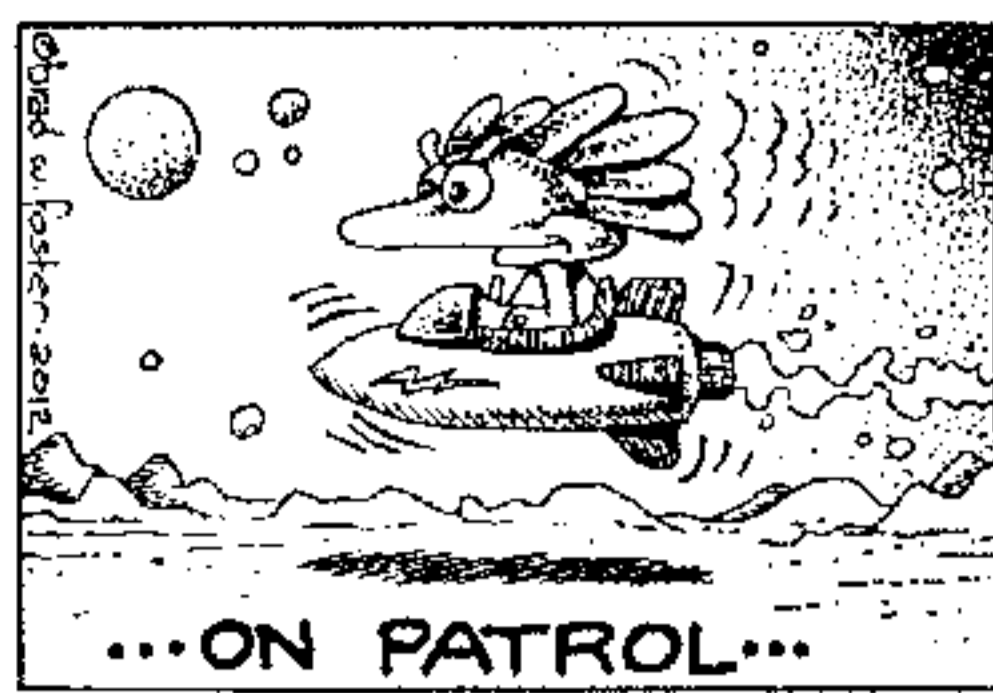


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From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Web news.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE or health and safety instructions for a Foon.

The Pirates of Ersatz

Brian Aldiss OBE revealed his special relationship with Aung San Suu Kyi: 'Since my novel *Forgotten Life* has extensive passages concerning Burma in it, I sent a copy out to Burma when she was confined to her house. She wrote back, thanking me, saying "I loved the sex." (One entirely understands.)' (letter, *Oxford Today*, Trinity Term 2013)

Colin Bateman, Irish crime writer, is not above a little sf homage. His latest novel *Nine Inches* features a Belfast pub called The Bob Shaw, eventually explained as being named for 'an Irish scifi writer who had invented an ingenious method of looking into the past'. [JB]

Ann C. Crispin is the 2013 Grandmaster of the International Association of Media Tie-In Writers, for her contributions to the *Alien*, *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *V* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchises. [L]

Cory Doctorow on the news that links to his Creative Commons licensed novel *Homeland* were being taken down via DMCA requests from Fox, on the basis that Fox has an unrelated tv series with the same title: 'I think you can safely say I'm incandescent with rage. BRING ME THE SEVERED HEAD OF RUPERT MURDOCH!' (TechCrunch, 21 April)

Michael Lindsay's sf novel *Mind-Sprung* (1981) was central to an enthusiastic feature article, 'Science Fiction and "Mind-Sprung"' by one John Schellenberger, in *Foundation* 25 back in 1982. Now a fascinating *TLS* essay on alleged literary hoaxer A.D. Harvey strongly implies that Lindsay, Schellenberger, Nold Jonson (publisher of Lindsay and Harvey) and several others are all fronts for Harvey himself. There is more, much more, including a bizarre theme of seemingly plagiarized nipples (*Mind-Sprung!*); but can one plagiarize oneself? Read all about it in 'When Dickens met Dostoevsky' by Eric Naiman (*TLS*, 10 April). [ML]

Gwyneth Paltrow, interviewed by Simon Mayo on his BBC Radio 5Live film show about her role as Pepper Potts in *Iron Man 3*, frankly admitted to being confused by the film's plot: 'I didn't understand any of the science fiction bits.' (26 April) [MPJ] But the rest made sense.

