



This could be yet another issue of the unstoppable Vibrator, unleashed upon the world like the plague it is, or the plaque it is if you have dental problems, and who amongst us don't. Many of our regular readers and contributors are long in the tooth after all. Not before now people have doubted my staying power with this project. Dave Cockfield has sent me money, David Redd has sent me stamps, all in an attempt to encourage me to continue with this on-going chronicle of the state of fandom in recent times seen from an embattled enclave in North London through my own peculiar grime-tinted lenses. I thank and salute them all but none more discriminatingly as you, the nameless unsung heroes out there who open my PDFs and decide they would really should have not.

Thanks to Steve Stiles for the multi-coloured cover of this issue. I'm not sure we can justify it in terms of Halloween content. Halloween is not a thing we have taken to in the UK, at least not as much as in the US, where they make endless horror films about it. Having said that a recent visit to Sainsburys has revealed an extensive range of the usual seasonal tat. I was especially disturbed by the range of free-standing signs saying 'Trick or Treat welcome' with a pointy arrow. That is surely asking for trouble.

This issue will be dated October 2015 and available on October 30<sup>th</sup> 2015. Deadline for November issue will be 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

## **GUN CONTROL**

Another day, another massacre, another debate about the issues with the same conclusions, with all the usual suspects speaking from whatever their current agenda is.

Obama seems to be becoming more and more frustrated, but probably realizes he can achieve nothing in what is left of his term, so is mentally willing to let the whole problem slide away. I suspect future presidents will find themselves in the same dilemma and will reach the same conclusions. So more massacres to look forward to, no doubt.

People shoot each other with increasing regularity in the USA, thus precipitating endless futile debates on gun control, which seem to be nixed by the NRA, who after all have all the money. Over here in the UK we have much more enlightened response. We see a fifteen year old kid sitting alone in his room fantasising about killing people, the way a lot of teenage kids do the world over, and being so stupid as to share his fantasies with the wider world, and we mobilize the full forces of security surveillance and send him down for life. That's the way to do it.

The UK kid didn't make public threats. In fact it appears to have taken the authorities some time to crack his mobile phone. Perhaps if he had been public he would just have been taken for the harmless looney he obviously is, and not as an international conspiracist. Anyone remember Billy Liar?

Yes, at school his mates had a down on him. How they addressed him was tantamount to bullying, and we all know what worthy public figures ranging from Esther Rantzen to Baroness Kuthrapaty have to say about that . So our surveillance services sympathetically earmarked him as a potential trouble-maker, and from then on he was doomed by his own fantasies to a life in prison, demeaned by his warders, ridiculed by his fellow prisoners who had only killed and defiled real people rather than having merely threatened to. Congratulations to the watchers for taking this \*potential\* troublemaker out of the system and thus rendering us safe from others of his kind. We are truly grateful.

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### **WHY DO PEOPLE POST CUTE PHOTOS OF CATS ON FACEBOOK? (YES I'M UNASHAMEDLEY ADDRESSING IAN WILLIAMS).**

Okay let's address this question with all seriousness, or at least as much seriousness as our straight faces can manage. It is to be sure an accredited phenomenon. Few of my friends would deny they have at some time posted a picture of a cute cat (probably even their own cat) on Facebook. I know I have. So why do we do it? The answer may be in the fact that it is \*our\* cat. People are emotionally attached to cats and like to parade them. That is understandable. Cat's are like babies in that everyone believes theirs is special in some way. (Strangely, among my friends, only Chris Garcia seems to take pleasure in posting pictures of his babies, who frankly all look like Winston Churchill, albeit processed through a Mexican wrestler). If someone likes your cat it seems they are automatically liking you, and we all know what that means in Facebook terms. Yes, it means you are contributing to their heuristic analysis of your posts. Don't expect them to send any \*I hate you cat\* posts directly to you. The most you will get are recommendations to sites where you can buy cat food. But why should they? Because I hate a lot of cats that are posted on Facebook. Some of them are simply boring cats, you know, ginger toms, tabbies, I guess most of my friends on Facebook being of the class they are (frankly lower bordering on psychopaths) can't afford exotic cats which I'd really like to see, curled up and in cute poses. Or maybe they are already selling the rights to major picture agencies.

