

VIBRATOR
FAAn Award Best
Personalzine 2015
Nova Award
Best Fanzine 2014

• THE FIRST STATE •
VIBRATOR 2.0.16
• DELAWARE •



May 2015



What's that on the horizon, charging inexorably towards us? A herd of rampaging Wildebeeste? Horses and hounds chasing after a fleeing horde of Sad Puppies, intent on rending them limb from limb? Herr David Cameron's jackbooted Gestapo out to grind all our faces into the dirt, but especially the ones who are poor and underprivileged and can't fight back? Joseph Nicholas, aka The Destroyer, trowel in one hand and a copy of the latest IPCC Report in the other? No, it's Vibrator 16, full of the joys of Spring and vodka. What do a rich ex-civil servant OBE who enjoys theatre-going, and Ian Sorensen have in common? Well, they are both on my mailing list but maybe not for much longer. What do Chuka Humanna and Nigel Farage have in common? Well, not much really and neither reads fanzines, but both recently made decisions and then went back on them. Oh, that's what they have in common. Perhaps they, and we, would be better off if they did read fanzines, especially topical monthly ones like this which transcend even the memory span of the meanest Marching Moron (an sf reference). Sad news today of the passing of B.B. King (the thrill really has gone). An ignoble end for a legend, dying lonely in hospital denied access to his friends and with family and management squabbling over his estate before he was even dead. So are the mighty fallen. Shelley said that about Ozymandias, one day he will say that about me, but it will probably be Pete Shelley. This is Vibrator 16, produced by Graham Charnock at 45 Kimberley Garden, London N4 1LD, UK. And dated May 2015. If you have already read it this has been Vibrator 16, produced by Graham Charnock at 45 Kimberley Garden, London N4 1LD, UK. Send me a loc on or before 30th June and I will wet my pants with excitement.

Speak yo me at graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk of forever remain silent.

SPRING FEVER

It's Spring apparently. That means we have to be interested in plants and birds. We live in a terrace of houses with gardens at the back which look across to the gardens on a similar terrace opposite. At the top of the terraces is a main road and shopping street, thus the gardens form a West to East channel of greenery. That works well for cats who tend not to go too far outside their territory, but not so well for controlling foxes who can go anywhere. It's also not too good for birds. There are trees of course, but not too many to encourage nesting. What birds there are seem to stick around for years and are obviously not very adventurous. We get wood pigeons. We have had a pair in our garden for years. They are too fat and lazy to climb on the feeder tree and simply browse among the displaced seeds and stuff scattered around the bottom. No blackbird activity here, except distant song, and little else except for tits and goldfinches. Crows sometimes fly over and we used to have magpies, but they never land these days. A pair of feral pigeons nests nearby and quite frequently perch (and crap) on the chimney abutment outside my second floor window. Occasionally a very daring one perches on my windowsill and peers in at me to see if he can catch me masturbating.

I'm the wrong person to ask about plants. That's Pat's job. We went to visit Joseph Nicholas and Judith Hanna recently to try and pinch some of their plants. They are serious gardeners and have a small but serious garden, chockfull of wonders for such a small space. But then they have an allotment too, and obviously take it far more seriously than Pat and I. We came away with some stuff and I look forward to seeing how Pat slots it into our set-up and how it manages to survive the frequent rampages by visiting foxes.

DAVID REDD GOES STRAIGHT TO THE BACKSIDE

Thanks. Next issue, the Da Vince Eager Code vs War and Peace? Francis G Rayer vs Mervyn Peake? Robin Hobb vs Megan Lindholm? No, no, once is enough. But you did make your point.

Skipping over the good stuff to the trifurcate Vibrator Backside:-

1. Second-class stamps will arrive.

2. Unfortunately you touch on something important. Puny man arrogant in assuming he can affect climate? Look, there are now 7 billion units of homo sapiens (sic) on this planet, and 6.999 billion of them are useless, redundant, and wrecking the place. If (thought-experiment) one butterfly flapping its wings can tip a wind pattern into a storm, 7 billion or so boneheads can generate a lot of trouble. I sort of agree with you about arrogance though when I hear people calling our age the Anthropocene; we live in the Pleistocene Terminal Event, end of story.

3. The excellent other fanzines you mention are known to me but now off-limits due to limitations of screen reading. I remain grateful to Vibrator for its physical manifestation.

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JOSEPH NICHOLAS ENJOYED CORFLU, SORT OF

"I've had no response to any of my pleas for Corflu memoirs," say on the last page of *Vibrator* 15 -- to which I respond that I don't recall hearing or seeing you making any such pleas. But perhaps that was on of the occasions when we weren't actually present at the convention, for example when we had to leave early (or at least not too late) each evening to get back to our very comfortable B&B in Sunderland (a few minutes walk through the park from the Metro station), or perhaps on the Saturday morning when we went to Tynemouth Castle on the north bank of the Tyne, where the river meets the coast. We had originally visited the Castle when we visited Arbeia and Segudunum Roman forts at the east end of Hadrian's Wall in October last year (staying in the same place in Sunderland -- which was one reason why we chose it again), but on that afternoon it was blowing a gale (with horizontal rain) straight off the North Sea, and our sightseeing was therefore somewhat curtailed. So when Corflu rolled around, we decided to go up a day early in order to fit in another visit before the convention, when the weather might be better -- only to discover that from 1 November to 31 March the site is open only on weekends, meaning that we would have to reschedule the visit for Saturday morning. Which is why we missed the TWP reunion, and turned up just in time for Kevin Williams's Gannet reminiscences film. (But we did have very fine and sunny weather at the Castle, and into the bargain discovered a huge and excellent flea market in the former Tynemouth railway station -- had we not had to get back to Corflu, we would doubtless have found an excuse to stay there all day, emerging with any amount of thrilling old tat valuable antiques.)

But let's give you a more specific memory: Ted White. Or, to be even more specific, Ted rather derailing, from the very start, the electronic fanzine panel that I was on, insistently shoving the discussion down the paths he wanted it to take rather than allowing the participants to pursue our own lines. I kept waiting for Lilian to leap in and say something provocative a la her remarks in *Chunga* 21 about the generally retro nature of fanzines and their failure to embrace Web 2.0, but (it transpired from our chat afterwards) she was waiting for me to make my move on the generally formulaic and unimaginative nature of the contents of many contemporary fanzines. Oh well. Next time -- if there ever is a next time -- we'll just go with our prepared position papers, and ignore whatever line the moderator is trying to take.

Rather agree with you that Avedon was somewhat invisible GoH. On the other hand (in her defence) she was due to be taken into hospital shortly after the convention for surgery of some nature, so her thoughts may have been understandably pre-occupied with that.

"Man and his achievements and endeavours are so puny, even on a terrestrial scale, that it is extreme arrogance for him to assume he has any effect on the climatological balance of the planet. All his mighty engines and burning of fossil fuels are just imagined vanities in his view of his importance in the scheme of things." Hmm. "Man" is these days a rather old-fashioned formulation; it is much more PC to refer instead to "the human species". But that aside, one has to say simply

that the weight of scientific consensus is against you on anthropogenic climate change; however, having taken up a denialist position (denialist rather than sceptical, because all scientists are sceptics -- they need to be convinced by the data before they will accept a theory*), no amount of evidence is likely to convince you (and your fanzine would certainly be the wrong place to rehearse it anyway -- not enough pages!).

* Used here in its scientific sense of the best available explanation for the observed phenomena and which is capable of validation by experimental observation, and not its common usage of a vague hypothesis or idea.

*(EDITOR: You are right, there is no point in going into lengthy discussion on the topic of Climate Change here. I have made my position plain on many occasions in the past, and people immediately launch into their own received doctrinaire messages without actually giving the impression of reading what I have actually written, especially with regard to the "weight of scientific consensus" without taking any regard of how and why the research involved in achieving such a *consensus* is undertaken. How and why the research is undertaken and financed by whom, and with what agenda is entirely what the argument is about. Not global warming. We will all look back on this and laugh in a hundred years time. I am laughing already in a kind of pre-emptive strike. Our children will not have died; we will have adjusted to whatever the planet has thrown at us, and what we throw at ourselves, because that is what human beings do, not roll over and kick up their heels and scream 'Lordy, lordy we are all going to die!' I am not a denier, I am not even a sceptic, I don't need *convincing* about an argument I am not making. I would just like to see a fairly proportioned and apportioned response to the subject, rather than the all too-frequent *all right thinking people must agree...* one that yours seems to exemplify.*

*The IPCC Fourth Assessment Report says 'Most of the global average warming over the past 50 years is "very likely" (greater than 90% probability, based on expert judgement) due to human activities.' Quite a few hedged bets in that statement *Most*, *very likely* *greater than 90% probability* (a particularly woolly kind of statisticizing which in itself might indicate up to a 10% possibility of error).*

There have been at least five climate swings in the form major ice-ages over the course of the last 5 million years and many more minor ones, none of which Man can ever be said to have contributed to. By all means carry on researching global warming, no matter what the agenda, but please let's disassociate it from political and multinational corporate imperatives. Because otherwise it means squat.)

Joseph sent a PS: Forgot to add: congratulations (of a kind) on reading Theodore Beale's nonsense, but rather you than me. Yes, he needs to be opposed, even argued against, and were he a rational individual he should be shown the errors in his reasoning and perhaps learn from them. But he is not a rational individual, and has evinced no sign whatever of heeding the responses of those who disagree with him. Because they disagree with him, They Are Wrong. Worse; as an evangelical religious fundamentalist, he cannot but regard everyone else as beneath contempt, because they are not among the Elect, and thus Not Saved. (They are without the law, evil beyond redemption, the very spawn of the hell-beast, etc. etc..)

But what are you going to do with the book now that you've read it? Surely not donate it to Oxfam or some other second-hand emporium, and thus spread Beale's poison to others?

