



**March 2015**



Well, by the time you read this Corflu in Newcastle Upon Tyne will either be going on, or will have passed. In the case of the former, I hope you will have a warm and rosy glow of anticipation at the fun you are about to endure. If it is the latter, I hope you are all revelling in a warm and cosy glow that is the fanzine equivalent of having a back-rub by Geri Sullivan. (I am starting up a franchise at Corflu - \$50 a time).

Thanks to all my regular loccers. You know who you are. You should also know you are what make this fanzine what it is, or what it isn't. What is it? Well it's not an opportunity to inflict my political prejudices on any others, unlike a lot of Facebook. I also don't publish cute picture of cats, but then I publish few photos anyway.

I like to think of Vibrator as an open source for comment and discussion, a sort of monthly community tied into what is essentially a print publication, just like those issues of Mother's Weekly, and Young Boy's Science Digest you used to enjoy.

Many of us have these discussions on various internet forums, and that is all very well, but my ambition is to tie them all together, and create a chronological journal we can all enjoy. If you don't like it, piss off.

As usual you can write to me at [graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk](mailto:graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk), or send snail mail to 45 Kimberley Gardens, London N4 1LD, UK. This issue is dated March 2015. If Pat has proof read it you will not see this. Thanks as ever to Steve Stiles for the cover, and Ian Williams for the cats. Deadline for the next issue should be April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015

## ***LET'S START OFF THIS TIME WITH UNCLE MIKE'S RISIBLE CLERIHWS***

**(This time Mike has dedicated his verses to some of the Superstars of Corflu).**

Doctor Robert Jackson  
Used to be very lax on  
All matters dietary: eating healthily was not on his agenda.  
But now there's Coral, who works hard to keep him slender.

Steve Stiles  
Who's won lots of FAAn awards by miles  
Said "They're okay, but a Hugo is what I really covet:  
"If I won one this time I'd love it."

Ian Sorensen  
Has travelled far to meet with fans beneath a foreign sun,  
So he won't be expecting undue hassle  
On a piddling trip to Newcastle.

Ted White  
When at Corflu, likes to stay up all night,  
Which is why we don't see him next day until noon,  
And even that is sometimes too soon.

Sullivan (not Peter - Geri)  
Has a disposition unfailingly merry.  
Her smile, ear-to-ear, became wall-to-wall  
When the Corflu Fifty gave her the call.

Claire Brialey  
Has not succumbed entirely  
To her day job, which is hugely taxing.  
Perhaps at Corflu she can do some relaxing?

Mike Meara

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**HERE'S UNCLE JOHNNY, FRESH FROM HIS LATEST BOUT OF DIALYSYS, OPTIMISTIC AS EVER**

Thanks for keeping me on your list chief. I may not have responded to a few recent issues but as you know, I have been otherwise occupied. I have read and enjoyed all of them and 13 is no exception.

I wanted to say something about old guitar instrumentals, about how the sound was so important, so heavily reliant as it was on reverb and echo. Did the Shadows copy that from the Ventures or was it the other way round? I think you assumed that the Shadows did not impact much in the States, but in fact they were more successful over there than Cliff was. Apache was a monster hit worldwide. In the late eighties, somebody made a record which was Apache with lyrics and a different middle eight, but I am absolutely bugged if I can remember who that was - some guitar and recording wizz. Suggestions on a pocsard please.

Wonderful Land was also big internationally. Mike Oldfield did a version of that that is worth hearing.

Another worldwide instrumental hit was Telstar by The Tornados, though of course the lead instrument there is a big old Hammond organ, and the Joe Meek production is just superb. It brings tears to my eyes every time I hear it. I will go so far as to say that that record is the greatest instrumental record of all time.

Ted White was right about the original Star Trek series. It was very bad Science Fiction. The Star Trek Next Generation wasn't very much better, but at least had better characters, Patrick Stewart's Jean-Luc Picard, the stunning Marina Sirtis as Counsellor Troy, that certainly generated emotional response. And the subsequent ST spin off's became very much better than you could ever have hoped for from the original 1960's series, particularly Deep Space Nine.

Similarly, I am personally certain the original Battlestar Galactica with Lorne Green et al would never have been made if somebody in Hollywood hadn't thought they could cash in on the success of Star Wars. But if they hadn't made it, there would never have been the reboot BSG, which, very possibly was the best TV SF ever. I know its a large and probably dumb claim, but that's the way I feel about it. I long for something like BSG to come around again. Instead, what do we get? Dr Who, that's what we get.

See you soon my love

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**NOW JOSEPH NICHOLAS HAS TAKEN A FEW MOMENTS FROM HIS ALLOTMENT AND HIS BATHROOM RENOVATIONS TO RESPOND**

I'm not at all clear why you think I might be the best person to provide advice on purchasing a dress - because, having nothing to place in the top half of such a garment, I have never bought one. This is why I wear skirts....well, it's one of the reasons I wear skirts; the others may be too numerous to list, but having fabulous legs (the best pair of legs in the Food Standards Agency, it was generally agreed - my female colleagues were deeply jealous) is doubtless the strongest factor. So I could give you advice on skirts, although you're just a few weeks too late to rummage through and have your pick (if any fitted you) of the skirts I recently edited from my collection: things bought on a whim which

didn't quite suit, things which were no longer in style, things bought for work but which I am never likely (having retired) to wear again. They all went to Oxfam in Wood Green, our favoured place for the disposal of excess clutter -- we once took some clothes we no longer wanted to the Mind shop in Stoke Newington Church Street, but the staff looked at our offerings as though they were excrement: because in Stoke Newington Church Street, unless you're a rail-thin yummy mummy decked out in designer finery, you're nothing. (Mind you, that hasn't stopped us buying stuff from that Mind shop, because it sells its designer clobber at amazingly low prices. I once obtained a pair of Ecco leather sandals for £5 which had hardly been worn; and a Fat Face tiered skirt for the same price which (apart from -- presumably -- being tried on in the shop) had never been worn at all, the clue there being that (apart from a price tag) it still had all its labels attached.) All that aside, I'd need a bit more information from you about why you need this advice before I could start offering you any -- such as: what is the occasion? What is your preferred length? What fabric and cut? Do you have a preferred label? What is your price range? And so on and so forth....

