

An Fleghes Hager-Na Yu Canjeons



August 2010 – 1.1 Holiday Sensawunda

Ugly Children

Before I kick off this issue proper I felt it best I do a bit of explaining about the title of this zine, and give some proper credit to its finder and donator - step forward Steve Brewster.

Steve is a Bristol fan who has more of less or less stopped attending conventions which is a real shame as his interest in the genre, fanzines and fanhistory means he'd be precisely the sort of person Peter Weston would line up to be the next "future hope of fandom". One of his major non-fannish interests is learning languages, and it was his relentless scouring of second hand shops that turned up P.A.S. Pool's *Cornish For Beginners* from which the title of this zine is taken. Mr Pool's book dates from 1965 (price 6/6) and contains many phrases which although interesting, would be of little or no use in contemporary Cornwall. The one that drew our attention was *An Fleghes Hager-Na Yu Canjeons (Those Ugly Children Are Changelings)*. Not only is it a cool name, but it evokes a sense of place and culture, and I like that, and that's something I hope to embody in this little publication. So, thanks Steve, I owe you big time!

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Holiday Sensawunda

I took the cover photo on our recent holiday to San Francisco and Seattle. It shows San Francisco's unique Transamerica Pyramid taken from just outside City Lights Bookstore and includes the sign for nearby Jack Kerouac Alley. In some ways it sums up that sensawunda feeling I get when visiting the States. The

Pyramid, I remember featuring heavily in almost every establishing exterior shot in the 1978 remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. I've not seen the film since being a teenager - someday I'll have to re-watch it to make sure my memory isn't cheating me.

Kerouac has long been an obsession of mine, a reason and an inspiration for writing and travelling. Stopping for a drink in Vesuvios, I could feel a deep connection to one of my most formative literary heroes, even if in the Beat days the staff were probably wailing over some wild bebop and not going mental over Mexico beating France in the World Cup.

Sensawunda followed me everywhere on holiday. On our first day Stateside, it was the enormous pancakes in Seattle's Mecca Cafe, but later on in that leg of the trip, my mind was repeatedly blown by such things as Mount Rainier, Randy Byers taking us to yet another fantastic real ale bar full of delicious porters and stouts, and finally meeting Carl Juarez.

I had my obsessive fan mind destroyed several times in one morning at the Experience Music Project/Science Fiction Museum. Seeing Neal Stephenson's handwritten draft of *The Baroque Cycle* was as mind-boggling as it was unexpected, but actually seeing old zines on display in there was something special. About an hour earlier I was marvelling over a bass owned by Fang from Paul Revere and the Raiders, Mudhoney's Big Muff distortion pedals and too many cool artefacts from the Seattle/Tacoma Garage Band scene.

Later in California, Spike and Tom Becker did their best to keep this trend going. AT&T Park converted me to baseball, while the amount and quality of good wine available everywhere we went was just awesome. And I haven't even mentioned pie, the wall of tequila or the margarita list, or giant trees.

Right up to our last day in the States I was overwhelmed by wonderment. The drive up to Robert Lichtman and Carol Carr's mountainside house was as scenic as it was windy. But there I saw one of the most marvellous sights I have ever seen - Robert's legendary fanzine collection. Yes, I am that fannish that after all the glories that California and Washington State had to offer I was most boggled by all those orderly filing cabinets carefully filled with precious zines. I should point out that I was a little bit jealous too.

After that there was only one way for the day to go, by drowning my sorrows in a distillery on a disused airstrip looking out towards that damned Transamerica Pyramid across the bay.



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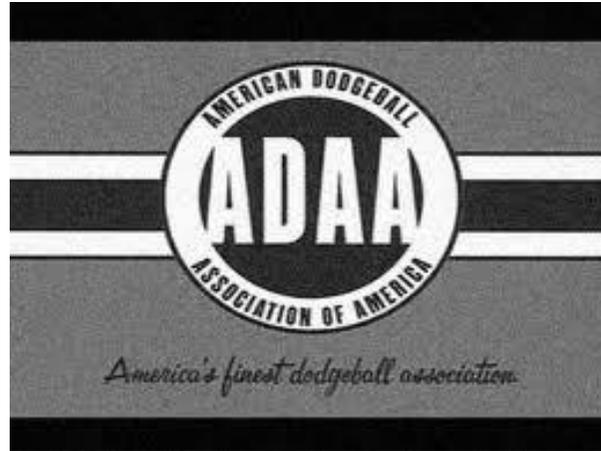
I'm going to miss the obvious big cinema talking points this issue (i.e. *Inception*) and skip to something else entirely different – airplane movies.

