



*Eat That Duck 3*

# Welcome to **Eat That Duck 3!**

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## Art

Many thanks to Brad Foster for the brilliant front cover and the great artwork on 5, 12 and 17.

Thanks also to Shep Kirkbride, who gave into my begging and sent me 'Indian Summer' for the back cover!

All photographs by Ron Gemmell

**Eat That Duck 3** *finally* comes to you from **Ron Gemmell** and is available for the 'usual', at [ron.gemmell@btinternet.com](mailto:ron.gemmell@btinternet.com)

or:

8 Kinsale Drive  
Locking Stumps  
Warrington  
Cheshire  
WA3 6LX, UK

It's been a long time coming...

Nearly twenty five years in fact. **Eat That Duck 2** was published in time for **Conspiracy** back in 1987. At that time, desk top publishing was just a dream for the average fan editor! **ETD 2** was hand typed on a manual typewriter and duplicated on my old Roneo.

My next Worldcon was **Interaction** in 2005, which was virtually the first convention I had attended for over ten years. A few years later I discovered Facebook, and finally came in from the cold.

Many, many thanks for the great support of many friends – old and new – who have encouraged me to publish the sequel to ETD 2, and apologies to any of you who sent me locs for that ancient zine. I'm afraid that I have long lost the letters in house moves and poor filing; though if you've kept a copy yourself I would appreciate it if you could send it over!

Many thanks also to contributors to this fanzine, Lucy and Brad in the US and Christina and Shep over here in the 'old country'!

The 'cunning plan' for Eat That Duck, is to strive for an 'annual-at-least' publishing frequency, with the target date for ETD 4 being sometime in September 2012. I really would appreciate your locs, artwork and articles. I promise that they will see print long before 2030, honest!

It's great to be here again

Ron

# Adventures in Swedish

Lucy Huntzinger

I'm addicted to learning languages. A few years ago I decided it would be amusing to learn Old Norse with a friend of mine. We found a course online, bought copies of E. V. Gordon's *An Introduction to Old Norse*, and set out to teach ourselves a dead language. It turned out to be a lot of fun. After two years we ended our studies, happy with the experience.

Fast forward to August 2010. I miss the experience of learning a language, but I don't want to do it by myself. I find the Scandinavian School in San Francisco. It would be fun to learn a language people still speak! So I sign up for Swedish and turn up for class having no idea what to expect. I don't know a word of Swedish and I'm pretty sure the Old Norse won't do me any good, but it can't be any harder than ON.

There are ten of us in the class. Everyone but me has Swedish relatives or is married to a Swede. Great, so they'll get to practice at home and I'll get to practice with the computer. My teacher Pia is from Malmö. That's right, I'm learning Southern Swedish. That means I'll sound a little sloppy compared to someone in Stockholm, but it makes no difference to me. It's all Swedish, right?

In the first class she asks each of us what our job is. Everyone is boring

and truthful. Being the class clown that I am, I say I am a rock star and make the devil horn sign. Pia laughs and claps her hands. "That's great! Show some imagination, the rest of you! No one has to know you're not really a fireman or dominatrix!" This cracked me up. Obviously we are going to get along fine.

Of course, it turns out the Swedish for rock star (rockstjärna) is insanely hard to say. She forces someone else to be a nurse rather than whatever she really is and I swear sjuksköterska is the hardest word in Swedish to pronounce. If it isn't, don't tell me!

In the third class we do an exercise called At A Party. Being me, I go off book for the "mingle and test your fellow students on how well they've memorized some simple sentences" part. It blows my fellow students' minds, but I can't help it, I want to really talk. I get my wish when I am briefly without a mingling partner. My teacher decides to chat with me.

"Jag heter Pia. Vad heter du?" she asks, shaking my hand.

"Jag heter Ingrid Bergman," I promptly reply.

"Jaha! Och vad jobbar du med?" she said, asking about my work.

"Jag är skådespelerska," I say proudly. We learned the word for actress tonight. I get the emphasis wrong, but the gender right.

"Jättebra! Varifrån kommer du?" she says, asking where I'm from.

"Sverige. I mean, jag kommer från

Sverige. Viken," I add, even though I have no idea where Ingrid Bergman was from. I have a friend who lives in Viken.

A miscalculation! She starts talking at normal speed in Swedish to me and I lose the thread of our conversation immediately. She's from Skåne and I guess no one knows where Viken is unless they're familiar with southern Sweden. Boy, is she excited to talk about it. I think she's saying they were having a heat wave, but I'm not sure.

I am certainly sweating by the time I sat down. I don't know of many things harder than trying to make small talk in a foreign language you barely know. As far as I'm concerned, conversations are all about improvisation, but it helps if you have a few nouns under your belt.

For the fifth class we play that ever-popular Swedish game Sänken Skepp! Our teacher gives the explanation of rules in Swedish and I catch on quickly, which makes me feel terribly clever, although to be honest, if I had to speak Swedish to save my life I'd go down with the ship.