Noting all the comments from other writers about their former favourite musical artistes, I open my mouth to respond in kind -- but then decide to close it again without saying anything. An exchange of lists of this nature -- you can find reams and reams of them in Bruce Gillespie's fanzines (favourite novels re-read this year, favourite new opera recordings, that sort of thing) -- helps to fill pages, but is unlikely to convince anyone else to change their opinions. I am partial to (some) Irish, Scottish and English folk music, for example; but I suspect that nothing I say about it will persuade anyone who prefers jazz or R&B to spend a few hours listening to Cara Dillon or Julie Fowlis, simply because what those singers offer lies outside their preference envelope. (Especially as Fowlis sings mostly in Gaelic.) Thus I deny Vibrator's readers the opportunity to learn why I think Gregorian chant is a load of pointless choral woobling....

More later, possibly -- I have some photographs of the latest work on our bathroom to post to Facebook!

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### **JIM LINWOOD STARTS OFF WITH A BIT OF SARCASM**

Thanks for the weekly edition of Vibrator.

When *Star Trek* first appeared in 1966 several US fans raved about it in their fanzines but it appeared over here to the widespread disappointment of Anglofans who had the same view of the programme as yourself and Ted White. It also had to compete with three more superior SF homegrown programmes on British television: *Out of the Unknown*, *The Prisoner* and (to a lesser extent) *Doomwatch* -- *Dr Who* was still aimed at children. We did applaud *Star Trek's* depiction of a multi-racial crew but otherwise found it dull and formulaic. Two of the early episodes that stood out from the rest, *The City on the Edge of Forever* and *The Doomsday Machine*, were written by Harlan Ellison and Norman Spinrad respectively. Harlan's script was mostly rewritten leading to a drawn-out dispute between him and the producers for failure to pay royalties culminating in a lawsuit in 2009 which was settled to his satisfaction.

Off screen Leonard Nimoy was an interesting character -- he even owned a pet shop: *Nimoy's Pet Pad* in Canoga Park, California.

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# ***OLD GRANNY CHARNOCK'S REMEDIES***

Granny Charnock was a wise woman, wise enough to dress up as a man occasionally, so she could gain access to Working Men's clubs. She kept a book of remedies which I only discovered by rummaging through her drawers after she had died, along with her whalebone corset, several porn magazines, and a membership book for the Ancient Order of the Bingley Foresters' Friendly Society. I often wondered why they allowed her to join; she was notoriously unfriendly and wouldn't even go out of her way to sweep up the dead cats that littered the pavements back in her day, especially on a Saturday night. Nevertheless I have found some of her patent remedies useful over the years and would like to share them with you.

## HAIR LOSS.

Take two mushrooms (preferably ceps) and deliquesce them over a small candle. Add two cardamom pods and some ash from a recently dead fire. Mix the whole with some molten wax from the candle and smear over your scalp. Report to the nearest A&E with second degree burns, for a scalp transplant.

## GOUT

Grandmother Charnock suffered from gout and swore by ten gallons of Guinness delivered intravenously every day, but then she ate huge slabs of steak every day but insisted it was cooked rare, as if that mattered.

## INCONTINENCE.

Granny Charnock used to swear daily by whichever Pope was in office and say ten hail Marys. She claimed this, and the incontinence pads from Tesco's, solved her problem. Well, it certainly didn't make it worse.

## ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

Although she never suffered from this she had to deal daily with Grandfather Charnock and prescribed the venom of the Bolivian Garter Snake which meant he had tented trousers 24/24. She discovered rubbing his penis with a damp flannel would sometimes make the condition go away, but only for several seconds.

## LESBIANISM

Granny Charnock had two spinster friends who told her there was no cure for Lesbianism. Granny told them to go and work in a wool mill in Hebden Bridge for twenty years, but that didn't help, in fact it only served to introduce them to a community of like-minded souls. Who was to blame them; they had been born into a post First World War generation whose young men and their huge alluring cocks had been wiped out by gas and bullets. She had to admit defeat on this one. She once tried scissoring, but found it chafed her thighs. Her remedy for that was grease, any kind of grease, sometimes from the axle-box of my Grandfather's Model T.

## SUICIDAL TENDENCIES

As a staunch believer in The Lord, this was never a problem for Granny Charnock, although after touring the neighbourhood and knocking on people's doors espousing her faith she seemed to come

across many people who subsequently felt suicidal. She would tell them not to buy vast amounts of paracetamol. So a sort of negative remedy really.

#### MIASMIC INFLUENCE

Granny Charnock often felt this first thing in the morning and several times in the afternoon after watching aspirational television on TV, and she didn't even have a TV. She was convinced The Miasma was what the Devil, or Mr Spock as she called him, used to communicate to his chosen vessels. She recommended Parma violets and a censer full of bleach, and kept a bucket of cow dung beside her bed, which let's face it, would keep most things at bay.

#### PEDANTISM

I before E except after C, she would always say, and we would just say, 'some species have insufficient science.' Which used to drive her crazy. Truly there is no cure for Pedantism.