Michael Swanwick gloats: 'I can now toss all my old trophies—the Nebula, the Hugos, that hideous bust of H.P. Lovecraft—in the trash. Geekadelphia has made me their Geek of the Week! Not surprisingly, my son and all his friends are very impressed. / *Philadelphia Weekly* which is, unsurprisingly, a Philadelphia weekly newspaper, threw this news into the same issue in which they covered the kickoff event for the petition to place a plaque honoring Isaac Asimov in front of the apartment house where he lived while working at the Naval Yard during WWII. A veritable Who's Who of Philadelphia Geekdom were photographed, with Gardner Dozois, Gregory Frost, Tom Purdom, Victoria McManus, and paleoartists Bob Walters and Tess Kissinger, front of center. Along with, of course, Your Humble Correspondent ...'

N. Lee Wood has undergone surgery and chemotherapy for endometrial cancer. All sympathy. As 'nonny mouse' she writes about it here: <http://crooksandliars.com/nonny-mouse/mouse-has-cancer>

Considine

Until 6 May • **Sci-Fi-London** (film festival), BFI Southbank Strafford Picturehouse. See www.sci-fi-london.com/festival.

4 May - June or later • **Mystery, Magic & Midnight Feasts:** Enid Blyton exhibition, Seven Stories, Newcastle. 10am-5pm (4pm Sun). £6.50; under-17s £5.50. See www.sevenstories.org.uk.

11-12 May • **Bristol Comic Expo**, Brunel's Old Station and Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Bristol. See www.bristolexpo.co.uk.

11-12 May • **Middle-earth Weekend**, Sarehole Mill Recreation Ground, Cole Bank Rd, Hall Green, Birmingham. Mostly free, but some activities are extra. Car park £2. Details at middleearthweekend.org.uk.

22 May • **BSFA Open Meeting**, The Argyle pub, Leather Lane, London. 5/6pm for 7pm. With Janet Edwards. Free; all welcome.

23 May - 27 Oct • **Magical Books**—From the Middle Ages to Middle-Earth (exhibition), Bodleian Library, Oxford. 9am-5pm Mon-Fri; 9am-4:30pm Sat; 11am-5pm Sun. Free. With accompanying lectures.

1 Jun • **BSFA/SF Foundation** joint event (including both AGMs),

City of Westminster Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's St, London, SW1P 2DE. 9:30am-4:30pm (SFF flyer) or 10am-4:15pm (BSFA ad). Free.

15 Jun • **Futura**, Light House, Wolverhampton. 11am-late. GoH Ian R. MacLeod, Ken MacLeod and Adam Roberts. £25 reg. Contact alexdavisevents@hotmail.co.uk; <http://tinyurl.com/ctakzsa>.

20 Jul • **Bristol Beer & Blake's 7**, Knight's Templar, Unit 1 Temple Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6DG. 12:15 to 7pm-ish.

18-19 Aug • **Caption** (small-press comics), East Oxford Community Centre, 44B Princes St, Oxford. Starts 11am. £10 or £6/day at door.

29 Aug - 2 Sep • **LoneStarCon 3** (71st Worldcon), Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas. Now \$220 reg. Other rates unchanged: YA/military \$110; child \$75; family \$520; \$60 supp. See www.LoneStarCon3.org; PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755, USA.

7 Sep • **TitanCon** (sf & *Game of Thrones*), Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast. Guests TBA. £25 reg; £5 supp. Join at www.titancon.com (PayPal only, with £1.20 surcharge on full membership).

14-21 Sep • **Milford UK**, Trigonos, Snowdonia. *Fully booked*, but two 2014 workshops are planned: 23-30 August (with half the places reserved for overseas attendees) and 13-20 September. £605 inc room and meals; £115 deposit required; published writers only. Contact 10 Park Head, Birdsedge, Huddersfield, HD8 8XW; www.milfordsf.co.uk.

8-10 Nov • **Novacon 43**, Park Inn, Mansfield Road, Nottingham. GoH Jo Walton. £45 reg, *unchanged* despite a threatened post-Eastercon price rise. Contact 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ.