That's right, we play Battleship, only using words instead of numbers. Pia walks around listening to our pronunciation. My partner's pronunciation is awful. He keeps using the German instead of the Swedish sounds. It's okay, I keep reverting to French myself. The hardest for me is the difference between the vowels, which is the point of the exercise, but I get it by the end of the game. I win, too, shouting, "Träff! Jag vann!" with abandon. I do hope that comes in handy some day in Sweden.

Most of the seventh class is devoted to family relationships. My brain is trashed by the time we're done and I'm very sure I haven't learned more than half of the terms. I never realized how simple English is on this topic. You have grandparents, you have an uncle, the end. Not in Swedish! In Swedish you have to specify which side of the family someone is related to, the mother's or the father's. It gets complicated.

We work on tycker om, to like something, for class eight. As usual, I make things more complicated than most of the others, although I'm not doing it to be clever or funny. I make a list of five things I like and five things I dislike. Everyone else lists things like movies or chocolate, single words that sound much the same in English (not entirely a coincidence, I'm sure). When Pia calls on me I answered, "Jag tycker om spökhistorier," I like ghost stories. This throws Pia completely.

Pia: What? Repeat that, please.

Me: Spuck historier.

Pia: Spyck?

Me: Spehk. Spooek.

Pia: Do you mean spåk? That would be an odd story.

Me, desperate: Spewk!

Pia: Spik?

Me, giving in: Ghost.

Pia: Oh, *spök!*

Me, indignant: That's what I said!

Oh, well. That's nothing compared to the guy who declares he dislikes getting literally stuck to the toilet and the guy who announces he likes to eat horses. Those Swedish vowels are tricky.

Somewhere around week nine we reach prepositions. It's all prepositions all the time! Which is good, because my reading comprehension suddenly takes a good jump thanks to understand those critical words. I add a significant chunk to my vocabulary, too, because of all the things that need to sit, stand, lie or hang either in or on other things.

We take a small break from prepositions to learn about first, middle and last names, including nicknames. For simplicity's sake (and because I am a coward) I pretend not to have a middle name, but I get to hear everyone else's. I get in a terrible tangle trying to explain that my efternamn is my maiden name. It comes out something like "When I am married I do not destroy my old name, but hold fast and my husband has his name because I do not like his name." Pia laughs her head off, the class is completely baffled and I put my head in my hands. There is, of course, a simple word for maiden name. Now I know it.

For week eleven we practice reading a few conversations.

"So what do you do in your free time?"

"I like to windsurf."

"Oh I see, that is very interesting. Would you like to go dancing on Saturday night?"

"Sure, why not?"

I sense these workbooks are not geared towards my age group. But I may be wrong. For all I know the majority of fifty-something Swedes are mad windsurfers who say yes to dancing with anyone after five minutes of conversation. I had better practice my Dougie.

It's almost Christmas of 2010 and I've had thirty lessons by now.

Because we are learning adjectives, we have been playing Twenty Questions. This is easily the funniest thing we've attempted so far. Pia asks someone to think of a person and then we have to guess who it is. The answers can only be yes or no. Naturally, we always start by asking about gender, age and whether they were famous. After that, it gets weird.

My favorite example: We have established that the person Loraine is thinking of is a man over sixty, Swedish (although she is oddly unsure of that at first), famous, not tall and has a wife. That doesn't narrow it down much, I think, and ask if he is levande (a living person).

"Uh...kanske." (Maybe.)

"KANSKE?" The class starts laughing.

"Uh...nej...ja, ja, han är en levande person," she says in confusion.

Hmm, I think, and wait for my turn again while the others establish he

does not have children, does a job and has a beard. But who could be both living and dead? Aha!

"Okay! Bor han i New Orleans?" (Does he live in New Orleans?)

"Vad? Nej! Varför frågar du det?" (What? No! Why do you ask that?)

"Eftersom jag tror han är en vampyr." (Because I think he's a vampire.)

"Oh, Lucy, not all vampires live in New Orleans," one of my classmates says as if everyone ought to know that. An argument breaks out in extremely bad Swedish as to whether there are Swedish vampires.

"Of course there are. There is Alexander Skarsgård. Oh! Is he Alexander Skarsgård?" I ask, belatedly remembering the game, but forgetting all the previous details.

"No!" Loraine says, turning pink from laughing. "It's Santa Claus! He has a beard! Vampires don't have beards!"

"Santa Claus isn't a living person!" I reply indignantly.