Back in my days of living in Auld Reekie, I used to take a couple of weeks holiday a year and go and watch lots of movies at the Edinburgh Film Festival. I loved it as I could sit in the dark watching cool films for half the week, and spend the rest hanging out in the Cameo or Filmhouse bars trying to decide if that bloke swigging single malts at the bar was really Tim Roth. So sitting on long haul flights to the States watching nothing but movies should be a breeze then? Wrong.

On part one of the outward flight (Bristol to Newark) there was one of those back-of-the-seat on-demand screens. I settled for the recent remake of *The Crazies*, a film which I was quite keen to see at the cinema but had let slip by. I'm a fan of Romero's original version and had heard enough moderately encouraging reports to give it a try. It started strongly enough and was competently done, but I couldn't settle into it, mostly due to the small screen size which made scenes set in the dark almost impossible to follow. One to revisit I think when it comes on TV.

I fared better with my second choice *Dodgeball*. I've seen this movie god knows how many times it should have ceased to be funny by now; it seems to be on a continual loop on Film4. But it got me good again - I was getting odd looks from Christina as I struggled to breathe, with tears rolling down my cheeks as

the "ESPN 8 – The Ocho" theme music started up.



From Newark to Seattle I was dead tired so decided to give *Valentine's Day*, the one film showing on the big old fashioned ceiling-TVs, a miss. Nevertheless I soon found myself watching it without headphones trying to make up the plot and dialogue in my head. I think this may have been the best way to enjoy it.

I watched *The Ghost Writer* flying out of San Francisco on the flight home which was pretty good. It was an enjoyable way to spend a couple of hours but the ending started to become obvious as the film wore on. The most interesting aspect was speculating whether Tony and Cherie Blair had seen the film and what they thought of it.

The last film I watched was the recent *Wolfman* flick which I found an incredible waste. I'm predisposed to like retro-monster movies but with this one I just let the action wash over me in a completely unengaged way.

Despite Benicio Del Toro and Emily Blunt trying their hardest the film just felt flat.

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Future Sounds: Ichi and The Hand

We don't get many gigs in Cornwall so over the past couple of years I've tended to go and see anything that sounds vaguely interesting. I hadn't heard of *Ichi* or *The Hand* but I had heard of *Rachael Dadd* (one half of *The Hand*) through a connection with my favourite record label, the Anstruther based *Fence Collective*.

Christina and I arrived early enough at the gig venue Miss Peapods to grab a table and settle down with a bottle of Skinner's Cornish Kocker. I started to worry about the gig immediately as the cheery waterfront café bar seemed to be stuffed full of yummy mummies eating cake and not drinking enough - is this really the state my rock and roll lifestyle has descended down to since migrating south of the Tamar? It now seems the days of risking life and limb in some of Scotland's seediest and sweatiest dives thrashing about to bands such as *nomeansno* or *The Misfits* are long gone. Mostly though, what kept me worrying wasn't the loss of wild crowded venues but the fact that one of the nearby ladies kept leaving her cake on our table. I have never seen anyone take so goddam long to eat a chocolate sponge before...or a cake that winked at me as much as that one did.

Almost without noticing, the music started. Drawing my attention from the cake, the small temporary stage had been occupied by a tall gangly but well spoken chap singing solo with

his acoustic guitar. He announced himself as Vashti Bollocks but eventually revealed his real name as [Andy Skellam](#), who sang and played in a soft [Nick Drake](#) kinda way. I was warming to the music, especially when he invited a few of the other musicians on the bill to accompany him on a couple of tracks. These arrangements completely added depth to his intimate songs, though you had to concentrate to hear the lyrics; the music was getting in the way of all the cake-eaters conversations.



With the end of the warm-up it was time to change to Skinner's own lager just to liven things up a bit. If that wasn't enough the next act *Ichi*, a small Japanese guy arrived on stilts wearing a fez and fake moustache whilst playing the harmonica. The stage was gained and stilts jettisoned without missing a beat, drum loops started and *Ichi* started playing a variety of wind instruments via balloons, firing of party-poppers hidden in his hat and banging around on all sorts of makeshift percussion including typewriters, alarm clocks and god knows what else. What impressed me most though wasn't the showmanship but the quality and mixture of music, which ranged from delightful soft lounge/exotica to Japanese folk and onwards to electronica.