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### **BARCON 3 – MORE RECOLLECTIONS**

(There was not enough space in Vibrator 20 for me to run my own report on this event, so, in the spirit of waste note want noty, here it is)

Barcon 3 was my fault. Tynecon III had just happened. Rob Jackson and Harry and Pat Bell had co-ordinated the hotel search for that venture. It was time to consider another Barcon. I'd organized the previous year's con in Leamington Spa and quite fancied a break from such chores, so cunningly suggested to Rob Jackson that given his recent

success at hotel-liaison with Tynecon III he might like to sound out hotels for Barcon 3. Like a puppy offered the keys to a pet-food store, Rob leapt at it.

Now I wondered if I'd been wise. I was on my way to Peterborough. The M11 was jam after jam after jam so the ninety mile journey seemed to last forever. I didn't know anything about Peterborough and had never attended any historical conventions there, but Rob and Roy were enthusiastic about it based on a scouting visit, so I just had to have faith.

I admit the Bull Hotel impressed me at first. It seemed to have all the right nooks and crannies where small or large gatherings could, well, gather. It was all very well kept, and my only complaint about the room I eventually found myself in was that it was on the second floor and about as far from the Reception area as you could go without falling off the edge of the universe.

For the first evening meal on Friday there was a strong consensus for the Banyan Tree. A large party went off, while Pat and I, Paul and Cas, thought it was only fair to wait for Rob Jackson to arrive before joining the Exodus. Thus we found ourselves upstairs and away from the main party. No doubt many words of wisdom and jokes were shared, but my evening was ruined by a prolonged attack of the hiccups. Now normally I can handle hiccups by going into a regime of deep breathing and concentration, but on this occasion nothing seemed to work, and it became increasingly painful and distressing for me, and I apparently started swearing and beating the table in my frustration.

The next morning at breakfast Pat chided me for my behaviour and reduced me to grovelling apologetically, and even after that she continued to glare balefully at me for several hours. After breakfast we discussed options for the rest of the day. I think Mike and Pat launched off somewhere on their own, while a group of us comprising the Skeltons, Jackson and the Maules opted for the Peterborough Museum. It was slightly underwhelming, with very little interesting artwork and rooms with educational historical displays mostly aimed at children. It did have a nice coffee shop, though, which we visited several times. While the others opted for a guided tour of Peterborough at 2.00pm, my legs were definitely failing me and I was all walked out. I retired to my hotel room to watch daytime tv.

After a while I went down to the lobby, where Pat Meara found me and told me everybody was having fun in a pub up the road, the Brewery Tap. Despite my inclination to stay where I was and catch up on ITB on the internet, the lure of beer was too much so I went to join them. When we'd arrived on Friday and met up with the Skeltons, I'd offered to buy Paul a drink, but he declined, claiming he had vowed to pace himself. I hadn't been drinking for two weeks previously, so obviously I should have done the same, but the Brewery Tap was the first place I'd been in which had some distinctive craft beers, so I declined to follow any advice my eager self might have dealt out to me.

Apparently some conversations about squirrels and trousers occurred, but that must have been while I was at the bar or maybe while I was pretending to interview the fiery

red Leicester Morris dancing team, who had wandered into the pub, the way that Morris dancers are prone to do when they are not actually dancing.

Back at the hotel the eternal question of where to eat again came up. There was a strong lobby for The Handmade Burger place, but I was not for travelling so decided to join Ian and Janice in the hotel's brasserie. Our quiet *tete a tete* did not work out as planned however since a group of diners piled onto our party having been thrown out of the Home Made Burger place, claiming it had been full of raucous youth and unable to accommodate them. To drown my sorrow at having to dine with these turncoats I started drinking more than I should have, considering I had already been drinking more than I should have. I began to feel quite ill and only just managed to force myself to finish my rib-eye steak before absenting myself from the table for an early night.

It may seem to some readers that so far I had not much enjoyed my stay in Peterborough and that is probably true. Peterborough itself seemed to be a city designed for shopping and not much else, and my constant tiredness meant I must have been less-than-sparkling company for those in my company.