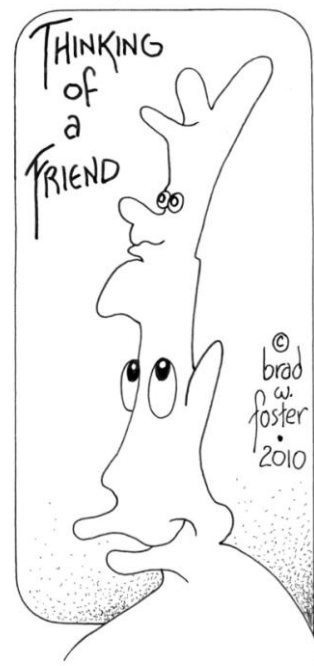
Pia laughs so hard she has to go get a drink of water. She says we're her first class to confuse Santa with vampires. I think we did great, though. I am particularly pleased that all of us were ready to wade in with our reasoning on why the famous short person over sixty with a wife and a job could reasonably be a vampire. My class is *awesome*.

During the summer break of 2011 I go to Sweden for two weeks, where I successfully speak a little Swedish and

am understood so well that not one person replies in English. I even have a real conversation while waiting for my train in Uppsala; it is, to my delight, with a woman my age who ends up confiding that she thinks younger men are better because they will do all the cooking as well as being much more fun in bed than men our age. That is a conversation I would never have had in Old Norse!

I don't have any particular reason for learning Swedish, but it's been so much fun I want to go on and become fluent. I'm in my second year at the Scandinavian School and to my surprise I am beginning to feel I can truthfully claim to speak Swedish. Five of my original ten classmates are still taking lessons also, so I've gotten some good friends out of it.

Best of all, I can now say *sjuksköterska* with no problem at all.



# Trains and Boats and Planes

**Ron Gemmell**

The main thing that I noticed from the window at ten thousand feet on the slow approach to Arlanda International airport was the abundance of trees and the water. Islands as well; lots and lots of them strung along the coastline leading up towards Stockholm. Ten minutes later we had left the coastline. The land and sea were replaced by land, lakes, yet more trees and yet more islands. Every lake seemed peppered with islands, their wooded shorelines only broken by the appearance of holiday homes and sailing jetties. The sky was darkening as we landed.

Arlanda is quite some distance from the centre of Stockholm, and since it was already late in the evening I opted for the fast rail transfer rather than the coach or taxi. The airport is best part of forty kilometres to the north of Stockholm, the Arlanda Express (twenty minutes platform to platform), was certainly fast but at twenty pound plus one-way, isn't the cheapest way to travel. It did get me to Stockholm Central Station for ten o'clock though. My hotel for the night was a mile or so away on the other side of town, time to go and see if the taxis were as expensive as the guidebook said.

They were; it didn't take much mental maths to convince me that the subway

system was going to be my preferred option. Pensionat Oden Vasastan is a five minute walk from the nearest subway station. The 'after hours' checking-in arrangement at the 38 Odengatan was unusual to say the least (the 'reception' not being manned after 6 pm), and entering the darkened lobby after successfully typing in the correct door access code was a bit off putting! The pensionat was on the second floor, access being gained by either the spiral stairway or the impressive ornate caged elevator directly opposite the entrance door.

The emailed check-in arrangement was like something out of the Bourne Identity. After the access codes and the elevator, I was instructed to open the door to the left using another access code and take an envelope with my name on it – the envelope containing yet another access code and finally the key to my room! The room itself was very large and very comfortable. Well lit, simply furnished with a high ceiling (complete with chandelier) large double bed, a couple of lounge chairs and table by the window overlooking the street below. The plan was to stay here for one night and then leave my case in storage for a further three before returning for the Eurocon 2011 at the weekend. The next four days would be spent exploring the islands of Moja and Finnhamn on the Stockholm Archipelago.

I spent the following day exploring Stockholm in the daylight, it was a beautiful day. I couldn't get over the compact size of the city, Vasastan (the area I was staying in) seems to be basically on the outer edge of the city centre yet it is only a thirty or so minute walk away from the Royal

Palace in the Old Town. I had a few hours to use up before my 3 pm sailing to islands so spent it picking up extra supplies and sightseeing. I was travelling light for the next few days, a weekend rucksack with clothes and cameras for four days backpacking round the Archipelago, and I was travelling alone. Multiday solo travelling is very much an unusual thing for me; I'm normally with family on holiday, friends in the mountains or colleagues on business trips. The way it worked out, this little expedition of mine was a 'solo affair', something I wasn't altogether at ease with at the time. Come the weekend I'll have plenty of fan friends to talk, drink and eat with, but for the next four days, I'll be on my own.

So it was certainly good to meet up with Christina and Doug outside the aptly named Grand Hotel before lunch – we called inside to check it out for future conventions and to use their 'facilities' – and went to eat at a nearby outdoor café where prices were more inside the UK fan budget (i.e. with beer at less than £6 per pint..). The list of attending Brit Fans had seemingly increased over the last few weeks, and the contingent was officially the second largest group at 36. Reasons for this was uncertain - accommodation, beer, travel, beer, luxury goods and beer were a little on the pricy side, which usually is enough to put Brit Fans off from convention attendance – have I mentioned that beer is expensive? Maybe Sweden is on our 'genetic must do list', calling us back to our Viking roots, cue the theme from the movie in your head ....