(EDITOR: I should burn it, I guess, but I fear I am constitutionally incapable of getting rid of any book I have ever acquired.)

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HERE'S A LETTER FROM MY BIGGEST FAN, IAN WILLIAMS

14, that is Vibrator 2.0.14 or whatever you called is sitting on a small pile of fanzines I acquired at Corflu and was read, though quickly skimmed might be more accurate, but unlocked while the others remain unread though it is my firm intention to change that.

My own Corflu was considerably shorter than yours being just over 7 hours long as detailed in my Facebook Corflu report which appeared very shortly after the event and, as you know, I had a really good time. You mention me enjoying myself "Amongst his old chums, though not so much Harry Bell," a phrasing I inferred, perhaps wrongly, was intentional on my part. Not so. I would have been very pleased to talk to Harry and to meet his new wife Pat (which I did but was limited to a handshake and "Hi, I'm Ian."). There just wasn't enough time. As it was I didn't speak to everyone I'd have liked to meet. I just only just caught Judith and Joseph on the stairs on my way out. And I certainly didn't talk to you anywhere nearly as much as I'd have liked. So for me, a convention of missed opportunities, to an extent at least, which is a great shame as circumstances (cats) mean that, barring the unlikely event of another small social con occurring in Newcastle it was my last one. Still, at least I had that much.

Found your piece on literature interesting as in my youth I went through a phase of reading lots of Graham Greene which I thoroughly enjoyed despite not being a Catholic or feeling guilty about anything in particular. Just a few other authors off the top of my head who I read from my mid-teens to late twenties: Baldwin, Steinbeck, Murdoch, Grasse, Hesse, Joyce (yes, all of Ulysses), Burgess, and many more that my decaying brain refuses to name. Still read a shitload of SF though. These days I read people like Peter Hamilton, Terry P, Iain (no M.) Banks, Kage Baker, Bujold, Haruki Murakami, and a shitload of graphic novels. Lists are a great excuse for not writing anything coherent.

Re-your later comment: I see no significant difference between reading Pratchett and Pynchon any more than I see such a difference between eating fish and chips and a cordon bleu meal -they stimulate different parts is all.

As for music. Enough has already been said except to inform you that currently in my car CD player is the 5-disc 6 hour running time Grateful Dead Soundtrack to the Grateful Dead Movie. If I played all my GD albums every time I got in the car they would probably last until next year.

I just love that Marion Linwood had a Granny Annie.

It goes without saying but I'll say it anyway, that I liked your demolition of Theodore Beale even if I did read a version on Facebook. He's the sort of person who never lets a fact get in the way of an opinion or a belief.

Your biggest fan,

Ian Williams can be found at ianw700@gmail.com

PHILIP TURNER AGREES WITH ME THAT GLOBAL WARMING IS LARGELY A SCAM, AT LEAST I THINK HE DOES.

Julius Caesar
Was a hell of a geezer
But he lost his starch
On the Ides of March.

The above out of my system, I'll say in response to your editorial rant that it's your zine and you should be free to run it how you want and damn the torpedoes. As far as film remakes go, Dredd (2012) is better than Judge Dredd, the 1995 Sylvester Stallone version IMNSHO.

Just being nosy, but what is the point of emptying money out of your pockets before you go to bed if

you just have to put it all back the next morning? The question comes from someone who leaves his dosh in the pockets of an anorak, so that if I'm not out and about, I am unencumbered with money, Royal Family-style.

Erratum: Philip Turner has no particular passion for backsides -- it's just that he's confronted with them regularly as a consequence of G. Charnock's folding habits.

The great Global Warming Swindle is not so much about Man's arrogance as a testament to the amount of taxpayers' cash which can be extracted from ignorant politicians in the name of saving the planet. It's all about the money, honey.

I did consider writing a small pamphlet on the Art and Science of Filing Toenails but I lost the will to live after typing the title. But the continuing interest in the topic suggests that the idea has a few legs and could run. As will I.

Gateshead sounds a really nanny state paradise, with the buses telling you to sit up nicely and when to stand up to get off. What do the local Global Warming Swindlers have to say about all the evil, nasty, ptoooie! carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere to broadcast such messages?

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NOW A WORD FROM THAT KEEN YOUNG NEOFAN, DAVE COCKFIELD

When your Vibrator was stuck through my letterbox I was worried that my enjoyment would be lessened now that the euphoria of Corflu had ebbed. Could I still gain as much satisfaction as I did from the last one that I picked up in Newcastle. Yes! Yes! Yes!

Reading Habits: Your reason for no longer reading SF/Fantasy is well demonstrated with your two excerpts. I can't refute your argument even though I enjoy the writing of G. R. R. Martin immensely. What is more worrying is that he traditionally takes about 5 years to complete one of his heavyweight tomes of formulaic writing.



Jack Calvert comments that growing up he admired the illustrations in an edition of *The Three Musketeers*. These were probably by Maurice Leloir and were incredibly detailed. I consider myself fortunate to have the 1922 edition that has all 250 B & W illustrations. He mentions that on re-reading he realised that it is pulp fiction. He is not wrong as Alexandre Dumas was the ultimate hack writer. He had the help of a number of collaborators, in particular Auguste Maquet. He wrote plot and a basic draft that Dumas expanded with detail and dialogue. One novel, *The Son of Porthos* was published as Dumas but actually written by Paul Mahalin. Dumas of course wrote for money to finance his lavish lifestyle and many mistresses. I still love the books though even today. Personally I read too much basic fiction for enjoyment. Here is a dreaded cut down list of authors.

CRIME – Barry Maitland, Mark Billingham, Christopher Fowler.
THRILLERS – Terry Haynes, Eric van Lustbader, David Baladacci.
FANTASY – George R R Martin, Patrick Rothfuss, Audrey Niffenegger.
SCI FI – Eric Brown, Mat Coward, Roy Kettle and Chis Evans, Dan Simmons.
CHILDREN'S – Neil Gaiman, Chris Riddell, Paul Stewart, Sam Gayton.

I do however try to vary my reading with something a bit more intelligent and occasionally demanding. Recently this has included:-

Christina Rossetti's Gothic – Serena Trewbridge. A study on the Gothic elements in her prose and verse.

Quest for Kim – Peter Hopkirk. An analysis of the novel through the medium of a travelogue in the 1990s recreating Kim's journey across Kipling's India discovering the influences that shaped the novel.

Mervyn Peake, My Eyes Mint Gold – Malcolm Yorke. An excellent biography that I am currently dipping into.

I happen to collect Arthur Rackham, Christina Rossetti and Rudyard Kipling.

Vehicular Suicide: Throughout Vibrator is mention of various forms of transport. I use buses, tubes, and trains with carefree abandon thanks to the wonderful Freedom Pass for the aged, infirm, and downright fat and lazy over 60s. I qualify in all categories so do not feel guilty in wasting taxpayers hard earned groats and pennies. I've even been known to partake of a taxi journey especially when Kev Williams is paying.

I never learned to propel my body from A to B other than on foot. Walking only as running is negated by the fat and lazy aspects of my life. When I was 3 years old I rode / careened down a flight of stairs on a tricycle sustaining painful cuts and bruises losing most of my teeth in the process. This was followed by a trip to hospital where a state sponsored idiot with a clown ventriloquist dummy proceeded to terrify me while waiting to be seen by a doctor. This was the start of a pattern in my life for which I blame the clown.

At age 10 some friends and I built a super Bogie made from a wooden plank and pram wheels. I crashed sustaining painful cuts and bruises. A friend tried to teach me to ride his bicycle when I was 13. A brick wall appeared out of thin air. I crashed sustaining painful cuts and bruises.

Years later another friend tried to teach me to ride his scooter. I applied the brakes too hard and shot over the top. I sustained painful cuts and bruises.

So you can see why I have never learned to drive a car although I have been a passenger 3 times when involved in crashes where I naturally sustained painful cuts and bruises.

So far aircraft have been reasonably reliable although once in Yugoslavia (it was the 70s) my plane had an engine drop off while it taxied on the runway.

However I feel secure in the knowledge that at worst I will only ever sustain painful cuts and bruises from vehicular accidents because my bad dreams have always been about drowning with never a vehicle insight. Difficult to focus when under water.

Well we did wake up to a new Government. It just happened to be one even more Blue than the last. What I can't understand is how the Tories captured seats from voters disgruntled with the Lib Dems. Presumably they were colour blind.

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ALMOST WASHED MY HAIR

Well, I had a bath. Bloody hell things have changed in the twenty years since I last had one. Mostly I've got twenty years older. First thing was getting into the bath. Distinctly shakey and dangerously slippery underfoot (no bath mat). I've heard of people dying from falls in the bath and now I knew how they felt. But I finally managed to kneel with one leg in and one leg out. Then I got both legs in, then sort of fell forward and rolled over at the same time. Almost made it the first time. Next challenge was getting out of the bath after having managed to lie flat in it. Roll over on my belly again. No, that wouldn't work. Couldn't trust myself to stand up. Back on my back again, flopped one leg out of the bath, grabbed onto the side and managed to kneel one leg in one leg out again. Finally staggered out. Bloody hell. There will have to be some changes made before I risk it again. A rubber bath mat for one thing and one of those rails for the disabled. Growing Old is Hell.

Of course I've long been an adherent of the principle that washing is basically unhealthy and unnatural and abrades the skin and destroys natural oils which the body produces to protect itself. It also destroys the natural pheromones which on an animal level are so important, as we all know, for non-verbal communication. I take this almost as seriously as global warming. Therefore I generally do not wash or shower, but I change my clothes daily and no one has ever complained of the way I smell. Apes, cats and dogs, don't naturally bathe, and birds only do it to wash pests and parasites from out of their feathers. I think in fact Homo Sapiens is the only animal which regularly performs this unnecessary ritual. Hippos and other river-dwelling animals don't count because they have no choice, and also have metallically resilient hides to withstand the corrosive effects of water. Most of our bathing is also encouraged by cosmetic companies who would seek to sell us endless unnecessary chemical products as if they were the answer to our attraction to the opposite sex. When I stood for Taff, a certain fan (well, Bruce Townley) ran a campaign to try and dissuade people from voting for me because *I didn't wash* despite me writing a campaign song pointing out just that fact. You know who your friends are.