#### SMOG DEPRIVAL

Smog was big in Granny's day when anthropogenic global warming was first beginning to take hold. Many people loved smog because it gave them their daily intake of tar, but Granny was agin it. Her favourite remedy was to close the windows, put a towel over her head, and shiver quietly.

#### CARTOONS

Granny never really understood cartoons. She couldn't differentiate between them and real life. She just concluded the stick characters were very anorexic, whilst Bluto, Wimpy and their like had too many hamburgers to blame for their obesity. Well, they did, and that was even before McDonalds. Her solution was to turn off the TV but she often had an existential crisis about where the tiny white dot went to when it disappeared. She wouldn't go to bed until it had reappeared again after she had fallen asleep in her chair. Which was some kind of result.

I owe my Granny a lot, my love of Country & Western Music and pistachio nuts, my collection of Authentic Science Fiction, and her ancient plywood dildoes which I will one day sell on ebay. I will take her Final Remedy for a Good Life to my grave: Don't die. In fact those were her final words.

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#### **FRED SMITH REVEALS DARK SECRETS ABOUT HIS HISTORY AS A LOUNGE LIZARD**

Many thanks for V 2.0.13 which I think (and hope) I'm in time to loc before that special Corflu ish. I'll be interested to hear what you all get up to at Corflu and rather sorry that I can't make it (even tho' Newcastle isn't that far away).

Your image of me as a "suave nattily-dressed lounge pianist perhaps tinkling away in the cocktail bar of a classy hotel" is not far off. Don't know about "suave" but dinner-suited, playing piano in a classy restaurant and, at other times, with my own trio (plus girl singer) in a cocktail bar. I've also played (mostly jazz) with a variety of groups ranging from five to eight-piece up to sixteen-piece big bands. It was generally acoustic, or "steam", piano until venues discovered that they didn't have to provide pianos and I was forced to go electric first with a Wurlitzer (heavy!) and then a Roland (light) plus hefty amplifier. So from being like all pianists who could turn up at a gig carrying nothing, I joined the ranks of bassists and guitarists humping massive electronic equipment! O tempora o mores!

Sticking with music for the moment I'm rather disappointed in Paul Skelton's reaction to "Happiness Is A Thing Called Joe" especially when it was the record that gave me that genuine shiver up the spine. I certainly wouldn't have called Frances Wayne's version "mannered and artificial". Her phrasing and slight variations from the original melody are carefully worked out between her and the arranger, Ralph Burns (with a contribution from Neil Hefti) and she hits every note dead centre. This

is Art! Incidentally, the You Tube copy of the original Columbia 78 is poor and so fails to give a true impression. The CD in the Woody Herman box set is far better and two LPs of airchecks that I also have are pretty good. The song was written by Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg for the movie version of the musical "Cabin In The Sky" (1943) and sung by Ethel Waters in a kind of wistful, downtrodden way. Unlike Frances Wayne's dramatic interpretation due, in part, to her Italian background; her real name was Chiarina Bertocci and I believe she had some operatic training. The Columbia record was cut in 1945 so the song was fairly new then.

Regarding Glenn Miller I wasn't a big fan of his either although, having played a few of the arrangements, I can appreciate how beautifully written they are. The big bands I really enjoyed, apart from Herman, were Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw and Duke Ellington and, more recently, the lone survivor: Count Basie. I wonder how many of you who profess not to like big bands have ever heard a big band live? Records only give a dim idea of the sound.

Having gone on too long now to write a proper loc all I can say is that I enjoyed it! That's a good cover of Steve's. I must have slow-growing toenails because my socks are showing no signs of shredding. Your book stuff very interesting and no, I don't read much SF now either. Could wax critical of Star Trek (and Star Wars too!) given the time and chance. All I'll say just now is I agree with you and Ted White!

Later! All the Best, Fred

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**PAUL SKELTON DOES WHATEVER ONLY HE CAN DO, ALTHOUGH NO ONE REALLY KNOWS WHAT THAT IS.**

2.0.13, eh? I know I might be a bit late asking this, but did you ever explain your new numbering system, back in issue 1 or 2 perhaps, and I've simply forgotten all about it? I mean, the 2 is obviously because this is the second series (I was going to write 'second coming', but that would ascribe a degree of importance way too high to attribute to even a zippy monthly focal-point fanzine), and equally obviously the 13 equates to the issue number within that series...but what's with the additional 0 sitting like some gooseberry in the middle? My original (admittedly stupid) assumption was that this was the volume number and that you'd chosen to start with a 0 rather than a 1 with some typically insouciant Charnockian *je ne sais quois*. But, here you are having gone beyond both the first twelve months and the first twelve issues and yet the enigmatic zero still sits there. What does this zero mean?

"Gosh Skellers, you must be thick! I thought everyone knew that zero means absolutely nothing. Haw, haw."

"Good Heavens, Choxa old chap, how terribly existential of you."

Anyway, if you did explain it all just point me at the relevant issue and I'll go and refresh my memory.

Excellent cover by Steve Stiles. I like the way, even with the thicker lines, he managed to still convey the element of vibration. But what's this...a mains-powered vibrator? Powerful, I would guess, but is it safe...and furthermore, would anybody really trust that it was?

And here's a surprise...Ian Williams can still be pedantic. I wasn't even aware that there is a style of music which might be perceived to be 'English', whereas there is surely a style of music that may be perceived as 'Irish' (fiddles and squeezeboxes and that sort of stuff, playing traditional Irish tunes), even whilst other Irish music is different and some non-Irish music...etc. etc. I was using 'Irish' to

denote the style every bit as much as the nationality, much as I might use 'cajun' or 'rock' or 'country & western'. Yeah, so sometimes I can be sloppy, but I bet most readers knew what I meant.