We swapped tales of hotel rooms and travel, things we had done so far and what we had planned, and then

parted. I was to bore them sufficiently with tales of the islands on my return – no point boring them too much beforehand!

And so to my odyssey

Back in January I hadn't even heard of the Archipelago, never mind considered actually going there. Turns out that there are somewhere around thirty thousand islands of various sizes, stretching sixty kilometres out from Stockholm into the Baltic Sea. From a map downloaded from the Waxholmsbolaget website (the major ferry company in the area) I planned a trip that would take me as far out as I could reasonably get to in a couple of days, and quickly settled on islands of Moja and Finnhamn.

At three in the afternoon, I sailed east.

The first island was Moja, one of the larger of the central islands at about six kilometres long by four kilometres wide. Moja has a reasonable sized 'year-round' population with just about all the villages lying off the single road on the south-eastern coast of the island. It actually forms part of an archipelago itself (imaginatively known as the Moja Archipelago), the ferry from Stockholm stops at three harbours on the island - assuming that you first let the ferry crew know which one you want to go to that is, as they don't routinely stop at every harbour or island. I had booked into a beautiful little bed and breakfast just outside the 'harbour' at Loka, five minutes away by foot and two minutes by 'flakmoppe'!

I was introduced to the amazing 'flakmoppe' by my host, Camilla, who arrived unexpectedly at the Loka

harbour to give me a lift to her home and B&B. A friendly, happy person with a welcoming smile and great English, Camilla apologised for being five minutes late (the ferry had just arrived early at Loka), welcomed me to Moja and asked me to climb onto the 'flakmoppe'. Quite a vehicle this, apparently the transport of choice on the islands, it roughly translates to 'front platform moped'. They are all pretty much the same, a basic 50 cc three-wheel moped (the two wheels being at the front), supporting an open wooden platform about a metre square (this one thankfully coming complete with plenty of cushions...). No seatbelts, no helmets (pretty much illegal on about half a dozen counts on the UK roads) and capable of about 50 km on the flat, which was fast enough on the tarmac and gravel 'road' to the Bumble Bee' B&B.

I had dropped lucky with the choice of B&B. Basically a self-contained apartment with three rooms and bunk beds for six; well fitted kitchen, satellite TV, great bathroom, comfortable chairs and fresh cut wild flowers on the table. Over the next couple of days this was my base of operations for my exploration of the island (all on foot, though there were bikes to hire if I wanted to), south west to main village of Berg and north east to a great fish restaurant on the outskirts of the hamlet of Ramsmora. I had arrived a few weeks before the main island festival (Moja celebrates Midsummer with the rest of the country) so things were pretty quiet even by island standards, the weather was mixed (showers on the first day but sunshine on the second) and the midges weren't too bad. The stay was over far too soon, and on the Thursday afternoon Camilla kindly

gave me a lift to the northern harbour of Langvik to pick up the 'sea taxi' to Finnhamn, my next island.

The crossing was swift. Finnhamn is actually two islands, joined by a footbridge, owned and managed by the Archipelago Foundation. There's not much there except a youth hostel, restaurant and a small farm. The island is just over a kilometre long and wide, it's easy to walk around it in half a day. I had booked into the youth hostel on the hill a few hundred metres from the harbour.

It is an impressive building, originally a summer manor for a coal dealer, it's been owned by the Swedish Youth Hostel Association since the late eighties. The hostel also looks after the bookings for the hundred or so small buildings scattered around the island. I had a room in the main hostel. I dropped off my bag on the bunk and went off to explore.

The island itself is beautiful, but in a sense, unreal. The Foundation totally manages the island – there is no private ownership of any of the properties. This in itself is at odds with most of the islands on the Archipelago, just about every island big enough to support a building has a private holiday home on it; you get the impression when sailing through the channels that half of Stockholm must own a property out here. Finnhamn, like a few other islands has been set aside, so that non-owners can enjoy a stay on the islands without having to go through private rentals. It's also unreal in the sense that the farm has been reintroduced; agriculture apparently left the outer islands when they became holiday destinations for the wealthy, so the farm here is a new

addition. All totally unlike the 'work a day' environment of a fair amount of Moja; I preferred the latter.

Probably the most amazing thing about this tiny island was the international 'feel' about it. The island has visitors all year round, arriving by ferry and private vessels, and a fair amount of them stay at the hostel and eat at the excellent Café and Krog at the ferry harbour. Over the two days I had stayed on Moja, I had not met another Brit or for that matter a non-Swede national in any of the villages or shops. In the restaurant alone I counted visitors from seven or eight different countries on the tables within earshot, and the same again in the hostel dining room the following morning! It occurred to me, that I was just a day away from the Eurocon – the stay on the island being a preamble to the main international event.