MILT STEVENS STRAPS ON HIS COLT 45 AND FIRES AT ALL THE RIGHT TARGETS

Before reading Vibrator 2.0.15, I hadn't thought about how much writing fan writers were doing. Claire and Mark do quite a bit of writing and most of it is about fandom. However, the champion word slinger of all fandom would have to be Chris Garcia. He published an awful lot of his own words in Drink Tank. It makes me tired to even think about it. Of course, now that he is married, his output may be limited for awhile.

There are some other people who do a fairly large volume of work. Dale Speirs, John Hertz, and Taral would be in that group. On the internet, there may be many who write 10,000 words a day. Until one of them finishes King Lear, I don't think we have to pay attention to them.

Occasionally, a remake is better than the original. The 1941 version of "The Maltese Falcon" is a classic film and probably the only version of that film you have heard of. However, it's a remake of a previous version made in 1931. I suppose people could argue whether the 1940 version of "Mark of Zorro" is better than the 1920 version or not. The 1920 version was silent, but Douglas Fairbanks was always fun to watch. The 1978 version of "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" is about as good as the 1956 version.

The Faan Awards may not be perfect, but at least they aren't as much of a problem as the Hugos this year. Do you suppose we need a scandal of some sort? No matter what we devised, it would only interest about a dozen people. The problem looks insoluble. It probably is insoluble. We might as well drink more beer and forget about it.

(EDITOR: I certainly hope Chris Garcia's output will be limited by his marriage. What did Churchill say about Chris, 'Never in the field of fanzine conflict had so much been written by one man of so little

consequence and read by so few people... and yet managed to win a Hugo". Oh and I'm always in favour of drinking more beer.)

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ALISON SCOTT IS ANNOYED WITH ME

It's not often that your Vibrator fails to please me, Graham -- but I was troubled to find my name in the list of people you never hear from when I had done you the cover of that very issue! Grumble, grumble, moan, artists-are-underappreciated, etc. etc. disgusted of Walthamstow. Besides, according to my records I sent you a LoC as recently as, well, November. I suppose that is a little while.

I did also say that you were welcome to print any of my Corflu witterings from ITB, in lieu of proper convention reportage; I can't remember what I said now but I did have a thoroughly good time. Unlike Lilian and Christina, I do not remember having had "the most debauched convention ever" at the Leeds Corflu; possibly because I had a small baby with me at the time. Said baby is off partying the night away at a School Leavers' Barbecue tonight and I do in fact now feel very old.

Please do not include any photographs of you in skimpy underwear in Vibrator.

I was taken aback by your suggestion that every piece of music, no matter how obscure, is on YouTube, so I searched for my standard test piece for obscurity, fave album of my childhood "Tijuana Nursery Rhymes" by the "Torero Band" (jobbing session musicians). It was a wash -- two of the tracks are on YouTube (put up by the same chap who, years ago, helpfully sent me MP3s), but the rest are not. And then that sent me on a quest to find other obscure music I remember from my childhood. Much of which was in fact there, so the principle is good. My excuse is that I was on the internet too early; I looked for a lot of this stuff before it was possible to find it.

I fret that I'm the only reader of your fanzine who still listens to, and even buys, new music. Partly it's a happy accident; Steven & I both like waking up to the radio, but have wildly differing views on what that radio should sound like, and the only station we can both (barely) tolerate is 6Music. Partly it's a habit of going to festivals, where you're almost certain to hear new things. And partly it's the ease of acquisition these days. Though I understand that wanting to own my music is very passé, and everyone just streams it these days.

Your reminiscences of Corflu reminded me of one moment; my dear husband suggesting that a future Corflu could have a panel game called "Just an Hour", where Ted White and Rob Jackson take turns to talk without deviation, hesitation, repetition or possibly even drawing breath while the other attempts to get a word in edgeways.

I share Ian Maule's dislike of cat stories, especially the cute animal videos that clutter up my facebook feed. I am perfectly content for people to share cute pictures of their own pets, or children, or antique radios, or whatever else floats their boat, as keeping in touch with my pals is the reason I'm there in the first place. But so much of what I see is 'viral' videos of random animals on the internet. I think it's supposed to cheer me up but instead it just depresses me. I wouldn't mind, except that I know that Facebook doesn't show me 80% of the stuff I do want to see.

I only met Art Widner once or twice but found him charming in that way that people get to be when they are of Great Age. Of course, that was about 15 years ago. So it was delightful to read yours and Rich's reminiscences. I was sad to hear of Art's death, but only very momentarily; it is not in fact sad to die after a short illness at the age of 97 having been beloved by everyone.

(EDITOR: So much to comment on in such a substantial letter, Alison. First of all I regret including you in my list of unresponsive people, but not so much because it obviously sparked you to object (You see the way I work?). You are obviously far more responsive than many. Gary Farber, you know who you are. I'm impressed you managed to find obscure music on Youtube. Maybe that only proves you are more of a specialist in obscure music than I am. I'm pleased to say I still buy new music. Mostly based on accidental hits. Alison Fairbairn said she was off to Germany to see *The Sadies*, which interested me as a concept. I youtubed them and found them quite interesting, so bought the album. I will buy any kind of rubbish as long as I have money.

You will see if you read this issue that Joseph Nicholas was very disgruntled about Ted's handling of his own particular panel at Corflu (see, I do read all these letters). I fear Ted has an agenda to pursue about fandom and fanzines which he will not give up, and why should he, if it is important to him?

People like Art Widner (there aren't many) are forces of nature I'm sorry you seemed perturbed by his being of Great Age (perhaps you didn't). Soon, Alison, all of us, yes you and I, will be of Great Age and probably dead earlier than Art (you know what I mean).

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JIM LINWOOD TEARS HIMSELF AWAY FROM WINE-MAKING TO WRITE

You were interested in film remakes that were better than the original and the only one that comes to mind is the second remake of *The Maltese Falcon* by John Houston in 1941. Although I haven't seen the first two, film noir connoisseur, Eddie Muller, described them as "a pair of smirky B's from Hammett's masterwork." The first version in 1931 starred Bebe Daniels as the femme fatale and the second remake, *Satan Met A Lady* (1936) featured an early appearance of Bette Davis as the FF who utters the great line "Would you mind taking off your hat in the presence of a lady with a gun?"

Two remakes that come to mind that are as good as the original are *The Thing* (Christian Nyby 1951/John Carpenter 1982) and *Cape Fear* (J.Lee Thompson 1962/ Martin Scorsese 1991).

I share your concerns about the FAAn awards. It is the only fannish award mechanism I have any faith in and I regard it as a pat on the back for the winners from their peer group rather than something with formal award ceremony trappings. The only problem I have is ranking five of my favourite fanzines and writers in a 1-5 order when I consider them of equal merit – is *Vibrator* a better zine than *Raucous Caucus* or visa versa? – I think not. What is needed is a light-hearted campaign to drum up more voters and I suggest that we spread the rumour that the Sad Puppies are taking over the award to provoke a trufannish reaction.

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PAUL SKELTON ALSO WONDERS 'WHAT IS TO BE DONE ABOUT THE FAAAAn AWARDS?'

Ought that not to begin "What, if anything,..."? I have not been aware of all this "bemoaning" from Andy and others but that's because I don't normally pay any attention. I am correct, am I not, in that you have to be a member of Corflu to vote? Not having the money to throw away on 'supporting memberships' I am simply not normally qualified to vote. Also, when I am technically qualified I always assumed that my general ignorance of all that was happening in eLand rendered me unqualified in respect of that ignorance, so again paid no attention. That would also have been the case this year, but as I did so want to effectively tell some of my fellow fanzine fans that I enjoyed their efforts I chose to redefine 'fanzine' and 'fanac' as, additionally, something that had to be

capable of arriving via my snail-mail letter-box, in response to a LoC. One day I'll get a device suitable for reading eZines, and then my viewpoint might change, but until then...

Having someone do a summary piece to remind us as to "which hats are in the ring" would only be beneficial if what is being bemoaned is not so much that there were only 39 voters last time, but that many of them voted for *the wrong thing*. Some of us might react adversely to such an implication. Though of course it does happen that stuff drops off your radar (and indeed one item dropped off mine, but looking at the results, they would not have been significantly different had it not done so).

As I see it the only real way forward (if what one wants is a wider electorate) would be to open the awards up to anyone interested in fanzine fandom...but then wouldn't that leave those of us interested in a certain subset of fanzines as feeling every bit as 'left out' as the Hugos used to leave us feeling, and as to why the FAAAns were originally created? I can see arguments both for and against this.

Moving on, Murray Moore's LoC intrigues me for several reasons. He states that you can see "a tiny part of our nearby plaza" from his couch. Of course people in the US and Canada are wont to define 'nearby' somewhat differently to those of us effectively standing on Zanzibar. Why, I recall back on one of our US/Canada visits (admittedly in the US portion) how a drive of 20 minutes between the main course and dessert was not deemed abnormal. Were it not for intervening trees, from my kitchen table I could see the Derbyshire hills, but it would take me a day-and-a-half to walk there, even back in the days when I could have walked for a day-and-a-half. So never actually having defined 'x', the various other distances orbiting around and beyond it are also somewhat fuzzy. Also, walking distance ("I can walk to a hospital in half an hour") is not all that useful as rates of walking tend to differ. Murray probably walks somewhat more speedily than I do, but then he may not have a complex tear in the cartilage of his left knee (see Graham, I told you after all). Even so, I can also walk to my nearest hospital in half-an-hour, though I used to be able to dawdle it in less than twenty minutes.