I was listening, with Cas, to Radio 5 Live, when they announced Leonard Nimoy's death. The announcer said "He was probably one of the most famous characters on television, Dr. Spock."

"Obviously not quite famous enough," I said to Cas.

Oh, and by the way, don't feel upset because your clerihehew was really a limerick. Console yourself with the fact that had it indeed been a clerihehew it certainly wouldn't have been as good or as funny. For proof I offer you this classic (or at least it ought to be) example...

*Paul Skelton  
once explained to me that he felt an  
insane desire to burn or ban  
all clerihehews because the sodding things would never scan!*

Here at the Skelton National Wildlife Preserve, spring seems to have sprung. Suddenly the sun is shining a lot and in the tiny pond just a couple of days ago 12 frogs were having it away like crazy. "Frogs' Porn", said Cas. Indeed, and as Frogspawn is what we do in fact want them to produce, we have been carefully avoiding the area near the pond so as not to interrupt them. Needing to go into that area today I asked Cas if it was safe to do so, using the not generally used alliterative tongue-twister "Have the frogs finished frantically fucking?" Just think, had there but been two more of them it would have been 25% more alliterative. No wonder I never win the Euromillions when I can't even get the number of frogs right!

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### **ROBERT LICHTMAN CHECKS IN, REGULAR AS THE 2.30 FROM CHATTANOOGIE JUNCTION.**

In your cover note accompanying *Vibrator* 2.0.13, you write: "Please note the next issue will be produced to be distributed at the wonderful Corflu 32 in Newcastle at a special Fanzine Launch Party. Be there or be square. In consequence of this I have brought the publication date of the next issue forward to March 24th. Will Nick Farey make it in time or will his cab be late? Will Robert Lichtman make it at all?" If you mean make it to the convention, you already know the sad answer to that. But here I am a *full week* before your deadline so that, unlike some months, you don't have to sweat out whether I'll get my response in on time or at all.

I loved Steve's cover cartoon, and it made me think backwards in time many decades to my early fannish years. Back then I was still living at home and my mail was subject to inspection and disapproval by my parents, who thought they needed to "protect" me from bad influences. If they had a clue about the function of the depicted device and the meaning of "bush" in relation to it, I suspect they would have Had Words with me. To my knowledge they never held back any fanzines. The one they most disapproved of was Bill Donaho's *Habakkuk*, which exposed me to (gasp!) radical views such as Ray Nelson's lovely article, "How to Be a Beatnik."

It's clear from the details in "Thrilling Shopping Adventure Stories" that the US and UK were on different time lines so far as changes in shopping patterns and convenience are concerned. When I was very young and we lived on the then-edges of Cleveland, Ohio, my mother would put me in a wood-sided coaster wagon (we had no car then) and walk a little over a mile to the closest grocery store. It was the local branch of the A&P, not quite yet a full supermarket but not a corner store, either. Once she'd shopped – and my recollection was that this happened weekly – she'd tuck the grocery sacks around me, caution me to leave them alone (I was *so* obedient then!), and walk home.

We moved to Los Angeles at the end of 1950, and it was a whole other picture. Our first residence there was in an “apartment village” that was immediately adjacent to what I learned from a book many years later was a “pioneering” shopping center, “Crenshaw Village,” that had opened in 1947. These were precursors to malls, differing mainly in not being covered against the weather. There were two major department stores, a bank, a branch of J. C. Penney’s, a very stodgy “health food store,” a chain “drug store,” and a major supermarket chain branch (and much more). We only lived there for around ten months while our house was being built. It was also close to shopping: two chain supermarkets! My father settled on one of them – he did all the family shopping now, because my mother never learned to drive – and I would often accompany him on these excursions. I had some history with the other one – I sold the afternoon newspaper outside the front door (with permission) and later I worked briefly as a “bag boy” (sacking groceries and hauling them out to customers’ cars when requested).

A two-mile circle around where we live would pick up only two supermarkets, but extend that to five miles and you capture where we actually do most of our shopping. This is not to say we don’t occasionally buy at one of those two close-by ones – we follow their sale circulars and shop for price. You refer also to bookstores. There are two in the smaller circle, but both are “best seller” oriented and we seldom/never visit them. The larger radius covers all the stores remaining on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley and some others as well. I suspect that the bottom line is that neither you nor we lack for ample shopping choices given that we both drive to where we need/want to go.

Ian Williams’ and others’ letters about music from the past makes me wonder if you (and *Vibrator* readers in general) are aware of <http://playback.fm/> – where the most popular songs of every year from 1900 on are available for free. This is definitely available in America, and I would hope for you lot over there, too. There’s lots of Glenn Miller for Paul Skelton in the relevant years, for one thing, but I rather doubt that more or less exclusively British groups will be represented. I use this site mostly for musical accompaniment when I’m taking a turn on a stationary bike. Currently I’m making my way through 1955, where there are no less than three versions of the “Ballad of Davy Crockett.”

I enjoyed Nic’s “Tales from the Taxi” (hopefully a) column a lot. I wasn’t surprised to read that in Vegas taxis can’t be “hailed” from curb side since it’s that way here in the East Bay. We mostly don’t use them, but when we do we have to call in to a dispatcher. He asks the addresses on both ends and then sends out a cab. Our preference is the Green Taxi, which runs a fleet of Priuses. About 100% of my taxi rides are to and from our automotive repair shop, since when I’m leaving a car there it’s for service that takes too long to wait around for.