All the theatrics were over for the evening with the passing of *Ichi's* set; it also seemed to be the end for much of the audience too despite their high sugar consumption, which was a real pity as *The Hand* were quite magical.

The Hand is essentially Rachael Dadd on banjo, guitar, ukulele, percussion and vocals and [Wig Smith](#) on kora, ukulele and vocals. I'd never seen a kora before and wasn't quite sure what this strange African instrument would sound like. Played though it had a clear harp like sound that worked surprisingly well in combo with the Dadd's carefully soft plucked banjo. Completing this was the delightful mixing of the two strong voices in exquisite harmonies. I took to this group immediately. The songs themselves were delicately beautiful constructions almost the aural equivalent of watching some ingenious hand-made clockwork flower open...and what was more, every damn

song was just as good as the last! I didn't even get to the end of the gig before emptying my wallet at the merchandise table, that's how good the whole set was.

Towards the end of the gig the audience had thinned down to a tiny group of admirers who were listening intently to every note or breath with wide-eyed wonder. Simultaneously I wanted to slap all those people who had left early for missing out on something special, but I also wanted to thank them for leaving as this made the whole event one of the most intimate gigs I'd ever attended. I am a complete convert to the way of *The Hand* now, catch them if they come near you and you won't be disappointed.

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Locs

The first issue brought a handful of responses which I am incredibly grateful for as I didn't know how much of an audience there would be for this Ugly Child out there. First up John Purcell, who gave me great words of encouragement and came up with a couple of great suggestions for shortening the zine's title.

"According to Bill Burns' announcement of this zine's posting to efanazines, the title means "Those ugly children are changelings." Okay... I'll buy that. Personally, I don't think this particular child of yours is ugly or even a changeling. *An Fleghes* - or is that AFHNYC? Geez, that's a cumbersome acronym; I'm

sticking with *An Fleghes* for short - looks pretty good for an initial e-zine.”

I like An Fleghes and I think I’m going to be using this as the official abbreviation. John continues on to discuss some of the reasoning behind ezines

“That being said, *An Fleghes* resembles a Garcia zine. Is that a good thing? Possibly. It is good in the sense that these little zines are quick and easy to produce. Another good thing is that is a zine like this is, like you say, a good place to get ideas down and work on them, maybe turning brief articles here into more thoroughly developed pieces for *Head!* I use my SNAPS zine sometimes as a drafting ground for writing that eventually finds its way into *Askance* or some other fanzine, so this tactic of yours makes good sense to me. It's your zine, so you can do what you want with it. I sure as heck am not going to complain.”

John also continues with the following thoughts on last issues film and music reviews.

“I shall have to keep an eye open for ‘*Centurion*’; it sounds interesting even if it does cater to the current theatre crowd's taste in action-adventure films. If those are done well they can be quite entertaining. Your write-up makes *Centurion* sound like there's actual thought behind it, and that's an added plus. I am assuming it's on DVD, or

will be soon if it's in the theatres right now.

If you've read my zines over the past five years you might remember that I've been in bands, so your review of [The Phantom Band](#)'s debut album interested me. I love the title: *Checkmate Savage*. Lately my musical tastes have been quite eclectic, encompassing blues, folk, blue-grass, jazz, acoustic rock, zydeco, and world music. Like you, I enjoy a band with its "own voice, great musicianship, good songs", and that right there gets me interested. To the Internet I go to see if *The Phantom Band* has a website with samples of their music.”

No new zine would be launched successfully without a loc from Lloyd Penney:

“Many thanks for *An Fleghes Hager-Na Yu Canjeons 1*. Ah, the spellchecker will have a fine time with this.

I’ve been to two Corflus, and I have been told that the ones I attended were kinda quiet, and that I need to get to some more. Something tells me that I probably won’t get to any more Corflus, so I will carry on as I do with writing locs, and leave it to that. I can’t really afford to be lazy, but I do find that I often need an assignment editor when it comes to writing articles.

The closest I’ve come to fanzines from other fandoms are the couple of steampunk fanzines that we’ve been able to contact through Chris Garcia’s *Exhibition Hall*.

Those are *The Gatehouse Gazette* and *Steampunk Magazine*. The 13th issue of *Gatehouse Gazette*’s just come out. There is a little overlap with our fandom and theirs, and while the editor of GG has set up a page for letters to the editor, *Steampunk Magazine*’ editors still won’t. That’s okay, they get the feedback they need, and they seem to be aware that SF fandom knows about them, and mission accomplished.

