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A TANDEM BOOK

3/6



Weigh hey my hearties. Time for another fanzine. Don't blame me, I'm OCD about this and just have to pub my ish every month. I'm under the orders of my pirate doctor who thinks I am possibly mad. What other explanation could there be for this behaviour, except possibly an excess of grog.

If things work out, this issue will include the long postponed LADIES OF THE NIGHT feature. I wish to thank everybody who contributed, including those who sent me several very sticky letters in sticky envelopes. (Graham Hall once complained that he couldn't raise enough spunk to stick a stamp on an envelope, so I assume the rest of you must also have this problem). I suppose it was foolish of me to imagine some actual Ladies might have contributed, but I nevertheless live in hope even to this day.

Amongst the more radical innovations in this very issue (pace, Paul Skelton) is that interlineations are now 2.0 point instead of 1.75 I am also including page numbers so that copies which are collated out of order are more easily recognizable. Don't say I never do anything to accommodate my readers.

Thank you for enquiring about my health. I have only fallen down twice since the last issue and have finally self-diagnosed not as being simply drunk, but as Postprandial Hypotension. Apparently when you eat, blood rushes to your intestines to handle the process of ingestion and metabolism (who knew?) which can cause sudden hypotension when you stand up immediately after eating. Bizarrely this condition is more often suffered by people with hypertension. No, I don't understand it either. Of course being drunk probably doesn't help.

LADIES OF THE NIGHT. I MADE MY EXCUSES AND LEFT

*While I was compiling the last issue, I had the idea of running a feature asking what experience fans had had of ladies of the night, that oldest of professions besides fanzine editing, namely prostitution. I don't remember what kicked it off. Possibly a chance remark than put me in mind of my only visit to Paris, when overnight I had stayed in the Place Pigalle. This was on a coach trip on the way to The Greek Islands, and they were obviously not too scrupulous about the places they booked us into. The *hotel* was so obviously a bordello, with rock hard mattresses and bolsters that were designed to encourage you not to stay much longer than an orgasm. I ventured out late at night and was propositioned outside a porn shop (what was I thinking!) for the first time in my life. My memory paints her as a slim short-haired girl, but by that you may possibly only guess my preference for prostitutes.*

Anyway, talking about this led me onto structuring this feature. Make of what you will.

IAN MAULE:

Soho 1975. A polite young fan dressed in suit and tie decides to drop into Forbidden Planet on his way home from work. He passes a doorway and a seductive voice says, "Are you looking for someone?". The polite young fan replies with a "no", and walks on with thoughts of skiffy on his mind.

MIKE MEARA:

The place: Soho, London, England (as the Americans would say).

The time: sometime in the 1970s, probably. What d'you mean, can't I be more precise? No, I can't be more precise. This wasn't something I noted in my diary, you know:

"Dear Diary: Went to London today, and quite unexpectedly had a delightful encounter with a Lady Of The Night. Unexpectedly, because it happened in the daytime. Also, because I don't look like that kind of person. Anyway, we went up to her place and engaged in some spiffing rumpy-pumpy for what seemed like hours, but was probably only about three minutes. And she didn't charge me anything! Said I had a kind face. Or a kind-of face, I'm not sure now. More probably because it really was only about three minutes. I suppose sex is a bit like arguments: sometimes you pay for the full half-hour, but then can't even manage five minutes. Glad to report that my generative member is still its usual sullen purple colour, and doesn't smell any worse than it usually does, so I think I'm safe in assuming I haven't caught any new diseases to add to my collection."

It wasn't like that at all. These were the golden days when it was still worth my while to make a day trip to London by train, in order to explore the numerous second-hand vinyl emporia, such as the Record & Tape Exchange, Mole Jazz, Ray's Records and many others I now forget.

And thus it was that I was in Soho, looking for the bit of Berwick Street that wasn't entirely occupied by sex shops. Of course, I'd sneaked a look at them as I sidled furtively past, but the sweet smell of used vinyl was my real goal, and I knew that Berwick Street was home to several such Platter Palaces: Honest Jon's is one I remember, maybe it's still there. It was as I paused, perhaps at the crossroads with Broadwick Street, getting my bearings, that it happened.

I didn't see her coming, but the reverse is clearly not true. Suddenly she is in front of me, saying something like "Do you want a go?" Somehow - I could think, like, quicker in them days - I realised what she was asking me, also that what she was doing was illegal, and that I therefore didn't want to be involved, so I managed to mumble something like "No, thank you" - politeness in adversity, I'm proud of that - and move off in some direction, any direction, just to get away from there.

I suppose she went off in search of another potential customer. I didn't look. I can't remember much about her. She didn't seem young - in her thirties, maybe - and her tired, slightly desperate look did not add to her attractiveness. But that assessment is based on eye contact lasting a second or less. Not a good way to judge people. Not that I would anyway, since I'm not a Judge. Even if she had been drop-dead gorgeous, I

wouldn't have gone for it; though I support the idea of legalising sex workers, it's not something I myself have ever wanted to partake of.

But the story does have a happy ending: I did find that record shop, and I went home happy, with that sweet smell of used vinyl in my nostrils.

GLENN GLAZER:

When I was in my early twenties and father in his sixties, we took a cruise around the Caribbean. When we got off the boat in Jamaica, one of the prostitutes walked right past me and gave him the "Hey, sailor" line. We were puzzled that they weren't interested in me, but amused because father actually had served in the Navy in WWII.

JOHN NIELSEN-HALL:

The Prince Edward Theatre was not always the Prince Edward Theatre. It used to be a cinema, but I cannot now remember what it was called. (Roy Kettle will probably know.) Anyway, on the corner it occupies in Soho there was a café where, if one was early for a showing or couldn't face going home right afterwards, you could linger over a very milky cappuccino, but only at the hazard of being badgered by ladies asking if you were "looking for business" or "looking for company". This happened a lot in there and its not that I entertain prejudices or have set some sort of rule that involves never paying for sex (since, looked at in the round, very few things in this life are free) but rather the ladies themselves were somewhat unappealing and in one or two cases very obviously in need of a fix.

Be that as it may, I think the most remarkable encounter of that sort I ever experienced was sometime in the 80's when I was in a club off Sloane Square, ostensibly for business reasons. I was there as the guest of a client, but I cannot now recall what it was we were supposed to be discussing or what the outcome was. The only thing I recall for sure was that I was at the bar, having already had a few, and my eye was caught, shall we say, by an absolutely stunning woman. As many people know, I have a breast obsession. I tend to look at a woman's chest before I even look at her face. I know this is bad, I know that I do it, I just find it hard not to do, even now when I am old and completely decrepit. Anyway, this woman might not have been everybody's cup of tea, but she was certainly mine. She looked about a foot taller than me, blonde, big wide shoulders and enormous , prominent, heavy boobs. She was large, but I would not have said she was particularly overweight for her height, and her legs were quite slim. I could take all this in, because my eyes were not moving from her, I was standing at the bar, and all thoughts about what I was going to order or whatever had quite left me, and my mouth was probably hanging open.

How long I remained in this trance-like state I cannot say, but it was long enough for her to have returned my fixated stare with a succession of irritated glances. Finally, she left the group of people she was talking to and came and stood next to me. I tried to pretend I hadn't seen her at this point, but she wasn't having any of that, and she leaned close to my ear and said in what Ray Davies would have described as a dark brown voice, "I could do with a few quid. Would you like to come round the back and you can look at them properly?"

But if I told you what happened next, that would either be boasting or a pathetic admission of how desperate I was. Oops!

JIM BURNS:

Mine isn't much of a story!! The only time as I recall was when I was a student at St Martins... walking through St Anne's Court... home at the time to the 'Dark They Were And Golden-Eyed' bookshop... One end of the lane towards Wardour Street was a bit notorious for ladies-of-the-night activities... they would hang out of the windows of their boudoirs touting for custom. I literally got the 'Hello dearie, looking for a good time' treatment from some slightly clapped out tart with her tits hanging over the window ledge. I declined her kind offer.. actually feeling a bit offended... not on any prudish, disgusted grounds (a gal has to make a living!) ..but the notion that I, a 21 year old might look that desperate. OK - at the time I was a bit desperate for some action... but not THAT desperate!

DAVE COCKFIELD:

I can tell my solicitation story in a few brief paragraphs as well.

The only time I can remember having been solicited was at Eastercon 77 in Coventry when the local gay community got into trying to score with the naive fans in the De Vere. In one of the corridors outside a late night room party, there was a group including a young guy sitting on the floor wearing dark green corduroy trousers and what might or might not have been more than half a cucumber pointing down the inside of his left thigh.

"I've got a big erection," he said. Well I never. As a pick-up line that was subtle stuff. With that distraction, I am left with no memory of his face. I walked on, probably blushing.

Seeing my 27-year-old self of the time was overweight, relatively chinless and moon-faced, I think we can leave the guy's state of desperation as an exercise for the reader.

Two girls at my secondary school became prostitutes.

Linda was a bubbly ginger haired lass who ended up at the bottom end of the scale to support a drug habit. The other was and still is a close friend of mine although it has been a few years since I last saw her. Heather, is a classy, very intelligent, tall, leggy blond who operated out of the Central Hotel in Newcastle charging businessmen a few hundred quid for a night. She retired, so to speak, about 20 years ago.

A close married work friend, now deceased, used prostitutes regularly.

The wife of another friend was a Dominatrix specializing in Japanese tourists.

Ian Bambro, sadly deceased Gannet, used to be a driver for strippers. I accompanied him occasionally and we often had to wait at the end of the night while some serviced punters.

The nearest that I got to the trade was helping out when showing movies with Dave Hutchinson at CIU social clubs.