I was nevertheless determined to enjoy some aspects of Sunday and the initial one was the Nene Valley Railway. On the way there we passed through Cathedral Square, where they were laying out tables for a massive Harvest Festival Communal lunch (entry by lottery and assigned tickets). They were also erecting portaloos, like you might find at a rock concert. Obviously every aspect of their patron's comfort would be catered for. As for the Nene Valley Railway itself, it was disappointing to have a mundane diesel loco tug us along, rather than a steam one, but at least the company was good, (Haddocks, Mowatts, Maules and the ubiquitous Dr Rob) and anyone who enjoyed prospects of fields along the trackside would have been possibly more satisfied than I was.

Afterwards my legs were still supremely tired but I managed to make it a little way into the cathedral, before finding myself caught short. My digestive system had been in troublesome travelling mode since Friday, and now I found myself grateful for those portaloos, or at least one of them. It was quite comfortable for a portaloos although I admit wondering whilst I availed myself on how the system for waste-disposal would work. There was a joystick to one side of the pan and pulling it dislodged squirts of a green gunk which effectively sluiced the pan clean. I deliberately cut short any speculation about what happened after this. The mark of civilization is truly the distance Man puts between himself and his excreta, after all.

That evening, there being only five of us left, we couldn't really avoid the lure of the much-missed Homemade Burger place. They were pleased to see us. Insanely pleased, I thought, and took such a pride in their venture that it involved long and lengthy explanations on how the menu worked and what we could and couldn't expect. Our waitress was pleasant too and remarked on how they had attended a training course at the Bull when they had first been employed, and what a nice hotel it was. At this mention of the Bull, Rob immediately opened his mouth and started, "Actually..." before not one but all of us leapt in and exhorted him \*not to go there\*, since we knew he was about to embarrass us all with one of his lengthy explanations of the history of Fandom and

Peterborough which the poor girl would have to feign some interest in. Rob obligingly shut up, muttering under his breath, "Yes, TMI I suppose."

The con was nearly over. Back at the hotel we settled into a discussion of where the next Barcon should be held. This soon resulted in a bizarre variation of the game of Mornington Crescent with people calling out random towns and places for consideration. I think the weirdest it got was when Janice speculated about Oswestry and none of us could actually think of where exactly Oswestry actually was. Rob googled it and I admit none of us were really any the wiser. So who knows when and where the next Barcon will be, let alone who will organize it. The only thing that is certain is that no matter how much notice is given of it, someone will surely find a way of avoiding it and finding something better to do.

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### **TRYIN' TO GET TO EMBSAY, LORDY (WAS BINGLEY)**

Snit not lest you be snat upon. Graham James surprised me when he sidled up to me on Friday at D. West's wake, and said he'd heard I'd fallen out with someone ITB (in invitation only fannish discussion group). Not only was this totally untrue, of course, but I was bemused as to how he had come by this \*information\* (he wouldn't expand). I did not take umbrage or snittage with any one person, but with D's wake in the offing, I was becoming depressed by the, yes, I'll say it Harry, more \*anodyne\* features of ITB, where frankly, my dear, it seems so often no one gives a damn. At least on Facebook you know you are going to get cuddly cats and lessons in peace and eternal optimism from Linda Strickler.

Anyway I'm back, from sunny Yorkshire at least, if not totally committed to ITB. Linda was at the wake by the way but I only said hello to her as she was leaving, and was not at all sure she knew who I was or recognized me as the person who had so often called her out on her Facebook \*Sunshine\* persona.

So. Ooop North. What's it all about, Alfie? I think the stone is Yorkshire (limestone?) and has the quality of absorbing centuries of climate as well, possibly of human emotions and feelings (Remember Nigel Kneale's the Stone Tapes?) Trapped on a train for many hours I recognized the odour of it as soon as I stepped onto the platform at Skipton. Old steam, engrained in the stone, old emotions. My parents trod these hills and dales, and in the post war years, after they had moved Down South, we returned on many family visits to the area I now found myself travelling through. I caught the Leeds to Skipton train and made my way through Bingley (where Don used to live and once upon a time worked in the Damart factory - still striking from the rail line), Shipley, Keighley, where my mother was employed in the Dark Satanic Mills, and Silsden (where her two best friends, unmarried sisters (lesbians) lived).

I can't say I recognized Skipton, far less the huge Tescos and Morrisons on the retail development next to the station. It had proved remarkably difficult to find accommodation in Skipton for what was after all not even a peak season weekend. I finally ended up in a \*boutique\* hotel called, not surprisingly Boutique25.