I still wasn't sure on this 'solo traveller' thing though, and really didn't enjoy asking for a table for one. Solo travelling did however have surprising effects on me throughout my stay on the island, and particular on Finnhamn. I found myself talking to people a lot! The waitress at the café actually mentioned this phenomenon herself when she was serving me with a 'moderately priced' beer. She told me that she personally enjoyed solo travel, because this way she found that she 'talked' to other people, and that people travelling with family and friends tended to keep 'themselves to themselves'. This was something I hadn't previously thought about myself, and was quite taken aback by the insight from someone so young.

The evening itself was the best I had seen on the islands, and I spent the next hour or so photographing the fading light and the amazing sunset across the bay.

I didn't want to go to bed, I wasn't ready to leave the islands and return to the city.

It was raining when I woke, the temperature had dropped significantly and the thought of sailing away not as depressing as it was the day before. I left the hostel (after the weirdest shower I can recall for years – I've never showered in cold salt water before!) and headed back to the harbour to wait for the ferry.

It was at the shelter where I first saw the 'lost boys'. A group of half a dozen, very excited ten –thirteen years olds, running round with sticks and shouldering knapsacks and fishing rods. I smiled to think that regardless of nationality, kids will always manage to turn sticks into toy swords and guns – just like I did many years ago! The 'lost boys' were actually made up girls and boys – and was just as imagined by Barrie (hopefully not like the other assortment imagined by Golding!) – nominally supervised by an attached adult. The group boarded the same ferry as I did and proceeded to embark on a high-octane game of tag on the crowded vessel (this time fortunately without the sticks) which looked like it would only end in tears, miraculously it didn't. They got off the ferry before Stockholm; I disembarked myself at the 'old town' and walked into the city the long way. The rain had stopped and the cars had returned.

I made my way back to the Pensionat Oden Vasastan, checked into my old room with my case waiting for me (more than a bit relieved about this!), showered and dressed for the town. Just outside the conference centre I met Lucy Huntzinger, first time we've met in person since Conspiracy in 1987! Lucy had been using her new found Swedish language skills to full effect and was just heading off out for dinner with a number of Swedish fans, I made my way to the registration desk, which was located just outside the bar – excellent planning.

Friday evening was a low key one for me. Didn't recognize too many fans on arrival (that what comes with walking in when everybody were eating off site...) so didn't spend too long there before wandering off to find a meal myself. Came back for about 8 pm, made my way to bar, met up with the 'Brit Fandom abroad contingent' along with assorted Swedish fans I knew reasonably well (i.e. UK convention bars, Facebook friends and others) Lennart Uhlin (who I had met at Novacon 40 last year) was amongst them as well as Johan Anglemark and Urban Gunnarsson. Time passed and my first and only Friday programme item came - the Fan Auction.

This was a highly entertaining event, led by the legendary Bono lookalike, 'Bellis the half-Greek', and ably assisted by a young Chrissie Hynde lookalike, Katja. Anders' auctioning technique was somewhat different from Rog Peyton's, but equally as enjoyable. I successfully managed not to bid for any books, comics, DVD's and even the 'mystery object' – always conscious of keeping the luggage weights down and funds up. We went back to the bar to discuss things ....

It's a strange thing, I can never seem to recall more than a handful of conversations I have at conventions for some reason. I suspect it might have something to do with air-conditioning, the food or maybe – just maybe – the drink. In either case I recall Lucy being with us for a while before jet lag getting the better of her (San Francisco being a touch further than Warrington and her only arriving just the day before), Tobes, Doug, Christina, Tim and Clarrie staying further into the night at the 'cheap' convention bar, and us all heading for our various hotels sometime before midnight. It looked like late evening outside, like the sun had only just gone down (this was my fifth night in Sweden and I still hadn't got the hang of this 'light' night time). Christina and Doug were staying in the same hotel as me – it being the nearest and cheapest to the convention, at just £100 per night for a single en-suite room!

The weather was a lot better on the Saturday with heavy rain forecasted for the Sunday. Looked like a good plan to do a bit more sightseeing (I'm all for plans) so I spent a fair part of the day walking around the city. Stockholm is a bit surprising for a national capital. It's a good size, but not overpowering. The old town is impressive with the Royal Palace, Royal Armoury and the Stock Exchange Building (where the Nobel Prizes are awarded); the new main shopping part of the city has broad streets, fine buildings and monuments in their own right (with a paved sunken square outside Central Station). Even in the city there's plenty of green places, it really is a nice place, and I'm definitely not a city person believe me!

I returned to the convention sometime midday and met up with Lucy, her friend Lena Jonsson and the John-Henri Holmberg. Enjoyed a good chat out on the terrace before the sun's heat reminded me that the bald patch that I had developed just a year or so ago (honest...) was a trifle hot and as such it might be a good plan to retire to the sanctuary of the programme for a while. I actually did make a programme item in the afternoon, 'Sweden and the Fantastic, Today', stayed a while longer at the con itself then headed back out into the city to find a restaurant before going back to hotel to get changed for the night's festivities – the Multinational Fan Party!

I had brought a shirt just for the occasion.