I was also aware of the “medallion” system since San Francisco’s taxi drivers have to own one of them. There are only a limited number, and the prices on resales are huge.

I smiled at one of the reasons to refuse a customer is “You don’t like the way he is dressed.” That could crimp things for certain people at science-fiction conventions. Would *you* want to pick up a Klingon in full regalia!?

Mike Meara’s clerihews were fun!

Your “Ontology of Books” resonated in many places. Unlike yours, my parents *did* have books around the house, but they appeared to me to be a set selection that never grew over the years. Mostly I don’t remember them, but several stick out. One was a hardcover edition of *Arabian Nights* that I remember for the sexy and detailed line drawings scattered here and there, but liberally, throughout. I tried reading some of the words, but I wasn’t ready yet. Another I remember only for the title, *Chicken Every Sunday*. There were some cookbooks and more than a few editions of *Readers Digest Condensed Books*. Even at a young age I knew they weren’t Real Books and pretty much ignored them. But then I found their 1937 “marriage manual,” with its strong emphasis on

religion and right living but also going into explicit detail about stuff like fucking. I was ready for those words, although mostly they created fantasies of what my parents might be doing late at night over in the next bedroom. (Whatever it was, they did it quietly.)

From age twelve I had a newspaper route that earned me some money – much of which I used for buying books (science fiction) and magazines (car-related, like *Motor Trend*, *Car & Driver* and *Road & Track*). Like you, when I got a bike it expanded my book- and magazine-buying range considerably. The best place was a converted house with room after room of piles and stacks and shelves of all manner of reading material. It was there that I found the first issue of *Motor Trend*, from 1949, which was a sort of goshwow moment because it came after I'd been reading the magazine for several years and had seen many references to their "humble beginnings."

I never had any illusions about opening my own bookshop, but I did work in the publishing industry (mostly in sales) for about seven years. The first was with the Farm's Book Publishing Company, and I've written about that (episodically) in *Motorway Dreamer* and *Raucous Caucus*. After that I worked for three years with Paul Williams and his Entwistle Books. It was quite a transition moving from flogging books about natural childbirth and vegetarian cooking to novelized confessions of a pedophile and systems of astrology.

I haven't stopped reading books, but I have tried to slow down buying them – partly because I'm old and would like by this strategy to eventually reach the point where I might actually have read all the ones I've bought that are sitting around in several piles. But then something irresistible comes along....

I was sad when Leonard Nimoy died because I'd heard over the years that he was a Good Person. I didn't watch *Star Trek* when it first appeared, and I'm not even sure that I knew it existed. I wasn't reading very many fanzines during those years, mostly the "fannish" ones, and the existence of the show might not have been mentioned. I did, however, see them all in syndication in the '80s when they were among my sons' and my chosen TV fare. I didn't think that highly of them, remembering that there had been better science fiction on the radio back in the '50s – and on the television, too, with *Science Fiction Theater*. I've found recently that my memory of *Twilight Zone* doesn't hold up to seeing them again. The SyFy channel aired fifty of them on January 1st, marathon-fashion, and we recorded them all. A few are okay, but most are sheer crap.

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### IAN WILLIAMS THOUGHTFULLY LISTS HIS CD COLLECTION

Next to my computer desk are two tall and thin (the opposite of me) CD shelf units. It's not all of my CDs by any means and I doubt if it's even a quarter of the stuff I've got on my Ipod, but here's a list of most of the artists (and some compilations) as they sit on the shelves starting with various artists cheapo box set compilations: Celtic, Jazz, African Funk, African Blues, Afro Lounge, Bhangra, English Folk, Ska, Afrobeat, Chicago Blues.

And now the rest: Echo & the Bunnymen, Hooker 'n' Heat, Howling Wolf, Jimi Hendrix, Bruce Springsteen, Lightnin' Slim, Albert King, John Lee Hooker, Canned Heat, Muddy Waters, Julian Cope/Teardrop Explodes, Stephen Stills, RL Burnside, Youssou N'dour, Fela Kuti, Dylan, Chuck Berry, Blind Willie Johnson, BB King, Lucinda Johnson, Fleetwood Mac, Fotheringay, Patti Smith, Buddy Holly, Gary Moore, Luther Allison, Lou Reed, Mike Oldfield, Frank Zappa, Marvin Gaye, Alela Diane, Thea Gilmore, Joni Mitchell, Imelda May, Cyndi Lauper, Donna Summer, Blondie, Janis Joplin, Afro Celt Sound System, The Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane/Starship, Neil Young, The Byrds, Fairport Convention, Sandy Denny, U2, REM, The Waterboys, ZZ Top, Big Country, Oysterband, Steely Dan, The Searchers, The Rolling Stones, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Eric Clapton, Heart, The Who, Johnny

Cash, The Both, JJ Cale, Aimee Mann, The Ramones, Dion, Yes, Cowboy Junkies, B52s, Chris Rea, and a bunch of classical shit (mostly Vaughan-Williams and sundry collections).\*

As I said, that's by no means the extent of my music collection but it's as good a representation of my taste as you can get. Some are limited to single CDs, others are pretty extensive (Young, Grateful Dead, Springsteen, Albert King, Lightnin' Slim, and U2) and in between. So, there it is for you to either gasp in awe at my superb taste or laugh yourself sick at such a collection of crap. (It's okay, I know it's the former.) But it does lead up to something else.

It seems to be hip to crap on U2 these days despite them being one of the greatest rock bands ever, coming in just behind The Stones and The Beatles, though I enjoy U2 more than either. I've got deluxe editions of Boy, War, October, Achtung Baby, and the lavish box set of The Unforgettable Fire, a total of 16 sets altogether including one live boot, and a live fan club only release, plus another live official download on my Ipod, 17 sets. So I think you could say I'm a fan.