On a Sunday we would go around different clubs collecting our fee (money) and often hung around the dressing rooms with the strippers who were performing that day.

THE NAME IS DAVE BUT I LOOK LIKE A JOHN

Living in London and frequenting shops in Soho (Sci Fi and Comics) it is inevitable that you will be approached. Over the years it has happened to me a number of times.

I've never been tempted probably due to shyness, the fear of ridicule, and disease.

One memorable occasion in Soho about 20 years ago has always stuck in my mind. An extremely well dressed (skirt and blouse) attractive middle aged woman with an immaculate Louise Brooks bob said to me as I passed, "Would you like to go love? I thought that I'd misheard her because she looked nothing like a nurse so why would she be asking about my bowel movements. Honestly!

I actually stopped and thinking that this was a sign of interest she started to give me instructions to meet her in the next street. To say that I was surprised and flabbergasted in an understatement but she was quite stunning and I stood there for a minute just staring at her until I managed to blurt out something along the lines of, "I'd love to but can't now, perhaps some other time."

One Sunday morning after finishing a night shift at Mt. Pleasant International Post Office I was waiting alone at a bus stop on Farringdon Road about 5am. I was in my Customs uniform that I hadn't bothered to change because I was knackered and just wanted to get home.

I couldn't help looking at a very lithe, sexy, young woman of about 18 years dressed in a T-Shirt and micro mini as she passed me singing and dancing, apparently lost in her own world.

She must have noticed my attention because she suddenly turned back towards me, smiled and offered to give me a blow job for only a fiver as I would be her last as she had just finished at Kings Cross and was walking home.

Laughingly I pointed out my uniform but she had no prejudice because she was used to giving it free to coppers all the time.

I was really attracted to her but declined the offer. Amazingly we ended up having a great conversation until my bus came. I think that in the end she was just glad to have someone to talk to. – Dave Cockfield

CHUCK CONNOR:

(EDITOR: Steve 'Boy' Green was good enough to forward my request to Chuck Connor, asking him if he wanted to share any Singapore memories. Chuck came back to me with this.)

Singapore? That was 1986 and I (along with some others) stayed at the Garden Hotel while all the nice married crew members brought their wives & families out to Raffles and the Mandarin – even though the reception areas of both were swarming with working ladies forever bobbing for businessmen. The skipper's wife of HMS Amazon (T21) or HMS Manchester (T42) got very upset several times while waiting for her hubby. Apparently several ladies told her in various grades of English that she should find her own street corner, and stop taking the trade away from the locals. That was the same weekend Singapore celebrated 21 years of independence, and I finished off IDOMO #20 ½ ("A Mother of a Blowjob") and airtailed it back to the UK for printing.

Sic Biscuit Disintegraf (Dave Rowley & Joy Hibbert) ran several of my 'Of Times Remembered...' things. I know they had the piece about Barbados, which would have been around 1976? Or possibly 1981, before the Falklands kicked off.

That would have been before they finally shut down Nelson Street – a bit like Malta did with The Gut after they kicked the Brits out. They had more chance of selling condoms to the Pope than they did in gaining respectability.

Nelson Street was nothing but bar-whorehouse-bar-whorehouse (etc), and I probably recounted the joys of Mr Harry's Bar. Mr Harry was a huge Barbadian, who had a full set of gold teeth and solid gold rings that made his handshakes quite memorable. He also had a Midnight cabaret – with a prize if you 'won'. It was something like \$4,000 BeeWees (around £1,000) if you could have sex on stage with a young woman – successful coupling without the use of hands, hers or yours.

Mind you, she was completely greased and oiled from tit to toe, and was more slippery than a sweaty ferret on a Saturday night, as the Navigating Officer found out, much to his chagrin, just after the skipper walked in at 3am.

It was either that West Indies deployment where I ripped my foreskin – or the one before. I think Joy pubbed that around 1984 or 1985? I wonder if Greg's Memory Hole has a complete run of that? Might be worth seeing if I can borrowing a copy and tidying it up.

Oddly enough, just remembered the January 1977 deployment. Down the coast of South America as part of the West Indies Guard Ship (WIGS) when we had responsibilities for Belize. Before Branson started to exploit it. Absolutely fantastic establishment on the outskirts of the walled city, Cartagena, Colombia. El Rancheros. It was run like a very

professional business, and exceedingly well managed and maintained – even if you just wanted a safe place to eat and drink.

It was a massive bar & bordello, with barn sized wooden front doors and a paved walkway which brought you into a building the size of a small aircraft hangar. First and second floors had been bedrooms, while the ground floor was bar, stage, restaurant and dance floor.

Speaking to John D. Rickett back in 1997 (in The Dolphin pub, off Kings Cross) he and I discussed the quality and sheer professionalism of the South American establishments – especially when compared to the rather dull and utilitarian European versions.

El Rancheros was also where I sold 'Jack' Frost to various eager young ladies (3 times, in fact) because they had a thing about virgins – and Jack looked disgustingly young – about 14 or so. I think he was actually 20 at the time, and had lost his virginity at school, long before he joined the Navy.

I made some money, ate my first fried guinea pig, then found a fantastic South American/Latin bar. The trumpet player had a very good lip, and a surprisingly dextrous tongue.

He was also very good on trumpet as well.

Later on during that deployment, Jack tried to pimp himself solo in Recife, which never worked as it always needed someone else to do the introductions.

“You want nice time?”

“No thanks. And you’re waiting your time with him.”

“Pretty boy?”

“No, he’s a virgin.”

After that, keeping them away from him was like trying to crowbar limpets off a rock. I think he ‘lost his cherry’ five or six times – all for free. Never contracted an STD as far as I know.

Of course, most of that happened during the 1970s and early 1980s – long before AIDS put the kybosh on casual sex – when it was also a totally different Navy. Now they don’t even do things like Crossing the Line, or Sod’s Operas. I was nearly lynched by a bunch of 45 CDO BDE for a Sod’s Opera act coming back from a 4 week Norwegian exercise.

Rewrote the lyrics to My Old Man (Said Follow the Van), and had a 6ft 4 steward dress up as Marine Lloyd. “My old Sarge / Said grease it with marj / And don’t tell the Navy / We’re all gay!”

These days it’s a much saner world, or so it seems. Shame really – some days I miss the chaos of it all.

FRANK LUNNEY:

You solicited experiences with prostitutes for the next issue of VIBRATOR.... and I couldn't respond because I don't think I've really have ever had one.

There have been plenty of approaches from pathetic souls in public bathrooms, starting when I was about 15 and being approached while pissing into a stand-up urinal while taking a break from working at the pizza stand in the Q-Mart in Quakertown. I think I was even still wearing my white apron tied around my waist! "Hi, how you doin'?"

The closest to being solicited by a woman may have happened in Amsterdam. It would have been too difficult to write up since you would know the other people who were with me, and I don't want to get them involved in any story of this sort.

It was a group of 6... two guys and four women. We were sitting in a bar having a beer while I rolled up some joints. I'm pretty good at rolling joints and can roll them tight enough that they look like a regular cigarette... makes it easier to smoke in public (you just have to pay attention to which way the wind is blowing).

At some point, I noticed that a really beautiful Euroteenager was sitting to my left. Her companion had severely cropped hair and what I'd call riot grrrl clothes... I remember red pants...

The girl next to me had curly, billowy blonde hair and she struck up a conversation as we smoked joints and drank beer. She showed me how good she was at rolling joints and we shared their dope and ours. My other 5 friends were having a conversation amongst themselves, but the blonde was chatting me up... who are those people (my friends), where you from, blah blah blah... until she got touchy feely with my arm and back and started whispering into my ear, "Let's go somewhere else.. your friends can take care of themselves... let's go have some fun..."

I was already having fun and above all else, I'm *loyal* in the best of circumstances (?), so after about 20 minutes of that (the thrill of the hunt!), before it got too embarrassing I said, "OK everyone... let's go..." and I waved good bye to... a 16 or 18 year old who likes older men (I was 42 at that point)?... a pair of Dutch teenagers looking for a threesome?... or a prostitute with a riot grrrl pimp?

Was I propositioned? Of course there was no mention of money, but there never is (for legal reasons) with the really expensive prostitutes, is there? It's all understood... but I got out of there before I reached any understanding

ROBERT LICHTMAN:

Along with the PDF of *Vibrator* 2.0.16 you sent a short message in which you proposed “running a feature in a forthcoming *Vibrator*...dealing with people’s direct or indirect experience with prostitution. Have you even been solicited, and under what circumstances?” Truth be told, I’ve never been approached by a prostitute (of either sex) but I have been solicited a couple of times – yes, exactly twice. I’ve often told the story of the first time – how at about 14-15 years of age I used to hang out after my judo lessons every Saturday afternoon in a huge, dusty used bookstore in Hollywood reading the Rog Phillips “Clubhouse” fan columns in late ‘40s issues of *Amazing* and similar fan columns in other pulp science fiction magazines of that era. They had a large wall of shelves devoted to pulps. I had long been a reader of science fiction at that point, but this was before I discovered fandom – and in my youthful naivete I thought it was so cool that this sort of thing was going on back at a time when my age was in single digits and my main reading was comic books and cereal boxes. It never occurred to me it would still be happening, so you can imagine my surprise and pleasure a year or so later when I discovered via Robert Bloch’s “Fandora’s Box” column in *Imagination* that it was.

On one of these occasions, an older man sidled up next to me on the bench I was sitting on doing my reading, with an open pulp magazine in his hands. I paid him no particular attention when he mumbled something about the magazines, grunting something noncommittal. But when he kept talking and put one of his large hands on my knee and then gave it a little squeeze, I got up with a start, gave him a dirty look, and decided it was time to go catch the bus home. I went back the following Saturday with some trepidation, but happily it never happened again.