14-18 Aug 2014 • **Loncon 3** (72nd Worldcon), ExCeL centre, London. Now £105 reg and £245 family. Other rates unchanged: £65.00 YA; £30.00 child; £2.00 infant; £25.00 supp. See www.loncon3.org.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others See Us. From a review of the film *Upstream Color* (whose opening scenes include 'a man harvesting little white worms from orchid root balls'): 'The teenagers join the man, who does nasty things with worms and could be a concerned florist, an experimental entomologist, a budding serial killer or just a run-of-the-mill science-fiction freak.' (Manohla Dargis, *New York Times*, 5 April) [GHL] • From *The Hunger Games* DVD extras, a statement of intent: 'I think my job as costume designer is really to create the vision that the director has, not necessarily the book. Gary (the director) wanted to make a movie that was real, that wasn't a science fiction film.' (Judianna Makovsky) [NR-S]

Awards. *Arthur C. Clarke*, presented at an invitation-only event following a one-day mini-convention at the Royal Society in London: Chris Beckett, *Dark Eden*. • *Ditmar* (Australia) novel category: Margo Lanagan, *Sea Hearts*. • *Eurocon 2013/European SF Society*. Grandmasters: Terry Pratchett, Iain Banks. Hall of Fame: AUTHOR Andrei Valentinov (Ukraine); ARTIST Nikolai Redka (Ukraine); TRANSLATOR Patrice and Viktoriya Lajoie (France); PROMOTER Istvan Burger (Hungary); PUBLISHER Shiko (Ukraine); MAGAZINE *SFX* (UK). Spirit of Dedication: PERFORMANCE "Vash Vikhod" (Your Move), "Raido" theatre (Ukraine); WEBSITE Europa SF—scifiportal.eu (Romania); ILLUSTRATOR Katerina Bachilo (Russia); FANZINE *Fandango* (Ukraine). • *Prometheus* ('best pro-freedom novel') shortlist: Tobias Buckell, *Arctic Rising*; Dani and Eytan Kollin, *The Unincorporated Future*; Cory Doctorow, *Pirate Cinema*; Sarah Hoyt, *Darkship Renegades*; Daniel Suarez, *Kill Decision*.

The Weakest Link. *Bradley Walsh*: 'What is the middle name of the science fiction writer Philip K. Dick?' *Contestant*, after being offered three options to pick from: 'Kindly.' The rejected choices were 'Kindred' and 'Killer'. (ITV *The Chaser*, 30 April) [MPJ]

R.I.P. *Allan Arbus* (1918-2013), US actor whose genre credits include *Damien: Omen II* (1978), died on 19 April aged 95. [MMW] • *Frédéric Othon Théodore Aristidès* (1931-2013), French comics artist and comic book creator in the Franco-Belgian tradition who published under the pseudonym Fred, died on 2 April aged 82. He is best known for his series *Philémon*. [AS] • *Richard Brooker* (1954-2013), UK actor who played the killer Jason (becoming the third to do so) in *Friday the 13th Part III* (1982) and was also in the fantasy *Deathstalker* (1983), died on

8 April. [SFS] • *Quentin Hoover* (1964-2013), fantasy artist who contributed many cards to *Magic: The Gathering* and other collectible card games, died on 20 April. [SFS] • *Carmine Infantino* (1925-2013), US comics artist and editor, principally for DC—where he worked on both Golden and Silver Age comics and drew many early stories featuring The Flash in his second (Silver) incarnation—died on 4 April aged 87. [GD] • *Richard LeParmentier* (1946-2013), UK actor who as Admiral Motti was famously Force-choked by Darth Vader in the original *Star Wars* (1977), died on 15 April aged 66. [MPJ/AW] Other genre credits include *Rollerball* (1975) and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988). • *Robert Morales*, US comics creator best known for the 2003 Marvel mini-series *Truth: Red, White & Black* (a Captain America prequel), died on 18 April aged 54. He was a close friend—and the intended literary executor—of Samuel R. Delany, who wrote: ‘To say he will be deeply missed is an incredible understatement.’ [PDF] • *Andrew J. Offutt* (1934-2013), US fan, anthologist and prolific author of sf, fantasy and (mostly as John Cleve) erotica, died on 30 April; he was 78. [GSM] He was twice president of SFWA, 1976-1978. • *Nick Pollotta* (1954-2013), US author who contributed many titles to shared-world franchises—in particular the ‘Deathlands’ survivalist sf series, using the house name James Axler—died on 13 April. Popular standalone novels include *Illegal Aliens* (1989) and *That Darn Squid God* (2005 with Phil Foglio). • *Jack Shea* (1928-2013), US tv sitcom director whose sf venture was the 1969 film adaptation of Keith Laumer’s *The Monitors* (1966), died on 28 April aged 84. [PDF] • *Jonathan Winters* (1925-2013), Emmy-winning US actor/comedian whose best-known genre role was Mearth in *Mork & Mindy* season 4 (1981-1982), died on 11 April; he was 87. [MPJ/AW] • *Philip Wordley*, a 78-year-old found dead from natural causes in the River Exe on 8 January, may be the writer of this name who contributed four stories to *Science Fantasy* magazine in 1965. [PF]