Why? Well, let's see, numerous terrific songs, many of them brilliant anthemic pieces, but also wide in range. Excellent musicianship and The Edge is a fucking good guitarist by any standards -just ask BB King who knows something about electric guitar. Intelligent meaningful lyrics and don't quote some bad ones because U2 often achieve more of an artistic peak in one album than most bands do in their careers. And lastly we have a superb singer who has a very expressive voice which does justice to those lyrics (yes, which he wrote). On top of that the band makes no bones about their commitment to human rights or to (three of the four) Christianity, like the Archbishop of York, a muscular humanitarian Christianity which even atheist me can respect. Maybe their later stuff isn't as good as the older, but how many artists could maintain that high standard of creativity? Not even Young, Dylan and Springsteen could manage that.

I deliberately left Bono till last because it seems that the main reason for disliking U2 is actually a dislike of him rather than the band. Yes, the man can be a prat but his heart's in the right place.

On books.

Being a retired librarian I'm hardly going to pass on that one. I love books. I've loved books since I could read. I remember joining the library on my 7<sup>th</sup> birthday (the age at which you could join in Sunderland. Now, before I retired, when I was asked how old a child had to be to join the library, my answer was succinct, "Born."). I will read books almost anywhere -on buses and almost any other form of transport, having a crap, having a soak in the bath- except in bed. When I go to bed it's to go to sleep.

I've bought books ever since I was allowed to do what I wanted with my pocket money and the first 'adult' book I bought was the Pan paperback edition of Charles Chilton's Journey Into Space (2/-). Eventually I ended up with a pretty substantial SF collection, most of which I sold (along with my comics) when I got married and moved into Susan's small flat. By then SF as a proportion of my reading material was starting to dwindle as I began to prefer crime novels. While I never gave up SF completely once I could afford to start buying books again it tended (and still does) to be on graphic novels. In recent years I've bought a few quality SF reprints, a number being from NESFA Press, and wish I could afford more if only to sit and look at them on the shelf. But my days of collecting anything have long gone. If I'm not going to read it again, I sell it on Amazon. If I'm not going to watch it again, I sell it on Amazon. And if I'm not going to listen to it again I copy it onto my Ipod just in case and then sell it on Amazon which is why I have a 150GB disc that is virtually full and the (still numerous) CDs which remain are those which I treasure. Until I stop treasuring them and ....

\* In a recent post on Facebook I mentioned my uncharacteristic liking for the current UK Eurovision entry, an engaging piece of faux-swing. I should add that after watching it I got in my car and once under way played RL Burnside at top volume -electric Blues as raw as you can get.

(EDITOR: Thanks for this Ian, but please don't anyone else list all the CDs they possess or even a small proportion of them.)

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### **DAVID REDD WANTS US TO MOVE ON FROM THE SHADOWS. SO, MOVE IT!**

Thanks for the paper Vib. Not sure about that shades-of-grey cover. But you realise I actually read the back page first, the way it comes out of the envelope? This time my first glance was at the end of a piece on (apparently) book-buying which asserted "you can't go into the shop any more." Really? Because Vibrator can't get off its Backside, or because London has lost all its bookshops? The rest of the article, when I reached it, was very enlightening about changing attitudes but didn't answer my query. Agreed about buying too much, sampling, casting aside, buying more.

Discovered more changing attitudes yesterday. Apparently the clients of the local foodbank no longer appreciate tinned salmon or sardines; they prefer tuna. And spaghetti hoops are gaining ground over baked beans. Presumably these people when in funds are the ones buying from those proliferating freezerfuls of pizza because that's all they can cook. (I should talk.)

Well, this issue sees the Shadows done; can we move on? Being tasteful was always their Achilles heel, even if during "Move It" on their last tour they could still blow Cliff's vocals off stage, as I keep recalling with pleasure. Thanks Mike for reminding the world of The Spotnicks, whom I'd thought everyone had forgotten. Preferred them to the Shads, at least when it came to paying hard cash for records. Bought their Oriole "On the Air" ep, and when in Norway picked up a couple of their Karusell singles. They played a fair bit of electronified USA/country music: bluegrass "Orange Blossom Special", "The Old Spinning Wheel" (b-side of a better-than-Shads "Ghost Riders in the Sky", "Pick a Bale of Cotton" etc... plus other material from American rock, a Russian folk tune or Swedish dance music. Mostly recorded on home equipment built by Bo Winberg. They seemed less rewarding from the mid-Sixties, I recall, or perhaps after the Beatles arrived I expected more.

(For an inventive fiddle version of "Orange Blossom Special" you could try "Orange Blossom Breakdown" by the great Scotty Stoneman.)

Corflu? Going to miss it yet again. And miss the auction as well as the people. But look forward to seeing what you all get up to.

*(EDITOR: I never saw how the Spotnicks could play music with their heads in those huge glass globes. An inordinate number of instrumental groups seemed to have managed to slaughter Orange Blossom Special, including the Ventures. I even once bought an lp of theirs where they claimed to be able to teach me to play it, but no thank you, they couldn't.)*

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### ***WHEN WRITERS DIE***

It's never nice when anyone dies (discounting rogues like Robert Maxwell, and Margaret Thatcher, of course) but when writers die it is especially poignant, as it is with any artist, when you consider a line must now be drawn under their oeuvre, and if you had a special affection for their work there will be no more in the pipeline. Don't get me wrong, I have no special affection for Terry Pratchett's work. I read one of his first Discworld novels when it first came out and decided its knowing jokiness was not my kind of fantasy. I never found him particularly imaginative or innovative in the way Douglas Adams, for instance, was, and his so-called profundities were certainly not as profound as Adams'.