If you find the idea of a boutique hotel in the heart of Skipton surprising, then join the club. Its decor was cheap contemporary, all rather tacky and not really put together with any idea of expense. Its manager was attentive but ineffectual, and spent a lot of his time apologizing profusely about problems rather than taking measures to fix them. I read one report on Trip Advisor which advised people not to be taken in by the pretty pictures, because nothing actually worked. That was more or less right, especially with regard to the heating. The first night it got very cold. I inspected the radiators but the control valve seemed to have been ripped off and left discarded.

On Thursday night I went out for fish and chips at Bizzy Lizzy's down by the canal basin, and I can report it was one of the best fish suppers I have had in my life. Really hit the spot. And so back to my freezing room.

I'd bought a Stephen King novel earlier, *Revival*, just in case there was nothing on tv. I started to read it and quickly got irritated. I didn't know why. Stephen King was a best selling-author, wasn't he? He was supposed to be entertaining you from the first page onwards, no matter how desperate your own reading arrangements were, even in the loneliness of a hotel room in Skipton. I quickly realized the novel was not crap. It was very well-written. But it was written in and about a Stephen King world, which I quickly realized didn't exist in reality and which I really wasn't interested in. I projected backwards on the King novels I had read and even seen dramatized and began to see that all his novels are a weird fantasy sub-set, set in a Stephen King world worse than Tolkien's, that doesn't really exist, with homesey folksy people who don't really exist and whose reactions are fictitious constructs equivalent to those found in video games. King tells a lot of the first bit of *Revival*, the bit I read, with a sub-juvenile voice which of course is another abstract of the unreal Stephen King World. He tells his stories as an adult, looking back, but voices them with sub-adolescent dialogue. None of it impinges on reality, or a real awareness of how human beings operate. With Stephen King we are living in a world of Stephen King Robots, all programmed with Stephen King Responses. Oh well, it was Skipton and the eve of Don's wake. No wonder I was becoming depressed.

I mentioned the heating problem to the manager the next morning and even showed him the broken valve. His response was to juggle with it and pretend to put it back in place by balancing it where it should have been. He confessed he didn't leave the heating on at night because then it would get hot, but he did apologize profusely. I was puzzled to be asked when I arrived what time I would like breakfast in the morning having been told it was available from 8.30 to 10.00. That seemed to indicate to me I could have breakfast anytime between 8.30 and 10.00, but no, he wanted to pin me down. The next morning my breakfast was ready at nine and so was I, but the breakfast had obviously been on a hotplate waiting for me; the bacon and egg were solid, the rest uninspiring. It was also still bloody cold, even in the Dining Room, and the accoutrements were non-existent. It was like having breakfast in a bleak British Railway cafeteria.

I went to the bus station and caught the bus to Embsay, a brief ten minute ride. I was a little late arriving at the Cavendish Arms and Graham West was already well into his funeral oration. Still, what I heard was good stuff. Arriving late I only got the later years

run-down, where Graham described how his father \*adopted\* this persona of a gnarly, looming, butt- smoking semivampiric figure with hair greased back. It was a figure I recognized but hadn't realize before it had been a \*persona\*. I thought that was the real D.

Wakes and funerals are good for bringing old friends and acquaintances together, so I was pleased to catch up with Linda Krawece, Graham James, Simon Ounsley and a rather fully-fleshed Steeve Higgins. There were also members of the Leeds group there I had never had much contact with, including Colin Fine, Mike Ford, Michael Ashley (no, not \*the\* Mike Ashley).

I have to report the Astral Pole was performed, mostly by the younger, more limber, members of the West clan and offspring and there were no fatalities.

Coming home from Skipton on Saturday there was a bus replacement service between Shipley and Leeds, my ultimate destination for that particular leg. This was due to weekend works on line. I admit I had been worried, when I saw the number of people piling onto the train on the intermediate stations, how they were going to accommodate us all. But I had faith and in the end my faith was justified. At Shipley we were forced to a queue in a corridor (they obviously had experience of this) and coaches arrived and we were funnelled onto them by stewards waving those flags and things that stewards wave. Eventually we were all seated in about three coaches full, and in due course we all arrived at our destination, I hope. It just seemed to me to be a massively expensive exercise which must have left the rail company a very slim margin over the ticket price. Plus they obviously had to do this for every train that more or less arrived on an hourly basis. I imagine the railway staff felt pretty tired by the end of the day.