It’s Dead, Jim. ‘I’m here to tell you that in a mere forty-five years the filmic genres of fantasy and science fiction have been wrung dry, have sprouted moss and ugly white squiggly things, and are no more. Gone. Done. Finis. Kaput ...’ (Harlan Ellison, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, January 1986) [BA]

Stamped Out. US Postal Service plans to issue special stamps honouring Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Philip K. Dick, Robert A. Heinlein and Frank Herbert—originally intended for July 2013 release—have been postponed until 2014. (*Linn’s Stamp News*, 29 April) [AIP] Maybe the USPS was tipped off about the talking squid in outer space...

As Others See Us II. A BBC website article about global threats to humanity (‘Are we on the verge of our own unexpected extinction?’) quoted scientist Dr Nick Bostrom: ‘It’s not science fiction, religious doctrine or a late-night conversation in the pub. / There is no plausible moral case not to take it seriously.’ (24 April) [PM-R]

Wages of Collaboration. Covering the SyFy channel’s planned ‘Big Crazy Artefact’ sf mini-series, the Bleeding Cool blogger instinctively added a second name to the novel credit: ‘*Ringworld*, by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle ...’ (www.bleedingcool.com, 10 April) [AW]

Media Awards. MTV: Movie Of the Year, Best Villain (Loki) and Best Fight all went to *The Avengers*. Best Hero was Martin Freeman as Bilbo in *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. Odder categories included Shirtless Moment (Taylor Lautner in *Twilight: Breaking Dawn—Part 2*) and Trailblazer (Emma Watson of Harry Potter film fame). [MPJ]

Not Dead, Jim. ‘... if I have to masticate my manuscripture, I’ll do it in as flamboyantly gourmandising a manner as was my original pronouncement. I herewith eat my words. The belief that sf is dead ... was a precise and correct view of the universe except ... I hadn’t seen *Brazil* ...’ (Harlan Ellison, *F&SF*, March 1986) [BA] • Moreover, ‘... to the reader who accepted at face value my statement that sf was dead as a filmic gesture ... this was a literary technique called engrossment. Sometimes referred to as satire ...’ (*Ibid*, May 1986) [BA]

Magazine Scene. Woe, gloom and misery in the Wildside Press customer newsletter: ‘What happened to *Sherlock Holmes Mystery Magazine*? / WE WERE SCAMMED!! A woman purporting to represent the estate (as “Administrator of the Conan Doyle Copyrights”) contacted us and requested that we license *SHMM* through her agent in London. We did so. But ... guess what? She was lying and has apparently been misrepresenting herself as the controller of the Doyle estate in the U.S. for years—despite many court cases which she has lost. *SHMM* is now duly licensed through the real representatives, who have been helpful and sympathetic.’ Background at *NY Times*: <http://tinyurl.com/yba3z7s>.

Random Fandom. Ray Nelson gets credit in a story on ‘CapNet—the world’s first wireless mesh network to be deployed in 250 propeller beanies [as a technogeeky “happening” at DESIGN West, 22-25 April]

... The original propeller beanie was invented in 1947 by science fiction author Ray Faraday Nelson when he was a high school sophomore’. (*EE Times*, 25 March) [AIP] • *Steve Stiles* torments me with a nifty *Ansible* masthead cartoon cunningly themed for issue 333. Can I keep going that long? • *Tara Wayne* celebrated his 100th article since 2007 for that ultra-frequent fanzine *The Drink Tank*: ‘As a Special Celebration of the Special Issue, I have ceased writing for *Drink Tank*.’ [F770]

As Others See Us III. Digested film review of *Oblivion*: ‘It’s also an unashamed rip-off of other Sci-fi movies, said Wendy Ide in *The Times*. [...] *No sci-fi film can be entirely original*, but *Oblivion* “lacks the critical bite of a new idea”.’ (*The Week*, 20 April) Our italics.