(Here's a Douglas Adams anecdote. I was at a convention, in the bar, standing next to Douglas Adams. I knew who he was and was too much in awe of him to broach a conversation with him. Des Skinn approached him and mutual introductions were made. "And what exactly do you do?" asked Des. "I'm one of the writers on Hitchiker's Guide to the Galaxy" he deferentially said. \*One\* of the writers?

"Geography is just physics slowed down, with a couple of trees stuck in it." Terry could toss off aphorisms like this routinely, as if they meant something, which they never did.

"I seldom end up where I wanted to go, but almost always end up where I need to be." – Douglas Adams. Adams was a true writer. Pratchett spent his life trying to be one but ultimately failed miserably. It must have sometimes galled him that he couldn't do better.

Many people have remarked about how approachable Terry was for fans, and how tolerant he was of their foibles. I never found him so. Maybe it's time for my one Terry Pratchett anecdote. I was at a party at Rob Holdstock's place, talking to Rob and Terry and A.N. Other. Rob's cat, Finegan, was perched on a windowsill next to us. After a while Rob decided to circulate. Then A.N.Other drifted away. Terry was far too much of a gentleman to continue conducting stiff party chit-chat with me, so he turned away and started talking to the cat instead. I hear he died surrounded by his family and his cat. I only hope his last words weren't addressed to the cat.

Another dead writer, Bob Shaw would not only \*tolerate\* fans but actively seek them out and hang out with them. Graham Hall and I once went out during a convention looking for a pub. We noticed Bob following us twenty yards or so behind, but assumed he had business of his own. But, in fact, when we found a likely looking pub and ducked into it, he followed us in and asked if he could join us. It was almost as if he was embarrassed at being a professional. I think he possibly felt as daunted by fellow writers as some fans might have felt with him. I knew him much better than Terry. Pat and I still have a certificate for a spoof Honorary Martian fannish society Bob made for us. And one of his stained glass windows hangs on our wall. I also think he was a better writer than Terry, but that is not to diminish Terry's achievement. Terry obviously tapped into a popular vein of fantasy that would never have interested Bob anyway.

Someone once said, 'Never read your friends' books; one day they will ask you what you truly think of them.' Rob Holdstock was a case in point. He would faithfully give me signed first editions of his novels (he was a neighbour and we socialized quite frequently). I read Mythago Wood but all the subsequent books seemed to be re-treads of the same idea, so I never bothered reading them. I never told him that, of course, and for his part he never asked me for my opinion.

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*A Sense of Perspective:*

I measured her amongst the milk bottles as she walked away in my dream  
She was as tall as a pint of red top, and as beautiful as double cream

I was playing Subbuteo when I saw her from my window  
She was as tall as Peter Crouch and as graceful as Ronaldhino

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### **PHILIP TURNER PROVES NO MEAN HAND AT A CLERIHEW HIMSELF**

I got V2012 after the LoC deadline but 2013 arrived just inside it. So you have only yourself to blame/thank for the following observations/drivel.

Robert Dylan

Is a man of great skill, 'n'  
When he went electric  
It sent tossers apoplectic.

"My therapist makes me eat mushrooms."

"Shiitake?"

"Yes, they are rather horrible."

Does no one file their toenails any more? A much less dangerous operation. And Robert: if you're looking for walking-about staff, they can be had cheaply from government apprentice schemes or by hiring migrants of doubtful legality. But you get what you pay for.

Is there something wrong with me? I buy books to read and I seldom find myself with an unreadable clunker on my hands. I take books off the many bookshelves, reread them and move them on to the charity box to make room for new arrivals. But I don't care how many books are published every year or get vexed because I'm not making a dent in the mass of new books. Books are to read and enjoy, not to get uptight about.

Yes, the original Star Trek was indeed ludicrous most of the time. Captain Jerk vs the Narzis or in a Western? Captain Jerk saves the Universe by punching some bad guy in the gob? That Roddenberry guy didn't really know what sci-fi is about.

Shadows fan? Oh, yes!

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(*EDITOR*: Filing Toenals? Is there an app for that.? But actually you have given me an idea for a new use for my Dremel modellist's drill.)

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### **BRYN FORTEY LIKES CATS TOO**

As a post script to previous mentions of Cliff's Boys (a term I use purely in a musical sense), during the fifties guitar legend James Burton playing in Bob Luman and the Shadows.

It seems that Ian Williams and I share more than a liking for our feline friends. My inability to sing in tune has long been a source of disappointment. I even had to mime in the school choir. When Elvis burst upon the scene I thought that even I could manage rock and roll. I learnt a couple of lyrics, practiced a few hip movements (not ahip movements again).

The term 'genius' is too easily given, I feel. Bob Dylan, for instance, is an excellent songwriter who crafts his compositions to a nasal whine I find very listenable. So yes, I am a fan, but I understand Fred Smith's lack of admiration. Everything is an acquired taste and nothing can be totally universal.

The mention of Archie Mercer brought back memories of BaD Group meetings. I would often pop across from South Wales and sometimes fans would visit from other parts. I remember a youthful Rob Holdstock demanding that we start a Short Story Factory.

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## **D.WEST ACCUSES ME OF HAVING CRIMINALLY JAGGED EDGES, WHATEVER THAT MEANS**

Since I see that the cover of VIBRATOR2.0.13 has reverted to your previous criminally jagged edges. Must do better. If you can't be bothered to get it right, then why should anyone else be bothered to do the work in the first place?