The second time I was solicited was over twenty years later. By then I was married and had four young sons. In 1978 we were living at the Richmond (California) branch of the Farm, and I was the West Coast Sales Manager for the community’s publishing arm – a fancy title for driving around California (and occasionally Nevada, Washington and Oregon) with a huge American station wagon full of books and paying calls on book and health food stores (the latter because we had a vegetarian cookbook).

I was in Los Angeles by myself on a sales trip that coincided with running a booth at an outdoor book fair happening in a park one sunny weekend that summer. Besides selling a fair amount of Farm books, that book fair was where I had my first and only meeting with Theodore Sturgeon, whose publisher at the time had a booth not far from mine. The booth immediately next to mine was also sort of SF-related – its inhabitants were Evelyn Gold, formerly married to *Galaxy* editor H. L. Gold, and their son E. J. Gold. My memory is a little weak on what they were doing there, but I think they were flogging copies of his *American Book of the Dead*. I found Evelyn both pushy and boring, and E. J. was busy most of the time chatting up people who stopped by the booth in hopes they would buy signed, inscribed copies of his book.

There was an attractive red-haired woman standing off to one side at the Sturgeon booth who, I noticed, was checking me out with what seemed to me more than passing interest while I was talking with Sturgeon, and who smiled when I turned briefly to acknowledge her attentions. Late in the day, the fair attendees thinning out, she turned up at my booth and wondered (out of hearing range from the Golds) if I'd care to smoke a joint with her. That was unexpected, but after a long day with no break it was very welcome. The Golds offered to watch my booth, and we walked off to some shady trees well-removed from the action.

It was great to get out of the late afternoon sun, the joint was good, and we engaged in that sort of conversation you can have with people on, say, a train or airplane who you never expect to see again – more revealing than what you'd tell people in your workplace who you have to see every day, year after year, because of the possible repercussions there. When the joint was done and it seemed like time (to me at least) to get back to my booth, she took my hand, squeezed it gently but didn't let go, and wondered if I was free that evening. There was something in her expression that made me suspect she might have something more in mind than just going to dinner – and then she said she lived nearby. Although in some other years of my life I would have been very interested in seeing what came next, this was too much for me to deal with – although being on my own I could easily have taken the next step, the whole concept made me very nervous. So I confessed to being married with children, she was “understanding,” and it was all over.

JOHN BROSNAN: I was at a dinner party thrown by Des Skinn to entertain several Japanese comic publishers. When the meal was over they asked Des if he could perhaps find a prostitute for them. Des went away and came back with the woman who had cooked their meal for them. It was his wife.

TEXAS LIFFS

In 2004 we went on a road trip to Texas. These are some of the Liffs I came up with in a series of motels while I was waiting for my life to end.

Slobodny - A woman dressed in peasant costume who gets on your train and sings operatic arias in Serbian whilst a dwarf collects donations in a hat

Sworgrim - The small piece of grit you step on whilst going downstairs barefoot, and which later results in you spending twelve hours in an Accident Emergency unit.

Edifrix - The huge monumental statue of a local hero you occasionally come across whilst driving across Texas.

Weltner - The person who sits behind you in the cinema and kicks your seat every ten minutes and doesn't stop even when you ask him to or throw pennies at him. (CV.

Airweltner – Some who performs the same function as an airliner.)

Glossom - A bandage people from Thailand put on the big toe of people who have been intimidated by their mothers in law. It signifies they are forbidden from cussing for twenty-four hours.

Wimbledon - Anyone who rings you up after midnight and then refuses to admit it's a wrong number.

Perfidia - Any old piece of plastic reformed into a different shape and then discarded, after an old 45 rpm single by the Ventures

Billop - The sensation of trying to remove dried bird dropping from your windscreen by spitting on a pocket tissue and rubbing vigorously.

Bilopi - The residue left after the above exercise

Billopit - The smear you leave on your cheek when you touch it with your finger after being involved in billop

Smook - Anything your pet irrationally refuses to eat. Named after a rare fish found in the Outer Hebrides, which is so foul it can only be used for the mass production of fish fingers.

Tiggly - The feeling you get when you're in a lift on your own and you never want the experience to end.

Tigglydrop – The worst experience you can ever have in a lift.

Stazi - The oil you put on your face which enables glittery bits of scazz you sprinkle on yourself before going down the disco to adhere.

Scazz - Bits of shredded foil which adhere to the stazi you put on your face before going down the disco.

Pollom - Roadkill which still has its fur attached.

Pollomgollum - Road kill which is still breathing, albeit rather heavily.

Gorwhilly - An area where you experience a temporary temperature blip of 140 degree Fahrenheit

Schlimpelfelsing - What happens to your muscles when you wait in a queue at Macdonalds for more than twenty seconds.

Cachtung - A cactus that has been used for target practice (mostly in Texas).

Trophomenory -The giggling fit you get when you overtake a truck on the outside of a reverse camber in a sports utility vehicle at 120 miles per hour and somehow still remain alive.

Flitromgeist - A gathering under a bridge in Austin to watch as 10 millions bats fly out to snack on insects for their evening meal.

Broffle - A leather thong worn by Hell's Angels when pole dancing. Often bearing arcane inscriptions and often passed on from generation to generation, whether they want to or not.

Pulmenodary – Inflammation of the brain caused by high level radiation from local radio transmitters.

Buffawombley - A game in which contestants attempt to predict the title of the next ZZ Top album.

Croudon - A liquor store situated on a county line, which is open only every alternate month on every third Friday, and then only for ten minutes.

Smicker - The half-smile which passes over a check-out girl's lips in a liquor-mart when you offer to show her proof of your age, despite being obviously in excess of fifty-years old.

Cardigan - A special rib-roast found in one specific restaurant in Abilene, slow-roasted in a jacket of sea-salt and served with sage dumplings and Hacket (q.v)

Hacket - A green weed resembling kale which grows near communal urinals in trailer parks

Jaloopy - What happens when you are drinking a slushie in a jeep and it goes over a bump.

Any favourite Liffs of your own? Share them with me here at graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk

PHILIP TURNER

Interesting pair of shoes your cover guy has. They look like they can be plugged in to power sockets when the wearer is watching TV to keep his feet warm. I could do with a pair of them for my nocturnal TV viewing until the world comes to its senses. There is a clear case for a global universal time based on GMT/BST to allow me to watch the Edmonton Eskimos play the BC Lions in Vancouver at 7 p.m. my time on a Thursday night instead of having to get up at 3 a.m. on Friday morning for this treat.

I have no new fox pictures not to send to you but I could manage cat pictures if you're interested. A pair of black and white ones (from next door and next-door-but-one) have developed the habit of zooming past me when I open the front door after a morning shop, strolling through the house and exiting via the back door. They clearly get something out of the ritual; I wish I knew what.

They don't call them Global Warming **Swindlers** for nothing. There's the Hockey Team, who had to be exposed as purveyors of horse hockey by AGW sceptics, and the data-cookers in East Anglia. Honesty in climate "science"? P'tui! And the characters who have been blatantly falsifying ground station temperature records (always upwards, of course) and manufacturing "data" for virtual weather stations for the 90% of the planet where there are no actual measuring instruments. P'tui! P'tui! (apologies for spitting all over your nice, clean floor, BTW)

Some more taxi stuff to finish. I think Nic would be well advised to consider an alternative to the Nielsen-Hall Procedure on his kidneys, namely keeping a clone in the boot to take over when his body needs servicing. And finally: did you send a copy of this issue to Buck House to get an official response to the Skelton Etiquette Paradox? I look forward to reading it in your next ish.

Philip Turner can be found at [**farrago2@lineone.net**](mailto:farrago2@lineone.net)

IAN WILLIAMS

I have just received an effusive apology from Mr David Cockfield concerning his allegations regarding my less than perfect driving (as if such a thing were at all possible) while on a holiday together in one of the more primitive regions of our septic isle many decades ago. He admits that this is born out of decades-long jealousy over an incident in which, drunk and tired, he retired to bed leaving me to continue drinking after hours in company of 'two gorgeous barmaids' -his words.

I expect no less than a full-page apology and a substantial out of court settlement for this blatant defamation of character.

Admittedly, there is a slight weakness in my case as I retain no memory of the incident he cites or even, alas one of me drinking with two gorgeous barmaids. In this there is a

similarity to another trip Mr C and I and (one Dr Jackson) undertook to stay with Bob and Sadie Shaw for a weekend and which I wrote about and Rob reprinted for Corflu this year in Tyne Capsule. While broadly remembering the event, the details have disappeared from memory and reading the article it came over to me as one written by a stranger - albeit a very talented and witty stranger.

I notice you no longer wish perceptive wittily presented pieces of The Grateful Dead. That being the case, all I have to say is-

Yours sincerely...

Well, perhaps another comment or two on a different topic.

Erm, actually, no. Stuff I could comment on I already have in previous locs, there's stuff I'm not really interested in and operate on the principle of, lack anything pertinent to add, keep quiet, and stuff which, while interesting/enjoyable, didn't seem to leave anything for me to add.

Or maybe it's just a mood I'm in or the flashing light in the centre of my vision -seriously, I had it last night as well.

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CURT PHILLIPS

I read your article on Graham Hall with considerable interest since Hall is one of those fans whose name I've heard here and there in fandom, but of whom I really knew very little. I'm not entirely certain that I actually know any more now than I did before I read it as I *suspect* - shallow, cynical, untrusting fan that I am - that you may have strayed in one or two minor details from the "strictly true" to the "wildly improbable". This should not be taken as criticism, you understand, as many of my closest associates in fandom are also wildly improbable. Was it Graham Hall with whom you once worked on NEW WORLDS? My file of the magazine is spotty in that period and I seem to lack many of the issues that might answer that question. And what did Graham Hall actually do after he came to America? Did he, perhaps, work in publishing?

