



More Balls 5

March 2010

You only get an Ooo from Corflu



Would you just look at the time. .

Where has the last year gone? I was completely convinced that I'd produced a fanzine last April but it turns out that I'd planned to and what I had was a file name and nothing else. Although with one thing and another I'm not surprised.

Where were we? More Balls 4 had me running round Merseyside mid 2008 looking for statues but then my life took a very unexpected turn and I found myself, once again, distracted from fannish activities by a bout of ill-health. I'm getting rather bored of going to conventions while recovering from surgery[1] and would like it to stop now, please. I'm feeling a lot better, thankfully, which is a good job as I have a GUFF race to manage.

Yes, GUFF, the fanfund that transports fans between Europe and Australasia is on the southbound leg, just in time for Aussiecon 4. I've a lovely pair of candidates for you and pdfs of the voting form are available online at

<http://pcwww.liv.ac.uk/~lister/guff/guff2009.pdf>

The following article sums up my experience of running in the fund and explains why I think fan funds should continue to be supported.

[1] I was very tempted to rename my fanzine "no ovaries"

The Unreliable Narrator— Post-Trip Mopping Up

The following article is based on the final part of my trip report (which is beautifully formatted graphically but so far lacking in paragraphs.)

Homesick, teary post-film, and feeling rather tired I arrived back in the UK. The trip through customs was blissfully simple and Dad was ready to collect me at the gate. He had my niece with him which was good as I had to keep myself composed and not dissolve into an emotional lump. It then took a few days to get back onto and emotional even keel. Then, ready to get on with reality, I came to a decision: after 15 years time had come to quit as a Brownie Leader. I was sad to give up but my GUFF trip had put into focus how much stress it caused me on a weekly basis.



My first duty as the returned GUFF delegate was to fulfil an election promise, namely to deliver my trip report through the medium of interpretive dance at Year of The Teledu. This was a fantastic and fun con that took place over a weekend in July in 2007. The pro-

gramme was developed interactively on a wiki and my trip report took place during the Saturday Cabaret.



Of course, it's difficult to dance interpretively while reading a script so Liz gamely stepped in as a stunt Ang and while various characters stepped up to act out parts of the report (Lisa Lagergren as a wallaby, Tobes Valois as a koala, Mark as himself) I ran around the stage fuelled by most of a bottle of wine and sheer terror. It went down quite well and the sight of the massed ranks of fandom singing "Cuddly Koalas" will live with me for a long time.



First fannish job done it was on to the nitty gritty of fan fund administration: a) raise funds, b) administer the next two races, and c) write a report.

Raising funds in the UK is eased

along by the magnificent efforts of the League of Fan Funds. Claire, Flick and Alison now have me pretty much at their disposal at conventions and I will be there when a table needs manning, an auction needs a runner, or a potato needs a name. It's a job I particularly enjoy which is lucky as I can see it being a lifelong duty.

The next race was great fun. In April 2009 I had Sue Ann and Trevor to stay but, obviously, I can't say too much about it because that belongs in their trip report. I don't think I terrified them too much with my random approach to direction and my sat nav's seeming need to send us on the scenic route to most places. In my defence I'd only just returned to work full time after surgery [2] AND they removed a whole roundabout from Bradford [3]. I'M JUST SAYING.

My final job is to write the trip report which, I have to say, hasn't been easy. Despite the best of intentions it sat as a named file, stalled for the best part of two years. GUFF winners have not got a good record for completing reports but as the past few UK delegates have managed to publish something I'd hate to let the side down, particularly as the report is the only thing fans ask for, really, as a product of your trip. Without the report what, really, is the point of the fanfunds?

Well, when I stood for and won GUFF there was no way that I would have taken such a trip independently. My non-fannish friends and family have no interest in travelling to Oz and I would be looking at spending the bulk of my time alone. Although I could be fairly confident that old friends like Alison would welcome me into their homes I would have been financially restricted to maybe travelling to one or two places and would have been mindful of the imposition I would place. I could only have travelled for a couple of weeks at most and even if I had decided to travel over for a convention there would be no guaran-

tee that any fans I knew would be there. It could have been a lonely and expensive mistake.

Travelling under the auspices of the fund does two things It gives you an automatic introduction to fans in the destination country, many of whom will not have heard of you but will have heard of the fund. If not, they will have heard of one or two of your nominators. It gives you a degree of commonality in a field that has encompasses a wide variety of interests.

Secondly you get to represent and strengthen the bonds between the different fannish communities. You do this by travelling overseas and also by meeting different fans who invite you into your home. Suddenly you join this community of fan fund winners and friends of the fund. Before the fund I'd have thought twice before inviting a winner to stay in my home as I'm slightly out of the way of the big fan groups and I would worry that it wouldn't be exciting enough. Now I'd happily offer anyone room to stay [4]. I'm also making every effort to attend the upcoming Worldcon in Australia which, if my experience of Australian fandom is anything to go by, is going to be a fantastic, exciting, warm, welcoming and relaxing experience.

Yes, having never imagined that I would ever travel to Australia, I'm planning to travel for Worldcon and I spent time there at Christmas this year for a friend's wedding. I was warned before my trip that travel to Australia could become a habit and it seems to be the case.

[2] I'd originally put a joke in here about it not being compulsory for GUFF candidates to have had surgery and then, while I was writing this, James Shields managed to fall over running for a train and fracture his wrist. While I admire his dedication to the cause it simply wasn't necessary. And don't get me started on Doug Spencer and his habit of falling down stairs.

[3] Proving, if there was any doubt, that roundabouts really do hate me.

[4] Although not right at this moment. About 15 months ago surgery looming, I dumped a whole load of old bedroom furniture as the first step in household renovations. Since then there have been desultory attempts at removing the cruft that filled the furniture and now we are finally at the point that the spare bedroom is being re-decorated. Unfortunately this means that not only do I have no spare bed, still, but that all the books, magazines, old chargers, shed cat hairs and craft supplies are now cluttering up my bedroom and my dining room. Which in a two up, two down means there's very little space left for me. Who knows where I'll be able to put the seed nursery this year...

More Balls is available "for the usual" from:

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Email: lister@liv.ac.uk

Or as a pdf file via that new fangled interweb thingy:

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/~lister/balls/>

A page that also includes links of interest connected with this fanzine.

Ang's livejournal is at:

http://ang_grrr.livejournal.com/

She also plays a lot of Bejeweled on Facebook and appears as [ang_grrr](#) on Twitter..

With thanks to James Shields for photographs of Teledudes in action.