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## **LETTICE: PICKINGS FROM THE SALAD BOWL OF LOCS**

### **LLOYD PENNEY IS ONLY ONE ISSUE BEHIND WITH HIS COMMENTS.**

I started this loc two weeks ago! More buzz in the form of Vibrator 2.0.19. OCD? I suffer from CRS. Can't Remember Sh\*t. Would a pirate doctor write you an Arrr!x for your prescriptions? And with that...

A lady of the night...yes, I've been asked, exactly once, and I gently turned her down, but also thanked her. She smiled at me, and carried on. Well, I'd married to Yvonne for a few years; I couldn't exactly say yes. But even if I wasn't married, I think I would have said no. Who know who's got what disease these days? Or back then, for that matter? I may have seen a few when we were in The Hague for the Worldcon (hard to believe) 25 years ago, but I certainly wasn't there for that kind of...alternate programming...

Here I am in Toronto, and I listen to Clare Teal on BBC Radio 2 on occasion. I am listening to CBC Radio 1 right now, and I wish the CBC could have more radio services for us, but...right now, the government is constantly butting funding, so the CBC can barely supply what it supplies now. We all would prefer to get a paperzine in the mail, if we all had our druthers, but we'd need a massive, water-tight shed in the back yard just to hold our collections. I have 25 Bankers' Boxes of zines in a locker for all my paper zines, and a file of e-zines that is still small enough to put on a single 16 Gb thumb drive.

An, my bare minimum loc from last time. We were victims of lack of time, and the leetle grey cells were not firing on all cylinders. Hope this submission is more to your liking. We're all getting to the age (or are already there) where our health is starting to fall apart. Stay healthy, you lot, I've lost far too many friends over the last five years or so.

The Puppies will be a suitable target for us for a long time. Why did the weather get suddenly cold? Blame the Puppies. Why didn't I get the raise I was promised? Blame those Puppies. Works for me!

It is a chilly day, much worse than the warm days we had just a few short weeks ago. Good thing I'm inside, writing locs for fanzines, and I have a giant pile of them now, gotta get to them. Many thanks for something buzzing from you, and please do send me more.

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### **NOT AS FAR BEHIND AS R. LAURRAINE TUTIHASI WHO WANTS TO CATCH UP ON VIBRATOR 16**

I'm replying to Robert Lichtman's comment about the Prius we replaced with the Civic. It had about the same mileage that he says his car has. It was on its second hybrid battery. We had started noticing some deterioration in mileage. We figured this was a precursor to other problems. Since we bought the car for its high mileage, I think it made sense to replace it.

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### **DAVID REDD**

Vibrator 20 seems almost like a proper fanzine. Everything happening ok, nice cover, traditional apologies for production difficulties, good locs and articles, enjoyed the con reports ... what went wrong?

Actually what went wrong may have been not quite enough pure Charnock? However, I've been rereading my book of Round the Horne scripts, as one does on the desert island in preference to the Bible or Shakespeare, and I find Marty Feldman not a bad substitute:

### **To Barry Took**

*Dear Sir or Madman,*

*As you know, I always like to keep my ear to the ground, which explains the curious crouching position I'm forced to adopt when out strolling and which in fact led to that incident involving a Dagenham girl piper and a mirror on the end of a broom handle which rocked all Crouch End to its very foundations in the Spring of '67. However, I digress. There, I've admitted it, I do digress, I've told you now inspector and I'm glad, I tell you, glad...*

Etc. A classic up there with Molesworth in its way, eh? (nb good post on dere nigel at Steve Holland's Bear Alley.)

Back in Vib 20, can find a classic here too. This opening line: 'I had trouble explaining to my sons why I was going to Peterborough.' Indeed.

I feel both sympathy and amusement on reading of Steve Jeffrey's hunt for the non-existent (so far) horror novel *Crickets*. No doubt Amazon's books files are now clogged up with spurious searched-for items: *Crickets* ...currently unavailable ...*The Hose!* ...currently unavailable ... But keep working on Harry Adam Knight. Remember that Leigh Brackett got so fed up seeing the non-existent story Purple Priestess of the Mad Moon in her bibliographies that she gave in and actually wrote the thing. (No, not The Thing.) So we might see *Crickets* on Amazon yet.