Tara and others rightly point out that there were indeed some big band recordings that used special effects, "Spike" Jones and His City Slickers among them. But all of your correspondents overlooked the most dramatic use of special effects in the big band era by Kay Kyser's band in the later 1940's. Kyser was the first to use the Sonovox - a singing electronic voice box triggered by music. This incredibly annoying device was used sporadically in movies, radio, and even a few recordings in the rock era such as Peter Frampton's nauseating recording of "Do You Feel Like We Do?". I can't stand Peter Frampton. Perhaps you'd guessed that. But in any event, Kay Kyser was the first to use it commercially and you can even find a film clip of Kay and his band using the sonovox on Youtube. It comes from a film called "You'll Find Out!", and I guess they did. And then there was the big band of Shep Fields, he of the "rippling rhythm". His special effect was achieved by him blowing air bubbles through a straw into a glass of water in front of a microphone, and the the resulting sound was called "Shep Field's rippling rhythm". This

has to be the cheesiest thing in show business that could possibly be called a "special effect", but Shep Fields made a hell of a lot of money out of that soda straw of his.

I actually think that Uncle Johnny is right in asserting that rock music is dead. Oh, you can still hear it on the radio every day of the week, and there are still new works being produced in the rock genre, but it all sounds derivative and bland to me. Big band music is still being played on the radio too but it's only played by hobbyists like me who do it in spite of the fact that very few people actually listen to it, and fewer still actually care about it. I think that people get imprinted by the music they hear in the world around them when they are in their childhood, or their early teen years, and from that point on it's only *that* music - whatever it is - that really sounds "right" to them. It is possible - I've found - to override one's imprinting. I think I've done that myself. I grew up with rock in the late 60's and early 70's - a barren wasteland of popular music that would only be surpassed for its lack of quality when Peter Frampton started making records in the later 70's - and for some time afterwards that was what "normal" music sounded like to me. But then in my later teens I started collecting and listening to big band jazz on old 78's and I slowly immersed myself in the music of the 1930's and 40's. And today I'm more or less conversant with the music and social history of that time to the point where I can talk about Artie Shaw and The Boswell Sisters and Andy Kirk as easily as you might talk about Peter Frampton. And which of us - I ask you - is the happier for it?

But outside of Big Band (and I mean big band of the 30's and 40's, and only *original* recordings from those years at that. *Never* the dreadful recordings from the 50's and later) I think some of the best music ever recorded can be summed up in two words: Steely Dan. Fagen and Becker - who are still touring today since that's the only way they can make any real money from their music these days - perfected the fusion of rock and jazz, and practically reinvented music itself in the process. Steely Dan; finest kind.

Tara discusses the FAAN awards. I don't want to step on anyone's toes, but in my opinion, anyone who actually worries about winning awards is completely missing the point. Sure, awards are fun to win and they give us a nice bit of ego-boo, but look at how lousy it feels when you're sitting around trying to be all "awards? Oh I don't really care. Nice to be nominated, though" when inside you're really screaming "OHMYGHODINEEDTOWINTHATBASTARD!", and then, you don't. Maybe it's just human nature to want to win an award and get that buzz you get when you think others are finally giving you a little respect. Is it really something that we should want for ourselves to let an award come to be that important to us? I don't think it is, at least not for me. I like seeing others whom I respect win awards. (I got a big kick when you won your FAAN Award, Graham, partly because you're a friend of mine, but mostly because I'd seen the work you did and continue to do on VIBRATOR. But just remember: even Peter Frampton won a Grammy Award...)

Milt Stevens talks about the US \$2 bill. I agree that you only rarely see them in circulation and for that matter we never really did see them very much. But they're still legal tender and one place you *do* see them is at the admissions office and the gift shop at Monticello - Thomas Jefferson's home in Charlottesville, VA. A couple of years ago when Jim Mowatt was over here on his TAFF trip one of the things he wanted to do was

to visit there since he's an ardent student of Jefferson, and so off we went to Monticello. It was really pretty impressive to walk the grounds of Jefferson's home and we had a great time there that day, but one thing I noticed was that whenever possible at the gift shop or admissions office, when making change, they'd hand out crisp new \$2 bills in change. That bill sports the image of Jefferson and when I asked the staff at Monticello told me that they have the Federal Reserve ship them fresh supplies of \$2 bills every week for their use. It seems that Monticello is today the largest single customer in the nation that uses those bills and they're quite happy in that role. Someday I plan to dress up in an 18th century frock coat and a white wig, go to Monticello, and stand around outside the gift shop offering to autograph \$2 bills for kids. Hey; you have **your** fun travelling around in a beat-up Volkswagen bus travelling from one Peter Frampton concert to another, and I'll have **my** fun by getting little kids hopelessly confused about American history. And then we'll see which of us sleeps better at night...

Jim Linwood mentions Clare Teal and her Sunday night big band show on BBC Radio 2. Is Clare back on the air again? She was - about 3 years ago - on directly after my show finished on Sundays and a very good show it was too (although she tended to mix in a few modern big bands now and then, which isn't to my taste), but the BBC took her show off for a time. I hadn't heard that she'd returned. That's very good news if she has. Clare knows that music very well and she always did a great show. Another excellent big band show is on the air (on-line worldwide) Saturday evenings on KEZW-FM in Denver, Colorado. "The Star Spangled Radio Hour" plays some very rare big band remote broadcasts from the 40's. Stuff you'll never hear anywhere else as their material comes from the Glenn Miller Archive at the University of Colorado in Boulder. My friend Rick Crandall hosts that show and does a fantastic job.

Good comments by Fredrick Smith on jazz and particularly on the subject of the "Glenn Miller sound". He's quite right about how that sound was developed, Jimmy Stewart to the contrary. In fact, that sound was transportable to a certain degree. Miller sponsored another band lead by Hal McIntyre in the late 30's and early 40's and provided McIntyre with several of his arrangements. Thus you often hear passages in McIntyre's recordings that sound as if they were directed by Glenn Miller himself. And of course after WWII when Miller failed to return home, his former saxophonist Tex Beneke led a "Glenn Miller Orchestra" for a couple of years playing many of Miller's original charts and very closely imitating that "Miller sound". Beneke made a lot of money for a good many years doing that. This is really another example of what Uncle Johnny was talking about when he stated that rock music is dead. By the late 1940's, big band music was really just as dead, even though bands still performed the same old stuff over and over. Nothing, however, progressed beyond the late 40's; not really. Maybe if Glenn Miller hadn't climbed aboard that little airplane at Twinwood airfield on Dec. 15, 1944, and flown off towards Paris, never to be seen again. Maybe then it would all have been different...

Robert Lichtman mentions Lee Jacobs and challenges the assertion that he was a Southern fan as he never lived any further south than Washington DC. Robert is both right, and wrong. Lee was indeed a part of Southern Fandom because he chose to be by coming to southern conventions and participating in southern fanac. One "opts in" to

Southern fandom. The list of non-Southerners who were and are a part of Southern Fandom is long and distinguished, and includes such names as Lynn Hickman, Charles Grant, and Bob Tucker. They all choose to become a part of the fandom we celebrate down here in the South, and we took them to our hearts. Anyone else can do the same - if you know how...

Nic Farey's Taxi-Tales are fabulous, and have convinced me of one thing for certain; from now on I will never get into a taxi anywhere unless I have an impervious plastic sheet to spread out over the seat before I set down. There are some stains that just can't be cleaned up well enough to suit me...

(EDITOR: Graham Hall went to America to sign up at University at Smith, one of the first males amongst a collegiate of females, as Linda remarked last issue. He did this to continue the American Studies course he had started at Sussex University. He thought this might help him write the Great American Novel, so he spent a lot of time reading Ross Lockridge's RAINTREE COUNTY. He seemed to be so insecure in his intellectual development that he wanted to pursue peer acclamation. But I suspect he just wanted to fuck all the other women in his college. As to what kept him alive, while he was abroad he always seemed to have a link with D.C. Thomson, the Scottish firm for whom he provided a steady stream of comic scripts and which at least provided drinking money. Also women and people loved him without qualification and fell for his charm and were always available to provide liquor which could rot his liver.)

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DAVE COCKFIELD GETS POLITICAL

It was good to see Harry Bell on the cover of Vibrator 2.0.18 demonstrating a problem that all of us old timers seem to suffer from these days. I hope his yellow fever clears up soon.

Along with Mark Kermode I love the film "Minions" and on morning tv I heard the best ever comment about it. "It should be required viewing for members of the Labour Party. Another set of little people in search of a Leader". The Minions got Gru and the Labour Party got Blair. They now might get Jeremy Corbyn because of the machinations of the Right Wing who have registered just to vote in an unelectable MP to hasten the creation of a One Party System.

As I understand it there have been 240,000 new registrations eligible to vote in the leadership elections. 1,000 have been found to be dodgy and 88,000 still haven't been checked yet. Consequently at least 4 Labour MPs have said that it is none democratic and the vote should be cancelled and a new system put in place to stop Jeremy Corbyn, current favourite, being elected. Obviously Jeremy is in favour of the voting continuing as is. If only 1,000 of 152,000 registrations have been found to be dodgy how logical is it that the 88,000 unchecked registrations be 100% dodgy?