(EDITOR: Paul then sent a timely PS: "Course, what I forgot to mention was that the hospital within walking distance is the currently notorious Stepping Hill, where a Filipino nurse has just been found guilty of murdering patients by tampering with their saline drips (adding insulin), so whether I'd actually want to walk there is somewhat moot. Mind you, both Cas and I have survived their ministrations several times in the past.")

My doctor's practice though is only at the end of the road so that, even dawdling, I could still do it in three-or-four minutes. Mind you this would seem like a generational-starship journey compared to my dentist, who lives in the very next building (we are on the outside of a pair of adjacent semi-detached properties) and if that should take me more than thirty seconds I'd be better employed skipping the dentist and continuing on to the doctors for some urgent treatment.

Not quite sure why all this is important though, unless it is to indicate that I am much more prepared than Murray for the time when I become totally decrepit. Then again, of course, there is the fact that I certainly need to be so prepared.

Sometimes life does not make sense. It would have made a lot of sense to remake *High Society* as *The Philadelphia Story*, but the other way around? The only thing which would have made more sense was not to make *High Society* at all, though one suspects 'commercial' sense overrode 'sense' sense in this regard.

(EDITOR: Your basic assumption about the FAAn awards is wrong, Paul. Anyone can vote. You do not have to be a member of Corflu. Hence the electorate of fanzine interested parties is about as broad as

it can and will get. I wonder though how many people erroneously share your view, and how much that must limit participation.)

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STEVE JEFFREY HAS MANAGED TO CATCH UP WITH VIBRATOR 14

Who is Ian Williams and why does he have my CD collection? Even the mildly embarrassing, though still enjoyable, prog rock stuff from the 70s.

I mean, Yes, Mahavishu Orchestra, Zappa, Afro Celt Sound System, Fairport Convention, Sandy Denny, Fotheringay and Thea Gillmore... It's almost an exact match. No goth I notice. Or reggae. All sensible collections need to have at least one album by U-Roy, The Mighty Diamonds, Lee 'Scratch' Perry or Culture in there somewhere.

In response to Paul, yes Virginia, there is a style of 'English Music' as distinct from Celtic/Irish folk. Shirley Collins is a good example, and the Albion Band in one of their many incarnations (the clue is in the name).

D. West claims 30 seconds of Chuck Berry is worth more than the entire output of Jimi Hendrix and then contradicts that in practically the next sentence by stating that all such judgements are essentially subjective. Which is true, of course. My threshold for extended twiddly soloing varies from day to day, and some days and moods I can listen to Joe Satriani or Carlos Santana noodle away quite happily, while on other days I just want three minute pop songs. But if you want an example of technical virtuosity not missing the point, but rather being the entire point - listen to Joe Pass playing Round Midnight. Then imagine anyone else trying to pull that off.

I never found Terry Pratchett rude or standoffish. Not that we know him well, but would happily chat if we met in the Conservatory/Cafe Munchen or the Angel pub round the back of Forbidden Planet, or at conventions and signings. Saturdays at the Munchen you could often find half or more of the London sf circle, including Rob Holdstock, Paul McAuley, Kim Newman, Mary Gentle and Colin Greenland freely mixing and chatting and drinking with fans, editors and publishers in a way that I don't think you'd get with any other genre

I loved Rob's books. My regret is that I never got him to sign his last book, *Avilion*, and it's the only book of his that I don't have a signed, personalised copy of.

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NOW. THE LATEST INSTALMENT OF NIC FAREY'S ADVENTURES OF A LAS VEGAS TAXI DRIVER

TAXIPHYLIS

Just one poor hardworking man's story of more Gay Sex...

Well, maybe not (down, Unc!), but it does seem that the more salacious and/or unusual bits of the job seem to tend in that direction, at least the salacious bits that inevitably end up in the column for Grah's award-winner here.



So I got a dispatch call on the inboard computer for a pickup at the Eagle Tavern, which as it happens isn't really too far from where I live, which also as it happens is a totally irrelevant piece of information. The rather drunk bloke locked eyes with me as I opened the cab door for him and, as I have been warned many times will happen, started salivating at the English accent, basically attempting to pick me up all the way back to Bally's. This included a fairly detailed quiz about my possible sexual preferences, then he asked an interesting question which, translated into the Queen's

English as spoken at Buckingham Palace state dinners, was "Do you mind if I have a wank?"

"Well, I don't really care", sez I, "Since I can't see", remembering to hastily add "Don't make a mess!"

I got treated to a bit of running commentary about how well hot it was him stroking it in the back of the cab while listening to my dulcet tones. Thankfully he did have enough nous to observe "I suppose I'd better put it away now" when we got within a block or so of our destination. It was nice not to have to ask. After that, you'd think I'd have got a decent tip (ahem), but noooo, the fuckin' cheapskate!

Fight weekend was about as bonkers as you'd imagine. I was told it was crazier than New Year's, and I can well believe it. I was booking \$50 to \$100 more than usual every day that week, and broke \$400 book for the first time on the Sunday (and made about \$150 in tips!) Knowing Grah's deep concern for my financial well-being, I actually did sums the other day, and worked out that to make minimum wage on a shift (\$7.25/hr equivalent), you have to book \$226. On a typical weekday (like this last week), I'll do close to (or better than) that. The average book, by which we live and die, will be somewhere between \$180 and \$200, meaning that more than half the drivers are making less than minimum wage (which the company has to make the paycheck up to). So, still not getting rich enough to buy the Tuscan-style \$3.5 million house in Lake Las Vegas, the pool of which Grah is apparently keen to piss in, despite the *acoutrement* of seven bathrooms (that's not too many). Monday after the fight, I got a couple of Filipinos from Montreal in the cab, who were going to the Delano, where Manny Pacquiao was staying, to actually meet the man and join his Bible Study group for the day. I was suitably envious, and toyed with the idea of sneaking in with them for a phoot-op. Despite all the nuttiness, and thousands upon thousands of inebriated punters, I never had a bad or unpleasant ride the whole of fight week, clearly having to wait until this last week for in-cab wanking to resume.

I've got a new schedule now which, while not ideal, is at least the same shift and the same cab every day, on the elite radio dispatch system as well as having a computer for centrally dispatched calls. Fridays and Saturdays off, 13 shift (1am to 12:45), so I'm still off to kip at 3 in the afternoon. Open shift bidding is next month, and I'd love to get on one of the "20" shifts, which begin starting at 5am, hours I'm much more used to from working construction, but I'm unlikely to have enough seniority yet to be able to get on any of those. My 90-day probationary period is almost up, after which I can get the company health insurance, the first time I'll have had any in over ten years. Once that's on, I'm aiming to get what's left of my teeth (8) yanked so I can get the all-American gnashers and smile again without scaring the horses.

More glossary:

Average : Eliminating the lowest and highest net book for each shift, the rest are averaged, and this is the main metric that decides if we still have a job tomorrow. Naturally anyone can have a bad day, but a driver who is low-booking and/or consistently below average isn't likely to last long. Not all companies work to this, but ours are ferocious on it. Fortunately, I consistently meet or beat the numbers. The averages are posted daily, so you know how you did, also reporting low and high book.

I suspect whoever booked \$27 for the whole shift one day last week has got the boot, unless it was an elite dispatcher or road supervisor, who are exempt from the fray due to other responsibilities

Bob Seger : A bit of slang which I feel *should* exist, meaning 16 rides or more on a shift. Our trip sheets have 16 lines on side one, so if you get that many rides, you turn the page. Geddit?!?!

Book : The meter total, basically. *Net book*, which is what we're measured on, is that minus 60 cents per trip.

Elite : Our cabs with radios are known as "elite fleet", which has a double-secret phone number given out to various businesses so they can call, the theory being we'll have a cab to them in ten minutes or less. This actually works quite well for the most part. The dispatchers are themselves driving cabs, we hear the calls too, and have four specific stands from which we'll get dispatched. One issue tends to be that drivers give out the number (something we're not supposed to do at all) to individuals, many of whom are somewhat undesirable sorts (pimps, cheap hookers etc.). Another is that there are some buggers (for some reason this gets pinned on the Ethiopians) who just listen to the radio and try to nick the rides.

Seniority : A number value which expresses more or less how long you've been with the company. (Mine is 696 at the moment, pretty much bottom rung.) Your seniority determines whether you get a particular shift you bid for, and whether you get the vacation days you ask for. The only way you get to move up is by attrition, or presumably assassination, so it's all very Klingon.

Trip sheet : The record of your shift, which we're required to fill out by the TA, showing number of passengers for each ride, start and finish time, meter total, and credit card authorization code. We also do our sums on this to work out how much we have to turn in to the cashier. Also the name of our pocket-sized trade mag which comes out once a month.

Wanking : Not the capital of China.

RANDY BYERS IS ALSO ANNOYED WITH ME

I was about to cancel my subscription to Vibrator because of your diss of Grace Kelly -- an actress whose collarbones I admired even before I saw them in 3D in a revival of Dial M for Murder. (True story: I mentioned her 3D collarbones in a blog post, and Google Analytics told me that somebody found that post with the search terms "grace kelly collarbones." Talk about having your fetishes exposed!) I haven't seen anything she did other than the three Hitchcock films, but she sure has more than "minimal acting abilities" in those films. Maybe she needed a better actor than Bing Cosby to spark off of.

In any event, despite your obvious ignorance, I forgave you this slur because of the diss of Ted White in your Corflu report. I mean, why you got to diss everyone, bro, but at least this diss was funny as hell. I particularly enjoyed the phrase "anecdotal timewarp." For that alone you deserve a FAAN Award for Best Fan Writer. Too bad you'll never get it! Because you diss everyone! Bow down to Grace Kelly's collarbones and maybe you'll do better, who knows?