Back in 1987, Lucy and her American co-conspirators had decided that Brit Fans needed to brighten their dress code somewhat and had shipped out a number of Hawaiian shirts. I was one of the lucky ones to trial them for the Worldcon at Brighton and was hooked on these 'understated' items ever since, I'm the proud owner of about half a dozen of the same. Seeing that Lucy was over for the con, I thought it only fitting to attend the party suitably attired in one of my favourites!

The party – which was in the smallest possible basement bar you could imagine and probably the hottest – was an amazing assortment of bid parties from all over Europe and even included the Texas 2013 Worldcon bid. It was a great success, everybody mingling, sampling the freebies and getting to know a whole lot of people from just about everywhere. Amongst the people I remember meeting were

Anders Hedenlund and his daughter Alice. We had actually chatted earlier in the day, though the thing that struck me in the evening was Alice saying that she would be going north in the next week or so to help herd reindeer (Alice being part Sami I think), I couldn't help thinking about how big a country Sweden was, culturally as well as physically.

The free food and drinks from across the continents flowed on. The pickled herrings and baked fat on bread (yummy...), Croatian wine, Ukrainian vodka, salted liquorice (double yummy ...), various beers and other assorted delights too numerous to mention. British Fandom won't be surprised to read that the last contingent to leave the building came from these very shores. The end of the night obviously approaching with the arrival of clear liquid in small plastic water bottles – when the moonshine comes out it is probably time to call it a night.

We left, but I didn't want to go back to hotel just yet. It was two in the morning and virtually daylight outside. I went for a walk around the city to get a feel for what the place looked like at this unearthly hour, it was totally unreal how light it was! By three, even I was feeling a touch tired, and made my way back to the hotel. There was a programme item I was looking forward to in seven hours time. I wanted to find out more about Moomins!

And so I did, and apparently they are nothing like the TV series that was shown a few years ago. I made a note to find some of the books and explore further... So after finding out about one cultural fantasy, I went for an

early lunch and returned for another one, The Dr Who Phenomenon.

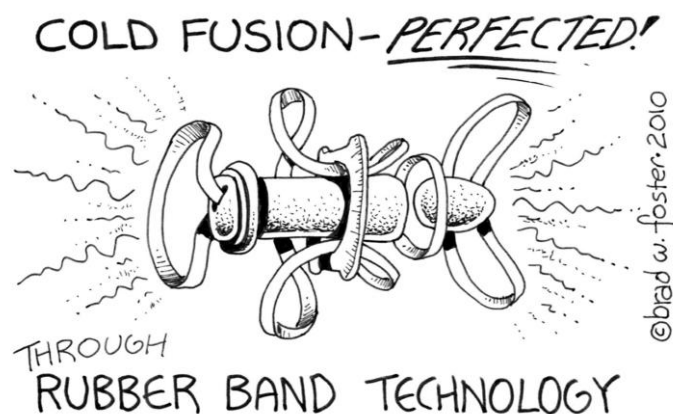
Sunday was a very wet day. It had rained a bit walking to the con in the morning, but it poured down on the return to the hotel in the afternoon. I had found a small international church I wanted to call into on the way to the Dead Dogs Party and so reached the first party venue only to find that plans were afoot to move to a bigger one. Too many fans, not enough chairs... The party moved, onwards to the English Pub (on a quiz night – have I ever told you how much I dislike quiz nights?), and when closing time approached (11 pm I think) we shuffled on to a club, about forty or so of us, with doormen that looked like they were not for persuading. Somehow, Bellis talked them round (I have to admit, I was impressed Anders!), and the remaining fans made their way into the bar, talked and laughed for another hour or so before dispersing out into the rain. It was a really good night, and a great end to a great convention!

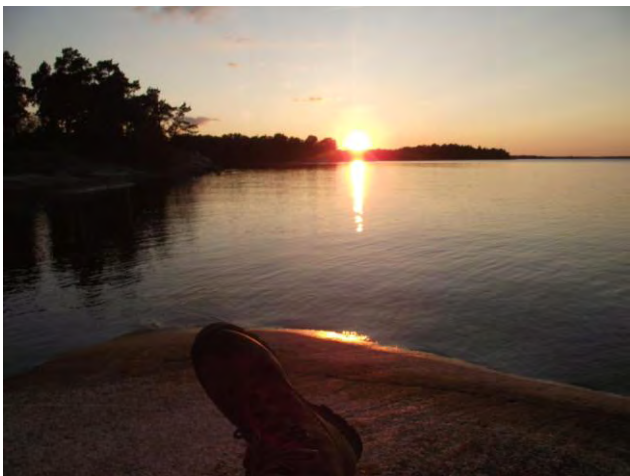
Monday came, the rain stopped, the bags packed, the bills settled and the door closed. It was high time to be heading for home.