My comments about Jeremy Corbyn in my last loc seem to have been a bit precipitous. He has shown himself to be an intelligent conscientious man who is willing to compromise for the good of the people and the country in order to improve the lot of the masses. He wants us all to have that LSD experience. Labour Social Democracy. His views can be controversial but he explains them extremely sensibly and in a very understandable way. He actually comes across as an open and honest politician and I would definitely vote for him. Hell, I've even seen him smile and crack the odd joke lately. Of course he could be the latest incarnation of Machiavelli and Donald Trump could be the next President of the United States.

Taximmetry is the best yet by Nic Farey. That's probably because of the wonderfully salacious setting. His gay news story was so vivid I felt that I was experiencing some sordid reality tv show (Big Knobs and Butt Plugs). Nic needs to write more of these tales from the taxi wank so we can all larf and larf even more. No spelling mistakes here.

Joseph Nicholas, the fan without a funny bone, produced a very thoughtful piece about climate change. It made a big impression on me but not the one you might expect. It made me glad that I probably only have 10 to 20 years of life left. I believe that climate change is happening naturally but it is also getting a helping hand from humanity. Unfortunately the whole world is undergoing social, religious, political, economic, geographical upheaval and I have no faith that mankind has any hope of preventing a new Dark Age. There are not enough light bulbs to go around. If I was a betting man my money would be on the cockroaches.

*(And on that depressing note, goodbye Dave Cockfield. The main thing I got from being on Facebook during the last election was that *all* my friends assumed a Tory victory was impossible because *we* all knew better. And yet they (we) were proved wrong by *real* people who didn't give a shit what Facebook clones thought. As a result of this I don't give a shit about whether Jeremy Corbyn can win an election. Obviously he can't. But neither can *we*. Corbyn has articulated a range of core beliefs which appeal to people who obviously have more moral principles than Donald Trump or Richard Branson or David Cameron and other Camila Batmanjelly supporters. Joseph Nicholas is also a Green supporter, which fits well with his addled views on climate change (uber alles) but he is a nice bloke with nice legs so I often find myself exerting him to kick me in the balls as long as I can kiss him afterwards. If you know what I mean you know, if you don't you won't.*

I gather the Labour Party is now stopping people from voting who have trade union alliances but are established in other party memberships. Well, that's up to them, if they want to appear even more Nazi than they already are. Bring back truth and ethics and beliefs in politics is all I personally ask. Talk about what you believe not what will help you win elections.)

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DAVE LANGFORD TEARS HIMSELF AWAY FROM SELF-PUBLISHING TO JOIN US HERE

Lots of thanks for real printed copies of 2.0.16, 17 and 18. I am not worthy (but I expect you were thinking that already). Even more exciting reading than my treasured copy of Peter Weston's self-published book of magazine columns about car door locks and indeed every other motor accessory you could imagine except, inexplicably, vibrators. It's full of

hot photos with captions like "D-shaped cavity in early ignition switch" and "Ford 'SF' and Triumph 'SS' are the same thing!" Bet you're envious.

I wish I had a memoir of Corflu, but for reasons too complicated and tedious to clarify even to myself I miserably didn't go. At least Geri Sullivan, a star attraction if there ever was one, also came to Eastercon and graciously smiled upon me there.

Steve Stiles's "Batmobile" provoked me (and does again every time I look at it) to a big happy grin just like Batman's as depicted by Steve. The man is a genius. I should send him a few spare Hugos.

You have a knack for raising the big philosophical questions of our generation, like "Ian Williams is still around?!", "Why does no one else put the hyphen in John Nielsen-Hall?" and now in 2.0.18, "How DO you pronounce chorizo?" I made my best guess and then resorted to the dictionary, which says I was wrong: it's CH not K and what's more the accent is on the second syllable. [Wanders off into the distance muttering "GraHAM CharNOCK" ...]

Wasn't "Fuck-All Point Fanzine" coined by D. West way back in the long ago? Rather than rummage through */Fanzines in Theory and Practice/* and */Deliverance/* to find the quotation, I tried Google and tracked it down to */Ansible/* 37 -- though not immediately. What actually came up was an Abi Frost article and a couple of mysterious Russian bootleg sites including garbled text of A37, but not A37 itself. I blame the drink. No, I blame the Great Firewater of David Cameron.

*(EDITOR: i thought *Fuck-all Point Fanzine* was somehow too clever for Andy Hooper or even (or should that be, especially) Roy Kettle to have coined. Thanks for confirming this.)*

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BULWER-LYTTON AWARDS

The announcement of the annual Bulwer-Lytton awards for the most cringe-making opening paragraph in fiction led me to try my own hand with these two examples.

'The apartment blocks had crumbled. The floods had come. The forest had turned into crystal. The winds drove sand across the deserted beaches silting up the engines of the abandoned SUVs . The swimming pools were crumbling. Damn you, David Cameron, screamed Doctor Kearans at the oncoming darkness.'

'The worst thing was not that his wife was a zombie but that he was a vegetarian. As his axe smashed into her face and he continued to hack off her head, he could only wish, viewing the sweet soft pulpy flesh, which would have made such a nice brawn, that it were not so.'

Any contributions from my readers would be welcomed.

DAVID REDD

Remarkably unworldly people in these parts? Well, yes, it is a proud and lonely thing to be, etc. As one at the opposite end of the worldliness spectrum to, say, Nic Farey, so far opposite that in fact some common interests are overlapping having come round the back from opposite directions, I have awaited your Ladies of Night with the expectation of glancing quickly through spread fingers ... only to find not only is it held over a month but I'm not even in the WAHFs. (Nobody is.) Please don't check me off as a no response, if you're that systematic. Print reading in quick bites from The Usual Gang of Idiots is appreciated.

Good to see Graham Hall still remembered; I should still have his fanzine somewhere. All four of your verdicts seem on-target. R-Laurraine Tutuhasi lost a fruit tree to wildlife? I just lost an oak seedling when red ants colonised its pot; there's a commentary on life in there somewhere. Kev Williams' Shetlanders interesting - they were always travellers even in Stonehenge or Roman times; in the Sahara desert, some rock-art of a hippo has an Atlanticist spiral-mark carved over it, although maybe the Shetlanders' Maltese cousins did it. We'll never know.

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MILT STEVENS

Climate change is a major topic in Vibrator #18. Locally, climate change has been overshadowed by our four year drought. Having a drought isn't a change for this part of the country. We have them whenever we don't have flooding. A few days ago, I heard a radio news item that next year we are supposed to have an El Nino weather situation which should cause lots and lots of rain. The program went on to interview people about the destruction that would be caused by the rain we haven't had yet. The segment ended with an interview of a bureaucrat who said no amount of water would ever end the drought.

It occurred to me the producers of the radio news program apparently couldn't distinguish between news and speculation. They didn't seem to recall there have been El Nino conditions in the past which didn't produce unusual amounts of rain. Among the other perennial local news topics is the really big earthquake that's bound to occur if we wait long enough. Of course, we all will die of old age if we merely wait long enough.

I've never heard that bit of etiquette about always talking to the dinner guest on your left first. Maybe it only applies if you are having dinner with Queen Elizabeth. I wonder if the etiquette book tells you what to do if you can't think of anything to say to the person on your left. What if you really don't want to talk to the person to your left? I find I frequently don't want to talk to people. It would be handy to have a non-violent way of communicating that desire.

I don't know why you want to devote any space to talk about prostitution. It's a slimy and unpleasant subject. I base that statement on having spent a couple of years as the vice auditor at LAPD Van Nuys Division. In that capacity, my job was to keep the records straight.

Let me give you an example of a real vice situation involving prostitution. There was a guy who was hiring local whores to piss into a bucket while he watched. We had a lively debate as to whether that was illegal or not. In order to be illegal, some portion of the population must want to do it. It also must involve sex in some way or other. We finally decided we would ignore this guy because we really didn't want to think about the whole thing.

(EDITOR: I'm surprised you characterize prostitution generally as slimy and unpleasant. Like all human activities some of it is distasteful, and certainly where women are pressed into service by men against their will, something needs to be done. But I am aware of and in sympathy also with working women who see it as nothing more than a job, and would like to see it officially recognized as such. It's hard enough to make a living these days, and not everyone can be an estate agent. Pissing in a bucket in itself doesn't seem illegal to me. I often do it myself.)

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PAUL SKELTON IS IN THIS VERY ISSUE

Apologies for the 'bitty' nature of this LoC...our son Nicholas is back with us, living pretty much in the front room, with a broken ankle. The ankle is "non-loadbearing" for at least six weeks, some pins are scheduled to be removed at about eight weeks, possibly the metal plates too I suppose. There are visits to hospital, visits to his doctor (in fairly nearby Salford), and coping with and around him. He smokes. He has crutches, and we have a wheelchair, but during the first week, when he was still in pain, Cas gave him dispensation to smoke in the room rather than going to the back door. When Cas came to wash his bedding after the first week she found so many burn-holes in the duvet, sheets and duvet covers we could only give thanks that the house hadn't been burned down around us. It's a tad stressful. Smoking in the house is now once again banned, though that's only been a relatively minor contribution to the stress levels. There will come a time when he can move back into his flat. We are reasonably confident we won't kill him before that time arrives.

I do though find myself very much in sympathy with the character in Harry's cover. I do love these illos of Harry's, and the eccentric colouring just adds to their piquancy. Of course I didn't remember to LoC, but at least I can do so now.

So, what else has been happening here of late? Well, the Mearae came and the Mearae went. We did manage to play one game of Wizard, which Mike "I **never** win, me" Meara narrowly won after employing desperate tactics borrowed from the CIA and fiendishly adapted. First there was the 'Forced non-Rendition', whereby you must stay in your own country and watch David Cameron scheme to appease the Tory Grandees by once more making fox-hunting legal...if not possibly even compulsory. Certain folk living in Haringey might initially not think this amiss, but they should bear in mind that you have to hunt foxes where you find them and, in Haringey, where you find them is in the Charnox back garden. By the time a pack of hounds and up-to twenty horses-and-riders have "Yoiks! Tally-Ho'd" across your garden you may find yourself fondly recalling the time when you only had foxes to worry about. As I understand it the First Haringey Fox-Hunting & Fracking Consortium is being formed even as I write.