The Dead Past. *70 Years Ago*, a fanzine ‘Libelletter’ from Douglas Birchby: ‘Listen—we think science fiction is lousy. We think it stinks. Why do you read it why does anybody read it. Question mark. Therefore why should you devote all your spare time to writing about it, inveigling people to read it, collecting it holding Conventions about it and so on. ... / News: Sir Arthur Ego Clarke has at long last moved from Yatesbury, tearing up roots with reckless abandon on all sides and leaving 3 dozen beves of weeping local maidens all-forlorn behind him.’ (*Futurian War Digest*, May 1943) • *20 Years Ago*, Alex Stewart contributed a heartfelt elegy in *Private Eye* mode: ‘*Lines on the Removal of the SF Foundation to Liverpool*: “So / Farewell then / North East London Polytechnic / As was. / “We can’t afford it.” / That was / Your catchphrase.” —E.J. Thribb, age 17½.’ (*Ansible* 70, May 1993)

C.o.A. *The Other Change of Hobbit* bookshop, 1600 Kearney St, Ste A, El Cerrito, CA 94530-2119, USA.

Small Object of Desire. The prop phaser wielded by Captain Kirk in the second 1960s *Star Trek* pilot episode was sold at auction for \$231,000, over four times the expected price. (*The Register*, 9 April)

Editorial. Again thanks for all good wishes and the tireless efforts of email correspondents who supply *Ansible* snippets. My personal news is that I’m getting a break from *Sunday Telegraph* sf reviewing owing to a summer redesign that makes less magazine space available for trivia like books; maybe I’ll be back on the case in August, but meanwhile laziness prevails. Except for the usual ongoing projects, including work with Greg Pickersgill on the remaining *Ansible* Editions volumes of Algis Budrys’s *F&SF* review columns—tentatively titled *Benchmarks Revisited* and *Benchmarks Concluded*. Here are some reviews of our first volume *Benchmarks Continued*: <http://tinyurl.com/cuyk48k>.

Fanfundery. *TAFF 2013*: Jim Mowatt won the westbound race from Europe to LoneStarCon with a first-round majority, 91 votes to Theresa Derwin’s 16. 13 no-preference votes and one for Hold Over Funds made up the total of 121. Fuller details in the administrators’ official newsletter *TAFFline* 6 at taff.org.uk/news/taffline-6.pdf. • *DUFF 2013*: the ballot for the northbound race (Australasia to LoneStarCon) was at last released after the corresponding *TAFF* race was all over. Candidates are Bill Wright and Clare McDonald-Sims; voting continues to 10 June. Ballot form at taff.org.uk/ballots/duff2013.pdf.

Thog’s Masterclass. *Going Through the Motions Dept.* ‘She seemed to be made out of the same stuff that movement itself is made of.’ (Woody Guthrie, *House of Earth*, 2012 [written 1947]) [MMW] • *Dept of Inanimate Threat.* ‘A circular carpet covered the centre. On it stood a large dark-oak table and several chairs, looking hostile.’ (John Wyndham, *Plan for Chaos*, 2009) [AK] • *Count the Hands Dept.* ‘Now grabbing Pugachov by the collar, he started flinging open closet doors, training his revolver on each new opening of dark space.’ (Sam Bourne, *The Righteous Men*, 2006) [PB] • *Neat Tricks Dept.* ‘They fell into her apartment, her clothes falling willingly to the floor.’ (*Ibid*) • ‘The doors finally slid open, and her hips sashayed down the corridor.’ (Jo Nesbo, *The Snowman*, 2007; trans Don Bartlett 2010) [PB] • ‘A sharp zing raced through me.’ (Lisa Mangum, *The Hourglass Door*, 2009) [PB] • ‘The last time he’d seen her she’d been lively, despite being up to her elbows in a decapitation.’ (William Ryan, *The Holy Thief*, 2010) [PB] • ‘Babel seemed oblivious to the fact that Korolev’s blood had concentrated in his toes.’ (*Ibid*) • *Eyeballs in the Sky.* ‘Two sad brown eyes started at his waist and worked their way up.’ (*Ibid*) • *Spoon Animation Dept.* ‘She threw the wooden spoon at the wall, where it splattered tomato sauce into a Jackson Pollock pattern, turned, and fled for the bedroom.’ (Sam Bourne, *The Righteous Men*, 2006) [PB]

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