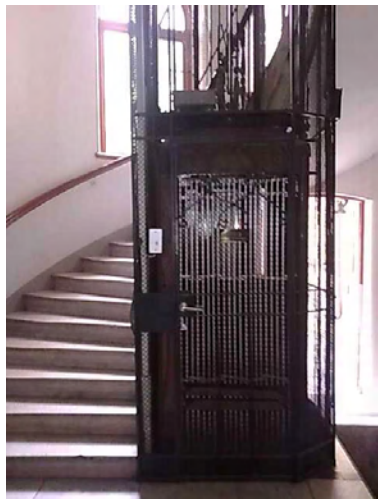
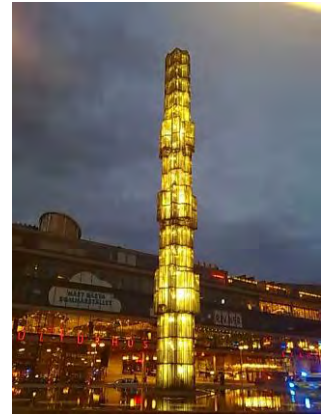
The subway journey was simple enough, but leaving Stockholm itself was pretty depressing, a few more days and I would have seen a lot more of the place. The Arlanda Express tore off north to the airport at two hundred kilometres per hour and before I knew it I had checked in the baggage and was waiting for my flight. So far so good; gifts bought (I had even managed to find a snowstorm for my collection), last bar of Plopp chocolate eaten and clock ticking nicely. Then the message over the intercom that you don't really want to hear, 'Due to air traffic control technical problems, all flights are delayed, please wait for further instructions'. Air traffic control is deemed a useful thing to have when flying so this news was a little disconcerting. Never mind... The board went red, one line at a time.

Fortunately the flight home was only delayed by an hour or so.

And now? Plans are afoot for a return family holiday next summer. Latest ideas include a few nights in Stockholm then a week or so in the Darlena region centred round Lake Siljan. I can't wait!







# TRAILS AND ALES

## CHRISTINA LAKE

Cornwall is full of good walking country. There's the coastal path, overlooking dramatic scenery of cliffs and sea, meandering among abandoned tin mines and engine house, skirting hidden inlets, and rivers full of boats. Or heading inland there's the stark spaces of Bodmin Moor or the wild countryside of the Penwith peninsula, littered with standing stones.

But I often feel that all this walking country is wasted on my fannish friends. When they come to visit they're more interested in the fish restaurants, pubs, strange alternative shops and second hand bookstores. Not that there's anything wrong with these, but for some reason I feel that the best way to appreciate Cornwall is to set out on a good walk. There's something exciting about planning a really long walk; the more miles the better, I think in advance. But sometimes it helps to be realistic. Cornwall can be cruel to those who don't do their homework properly. For example, Doug and I planned a walk from Port Quinn across to Port Isaac and back. This is just a couple of miles along the coast path, so we thought it wouldn't take us much time, we'd have a bit of food in one of the pubs and stroll back. We hadn't noticed that the walk was described as "strenuous", or looked closely enough at the map to see the cluster of contour lines, which should have warned us that this

particular stretch of the coastal path goes up and down like a roller coaster. Our quick walk turned into a ninety minute slog, down to sea level then back up again, and we barely made it to Port Isaac in time before the pubs stopped serving for lunch. On the way back we cheated and found a short cut across some fields that cut out a few descents and ascents, but we were still pretty worn out by the time we reached the car.

Another time, a couple of friends were visiting with big plans to take the ferry across to St Mawes, and another tinier ferry across to Place, then walk to Portscatho for lunch. It was only May, but the weather had turned unseasonably hot, and the walk round this beautiful and secluded part of the south coast turned into a bit of a challenge. We'd seriously underestimated how long it would take to walk to Portscatho, and spent far too long admiring the lighthouse on St Anthony Head (aka the Fraggie Rock lighthouse) and discovered that far from reaching the coastal town in plenty of time for lunch we'd be pushing ourselves to get there any time before two. To add to our worries, we had to make sure that we made it back to the Place Ferry in time to catch a ferry that would connect with the last ferry back to Falmouth. While St Mawes to Falmouth is only a short 15 minute ferry ride, the trip by road is considerably longer, and lacking in a frequent bus service, would probably require an expensive taxi ride. In the end we gave into the joint exigencies of sunstroke and fiscal prudence and curtailed our walk so that we could go back to St Mawes for lunch instead.