The second of Mike's tactics was 'Wine Boarding', which involved placing opened bottles of wine, each bearing strange numerical symbols such as '15%', in front of a feckless host of weak resolve, then waving away offers to share them with cries of "No, no. I'm still alright with my first." How else to explain that, whilst he finished with 320 points ahead of Cas on 240 and Pat on 200...I could only muster a mere 60? Such Perfidy! If he wanted so badly to win he had merely to say.

Fascinating stuff from Taral and I agree that I'd like to see more stuff in fanzines talking about stuff that's in other fanzines...sorta like giving a sense of community. Whether that is really viable given the relative paucity of titles these days is another matter. He says he doesn't want to talk about the FAAN Awards and, given that when he did so in a recent *Broken Toys* he and I managed to get at cross-purposes, I see that as a road I can also walk...except to remark, regarding Joseph Nicholas' comment that when he won back in the Mesozoic there was no physical award, that I'm sure I recall the original incarnation of the awards, before Joseph's interregnum, having as a trophy a statuette designed by Dan Steffan involving a beer can and a mimeo. I do though agree with Joseph (about much that he had to say, but specifically) that for the awards a physical trophy is relatively unimportant...especially given that the awards themselves are not exactly going to change history.

Now I know it's not the done thing to mention one's own contribution when LoCing, But I came across this quote (which I know you won't have seen because it's from an SF novel) just yesterday...

"She'd snuck a look to see what Val Con was having; took a little of that and nibbled while she tried to do her conversational duty to the woman on her left."

Plan B by Sharon Lee and Steve Miller - being, according to Sharon's website, the 11th novel (in chronological sequence) of their *Liaden Universe* series and proving that etiquette in the Liaden Universe parallels that in our own.

Anyway, I've been kicking myself about letting you print the piece ever since I remembered that many years ago (yeah, even in that same pre-history when Joseph won his FAAN Award) I had made some notes – pen and paper...and who knows where they are now - towards an article entitled *An Etiquette of Umbrellas*. No, it wasn't a group name, such as a 'murder' of crows or a 'parliament' of owls...though I thought at the time it would make a perfect one. It was back when I first stumbled across the concept that some people really did think that etiquette was important...surely a truly science-fictional concept. But sadly I had forgotten and so I frittered these latest thoughts away on a mere 'think' piece rather than weaving them in with the earlier material into a work that would surely have redefined The Sevagram.

It is apparently my destiny to be entirely inconsequential.

Struggling against this though I humbly suggest that you consider buying some word-processing software or even a PC, so that you can edit your material right up to the point of publishing it, and hence need no longer tell people that material is "...in this very issue..." when it isn't.

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JOSEPH NICHOLAS PROMISES NOT TO MENTION GLOBAL WARMING AGAIN, DUH...!

Re-reading your responses to my remarks on climate science and anthropogenic global warming (to use the technical term), I note that your argument seems to have changed over time -- first you denied that there could be any human impact on the climate at all, then you wanted to know what and why the research was being undertaken and how it was funded, and now you're suggesting that the real issue is how humans respond to issues that may be beyond their ken. Anyway, let's now leave the subject, save for two corrections: firstly, it was governments which created a carbon trading protocol, not the IPCC; and secondly, the IPCC doesn't concern itself with children because they're outside its remit, which is to evaluate the science and feed that information into international negotiations. The protection or otherwise of future generations, the relocation of cities such as Dhaka or New Orleans in low-lying river deltas, the creation of new biospheres for critically endangered species, *et al*: these are policy questions for governments to determine.

I should also correct one of my own references in my previous comments, where I twice referred to the NUF -- a body which does not exist -- when I meant, instead, the NFU, the National Farmers Union. This is a really odd mistake for me to have made, given that for the last fifteen years of my working life the NFU was one of my key stakeholders; perhaps I had momentarily confused it with the FUW (Farmers Union of Wales) or the UFU (Ulster Farmers Union). But perhaps that's one problem with UK agriculture: too many sectoral organisations with too many similar groups of initials. (NIGTA, GAFTA, BAFSAM, AIC, AHDB, PFMA, on and on; also some of my key stakeholders. You can look them up if you wish.)

Actually, there is another correction, or what might be better termed a response, to Philip Turner's assertion that renewable energy generation is "an expensive swindle". He obviously hasn't been paying attention, or he would have noticed that the costs of renewable energy have been falling steadily over the past couple of decades, due to both technological development within the industry and economies of scale as manufacturing and consumer take-up expands. Once the capital costs have been met, indeed, the energy generated is entirely free -- rivers continue to run, the wind continues to blow, the sun continues to shine (mostly) -- and people who generate their own energy no longer have to pay quarterly bills to utility companies. So not a swindle at all, but a saving. And I think that explains why, since he became Chancellor five years ago, George Osborne has been attempting, through changes to energy-related tax and subsidy regimes, to undermine (even destroy) the prospects for renewables in the UK, and why government ministers have had so many meetings with corporate lobbyists for the Big Six electricity producers versus none at all with renewable energy interests: the Big Six can see their profits falling off a cliff, and are desperate for the government to take action to prevent that. They will have been very pleased with July's Budget proposals to apply the climate change levy to renewables (equivalent to applying an alcohol tax to orange juice), end the Feed-in Tariff, and make it more difficult for community energy projects to obtain funding.

Only by destroying renewables can Osborne drive people (by depriving them of other choices) towards his favoured, and much more expensive, means of energy generation, namely fracking and nuclear power -- but neither of these will make much of an inroad into meeting the UK's near-future energy demand, in part because they can't be brought on-stream in significant quantity within the next five to ten years and in part because of other factors. Fracking, for example, requires accessible shale formations with a realisable petroleum content; it's because politicians are not geologists that they don't grasp that the world's shale formations are not always and everywhere the same and thus that the UK is unlikely to replicate the USA's experience (estimates for potential UK shale production are fantasy numbers plucked out of the air). The economics of nuclear power, for another example, are absurd -- you will remember the excitable claims, in the 1950s and 1960s, that nuclear-generated electricity would be too cheap to meter; instead, no nuclear generating plant has ever been built to the project deadline or within the project budget. Germany is abandoning nuclear power; the plants which EdF is building at Olkiluoto in Finland and Flamanville in Normandy are nine years and five years behind schedule, respectively; and at Hinckley C, which received its site licence three years ago, not a cubic centimetre of concrete has been poured because EdF and the Treasury continue to squabble over the "contract for difference" pricing mechanism for the electricity to be generated, which would see consumers of that electricity paying (at current rates) two to three times the price of that from conventional generating plants.

The real issue for the UK's near-future energy demand is plugging the generating gap that will arise as existing, ageing plant (nuclear, coal, oil and gas -- around 40% of current total plant) reaches the end of its life between now and 2025 and has to be retired. But in the

two decades since the privatisation of electricity generation, handing money to shareholders has taken precedence over infrastructure, meaning severe underinvestment or even no investment in new and replacement plant; on current trends, the UK will be forced to rely on imported power (not imported fuels, but electricity generated elsewhere), which in a seller's market means that we will all be paying much, much more. Our politicians do not grasp this; instead, they make irrelevant noises about reducing or freezing existing costs to consumers, which misses the point by at least twelve parsecs (as Han Solo might say).

For our part, we would like to install solar panels on our roof -- but our house faces east-west rather than north-south, meaning that each slope of the roof would receive only a few hours of direct sun per day and the pay-back time on the capital would therefore be much longer. In addition, we live in a conservation area, which requires that any alteration to the exterior of the house be invisible from the street; but the position of our house adjacent to a corner means that both the front and the rear roofs can be seen by passersby. Ergo, we have had to forgo solar panels and have invested instead in passive energy efficiency measures to reduce our carbon footprint: internal insulation to eliminate the temperature gradients across the external walls, wood-framed double-glazing to replace the original aluminium frames, double-layer fibre-glass insulation and flooring in the loft space, a more efficient boiler. And low-energy light bulbs, which we shall replace with LEDs once the manufacturers produce ones more powerful than the 60W which is the current top of the range. Capital outlay, with consequent savings.

Changing the subject, I see that a number of people are still talking about jazz, a musical form which leaves me cold although some people clearly think there's a crossover between jazz and the classical music which I do like; every issue of *BBC Music* magazine, for example, has a couple of pages of reviews of the latest jazz releases, plus a featurette on a jazz musician of some renown. Indeed, jazz has even been creeping into the annual Proms concerts, which under successive directors have been departing more than a little from their original remit. In addition to jazz, recent Proms seasons have featured film music, big band swing, a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, and (this year) a tribute to Frank Sinatra. What next -- Balearic beats at the Albert Hall? Actually, that's already featured in this season's programme, complete with laser strobes and a glowstick-waving audience -- plus evenings devoted to orchestral versions of the stuff played on BBC 6 Music and (*quelle horreur!*) pirate grime stations. Disgraceful! Even more disgraceful is that audiences have begun applauding after each movement of a symphony! These people clearly have no breeding. Tear up their tickets and ban them immediately! Special thanks to Jim Linwood for clarifying the situation with respect to Tony Martin. I should probably say more than just that, but I've written quite a bit already and am mindful of your desire to keep your page-count under control -- with which thought in mind, I've been back through what I've written above and pared it down a bit, knocking out a couple of hundred words and streamlining some of the arguments. Thus I do my bit on your behalf.

