

THE FORTNIGHTLY FIX

#Six



Milestones and Millstones

To the Falcon in Willenhall, to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of my old friend and *Critical Wave* partner Martin Tudor [pictured below]. As well as members of his family and a couple of childhood chums whose arrival obviously comes as a pleasant surprise, there's a healthy contingent from the MiSFITs (the more informal of the region's two sf groups), including Tony Berry, Helena Bowles, Simon Dearn, Richard Standage and Alan Woodford (who unfortunately has to leave early, as his wife Anne is suffering from a post-xmas bug).

The conversation soon drifts onto the future of Novacon, which has become dangerously reliant upon a half-dozen committee veterans, several of whom are considering taking a sabbatical after this year's instalment. Whilst the Birmingham Science Fiction Group (Novacon's titular organiser) might once have recruited replacements from within its ranks, membership has dramatically contracted over the past decade and it's doubtful the answer lies there. I'd previously mentioned to Martin that I might up to chairing the 2011 event, having last held that post three years ago, but I could hardly be expected to run Novacon single-handedly.

It's at this point that Heloise Tudor (my younger god-daughter) and Maggie Standage-Bowles either volunteer (or are press-ganged, it's hard to tell) to fill in the gaps, probably dragging in Magz's brother Danny and my elder god-daughter Rachael Wright along the way. *Novacon: the Next Generation*. It's an insane idea -- very nearly as bonkers as the time I found myself the putative chair of a UK bid for the 1989 worldcon -- but it sounds like the Brum Group better come up with a better solution if Novacon is going to reach its fortieth birthday, and soon.



Moving Pictures [the sequel]

Back in issue four, the checklist of films I'd caught on the big screen during 2009 had reached seventy-seven by the end of November. Just to bring it up to date, the final month added a further thirteen: *2012*; *The Box*; *Cracks*; *Das weisse Band* (aka *The White Ribbon*); *Descent: Part 2*; *Law Abiding Citizen*; *Me and Orson Welles*; *Nowhere Boy*; *Paranormal Activity*; *Planet 51*; *A Serious Man*; *Sherlock Holmes*; *Where the Wild Things Are*.

Perhaps as a side-effect of all this cinemagoing, I had the bizarre experience the morning after Martin's party of dreaming that I was among the audience of an incomprehensible Russian movie, complete with bewildering editing and unintelligible subtitles. However, dire as I can recall this fantastical enterprise being, it was still nowhere near as disappointing as *Knowing*.



Down the Loccol

Andy Hooper: “Ah, you have lured me from the cave of gafia with your ensmallled (yet still imaginary) fanzine. I'm tempted to print it out, since it is so pleasantly short, but if I had started that crap with Chris Garcia, I would now have a pile of paper that would easily reach the ceiling. But if you insist on publishing only online, how will future generations make money by selling your fanzines on eBay? Have we really thought this transition from paper through? Of course it is all old news for some people. It seems like I have been reading letters from Lucy Huntzinger, in which she insists that she does not miss paper fanzines at all, for almost 20 years. Of course, I read most of those letters in paper fanzines myself, so I am admittedly slow to begin missing them.”

I fully intend to return to the ‘dead tree’ format in the near future, but given my current financial circumstances, there is no way whatsoever I could produce *The FFix* in any other medium but electronic. It's that or nothing, folks.

“Long lists of books read and movies seen always put me in mind of the late Bill Bowers, who made them such a regular feature of his fanzines. Your tally of movies for 2009 is impressive, if possibly a bit compulsive. *Watchmen* was my favorite film of the year, so I'm glad that was one of the pictures you actually went to twice. And see, if I went to a movie called *Lesbian Vampire Killers*, I don't know if I would advertise that fact. *Jennifer's Body* and *Pandorum* are damning enough... But even with repertory and campus films, I know it would be a challenge to find 75 movies I wanted to see in a single year, and I congratulate you on making the effort.

“I'm curious to see if I can appreciate the 3-D process in *Avatar*; I imagine you'll be seeing that as well, so you must let me know how your eyes deal with it.

“A season after the fact, I'm still very pleased that you were able to come to my birthday party as part of your TAFF trip. It certainly will stand out among the most memorable birthday celebrations I've had -- no live band, but a TAFF winner is no slouch. There were what, three other TAFF winners and a DUFF winner there as well? After all, anyone can have a *Nebula* winner at their barbecue...”

“Short fanzines need short letters, so I'll send this on now. Thanks for the zinery, and for publishing that quote -- oh, halcyon 2001, when the world was full of hope and light and Internet ponzi schemes...”

It was great to meet up with you and Carrie during my stay in Seattle, Andy. As you might have heard, there was an impromptu fan fund version of *The Usual Suspects* the following evening, with a half-dozen TAFF winners (Stu Shiffman, Randy Byers, Victor Gonzalez, Suzanne Tompkins, Ulrika O'Brien and myself), plus a brace of DUFF delegates (Jerry Kaufman and John D Berry). I may well try setting something similar up when Anne Murphy and Brian Gray visit the UK this Easter.