Anyway, the real reason I'm writing is to thank Rich Coad for his wonderful memorial to Art Widner. Rich mentioned that Art preferred Dixieland jazz to bebop, and that reminded me of a conversation I had with Art many years ago when he expounded on that topic at great length. As I recall, he loved Louis Armstrong and he hated the saxophone. "It's such a bastard instrument," he said with a big smile on his face as I spluttered, "But it's sexy!" He would have none of that.

Like you, Graham, I didn't get much of a chance to talk to Art at the Portland Corflu, which is the last time I saw him. In honesty I haven't felt all that sad at Art's passing, because he lived for such a long time and seemed to have such a great life. But I do find myself thinking often of a moment in Portland when he sat down across from me while I was talking to Dan Steffan and tried to get my attention. I was deep in it with Dan and didn't want to be interrupted. Wish I had. And yeah, I really wish I'd see his smiling face at Prolog(ue) and Sasquan this summer.

FRED SMITH

Very comprehensive notes on Corflu re. socialising, etc. although not much about the programme. Was there a programme? Never having attended a Corflu I'm unclear as to what goes on. Noted that in response to demands you include more of you in the zine this time. Incidentally, I would call the 40,000 words you quote as "almost a novel in the good old pulp days" as - a novel! Depends what you mean by "novel" but I once classified 20-40,000 as a novella (in pulp terms) and over 40,000 as a novel.

Interesting your disparaging remarks about the remake of *The Philadelphia Story* as *High Society* and especially the "irksome diversion" of the characters bursting into song. It is, as you acknowledge, a musical, hence singing, and it's expecting a lot for it to have the dramatic intensity of the original or for the acting of Bing Crosby (not a jazz musician, by the way!), Frank Sinatra or Grace Kelly to equal Cary Grant, James Stewart and Katherine Hepburn. Different approach and good fun anyway, I thought! Now, you ask for suggestions for remakes which are better than the original. Well how about "*The Thing*" (1982), much better than "*The Thing From Another World*" (1951), even though it was compared unfavourably by the critics at the time. In later years it was reassessed, however, and has become established as a classic (if gruesome!) SF movie and, of course, much closer to Campbell's "Who Goes There?"

Milt Stevens comparing the bridge of the *Enterprise* (Star Trek) to his navy CIC indicates, to me, that he served on board an aircraft carrier. Spaceships (the fictional kind) usually had bridges and other close similarities to seagoing ships, particularly naval vessels and even airships (unlike aeroplanes) operated that way with crews wearing seamen's uniforms. Possibly because the early military airships were run by the navy anyway.

I won't argue with Paul Skelton any more on matters of musical taste except to say that "carefully worked out variations" does NOT mean the same as "mannered and artificial". Unless, Paul, you would apply the latter term to, let us say, the Bach "Goldberg Variations", just to pluck one example out of the air.

Not much else I can say right now unless you really want the latest news about my toenails. I've had them cut and been told to file them in future!

Rest of the letters fine, as usual, and your own stuff very interesting especially your comparison of the writings of George R.R. Martin with Graham Greene.

Saddened by the death of Art Widner, whom I thought indestructible. A very nice obituary by Rich Coad.

(EDITOR: Here is a link to show you what you are missing by not attending a Corflu Fred.
<http://www.corflu.org/Corflu32/schedule.html> (copy and paste into your browser).

Corflus customarily have a programme, which may be elaborate or casual and improvised depending on the whim of the organizer(s) but also a lot of time is usually left free for socializing, sight-seeing, shopping, drinking and eating. Occasionally there will be some kind of presentation as a programme item (Kev Williams showed a very funny and nostalgic film about Gannets in Newcastle, and Dave Hicks' talk with slides at Sunnyvale was also very enjoyable, less so for me at least are ANDY Hooper's frequent dramatic presentations), but most programme items are in fact excuses for themed open ended group discussions among attendees.

Like you I would categorize 40,000 as a novel but it is practically impossible to sell anything of that length under that description today. Publishers are likely to demand novels of 100,000 or more words, and of course there is no shortage of not very talented writers (The words Dan Brown come to mind) ready to indulge them thanks to the facile ease of word processing. People wrote long novels in the

*days of the typewriter and even the pen (Raintree County, Clarissa) but they obviously involved far more sheer *work* than they do these days.)*

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CURT PHILLIPS WRITES

My condolences to you on winning the FAAN award. I see that you're attempting to put a brave face on it, but of course it's obvious that behind that courageous smile you've been showing for the cameras is the tortured, sensitive face of a fan who now realizes that never again will he be a part of the vast, happy throng of fans who have *not* been burdened with winning an award. You can no longer be one of us ordinary fans, gawping like neofen caught in the headlights as the BNFs cruise by. Now and forever after you must always be a part of *Them*; that small, elite group of award-winning fans who have no choice but to run conventions, conduct fan-feuds, say pleasant or at least neutral things about fuggheads, and publish fanzines. And not just *any* old kind of fanzine, mind you, but *award-winning" fanzines. (It's rumored that Steve Stiles could have won a Hugo at anytime over the past dozen years, but *he*, of course, understands what he'd be giving up!) It's a shame that such a thing had to happen to you, Graham. I've always thought that you were; oh, I dunno, such a *nice* chap. "That *nice* Mr. Charnock", they always say. But your luck finally ran out and I guess you're stuck with it. Now instead of mingling with us common fans where all the fun is, now you'll have to go to conventions and immediately disappear into closed parties for Hugo winners, Worldcon Chairmen, and other such riff-raff. Now you'll be called upon to State Your Opinion on various fannish matters for File 770, contribute learned examples for Thog's Masterclass, shave off all your hair like Pat Virzi did the other day (you've got a nice head-start there...) and volunteer to run the Eastercon after next in Harringay (please put me down for a supporting membership). It's the same sad old story of a great fan brought low by winning a prestigious award, and I grieve for your loss. But, at least we know that you'll now be required to publish another 30 issues of VIBRATOR - each one bigger and better than the last - so we ordinary fans whom you've left behind will at least have that.

I learned far more about what happened at the Newcastle Corflu from reading Vibrator than I did from watching the proceedings on the UStream video here in Virginia as it happened. I could usually see just enough to catch my interest before the broadcast stalled, or one of UStreams frequent commercial interruptions (which, curiously, always seem to have quite good quality video and audio) broke the discussion into incoherent fragments. Still, you know how I hate to complain, Graham, and at least I got to see the fuzzy image of Nigel wearing your wig at one point. That was almost worth the 20 or so hours I spent attempting to watch the 5 hours of programming that were broadcast. I *did* get to see most of Kev Williams' film (I hope I've got that attribution right. I saw someone introducing the film but the image was so blurry that it could have been Rob Jackson or Uncle Johnny for all I could swear to) and I thought that was exceptionally well done. The film itself looked quite good on the broadcast, although much of the other items looked a bit rough. I blame award-winning fans, as you'll understand.

One good thing about the current... er, *issue* afflicting the 2015 Hugo Awards; it makes the FAAN Awards - as relatively small as they are - all the more important to Fandom. I hope to make a better effort to support the FAAN Awards in the future.

I enjoyed Dave Cockfield's memories of Bob Shaw. I never met the man even though he apparently attended many SF conventions here in the American South later in his life. To this day at Southern conventions the old-timers will gather and tell stories about Bob, and I always regret that our paths never crossed. Dave's mention of Bob's glass staining hobby caught my interest both because of the three pieces of Shaw stained glass that appeared in the TAFF auction at Loncon 3 last year (I believe that they'd been generously donated by David Langford) which attracted intense bidding, but because that detail highlights the creation of the first story by Shaw that I ever read, "Slow Glass", which I read in Wollheim and Carr's 1969 World's Best SF collection. Funny how such things come together over time, isn't it?

Paul Skelton writes about not particularly wanting a *complete* collection of Glenn Miller recordings even though he does enjoy the better known Miller tunes. I'm just the opposite. Since I do a weekly big band radio show (you knew I'd work in a plug before I was done, didn't you?) and Miller is one of my favorites I bought a complete set of his civilian band recordings last year and have been enjoying most of it ever since. True, some of the lesser known tunes are stinkers, just as Paul indicates, but I've found enough gold in those well worked veins to justify my purchase. But a truly complete set of Glenn Miller is a little tough to compile since true collectors also have to have the 24 tunes he recorded with his *first* "Glenn Miller Orchestra" in 1937 and 1938. That band failed financially but those 24 songs are pretty good stuff and show glimmerings of the Miller style that came to typify his later band. Then you have to go further back and collect the hundreds of sides (meaning songs as in 'sides of a 78 rpm record') that Miller played on as a sideman or arranged for with Ben Pollack's Band, The Dorsey Brothers Band, and the several other smaller bands that he worked with in the 20's and 30's. Miller disbanded his organization in late 1942 when he went into the Army, but as the leader of his Band of the American Expeditionary Forces Training Command and other service bands he recorded several hundred tunes - much of this his best work - none of which was released commercially at that time. A lot - though far from all - of it is available on cd today and I have all of that too. But wait! There's more! There are the hundreds of live radio broadcasts that he did over the years with all of his various bands, many of which were recorded by a transcription service for Miller and which thus survive, but many more that weren't. Some of these otherwise unrecorded broadcasts were recorded by amateurs with home recording disc sets, and to this day new "lost" Glenn Miller recordings are still being discovered as old time hobbyists pass away and their collections come onto the market. There's a Glenn Miller Archive at the University of Colorado (Glenn's alma mater) which collects and restores such recordings and preserves them for future generations. The Archive has provided several rare recordings to me for my radio show, and has done so entirely for free. So just as there are obsessive science fiction collectors (like me, who is currently searching for issues of AUTHENTIC SCIENCE FICTION to complete my set), there are also obsessive Glenn Miller collectors (again I raise my hand) who enjoy tracking down every scrap of music that he was involved with and every bit of lore. One of the many things that I would have loved to have done on my trip to England last year would have been to visit some of the places that the Glenn Miller band played at or stayed at during their deployment in WWII, such as the Corn Exchange in Bedford where the band recorded many of their broadcasts. Alas, there just wasn't time, and I was visiting on Fandom's dime so there were other priorities. Next trip, though...