What a thought. Better finish off the red wine.

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### **UNCLE JOHNNY**

Your position on fans and crap won't wash. You say that a general reader who is not genre specific will tend to have an interest in reading more elevated forms of fiction than crap. You overlook the probability that such general readers may elevate crap. I wouldn't go quite that far with Graham Greene, but I would with Ian McEwan. What about genre writers who manage to transcend the bounds, as it were? Have you read John LeCarre? Is that merely spy fiction?

Jim Linwood's recollections of tarts lined up in the Bayswater Road in the dim and distant was very entertaining. But I doubt they all went off and transacted their business in the park, which would be very uncongenial most of the year. Rather, I recall that Bayswater and Queensway were full of rather seedy hotels, back then. There are still a lot

of hotels there, but most of them now have coachloads of tourists in them these days. But in Paddington, you can still find lots of very dubious hotels, with rooms I bet you can rent by the hour. No need for standing out in the street these days thanks to the internet, although this still goes on in many places outside London and in the more funky South London boroughs. Though, there's a high probability that the girls doing that stuff now are trafficked, an evil I very much oppose.

Fred Smith has just discovered the rabidly left wing nature of most of old phart fandom. Its taken him a while. Yes, Fred, I am afraid it is true. They all read the Guardian and if you get them all in a room you can test their knee jerk responses if you shout "Starbucks!" or "Jeremy Hunt!" or maybe just "Tories!" They will all quickly stand on one leg; the left one. Actually our esteemed editor is one of the more independently minded of their number, as evidenced by his attempting to out argue Mighty Joe Nicholas on Global Warming (and crashing and burning rather spectacularly, I thought). But on the whole they are slavish believers in political ideas that remain rooted in the **\*nineteenth\*** century, not even the twentieth, let alone the twenty first. Steampunk politics you might call it.

Me? Despite often being traduced as a Thatcherite or a Fascist, I am more pick'n'mix. For instance, I am very right (in both senses of the word) on the economy, but dont think we need a nuclear deterrent. I didn't vote conservative at the last election- I'm not sure I ever have done- and when I have voted Labour I have always wound up regretting it bitterly. I would characterise myself as a centrist. To specifically answer Fred's question I am not a fan of David Cameron, but right now I think the sun shines from the impressive fundament of Boris Johnson. I wasn't happy with the election result- I would have preferred more coalition. I regard the SNP as Labour's fault. Indeed the sins of Labour are so many and cast such a long shadow, I dont think they will see office ever again. As for Jeremy Corbyn, I am thinking of going down the betting shop with the proposition that he will not still be leading Labour come the 2020 election.

I very much enjoyed Nic's column, and Pat's report on Barcon. Indeed, I fucking love Vibrator, and I got all the pages and all in the right order and I could weep with the joy of it. Honestly.

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### **MILT STEVENS PUTS HIS FOOT IN IT**

My Foot!!! Before reading Vibrator #20, I wouldn't have expected to begin an LoC with that exclamation. You wrote about having problems with your foot. I've also been having problems with my foot. In particular, I had problems with a sore on the big toe of my right foot. I'd had it for several months, but I finally decided to see a doctor after I got back from Sasquan. He said it was an ulcer. That's good to know. He prescribed some anti-biotics and gave me a device I dubbed the Quasimodo Shoe.

The shoe was designed to protect my right foot. That was good. It effectively made one of my legs longer than the other. That was bad. It caused me to walk with a definite limp. I had to wear the fool thing for four weeks. I thought about that. Maybe I could make people believe it was a fashion statement. Wearing your underwear on the outside might make people suspect you were unbalanced. Wearing the Quasimodo Shoe made you really unbalanced.

The shoe might also lead to a new dance sensation. The dance moves you could make while wearing the shoe would be lacking in couth. That should appeal to the teenage zombie market. The Quasimodo Shuffle might even offend those parents who thought their children couldn't do any more to offend them.

I've never had any problems locating Vietnamese restaurants. Back when I lived in Reseda (early nineties) the Vietnamese had occupied an entire mini-mall at the end of the block. One of the businesses had a sign reading "Asian Sandwich Shop." That gave me disturbing images of an Asian and two slices of bread. After a brief time, the sign and all other Roman lettering were removed. I never saw anyone but Asians patronize the shop.