[Photograph above by Hal O'Brien]

Brad Foster: "Wow, that's one heck of a viewing list. Cindy and I have actually cut way back on the movie-going stuff, just too expensive these days. I figure everything will eventually show up on the tube, and I can not only watch it, but still get some work done at my drawing board at the same time. We're also lucky to have some friends who get the DVD version of just about everything that comes out, so we've seen some of the big-event things for free over at their place. But still, *tons* of movies we've yet to see, and your long list made me drool in envy!"

Murray Moore: "One of your correspondents misses fanzines as objects. We are having our basement renovated. Everything comes out but the furnace, washing machine and dryer. Many, many fanzine objects. Being a stamp collector suddenly seems so much more practical."

Jerry Kaufman: "I just skimmed [*The Ffix #5*] and got a little shock from hearing that Rob Holdstock had died. I never met him, but I enjoyed his *Mythago Wood* books, and he was always one of those fannish myths himself in his place in British fandom."

John Purcell: "Awesome fundage report on TAFF! Should I earn this year's DUFF nod, my goal is to fill the coffers as much as I possibly can. That part of the task actually sounds like a lot of fun. We shall see what happens."

"Lloyd Penney mentioned a couple of DVD acquisitions. We haven't done that, but last night my wife and I enjoyed *Get Smart* (very funny movie, and I think Steve Carrell made a fine Maxwell Smart, but Alan Arkin stole the show as Chief of CONTROL) and the remake of *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. It wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be, although Keanu Reeves' one-dimensional acting skills were admirably exploited for full effect. It was a pretty-looking remake, but I didn't like the ending: I miss Michael Rennie's admonition to the human race to shape up or it's curtains, kids. Overall, enjoyable enough."

"I absotively *love* the bacover by Brad Foster! No doubt about it, Foster's one of the best. And to think I just missed seeing him at Fencon VI this past September. *fout* Well, I'll have other chances in the future."

Personally, I found the *Still* remake dull and overlong, any dramatic tension swept off in a tide of monotone computer graphics. The *Get Smart* reboot was entertaining enough, though.

Lloyd Penney: "The TAFF race seemed to go well this year: good candidates all around, but at least Frank Wu has a Hugo to console himself with. Good idea on the Tuckerizations. Is there a list of fans Tuckerized in SF stories?"

"We did see movies at Christmas time.. on DVD, that is. For fun movies, it was *Up* and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. We also have *Star Trek* to see, and there are a few other movies we might go to. Given the choice between the movie house and the video store, it's the latter."

"And finally the typical Brad Foster madness. Brains, brains, brains! Where does Brad get his ideas? A mail order house in Schenectady? I thought that's where they all came from."

Regarding that particular illustration, I threw a bunch of potential themes at Brad and rather than just one sticking to his drawing-board, they *all* did. As he told me at the time,



my suggestions “just blasted into the core of my brain, and by the end of the day, I had completed the fillo”. Needless to say, I was delighted with the results.

I also heard from: Curt Phillips (“I happened to be on eFanzines as [*The FFix #4*] was posted and read it right away. A good zine, Steve.”); Eddie Trenchcoat (“Bet you wished you’d thought of calling your yulltide edition the ‘fifthive’ issue, eh?”); Felicity Walker (cheers for the feedback in *BCSFazine #440*); Richard King; Paul Birch; Dave Hardy; Jean Weber; Taral Wayne; Chris Holmes (“It was nice to reconnect with you, after so many years apart, and meeting here in Toronto was a special bonus!”); Spike Parsons (“Santa’s left a zine in the ol’ stocking - excellent!”); Hope Leibowitz (“Great Brad Foster art, even if it is sort of xmas related.”); John D Berry (“Sorry I couldn’t catch up with you when I was in Birmingham last month. I managed to have a drink with Peter Weston, but that was it, fannishly. It was a very quick visit for professional purposes, and I had typographic social obligations.”).

Let’s Send a Rocket to the Moon!



As a number of friends have been reminding me today, the nominations process has begun for this year’s Hugo Awards. Might I humbly suggest that those of you eligible to nominate consider the British science fiction movie *Moon* for the “dramatic presentation (long form)” category?

Even if you choose to vote for another movie or tv miniseries on the final ballot, it would be really good to see an intelligent, non-cgi-driven sf entry reach the Hugo shortlist, and it might also help director Duncan Jones secure funding for his next project, *Mute*.

This has been *THE FORTNIGHTLY FIX #6*, dated 4 January 2010. Once again, the person to blame is Steve Green, who can be reached via stevegreen@livejournal.com. Artwork by David “Tozo” O’Connell (pg.1, pg.4), Arthur “Atom” Thomson (pg.2), Brad “W” Foster (pg.3). My usual thanks to Bill Burns and eFanzines.com for online distribution.

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