Greatly enjoyed Nic Farey's explication of Las Vegas taxi service lingo, but "Vox Day" means a coffee break? I'd have expected it to mean something quite a bit nastier for some reason. I dunno why...

And lastly I also was glad to read your and Rich Coad's comments about Art, which filled in much info that I had wondered about. I wasn't Art's ideal kind of person in some respects - he didn't approve of my Civil War reenacting hobby because he felt that it glorified war, for instance. We had a very dignified talk about that at Corflu Zed - but I was a fan just as he was, and that was all that really mattered to Art. I last saw him at the Richmond Corflu where he made a point of making sure that he and I had a little while to talk one-on-one again. I enjoyed and appreciated that. Art went right back to the very foundations of Fandom and truly understood what Fandom is all about. I'll miss him.

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THE SAD STORY OF EZTV. (IN WHICH GRAHAM BANGS ON AGAIN ABOUT INTERNET FREEDOM WHEN NOBODY REALLY CARES)

This was a website which allowed people to download torrents of popular and not-so-popular tv shows. In the UK the government, acting at the whim of copyright holding corporations and powerful media lobbies, outlawed it, along with more notorious sites like The Pirate Bay, by banning ISP's from linking to them. It was a pretty futile gesture since, it being the nature of freedom of access to information, workarounds soon became available in the form of proxy sites. I used to use EZTV

frequently. It was a convenient and comprehensive one-stop site for this kind of material. Now, however, the site has gone tits up. The interesting thing about this was that this was not a police or government action on behalf of copyright holding cartels, but purely a commercial exercise.

It was an unusual case of internet chicanery involving the domain name being hi-jacked by another party seeking financial gain from the exercise. It was as if I had hijacked the Ansible domain and then sought to charge a subscription for access to it.

People seem to become increasingly ingenious in trying to make money out of the internet. Porn sites have long been established to recycle freely available material by offering download subscriptions (as well as advertising) and there are of course the perfectly legitimate *scams* when countless sites charge for a service in providing things like driving licenses and passports and visas above and beyond the actual cost of the items themselves, when no charge is made for such *services* on official sites.

So another free site gobbled up by money-grabbing pirates, which are of course close to the heart of laissez-faire jackboot capitalist governments like Cameron's. Now I am forced to use sites like Kickass, which is no real hardship. It's good that for everyone who tries to control aspects of the internet for their own gain, there are always people who believe enough in free access to information that you can always find an alternative.

CURT PHILLIPS POSTED AN ITEM ON A PRIVATE GROUP ABOUT GUNS, AND I EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN USING IT HERE. HE AGREED AND EXPANDED IT SOMEWHAT

Nine Guns and Countless Snapping Turtles

By Curt Phillips

On the farm in Southwest Virginia where I grew up we had a pond, and that pond had snapping turtles living in it. Snapping turtles – for those who might not know – are nothing like the cute little pet turtles that used to be available for sale in dime stores all across America when I was a kid in the 1960's, but are in fact nasty, stinking, ugly creatures the size of a football or larger. They are omnivores and routinely killed any fish which made their way down the creek that fed our pond and on the hot summer days of my middle childhood when I had nothing better to do I'd take a .22 rifle, climb into an old willow tree that stood about 30, 35 yards from that pond and shoot snapping turtles. This was back when I was 10 or 12 or so. I got pretty good at it, and once killed 4 in one day. That might not sound like a lot, but as soon as the first shot was fired, all the turtles would dive for the soft mud at the bottom of the pond. Except, of course, for the one that I had just killed. I probably killed more than a hundred over a three year period. I had my rules to the thing, and wouldn't shoot them when they were out of the water on the dry ground or even when fully submerged, but would wait till they slowly raised their heads above the surface of the pond. Then I'd shoot them in an eye. For a long time my dad wouldn't believe that I could shoot that accurately, but the day I got those 4 I got them all out of the water and had them lined up with their wounds clearly visible for his inspection when he got home from work. He got a kick out of that.

I'm not that good a shot now at the age of 56 since my vision has deteriorated. At one time I could shoot a single leaf out of a tree at 50 yards, and only cut the stem - not the limb or the body of the leaf itself. I won a few small bets among my class mates at Cleveland Elementary School doing that sort of thing until the word got around. Guns and hunting were just things that boys grew up with in those years in my part of the country. My Grandfather Phillips taught me how to "bark a squirrel" with a muzzle loading rifle when I was 8. What you do is, you load a solid lead shot in a Kentucky rifle (the shot is about .30. I've never actually measured it; we made our own with hot lead and a mold and the mold had been sized to that musket) and when you spot a squirrel clinging to the side of a tree you shoot *under* the animal's belly into the bark, which causes the bark fragments to knock all

the air out of its lungs, and it falls to the ground, stunned. Then you run over, pick up the squirrel and dispatch it by wringing its neck. When you've caught enough for that night's supper, you know that you won't have to worry about picking lead shot out of your meat at dinner.

Of course, my grandfather had to worry about feeding his family back during the Great Depression of the 1930's, and do so in the mountains of East Tennessee where – at that time – if you didn't hunt for food or grow your own you didn't eat, so being a good shot while hunting was a necessary survival skill. Those skills were passed on to my dad and then to me, and I became a pretty fair shot as such things are reckoned in these parts. But happily, even though we had our own lean times I never had to fall back on hunting and fishing to make sure that Liz and the girls didn't go hungry. But it was nice to know that I could have if I'd needed to.

Fast forward many years to Corflu Zed in 2009, where one evening I walked into the consuite to find a few of my British friends discussing the gun culture of America. I'd missed the start of their discussion, but I imagine that it had something to do with the fact that so many Americans seem to own guns while among the British gun ownership is far less common. There are several obvious reasons for this, and most of them stem from the establishment of the legal right of private gun ownership for Americans in the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States:

“A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

When the authors of this amendment wrote it in 1789 they were only a few years removed from the War for American Independence in which common citizens often took up their own hunting rifles, banded together with their neighbors and went to war to establish the United States as a free and independent nation. They were keenly aware that those “citizen soldiers” made *all* the difference in the winning of the war and there was a strong and virtually unanimous feeling that the right of American citizens to own and carry arms must never be subject to the changing cultural or political climate of later times, and so they embedded that right into the very foundation of American law. In all the years since, we Americans have cherished and guarded those rights, and though occasionally challenged they still stand as the law of the land.

Of course, the times and the country **have** changed since the days of Colonial America; and some of those changes are dramatic. My ancestors in 1789 lived in what was then the frontier of American expansion here in Southwest Virginia, and guns were a basic necessity of life back then both for hunting and for the defense of home and family against wild animal attacks and marauding Cherokee and Watauga tribes who'd discovered the hard way that European settlers made poor neighbors, and who were determined to drive them out of their hunting grounds if they could. Those settlers – my ancestors among them – had no place else to go and so the only options were to fight or be killed themselves. That my family and I live here in those same mountains today indicates who won that conflict.

But that was then and this is now. The life we face in my mountains today is much calmer and far more secure. Some people in the high mountains still hunt for food for their basic survival, but they do so of their own choice, and their numbers are vanishingly small. There **is** still the occasional wild animal to be dealt with, but we have a state Department of Wildlife Management who respond to such incidents on behalf of the citizenry. I've only seen a large predator in the woods twice in my life – Black Bears each time – and I was able to walk away from them each time without shooting. We do have some species of poisonous snakes that are common in my part of the country and so my family has always kept guns ready to deal with them. I've had to shoot Rattlesnakes and Copperhead snakes a few times when I've found them on our farm. Two years ago my 82 year-old father was bitten in the leg by a Copperhead while he was cutting firewood. He didn't have a gun with him at the time but he did have a running chainsaw in his hands, and he used that to quickly kill the snake. Then he limped to his truck and drove himself to the nearest hospital Emergency Room where he was treated and released. You can still see the scars on his leg from that snakebite. Farmers in this rural region are also sometimes plagued by foxes (some of which are reportedly rabid) and coyotes (which run down and kill sheep and calves when they can) which endanger people and livestock, and all manner of smaller pests such as crows, raccoons, and other animals which endanger crops. In most cases a

good rifle and someone who knows how to use it are still the most effective way to deal with these pests.

But then, a farm kid grows up learning about these things and most of us are taught when we are very young not only how to use a firearm, but *when* it's appropriate to use one and the dire consequences of their misuse. Growing up in the country, guns were just a normal part of our world and it never occurred to me or – as far as I know – to any of my friends to misuse them in any way. Such things just weren't done. Our parents and older relatives taught and reinforced those instructions. We had "hunter safety" classes in school and at summer camps. And when there was a fox in the henhouse – not an euphemism – sometimes it was us kids who reached the family rifle first and had to shoot the fox before it killed any more chickens. But then, we were *country* kids, and we were far closer to the natural world than were kids who lived in towns or cities. I eventually discovered – when I reached high school - that town kids were unfamiliar with many of the things that I'd grown up with, including firearms. Worse, town kids were *meaner* than country kids. Instead of spending their free time playing in the woods as I and my friends had, *they* had spent all their time fighting, learning to smoke and drink and learning how to steal things to smoke and drink since they were underage, and learning how to act tough. I and my cohort grew up trying to be young Davy Crocketts and Daniel Boones; *they* grew up trying to be young Al Capones. When our two worlds met in high school a great many conflicts ensued, most of which we all eventually worked out in one way or another. That experience taught me an important lesson about how most of us grow up seeing the whole world in one particular set of terms, which we all come to think of as the one true way that the world *should* be seen, and that whenever we meet someone with a different worldview our first innermost thought is "why doesn't that guy see things *my* way?" Learning how to balance conflicting world views in ways that respect the other guy's dignity is, I think, one of the first important lessons that we learn (or should learn) as we take our first steps toward adulthood.