(EDITOR: 'It was governments that created a carbon trading protocol'. Is that supposed to reassure me? Governments who presumably have never based any of their policies on

*IPPC reports but merely pulled them out of a magic hat? You haven't been reading my responses very clearly, Joseph. I have *never* denied the anthropocentric impact on carbon production. I have always accepted it but questioned the importance of it in the whole scheme, something you have never bothered to address. As for modern advances in carbon limitation and the costs of renewable energy falling. What planet are you on? : 'Once the capital costs have been met.' When will that be, Joseph? When will it not be a consideration? What is its impact compared with volumetric input from volcanoes. This is another subject you don't seem to have any opinion on, presumably because you believe the IPCC will answer any problem, and you haven't the will to research any topic which might really bother you. They won't, believe me. Let's all wait for the Yellowstone Volcano to explode and see how that affects your argument.*

At least we can agree on the travesty that The Proms has become. Once a jamboree for classical music lovers it is now just a corporate jamboree, underwriting its plebeian cheap seats by corporate block sales (including hospitality). I personally thought the Albert Hall had gone downhill when I first saw Led Zeppelin and Blodwyn Pig there in 196what.

Joseph later posted these additions, amendments: A couple of postscripts to my previous email....firstly, I should perhaps have clarified, to avoid potential charges of hypocrisy or dissembling, that despite not having solar panels on our house or a wind turbine in the garden we purchase our electricity from a renewable producer rather than one of the Big Six suppliers: namely, Good Energy, which derives all its power supplies from wind and solar. Additionally, we have put our money where our politics is, and invested in the company (which among other things seems to be set up to attract investment from individuals and ethical trading funds rather than hedge fund scum who will replace all its directors and commit the business to ploughing up Canadian tar sands instead).

Secondly, I greatly appreciated your piece on Graham Hall, with contributions from Linda Moorcock, but couldn't really say anything in response since of course I never knew him. But thanks for it all the same.

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FREDERICK SMITH IS MISSING HIS POTATOES

Thanks for the July ish, meaty as ever (but no potatoes!).

In spite of what Taral Wayne says about the advantages of e-mailing your zine, saving postage and all that, I still prefer to get a printed copy through the mail even if it is professionally printed! Somehow it doesn't seem like a real fanzine unless it's on paper. He has a point though when he avers that *genuine* fanzines should be mimeo or ditto printed by the publisher himself, although ditto is going a bit too far! And he should have added that they should be A4 (or U.S. equivalent) and on twilltone, preferably! Or am I hankering after the good old days? Nostalgia aside, of course, fans are now a lot older so it's difficult to imagine them messing about with stencils and cranking duplicator handles. And new, teenage fans, if there are any, have probably never heard of, or seen, a fanzine.

Tara makes some pertinent points about jazz, that "as it became more cerebral it lost much of its audience who couldn't dance to it, follow the tune or even understand what the heck was going on" and I agree with him regarding "Fusion" jazz and other attempts to update it. I tend to disagree about bebop, however. When introduced by Parker, Gillespie and other musicians of that calibre it was new, fresh and exciting. In the hands of other, lesser, people it became repetitive, cliched and, ultimately, boring. Its innovations have long since been absorbed into the mainstream of jazz which soldiers manfully on!

The idea that the music might have been "spoiled by musicians who took themselves too seriously as artistes" doesn't stand up to much examination. The term "serious artiste" is not one that most musicians would use; it tends to be an invention by critics and commentators. Most jazzmen would certainly be "serious" about what they were playing but they would also enjoy it without becoming "arty".

Paul Skelton, do you realise that you're trampling on my memory of a tender moment with a lovely young lady? And, of course, I have to disagree with practically everything you say about the Quincy Jones / Phil Woods record. In the first place it sounds much better on vinyl, played on a decent hi-fi system, than on Youtube and the arrangement, rather than "turgid", serves as a good platform for Woods' soaring alto sax. Melba Liston, one of the trombonists in the band, wrote the score. As far as I'm aware it's the only one she has written, certainly for this band. I don't know why "The Gypsy" (a pop song by British bandleader Billy Reid, 1945) was selected as a feature for Phil Woods but would guess that, because it had been recorded by Charlie Parker in 1946, it was attractive to Woods, a Parker disciple, and to Sonny Stitt, another who also recorded it. The Quincy Jones LP was issued in 1959 as "The Birth of a Band" and reissued in 1965 as "Fab" (a stupid title!). YouTube also has a video of the band made in a Paris TV studio in 1960 which includes "The Gypsy". Personnel seems to be the same, as far as I can tell from the poor quality, and the arrangement is the same but Woods' alto is quite different (being improvised) and he doesn't include that charming two-bar quotation from "If I Only Had A Brain (A Heart, The Nerve)" that's on the LP. I can't help wondering if that's the version you listened to: the sound on it (as well as the video) is awful!

For once I find a plateau of agreement with John Nielsen-Hall, not in his jazz views but regarding Graham Greene. Not that I've read a lot of his stuff but "guilt and remorse from a wannabe martyr" sounds about right as a description of his works.

In Nic Farey's piece this time (on brothels) there's a wonderfully descriptive phrase, "rub and tug establishments" which could well be applied to our so-called "massage" parlours. Talking of taxis, how many of you have tried picking up a black cab in or around Soho and

found the driver most unwilling to take you anywhere but to a strip club? Might be illegal to refuse but surly is the driver who is forced to take you to your legit detination.

*(EDITOR: I suppose at this point I should Come Out about my own feelings about Jazz. We weren't exposed to much music in our house except for old 78s by Charlie Kunz (whom my father liked) and Mario Lanza (whom my mother adored). So my early exposure to 'anything like Jazz' came through the steam radio, and it was not served well by people like Billy Cotton (The Billy Cotton Band Show) or the Goon Show (Max Geldray and the Ray Ellington Quartet). Occasionally Anglicized Big Band Music turned up via artistes like Victor Sylvester and Jack Hylton, but I was always aware that was a rather watered down version of something not more readily available. As my musical appreciation developed in my teens, of course, American rock and pop easily established itself to the forefront of my tastes, with my elder brother introducing me to records by Elvis, the Everly Brothers, Del Shannon and the like, and I was disinclined to explore music outside these parameters until I took up playing the guitar, and even then the axis of my development veered more in the direction of folk and pop (John Martyn, Bert Jansch, Jackson C. Frank) rather than high-octane blues, let alone jazz. I didn't really explore jazz until I fell in with a group of amateur musicians, one of whom (Graham Nowland) played keyboards and had an obsession with Charlie Mingus and Thelonius Monk and a saxophone player (Duncan McCoshan) with an extensive repertoire based on Coltrane, Roland Kirk, and mostly Ornette Coleman. I'd never been interested in the sax repertoire before I met him and hadn't realized how *vocal* a sax can be in its expressiveness. I found I could quite easily trade call and answer riffs with Duncan (mostly with him answering) and suddenly realized what jazz was all about. We formed a group called Terminal Willy rehearsing mostly in the basement on my shop in Baker Street and invented a sub-genre of jazz called Swazz which incorporated elements of funk, swamp, fusion, and even Pink Floyd (We released an album called "Set The Controls For the Heart of Sainsburys".) We also found, for a short time, a young red-hot jazz drummer whose tastes tended toward be-bop, but he was far too good to stay with us for long. Outside the confines of the group I started exploring and collecting the work of jazz guitarists, with pioneers like Charlie Christian but spending most of my money on mainstream stalwarts like Tal Farlow, Kenny Burrell, Jim Hall and Barney Kessell, all perhaps best typified under the heading 'American Cool'. All this time my guitar playing was become *freer*. I'd bought an Ibanez version of a Gibson 335 and I was moving away from formal melodic approaches, so the free-form playing of stylists like John McLaughlin and particularly John Etheridge and John Scofield appealed to me. I didn't have their dexterity but I picked up a rather clumsy knack of voicing chords based on what my fingers rather than my head told me. I learnt that any accidental note (ie mistake) could be worked upon, embellished and exploited. So you see, I probably tend these days towards appreciating what you might call "experimental" jazz*

rather than strict arranged stuff like Duck Ellington or Count Basie. That said, I like to work within some established harmonic structure so ambient and programmed music such as that by Brian Eno and Phillip Glass, largely leaves me cold.)

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LLOYD PENNEY JUST ABOUT MEETS THE BASIC REQUIREMENT FOR INCLUSION IN THIS FANZINE, BUT I AM WATCHING HIM, OH YES

Memories of Graham Hall...how many fans do we know with a self-destructive bent? It seems too many. One local fan I can think of must have thought that such self-destruction made them seem much more interesting.

With the advent of e-mail, I really don't know where many people actually live. E-mail gives them that cushion of anonymity, but that's when you realize you might not really know these people. I keep an old-fashioned address book, and it gets thinner all the time. I understand Milt Stevens' history. I started with cons by running them, and after 30 years of that, we became vendors, and have been steampunk jewelry vendors for the last few years. I guess you've got to do something.

Looks like I have beaten the deadline for getting stuff in the next issue, so I will take that as a personal victory to gloat about on the weekend. Thanks for this, and please do send some more.

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ROBERT LICHTMAN HAS ALSO STUDIED AT THE GOOGLE SCHOOL OF PRONUNCIATION

“Chorizo” is pronounced with a hard “ch” – that much is agreed upon at all the on-line sources I checked. But from there many variations exist for the right way to say the final syllable. If you google for “chorizo pronunciation” – no links, boss, since you don’t like to print them – you’ll discover them for yourself. In doing so, I learned that I’ve theoretically been saying that last syllable wrong for many years: “This word is very often mispronounced by English speakers, who affect Italian pronunciation on a Spanish word, so it comes out ‘choh/RITZ/oh.’” Actually, my pronunciation is a little different than that. You can hear it by playing the YouTube video on the subject. Yes, I’m carrying on a bit here, but you *did* say “Unless you really want to.”