I suppose I started losing touch with current music sometime around 1970. (Like everything else of any significance this certainly happened thirty, forty or fifty years ago, but at this distance I can't be sure of the exact date.) Anyway, a lot of the more modern stuff has passed me by, since as Milt Stevens says, "I respond with mild apathy". So there's a fairly long list of performers much admired by others but regarded with indifference by me, though I might like the occasional track they've done. As Ian Williams rightly says, it's not very sensible to say one dislikes everything in a particular category, since in among the unappealing there's often a thing or two one enjoys. However, he then leaps off the path of good sense by declaring his inability to understand anyone who doesn't like Bob Dylan. But why not? It's all a matter of personal taste, not scientific reason or moral law, and as far as I'm concerned Dylan is back in the mild apathy category. I don't dislike him, but he doesn't interest me very much. He may be very worthy and meaningful and so on (or, alternatively, he may just be full of crap) but I prefer something more direct. Such as Jerry Lee Lewis. Or Little Richard. Or a bunch of others who are even less critically respectable. Popular music isn't really about being clever -- it's about gut reaction.

Or possibly about operant conditioning, meaning the association of the particular piece of music and song with some significant event in your life. Everybody probably has stuff that sticks with them not because it's especially good but because it reminds them of some emotionally powerful event or situation. This means that teenage music is always likely to linger on. Which in turn is probably why so many people remember the Shadows with fondness. Good guitarists, yes, but their stage presence was not exactly terrific. That arthritic routine of 'kick to the right, then to left', looked a bit feeble even at the time and now seems completely ludicrous.

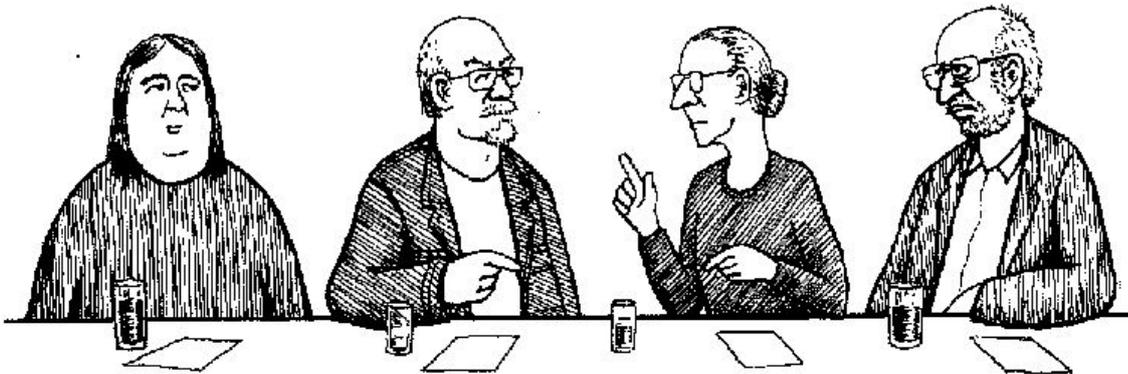
Anyway, once beyond a certain level of competence, how does one decide that one guitarist is better than another? Myself I regard long guitar solos or playing very very fast with lots of twiddly bits, as a huge waste of time. Displays of technical virtuosity are missing the point. Thirty seconds of Chuck Berry is worth more than the entire output of Jimi Hendrix. Once again, popular music isn't about being clever, or nimble-fingered either. As in all the arts, technical ability is certainly useful, but it's not enough on its own. To say that one guitarist is better than another is likely to be fairly meaningless since the real judgement is made on the essentially subjective basis of whether their material, their treatment and their whole personality has an appeal. Music critics are partial to laying down the law, but they really ought to know better, since what people like or don't like has no law at all.

Yes, there's no accounting for tastes, and perhaps that's all one can say about Star Trek. Myself, I didn't care for it, not because it was Bad Art but because it was Bad Entertainment. In very small doses it was mildly amusing, but after ten or fifteen minutes the joke wore off and it became merely dull, pompous and stupid. I'm quite willing to watch all kinds of wild and woolly nonsense if it entertains me, but Star Trek just wasn't very good. The fact that the emotionless Mr Spock was probably the most memorable character says it all. (Well, he had pointed ears, so you could tell him from the rest of the wooden cast.) But I don't think it did SF any harm. If it did make the genre even less respectable, then so much the better. I used to think that SF should be given a serious literary place, but now I think that any meagre value it may possess depends largely on its disreputable outsider status. Like music, it should have a kick to it, and damn the literary pretension.

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## PANEL DISCUSSING WHITHER FANDOM AND IF NOT WHY NOT BUT WHO CARES ANYHOW?



## VIBRATOR BACKSIDE

There, now you've read it, unless you started at the back page first. That wasn't so painful was it? Not like being asked to do the Astral Pole or appear on a panel with Ian Sorensen. Thanks for talking to me at Corflu if you did, and if you didn't, sod you, unless you were someone I didn't want to talk to, in which case, thank you. Next issue will be Number 15 and I hope to publish it on or about April 1<sup>st</sup>, so a deadline a few days in advance of that could still give you a chance of appearing in the next issue. Now off you go, the hounds are running...

Write to me at [graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk](mailto:graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk) And if you are lacking any back issues you can find them on [www.efanzine.com](http://www.efanzine.com)

This issue is printed by Nicholas Printers at [www.nicholasprinters.com](http://www.nicholasprinters.com) because I couldn't face printing it myself. Nick has printed Raucous Caucus in the past, and is a Good Bloke.

## PER ARDUA AD CORFLU!