But I digress...

Returning now to 2009 and that discussion about guns at Corflu Zed, when I entered the room that group of my British friends turned to me and said "tell us Curt, how many guns do you own?" I think they may have expected that I'd say "none", but I thought a minute, counted them in my head, and truthfully replied "nine". My friends went all silent and a moment later more or less changed the subject. I fear they were all thinking "good Lord; even *Curt's* one of these American gun nuts", or something like that. I dunno; is nine guns too many?

Thing is; those nine guns all have different reasons for being in my house. Here's the run-down:

- 1) A 12-gauge shotgun, a long ago Christmas present from my father, which I used to shoot crows out of our garden when Liz and I lived on our own farm. I don't have the farm any more, but the shotgun came with us to town. I guess the surviving crows stayed on the farm.
- 2) A .30 M-1 Carbine - a WWII relic - also a present from dad - which I used for shooting blanks at WWII reenactments, and for target practice. It's a wonderfully accurate weapon. If someone ever breaks into our home some night, this is the weapon I'll greet them with.
- 3) A .69 Springfield musket, made in 1841 and used in the American Civil War by an ancestor of mine who brought it home when the shooting stopped. It was handed down through the family, until it arrived in my hands. I had it cleaned and restored a few years ago and used it in my Civil War reenacting hobby. I've live-fired it at targets and it's surprisingly accurate.
- 4) A percussion cap muzzle-loading Kentucky rifle, made locally around 1800 or so. Another family heirloom that a Grandfather once used to bark squirrels and train grandsons.
- 5) An old Stevens shotgun - a 410, I presume - that the other Grandfather left me in his will. It dates to the 1920's and that Grandfather once shot a man with it who was engaged in stealing one of Grandfather's cows. The thief survived and went to the county jail. I've never fired it and probably never will. I'll pass it and the story along to a younger family member someday.

- 6) A K98 Mauser rifle, used by the Turks in WWI and given to me by a friend from Texas who imported a few dozen of them for use in WWI reenacting. He gave me a bandolier of vintage ammo for it too, but I've never fired it.
- 7) The .22 rifle I mentioned above. My mom wanted it to shoot snakes and other varmints in her back yard because it was light enough for her to shoot. I may get it back, eventually. Mom still lives on a farm and I've moved to town where few snakes venture.
- 8) A .36 Colt Navy pistol, a replica of a Civil War weapon. It looks great but is wildly inaccurate at 25 paces, (I tried once) so it's useless as a practical weapon. I only wore it for appearances with my formal Civil War uniform.
- 9) A replica British flintlock pistol, picked up in some trade long ago. Revolutionary War era in design. I've never fired it.

So there; 9 guns; most of them antiques. The only ones I can ever imagine using again are the shotgun – which I could possibly use for skeet shooting at a shooting range someday; *possibly* the .22 rifle or the .30 carbine *if* I ever go hunting again (unlikely), and *maybe* the Kentucky rifle, if I ever have a grandchild who wants to learn Appalachian Mountain hunting skills. I think it very unlikely that this will ever happen. The other guns? I'll keep the Kentucky rifle and the .69 Springfield in case any of my younger relatives ever prove worthy of having such family heirlooms handed down to them. The Navy Colt I loaned out to the Barter Theater in Abingdon, VA last year for a play they were doing about Robert E. Lee and the end of the Civil War (the actor who played Lee is a close friend of mine). I'll eventually sell or trade it away as I will most of the others. Aside from the family heirlooms the others are just tools to me, and at this stage in my life it seems unlikely that I'll ever have a great need for them again. I have the right to keep and bear arms and I'm grateful to my ancestors and my forefathers who fought to establish and secure that right for me and those who come after me. But I no longer have a need for most of those nine guns and I will eventually find good and responsible ways to dispose of them all.

But if I ever do have a grandchild who wants to learn something of how to live off the land by hunting, I'll teach them the lessons and stories that I was taught, and I'll make sure that my grandchild understands that the single most important thing about any weapon is the good judgment of the person who holds that weapon in their hands. Because no blow can ever be un-stricken, and no bullet – once fired – can ever be called back.

ROBERT LICHTMAN WRITES

I admit to being both a little perplexed and a little ticked off at those people who “liked *Vibrator* but it didn't have enough of my own writing in it.” Your survey of how much you wrote in the first dozen issues was illuminating, and led me to doing a quick and dirty check of #15. Of the 23 pages that were text, you wrote approximately seven of them – which strikes me as a decent percentage. Since *Vibrator* is a combination of a “perzine” and a “letterzine,” it seems a good balance. In addition, this issue also contains “articles”: just over three pages altogether by Nic Farey and Rich Coad. Why, it's practically a “genzine.” Watch out, or you'll cause categorical confusion among some in next year's FAAn award voting!

Looking at the cover Alison supplied, I was struck with how in just over 150 years relentless miniaturization has shrunk the size of vibrators to where – instead of having to be some forty feet long, powered by wood-fire generated steam, and requiring one to climb up to the top of the stack in order to use it – they are hand-held and battery-operated. What wonders this modern age has wrought!

Of sitting opposite Ted White you learned that his “anecdotes go into total and overwhelming detail so in the end they are often not so much anecdotes as entire life-histories.” As someone who's

known Ted for a very long time and has had many occasions to sit in his proximity – many of them by mutual agreement, and at a Corflu – I’m well familiar with this propensity of his. Usually the subject matter is of interest to me – and, in fact, I’ve heard his tales of working at the t-shirt wholesaler – but I can see that others’ mileage may vary. If what he was talking about didn’t interest me, at least not in four-part harmony (thank you, Arlo!), I’ve been perfectly capable of changing the subject with no hard feelings on his part. And we’ve remained friends.

Regarding the FAAn Awards, I am not among the “some people” who feel the process needs a shot in the arm. The idea of having a nomination period, Hugo-style, after which the Actual Voting would take place – also Hugo-style, selecting from the handful of choices in each category – seems to me to be adding unnecessary complications to what’s basically a very simple process. Yes, for some it is worrisome that there isn’t wider participation, but given the ever-shrinking pool of writers, artists and publishers for whom to vote, it doesn’t (how many ways can I say this?) bother me. As for someone “writing a pre-emptive and unbiased roundup of fanactivity well in advance of the event, just to remind people of who might have their hat in the ring, without actually stipulating the level of hatness,” as you suggest, I think that Bill Burns’s annual display of fanzine covers – meant mainly to aid voting in that category – performs this function in a sufficiently adequate way without going over the deep end into lists of who wrote/drew what and where did it/they appear.

I enjoyed Nic’s “Taxi-Onomy,” especially his lengthy and detailed glossary of Cabbiespeak – almost none of which I already knew. The exception was “bandit.” I love this sort of thing. Some of Fredric Brown’s stories have carnival/circus settings, and in one of them he presents a glossary of Carniespeak. And, of course, we as fans have our own legacy of Fanspeak....

I had to smile at R-Laurraine’s writing that her Prius “was getting a bit long in the tooth. It was almost thirteen years old,” since my Corolla is now sixteen years old, and I’ve had it for fifteen of them. It’s got some dings and scratches, but at over 185,000 miles it’s never burned a drop of oil and is still running strong. Good that she’s happy with the Civic hybrid she bought but I do wonder what, other than neither her nor her husband having “kept a car that long,” was a problem with it.

I’m mildly envious of Murray Moore’s walking and biking access to a wide array of stores. As you know, living where we do up a steep hill on a winding road with no sidewalks we have to drive to get to any shopping. The nearest cluster of stores is in an area called Montclair Village, but it’s far from as complete as what Murray describes and the mix is decidedly different. He has two banks, we have five. We also have two bookstores, but they’re limited to new offerings mostly of the “best seller” variety so I never visit them. One of our two drugstores is in very small premises – a miniature of that chain’s more typical outlets – and doesn’t even carry everything that they advertise in their weekly flyers. We also have two supermarkets, but mirroring the situation with the local drugstores one of them is also a miniature with limited offerings. We used to have two hardware stores, then one (the closed one became a real estate office), and then none (that one became a health club). After a small but nasty earthquake about 5-6 years ago wiped out the inventory of our only liquor store, it closed down and the premises are now a frozen yogurt shop. There are no health care providers of any kind, but there are two shops devoted to vision services and sales of glasses. We have more real estate offices than is seemly. I won’t go on, except to note that what we have in spades is restaurants of many ethnic varieties including “American” and in every price range – oh, and of course a Starbucks.

I enthusiastically second Jerry Kaufman’s recommendation of John Baxter’s wonderful book travelogue/memoir *A Pound of Paper*. But I also have liked his many books about Paris – and about life in France more generally. Perhaps my favorite of them is *Immovable Feast - A Paris Christmas*, about (as the back cover text aptly describes it) about “how a man who was raised on white bread – and didn’t speak a word of French – unexpectedly wound up with the sacred duty of preparing the

annual Christmas dinner for a venerable Paris family” (his, by marriage). It’s a fascinating read, full of mystery and suspense and the search for ingredients.

Your and especially Rich Coad’s memoirs of Art Widner were touching and evocative. Rich writes about how after he and Stacy moved to Santa Rosa in 2007 they began seeing more of Art than at “the occasional party or convention.” He explains: Art would make fairly frequent jaunts down to Santa Rosa, either to see his doctors at Kaiser Medical Center, or to stock up on supplies at Costco.” Prior to my retirement in 2005, when I was working in Santa Rosa I would meet up with Art when he made one of these trips for lunch together at one of the restaurants near my office. It was always good to see him, and I remember those lunches as times of good conversation and cheer.