The fun and frolic behind a minority government...a coalition government seems to be best for you. We’ve had so many elections over the past decade or so, we wound up with a minority government that the other parties are propping up because they know the idea of yet another election is unpopular. Our government right now is right-wing, and heavy handed with lots of people, so an election may be just what we need to clear out the Tories and bringing in the Liberals again, and perhaps we’ll have some intelligence and common sense in Ottawa.“

The last shout out this ish goes to Steve Green, one of my fannish heroes.

“Congratulations on *An Fleghes Hager-Na Yu Canjeons #1*, an entertaining bite-size perzine. Like yourself, I prefer the printed format, but *The Fortnightly Fix* would be an impossible project were it not for eFanzines.

Ref the General Election, even ignoring the numbers for a moment, the basic fact remains that Labour weren't interested in making a deal. It would have been suicide for

both Labour and the LibDems to stagger on with Gordon Brown as PM, but he was refusing to budge and there was no prospect of any real role for Clegg's team. The final outcome may not be ideal, but at least certain of the harsher Tory policies may be reined back, and a handful of LibDem policies placed on the table. (Should I declare an interest here, given I was a part-time 'spin doctor' during the campaign?)”

I have to admit I left the fact there was no appetite amongst the Labour Party for a Lib Dem/Labour coalition for space considerations, as I was trying to keep the first ish size to 4 pages, something I have abandoned with this one.

“I caught *Centurion* back in late April, at which time I wrote: "Brutal military drama from *Dog Soldiers* director Neil Marshall, set during the twilight years of the Roman occupation of Britain. The pace drops occasionally, but the battle of a small group of soldiers to survive behind enemy lines certainly holds the attention." On the subject of gore, though, have you seen any of *Spartacus: Blood and Sand*? It's like watching a live-action comic strip.”

Not seen *Spartacus: Blood and Sand* yet but checked it out on YouTube...looks fun in a bloody sort of way.

WAHF: An Fleghes was also recently name checked in Ian Millstead's second issue of Griff. Thanks Ian, I owe you a loc!

This Month...

Right, this month has seen a smattering of holiday reading including finally settling down to the Scroll version of Kerouac's *On The Road*. I've read and re-read the original published version many times over the years and despite picking this up a number of years ago (in *Shakespeare and Company* in Paris no less) I hadn't found the right occasion to read this before now. I've always thought of *On The Road* as a bit of a marmite book, you either love it or will hate it and the scroll's unedited nature amplifies that further. Some parts don't work as well as they do in the polished original, but there are moments of dazzling writing where Kerouac somehow plucked moments of profound beatific wonder out of his continual benzedrine stream of consciousness writing. It also doesn't help that there is no ending – Lucien Carr's dog ate it. That aside with the names of the original Beats being used rather than the later invented pseudonyms used in the original version this offers a valuable insight into not just the lives of the small group of writers but also into the creative writing process itself. Accompanying this I bought *The Illustrated Beats* in San Francisco, and sadly finished reading it about three days before the death of Harvey Peckar, the main writer in this collection.

Other fun reads this month have included Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* and Richard Morgan's *Altered Carbon*. Somewhere in there I also had time for *Moneyball* by Michael M Lewis and *The Angel's Game* by Carlos Ruiz Zafón.

Been a bit light on the old film front – I have seen *Inception* and am still digesting that one. Oh, *Predators* - am I the most wrong person in the world for thinking *Predator 2* is the best film of the franchise?

I managed to miss nearly all the *World Cup*, although have fond memories of watching Japan play somebody at San Francisco airport. I did catch a fair bit of *Le Tour*, Mark Cavendish did well picking up a whole buncha stage wins after a slow start, Contador looked not as unbeatable as he did last year, *Rabobank* and Denis Menchov placed high (I tend to support the *Rabobank* and the *Euskatel* teams) and the challenge of Armstrong faded away to nothing, which is only good for cycling as a sport. Finally I don't care what anyone else says Mark Renshaw's disqualification for head-butting and strategically barging people in one sprint finish was well over the top considering some of the hijinks we've seen over the years, and if you have a problem with that I'll see you outside now!

Jesus, this mother actually made it to issue 2! Stay tuned for another exciting ish of **An Fleghes Hager-Na Yu Canjeons** coming atcha soon!

Special thanks to the great **Bill Burns** for hosting this ugly child on **efanzines.com**.

Any comments, abuse, etc drop me a line at doug_bell@tiscali.co.uk or follow me on Twitter or Facebook as dhunterbell.