I never knew Graham Hall, but I was touched by your and Linda Moorcock’s memories of him. His refusal to give up drink for his own health reminded me of the late Martin Smith, who I think died via the same means either slightly before or just after you got reinvolved in fandom. Sad stories, both.

In Taral’s letter, I guess you can count me as one of the “bitter holdouts” who (so far) still

prefers to produce a primarily print fanzine. So long as I *have* some disposable income, it's a nasty habit I'll continue. Of course, since I don't use either mimeo or ditto, I guess I'm not actually doing a "genuine fanzine." I can live with that, too.

Elsewhere in his lengthy letter he writes, "There certainly has been a very strong correlation between frequent Corflu goers and who wins a FAAn lately." I've only been to 13 of the 32 Corflus, and the last one was in 2011 – and yet despite my absence I've somehow scooped up eight FAAn awards from 2011 forward. How could this be? Perhaps that "very strong correlation" is all in Taral's mind.

I think you make a very good observation, concerning this alleged correlation: "I suppose the apparent bias in FAAn awards towards regular Corflu attendees can be explained by the fact that Corflu is a convention for fanzine fandom, in fact the only one. Corflu as an institution tends to engender a fondness and that is also reflected in its members' enthusiasm in voting." To which I would add that not all the fans voting are regular Corflu attendees, which further skews Taral's argument.

Ignoring all the climate change discussion in Joseph Nicholas's letter (and by others), he does make a good point in the penultimate paragraph about paying more attention to "regularize your formatting" – though his examples don't seem to actually show up in the fanzine. What I mainly notice is the differences in line spacing as I make my way through the issue. One prominent example is in my letter. You start off with two paragraphs of tight line spacing, and then the rest is all wide. Some attention to having *all* line spacing be the same – preferably the tighter spacing of those first two paragraphs of my letter throughout the zine – would give you more words per page *and* you could still continue with double spaces between paragraphs to maintain a little "air" in your all-text format. The font size you're using is just fine. I would resist Joseph's suggestion about going to 11- or even 10-point. Unless you double-columned each page, this would be very difficult to scan across a full-page line.

In his letter Paul Skelton wonders how the circulation of some present-day fanzines compares to his own *SFD* back in the day: "How many people do you send *Vibrator* to, Graham? What's Mike Meara's *aMfO* mailing list total come out like? What's the circulation of *Raucus Caucus & Banana Wings*?" I seem to recall Mike saying his zine goes to around 75 people (half print and half electronic). My own *Trap Door* goes to around 150 people these days. It used to be significantly more, but sadly most of the loss has been from people dying – and very few coming along to replace them. It's not that there aren't plenty of other fans out there who turn up in the letter columns of some of the other fanzines I receive; but their output simply doesn't inspire me to want to get my own personal supply. Of what Paul lists, I strongly suspect that *Banana Wings* has the largest circulation.

Coda: I wrote a letter to the head driver supervisor which I hand-delivered when I picked up my final check on the Wednesday, pointing out the relative innocuousness of my transgressions compared to some others, and arguing that my good and positive qualities might outweigh them. I got no reply. This week I took my application form and fresh DMV printout to another firm, and they hired me on the spot.

LICHTMAN GLOSSARY FOR PUPPIES

Mobileye : A safety device in the cab which measures the distance between you and whatever might be in front of you, crunches an algorithm with your speed and issues warning beeps if it doesn't like the answer. It's clever enough to know the difference between another vehicle and a pedestrian - in the case of a pedestrian in front of you, it'll *really* scream. Some of the drivers don't like the beeping, and block the sensor, which is typically grounds for immediate dismissal if you get caught. I reported one such case of interference the week before I got the shaft. As an aside, I had a ride to the airport the other week, with the passenger bragging that this would be his last ever taxi ride in Las Vegas, since the next time he visited Uber would be up and running. We actually ended up having a quite reasonable conversation about the pros and cons, and he tipped pretty well. One of his more surprising arguments about why Uber was so much better was that being in a private vehicle means that you don't have any of these annoying safety devices.

Red lights : My philosophy of which has been subject to derision and admonition from people who aren't professional drivers (ahem). Just to get the definitions straight: *Running* a red light is the same as ignoring a fixed stop sign - the instruction to stop is willfully or unknowingly ignored (doesn't much matter which); *Jumping* a red light (getting a head start on the change) doesn't really happen in the US, since the light goes straight from red to green, without the intervening red/amber combination. It's possible to jump the light if you watch the changes in the crossing direction, but not very likely; *Shaving* the red light is going through after it's just changed to red - in fact you have up to two seconds from when the light in your direction goes red to when the other goes green, so I maintain it's a judgement call, and on the whole actually safer than jamming on the brakes.

HEALTH ISSUES

Gosh, I seem to be spending a lot of time in hospitals these days. Not with my problems, mind you, although with my advanced state of liver decay that constantly surprises me. I did go for a liver scan and very efficient they were, but my doctor was not so efficient in getting the results back and after two visits in a month I was still none the wiser. I finally told her to stuff it and left her literally blubbing over her computer screen "I'm sorry. I'm sorry"

No, the most recent visits were all Pat's fault. First she got diarrhoea and dehydration and kept falling down. I held her hand for four hours while they fiddled about, running all sorts of tests and giving her a rectal examination (She demanded I left the room for that).

They stabilized her and got her levels back to normal without making any real diagnosis, and released her. After her doctor had run tests on her poop it was revealed she had had a bacterial infection. She blamed me for failing to cook a duck breast adequately.

I am now beginning to get quite used to visiting our local North London hospital, The Whittington, although each time I visit it seems to have reconfigured its topography. And why are people trying to sell me jewellery and trinkets on the main lift level?

Pat was recently back there for *a procedure*. I will not reveal what it was except that it feature the back passage rather than the front passage. Oh, I have revealed what it was. Again I went along to hold her hand. When the day-patient nurse processed her she told me it was likely to take one and a half hours. So I went down to the Cafe area and got a coffee and ate a toasted cheese roll. One and a half hours later I was back waiting for her. It did not take one and a half hours. It took four hours. She had given them my mobile phone number, but when she was through they phoned my home number, and of course I wasn't there. My son Dan phoned to give me the news, so I had to phone the ward to tell them I was there, I was sitting waiting in the day centre reception, whose reception staff had all gone home leaving only a ward number. Problem: my phone only had one hour of credit left. Problem: the nurse wanted to direct me by telling me to turn left, turn right, etc, without even considering where I was orientated. I told them I would stay where I was and suggested they should deliver her to me. Which eventually they did. It was another four hours wasted from my life. I shouldn't complain. One day I will surely be in there on a life support machine, and those whom I love will be waiting for me to die.

This is the End, my Beautiful Friend.

ADVERTISE IN THIS SPACE!

Have a fanzine you want to promote, or even a self-published novel called something like FUTURE PERFECT?

Run a day clinic for recovering alcoholics?

Want to improve footfall on your website (tip, don't call it something stupid like Ansible).

**Contact our helpful sales staff at
graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk**

VIBRATOR BACKBITERBIT

I'm Graham Charnock. I'm at graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk. Why not visit me at www.cartiledgeworld.co.uk if you have some time on your hands. Vibrator is a personalzine in that I use it very often to rant about personal issues, but you will have noticed I am not averse to the occasional contribution from outside sources, so if you have a bee in your bonnet, release it and send it my way. Thanks to Pat for proofreading this, if she did. Next deadline Sept 30th.

I'm getting wary of promising folks too much in future issues. It confuses Paul Skelton for a start. But I'm pretty sure the next issue will include a comprehensive round-up of reports on Prolog(ue). This was the pre-Worldcon bash organized in the Seattle suburb of Renton, largely by Ulrika O'Brien and several other suspects. It was, I believe, a relaxacon much along the lines of Good Old Corflu and our reporters Rich Coad, Dan Steffan and Murray Moore seem to have enjoyed it. Who was the crazy man who waylaid Dan and Rich with tales of dowsing? What exactly did Aileen Forman tell Murray Moore about her separation from Ken? You may not find the answers to these particular questions, but you can certainly pick up vicariously on some other gossip and experiences by subscribing to the September issue.

Meanwhile, what went wrong? Why didn't I win a Hugo? More to the point, why did James Bacon win a Hugo? I blame Puppies, of course, whether sad or happy, they should all be shot at birth, because they seem to be screwing up our lives. While in no way denying James Bacon his acclaim, and while appreciating the gentle Irish wit and humour of his acceptance speech, recycled I gather from a previous recounting, my own personal experience of the man has been less than happy and filled with his characteristic bonhomie. At a Hinckley Eastercon Peter Weston, with a distinct glint of evil in his eye, led me up to him and introduced me as an innocent neo who wanted advice on fanzine production. James immediately adopted his Godfather of Fandom persona, and not only did not recognize me (why should he) but did not bother enquiring about my fannish credentials, and proceeded to earnestly lecture me on How To Be A Fan. Peter Weston's joke soon wore thin. I neglected to remind James that I had probably been in fandom since before he was born. Still, I believe he is a very good train driver. I have to take other people's word that Journey Planet is an excellent fanzine, because I personally find it unreadably earnest.

What more can I say? Another relaxacon, Barcon 3 (members only) is due in September and will probably be reported on in due course. Paul Skelton will even be there, and I might impose on him to provide a report. Turn on, tune in and drop out.