In “Vibrator Backside,” you give the reason that yours is such a popular and anticipated fanzine: “What I basically do with this fanzine...is write a few bits about my own views...whilst trying to provide enough hooks for people to hang comments on. Does that make this a focal point fanzine? I dunno. There are fanzines out there where the editors certainly give more regard to design and content than I do. Maybe I try to give the arguments more continuity than those, because as David Cameron says, we are all in it together.” Sod Cameron! You do it better than him, any day!

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Robert also sent some pics of Art’s car, one of which is reproduced here:



JIM MOWATT HAS SOME IDEAS OF HIS OWN ABOUT TAXONOMY

Reading Nic's taxi codes I wondered about some possible alternative taxi codes based upon popular culture and fandom.

It's getting all Game of Thrones in here – one of the passengers is telling you a heartbreaking story about all their pain and suffering and the other one is almost certainly going to rape and murder that passenger in the back of your cab.

A Star Trek Fare – one that always goes to the same place time after time but makes out that it's a big deal.

A PKD moment – a passenger that is convinced that you're not real or that you're a robot in league with the government that is spying on all your fares and going to turn 'em all in.

A Sorensen – a passenger who will tell you that you're going the wrong way and then when you reach the correct destination will say that you're a crap driver and you did it better back in the 80's.

A Worldcon bid – a passenger that says they want you to drive them to Mexico but only has 5 dollars and is hoping that 10,000 other people will chip in a portion of the fare before you get there.

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NOW HERE IS KEVIN WILLIAMS WITH TWO LOCS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

First Vibrator 14

I left Corflu with a renewed sense of all things fan (unless it was the excess of chick peas and butter beans from the Tapas on the last night), and a modest pile of fanzines. I really enjoyed the time there, the multitudinous discussion, the right-on (or should I say left-on) attitudes shown, to all things out there.

I don't any more, feel much motivated by things that are fannish for their own sake. Did that with Mexican and pretty soon afterwards moved away physically and socially. The endless discussions about fannish ephemera are not really for me, any more.

I like the people, a decent communality of opinion, many common and related interests and passions. I was part of 'In the Bar' when Harry started it up, and found it potentially overwhelming. Being a tad OCD, if I got involved I feel I'd have to read all the postings and formulate a response to all of them. I would not have time to sleep. Harry says it's easy, just decide how much you want to do. Easier said than done for me.

But VIBRATOR, I think I can do. Having listened to Graham and read this issue, I see it as an edited form of 'In the Bar', which I can manage.

I enjoyed the issue, and can see the familiarity that the contributors share, which I will have to aspire to, since I'm new to this, and really to fandom of the last 25 or so years.

OK so, here we go...

Loved the Clerihews, and am super impressed by the skills exhibited. I can't do that. But delighted and relieved to see discussions on media and music, which I can contribute to.

Don, Ian W and John H comment on guitarists. I have always liked the uncompromising sound of Hank Marvin's guitar, and heard something even heavier in lead sounds from Hank Wangford and the Playboys. Their lead guitarist appeared to be playing a Fender 6 string bass, but with very heavy gauge strings, The sound was wonderful. Check out 'Welcome Here' from 'Best Foot Forward'. I wouldn't agree with Don that Chuck is better than Jimi, but do agree the general point that nimble, flashy-fingered show-offism is boring. There is more eloquence in the spaces between the occasional notes that Peter Green (used to) play, or Bill Frisell, than in the whole careers of Slash and Joe Satriani.

Fred Smith's love of the big band sound, brings back memories of when Sue and I learned ballroom dancing (her idea, natch), and then we went to live in Cincinnati and went to a couple of big band

concerts, to which we would and (sort of) could dance. Eee, it were grand! Not been much of a fan of sitting and listening to the records, although my brother has over 200 Stan Kenton albums. (OCD runs in the family).

I promise not to list all of the music I like. However, I do like to hear new music all the time, and have run 'Loop-de-Ville' (a sort-of music APA) for the past 18 years, my only pseudo-fannish activity, of which Harry B, Dave C, John Barfoot and of course the estimable G. Charnock, have been contributors. It was inspired by the Tape-Loop that Peter-Fred (?) started during the heady days of Franks APA, later taken over by Alun Harries.

The general opinions of the early Star Treks, I'd agree with, but it got seriously good with DS9, particularly the later seasons. Possibly the greatest ever TV SF series is the reboot of 'Battlestar Galactica' – up there with the best of TV series in general (Breaking Bad, West Wing, Sopranos, True Detective). The common feature here is the creator/producer Ron Moore, who interestingly has a new series called Outlander (a sort of Scottish Highlands version of Game of Thrones), which I understand has gone down well in the US.

Not quite sure what to make of Granny Charnock, but I can see that she was surely a great entertainer.

...and there on the back page, yet another dead-on Don West cartoon. This man should be world famous, and in receipt of large art council grants.

Then Vibrator 15

In the new issue, I really liked your two 'back-to-back' pieces. Firstly the literary snob bit in the new issue - the 'Game of Thrones vs Graham Greene' game. The processed word/word processor generation versus the 'need to read every word' context and character laden distillation, that's provided by Greene. The former seemingly bent on stripping the planet of trees, to provide us with handy door-stops. I'm convinced that the word processor is the main cause for the bloated excesses of so many modern novels, a syndrome which especially afflicts SF. Word count is an assumption of quality? It must be so easy to go back and embellish, add a bit more description, crow-bar in a bit of thinly disguised wikipedia entry and so on.

The second piece is the comparison between 'Philadelphia Story' and 'High Society'. There's no disputing that HS was the poorer film in terms of casting, acting etc, but for me, it was a landmark film, because of the music, mainly the sole jazz performance: 'Now you has Jazz'. As a ten-year old (my Mam and Dad would take me to the cinema every Thursday), we saw this probably on its first re-release. I loved the song, especially that astounding solo that Armstrong seems to pull out of thin air, but doubtless had played many times before. That, plus with a brother 8 years older also a big jazz fan, who allowed his snotty kid brother into the parlour where he played his (usually Stan Kenton) records on his Decca, was my initiation into true excitement in music. The HS album was there and I'd play that one track over and over. I knew all the words by heart, even though some were indistinct and mystery-filled: what's a 'box that rocks', why would I 'take some skin?' These mysteries perplexed me, but I sang along merrily not understanding.

By the time I was 14 my brother was at college and president of college jazz club, which had inherited the collection of jazz records assembled by Kingsley Amis (then a lecturer at Swansea) from his reviews in the Observer. It was all I listened to, plus a few blues discs that had crept in from somewhere, until the Beatles hove to.

One of the first LPs I bought was *Louis Armstrong Town Hall Concert Plus*. This had 6 tracks from a 1947 NYC concert. The versions of 'Rockin' Chair', 'Back O'Town Blues' and 'Ain't Misbehavin'' are remarkable. I recently splashed out on a box set of Armstrong's live recordings for Columbia and RCA

Victor, which includes, I think for the first time, the full Town Hall Concert, including an iffy section where the acetate disc cutters overheated and the sound gets muddy. Unlike in the 20s, when Louis was backed by pretty average musicians, this concert has become seen as the beginning of the second stage of his career. He was accompanied by great sidemen: Jack Teagarden, Bobby Hackett, Peanuts Hucko and Dick Cary on piano. Apparently completely unrehearsed for this concert, they seemed to push him to greater heights. Yes, there's some chummy, hackneyed singing, but they set the mood for the explosive, breathtaking solos that follow.

Here's the sleeve notes by Armstrong expert, Riccy Rickardi: *"with 'Rockin' Chair, we move to a highlight of western civilization! Hyperbole aside, this is as good as it gets, another 1929 vintage routine, but that Armstrong had never performed with Teagarden. Without any rehearsal, they nailed it, Teagarden with his cool Texas drawl, being the perfect foil for Armstrong's more excitable character. But more than just going for laughs, there's clearly a love between the men that the audience in Town Hall felt that evening and that we can still feel today. The laughter you hear in the audience is 100% genuine and completely contagious. When Armstrong leads the way out with his horn, the emotion of it all is enough to bring you to tears – a quintessential Armstrong performance: laughter, warmth and heavy drama, all in about 5 minutes"*

Thinking back, I now realise that these early exposures to jazz, thanks to my brother, were life-changing for me. I realised at a young age, that music didn't have to be syrupy and sentimental (my parents preference), but could really move you profoundly - that great sign of appreciation – thrill felt, hairs rising – autonomic applause. I was ready for the Beatles and all that followed.

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VIBRATOR BACKSIDE

Enough, enough, already. Vibrator 15 was quite late going out, allowing for Corflu Comedown, so I thought response might not be so hot and I might get some respite from having to produce a twenty-plus-page fanzine every month. But you lot won't let up, will you? I suppose that is the Price one pays for producing an Award-winning (twice!) focal point fanzine. If this goes on I fear I may have to make some cuts, although they will probably be in my alcohol consumption. David Redd was so concerned about my dire warnings last issue that he actually sent some second-class stamps. Ironic, since David is one of my most consistent and reliable correspondents and hence certainly very low down on any potential chop-list. The rest of you... well, obviously I can't continue to make veiled threats for fear of becoming known as the fanzine editor who cried Wolf! Anyway don't take all this as an earnest plea to you *not* to send letters. You are what makes this fanzine after all.

This has been Vibrator 2.0.16 dated 31st May 2015, and comes to you from Graham Charnock at 45 Kimberley Gardens, London, N4 1LD, UK. Email: graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk. Thanks to Pat Charnock for proof-reading and Nick the Printer for offering to print the cover for free (he must be anbgling for the contract for Pat's Raucous Caucus. Deadling for number 17 would seem to be at the end of Flaming June – pencil June 30th in on your wall-planner.