There was also what appeared to be a conventional restaurant named "Thanh Hoa." During the war, Thanh Hoa was in the wrong end of the country. I remembered that because the ship I was on once blundered out of the fog in clear sight of Thanh Hoa, North Vietnam. They could have lobbed mortar shells on our flight deck if they had known where we were. Fortunately for us, they didn't know where we were anymore than we knew where we were, so we turned stern and went back in the fog.

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## **STEVE JEFFREY**

My tablet reader seems to be playing silly buggers with scrolling, so I first read the opening sentence of Rich's Prolog(ue) report as being "a small relaxacon in Walmart". Handy, I thought, if you run out of Tylenol, socks or even semi automatic rifles during the con.

That was a nice birthday surprise from Lynn to Dan. Better than socks. Although at my age I can get excited about new socks. And totally unexcited about birthdays, which just seem to be another scratch on the prison wall until time is up.

I know fandom is getting old, but Victor kitting out a medicalised RV seems to err on the side of extreme caution. I suppose you could fill the IV drips with alcohol and have a hell of a party in the back. Not sure I'd want a bunch of drunk fans let loose with defibrillators though.

OMG, Dan. You actually said *that* in front of Nina and everyone else. And on a panel. That was a pure Basil Fawlty moment (Do you get *Fawlty Towers* over there?)

Did anyone ever find out who the mystery dowsing wizard was? Was he actually part of the convention? Who invited him? It seems inconceivable that someone can turn up to a small convention who nobody seems to know.

"...but \*only\* a fan reads crap". Have you not looked on what people read on the bus or on the desk of your work colleagues. Everyone reads crap. Just not crap sci fi (although a surprising amount of fantasy judging by the Julian May and Dragonlance paperbacks on the shelves in the work canteen. Dragonlance, for god's sake! Who the hell reads Dragonlance. And more Andy McNabs than you can shake a stick at. Not that you'd want to, him being supposedly SAS trained and all that. I am SAS trained too, but in my case it's a stats programming language rather than the ability to dismember an enemy with one finger. Which could be a useful reputation to have precede you in interminable specification meetings.

But is anyone ever exclusively genre specific in their reading outside the minds of media reporters reaching for the first available cliché? Anymore than they all still live with their parents (and that is starting to look less pejorative than necessity in these times) and don't have a girlfriend. The joy of trawling other fan's bookshelves is not to see if they have the latest David Weber or John Scalzi but the discovery of both familiar and completely unexpected titles, whether it be the *Tao of Pooh* or the biography of *Elizabeth I of Bohemia*.

Please define "elevated forms of fiction".

It's good to learn that the Croydon amusing animal meme has not yet died out. Although I suspect the Mouse in Trousers was not quite as amusing, or at least rather disconcerting, for the trouseree.

A real, real shock about Don. I learned of his death in *Ansible* (as probably the last person in fanzine fandom to know). It's still not quite sunk in that he won't send you a letter complaining about the size or reproduction of his cartoon on page 40.

I used to be confused by Don's insistence on perfectionism and his constant complaints about how his work appeared and that fanzines were an ephemeral medium, but I've come to understand his point. He put a lot of time and effort into his artwork and expected editors to repay that compliment and not just slap a badly scanned image anywhere it would fit, when they wouldn't dream of doing something equally slapdash by misprinting an article or even a loc with missing paragraphs and random line breaks. It was evident in his disdain for a lot of Rotsler's throwaway scribbles, even though I admired Rotsler's ability to dash off a cartoon in about five seconds and as few lines. Different style, different skill and attitude, but the twain were never going to meet.

Steve Jeffery can be found at [srjeffery@aol.com](mailto:srjeffery@aol.com)

## JAY KINNEY

I've been entertaining a fantasy for most of the existence of Vibrator where I imagine writing a witty LOC and then am disappointed that it hasn't appeared in the following issue. There have been countless LOCs imagined, but apparently none written. This is distressing.

V #20 was duly received and just now digested, but it all drew to a halt with the news of D. West's death from cancer. I'd not run into this elsewhere in fandom, but I lead a sheltered existence. What a bummer. He was one of my favorite fan artists, certainly one with the driest of wits. I briefly met him at the Winchester Corflu, in the hotel bar, but he was not in a chatty mood and barely acknowledged my existence. More's the pity.