But mostly my problem is under-ambition. There always seems to be other calls on my time at weekends - like writing articles for fanzines, for example. So instead of dedicating the whole day to finally walking the coastal path between St Agnes and Perranporth, or maybe even attempting to traverse from Porthleven to the Lizard, we just opt for one of our old favourites like the walk from Swanpool Beach on the edge of Falmouth along the coastal path to Maenporth. This takes about half an hour and gets you to a wild-looking sandy beach, with a good beach cafe and a highly-rated gastropub (though the views from the beach cafe are better!). We have also been known to carry on from Maenporth out to the Rosemullion Head, which has beautiful views and adds an extra half hour on to the walk (or two hours if you take the wrong path on the way back). Happily, Cornwall doesn't actually require the commitment of a long walk. On a sunny day almost anywhere on the coast repays a visit, and even the tired old local walks feel different every time. The light changes, the tide moves up and down, and the boats keep rearranging themselves on the horizon. So while I hanker for a Samaria Gorge moment (Crete's talismanic long walk) or the thrill (and, to be honest, slog) of a day climbing up Ben Nevis, Cornwall does seem to lend itself to bite-sized walks and slobbering around, moving from pub to pub. And this seems to be an agenda which really suits our fannish visitors. Falmouth has three pubs right on the Harbour. Our favourite is The Front, which is deservedly Camra Kernow's pub of the year, as it has set up its own real ale barrel bar, and keeps a pleasing array of beers on tap. It also serves local ciders, Grandma's

Weapon's Grade Ginger beer and a mean selection of rums and other spirits. There's also The Chain Locker, an old harbour-side pub full of nautical paraphernalia, which has the best views of the harbour in its extensive outside seating area, and some quite decent beer.

Falmouth has also acquired an excellent specialist beer bar – The Hand Bar. We only take our friends there if they are very into beer as it's pretty expensive. Ron will understand what that means when I say that some beers in the bar were sold more cheaply in Sweden than they were in Falmouth! The Hand specialises in imports from Belgium and the States. Doug is currently drinking his way through the Anchor brewery range, while I've been trying out various blondes and pale ales. One evening we were served beer in a third of a pint measure – but it was Double Dog Pale Ale, a very intense brew weighing in at 11.5%. We also went to a beer tasting there given by the Head Brewer at Sharps (Sharps are a much better brewery than their signature beer Doom Bar suggests). His brewing style was shall we say influenced by Belgium beers, and he also produced the most gorgeously chocolate stout I've ever tasted (Chechen Grand Imperial Stout). Unfortunately, he only brewed a small batch and it's not commercially available. But we made the most of what he'd brought along after the tasting!

The pubs of West Cornwall owe a lot to another local phenomenon – the Post Office in Constantine. Constantine is a small village in the hinterland of Falmouth with a rather nice pub – The Trengilly Wartha Inn – which does excellent food and has a huge whisky

collection. It's down a winding lane from Constantine, very easy to miss in the dark, and more fun to cycle down than back up if you're approaching the pub by bike for a lunch time pint in the garden. But it's a local legend, almost as famous as the Pandora Inn was before it burned down this spring (though the Pandora, which is currently being rebuilt, has the advantage of being accessible by boat or water taxi). Anyway, back to the Post Office. I didn't immediately connect the Trengilly Wartha's well-stocked whisky bar (nor indeed the endless supplies of excellent rums available at The Front) with the Post Office, because until you actually go into the Post Office, even if you have been told by work colleagues who you trust, you really can't believe the sheer quantity of space devoted to booze in all its varieties. Whiskies, rums, gins, vodkas – flavoured and even sparkling - liqueur bottles in all shapes, sizes and colours, and, very much secondarily, a substantial side order of wines and beers. Trips to the Post Office have proved distinctly popular with some of our visiting friends – fannish or otherwise!

We also owe a lot to the local brewers. When I first started going down to Cornwall I was pleasantly surprised to find that there were some decent local beers – which in those early days were mainly from the St Austells brewery, and the late-lamented Ring-A-Bells of North Cornwall. But once we moved into Falmouth, we developed a new loyalty to the Skinners beers, brewed in Truro. Kocker, a light, summery ale remains my favourite, but they also do Betty Stoggs, prize winning bitter, the luscious but not overly sweet Heligan Honey and come Oyster Festival time, Pennycomequick stout. But the Cornish



beer scene is ever expanding. Each Falmouth beer festival, the Cornish brewery stand gets larger, with even more brewers represented. And then there is Spingo, brewed by the Blue Anchor in Helston, one of the oldest pubs still brewing its own beer. Spingo is a bit of a lottery as you can never be sure which strength of Spingo will be on tap at any time, and if you start a session on Spingo Special at 6.5% then the next day can be quite cruel. But the Blue Anchor is a great old pub, with numerous nooks and crannies, local atmosphere and the occasional local folk and blues bands. It also runs the legendary Helstonbury – Helston's answer to Glastonbury, which takes place in July in the beer garden and skittle alley (or the Acoustic Stage and Cannon Stage as they are called for the duration).

So perhaps it's time for me to accept that visiting Cornwall to enjoy the pubs and the beer is just as valid as going out on walks to experience the scenery. One way to combine the two strengths of Cornwall - walking and beer - is to take the bus to Helston and walk from Helston down to the sea at Loe Bar. Loe Bar, regrettably, is not a beer bar but a sand bank between the sea and Loe Pool, but it is very scenic, and you can carry on along the coast to Porthleven, which has two pubs, or complete a circular walk back round to Helston and have a pint or two in the Blue Anchor. Visitors of a sedentary disposition can of course skip the walk and just stay in the pub.



Shep.. '91.