At any rate, consider this much belated semaphore signals that I do enjoy Vibrator, often read it (if not entirely), and keep imagining I have written a LOC.

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## IAN WILLIAMS

Hi Graham,

What I've done this morning so far:

Not gone swimming -couldn't find my trunks otherwise I would have.

Arranged a vets appointment for a foster kitten at lunchtime.

Arranged a dental appointment to replace a filling tomorrow.

Booked a doctor's appointment on Wednesday -urgent as my left leg has deteriorated a lot in the last week.

Applied for a disabled (blue) badge which it looks like I won't get as you can only apply every 12 months which seems a little unfair. Update: referred to Occupational Therapy who will call me. Still seems unlikely, but at least the person I spoke has been helpful.

Now I'm squeezing this in before someone calls to give an estimate for putting laminate flooring down in my bedroom because the carpet is a stained mess due to successive cats not always using the litter trays for over three years now.

Pages 1-13, um, nope, got nothing.

Page 14, oo, ah, no, sorry.

Page 15, nada.

Page 16, jazz, count me out.

Pages 17-18, Joseph being intelligent and erudite which on the latter grounds rules me out completely and probably on the former as well.

Page 19, I chorizo but was mortified to discover it was pronounced Chuh-rizo rather than KHor-rizo which sounds much better to me and how I still mentally pronounce it.

Luckily it doesn't come up often in conversation so I don't embarrass myself in that respect.

20, 21,

22, Dave Cockfield, surely there must be something there for me to comment on. I mean, I've known him for 40 years. But no, I have no memory of ever pissing on anyone's shoes. I know he didn't say I did, I was just thinking it maybe gave us something else in common.

Page...ah sod it, I'm giving up on this P sorry but I've nothing to say about it.

Climate change. Yes, man is undoubtedly contributing to it but it is also not impossible that it's also a natural occurrence. The end.

No significant mention of Rock music this time so I'll add some. On the grounds of a recommendation by Bruce Gillespie, a man of fame and taste, of it being a good rock album, I bought Neil Young's *The Monsanto Years* which I'd avoided until now on the undoubtedly erroneous assumption that message albums are crap. Having played it three times I've come to the conclusion that, if not crap, it is entirely missable. Hope you're enjoying Lucy Ward's *I Wish I Was A Bird*.

It would be presumptuous of me to comment on Don's death as we were hardly friends, but I admired his talents and fandom is diminished by his loss. It's always shocking when someone you know dies, especially someone who is a friend.

Please, please, put this in the Wahfs. Like I have to ask.

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### **ROBERT LICHTMAN**

*Vibrator* 2.0.20 will go down in my personal fanhistory as the Con Report Issue with accounts by Rich Coad, Dan Steffan and Murray Moore on Prolog(ue), and Your Pat and Claire Brialey on Barcon 3. Although of course I read them all as they appeared on InTheBar, I enjoyed reading them all again – and it's a Good Thing to have them in print in one place that can be filed and reread at a future date (if desired).

Of the various responses to the prostitution stories, I most enjoyed Milt Stevens's:

"Hi white boy, you want to have some fun?"

"I dunno, do you give a police discount?"

Reminded by my story of accumulating Definitely Not Mint two-dollar bills by asking for them at the bank, I decided to give it a try a couple weeks ago – for the first time in at least a few years. There were none, so I told the teller about Curt Phillips getting them at Monticello – and why they were available (perhaps only) there. She was much amused.

I don't know if, as per Unc, "Nic's column is probably the best thing you print each issue," but it definitely is one of my favorite *Vibrator* features. In this issue's "The Lichtman Fred Smith Glossary," I'm familiar with the first two definitions – but in different contexts than Nic offers. Growing up in Southern California, "cruising" was

something that Boys With Cars and Attitude did in certain areas. It all had to do with Picking Up Girls, so their cars were tricked out in various ways – fancy paint jobs and remote-controlled suspension being two primary ones. The latter allowed the driver to raise and lower the car – usually alternating between front end and rear end, but sometimes both – to draw attention. There was a Drive-In Restaurant aspect to cruising as well, with one drive-in (Scrivner's on Crenshaw) being so popular that it was the home base for a radio show in which a disk jockey (Art Laboe) went from car to car taking requests and dedications from the occupants of the cars stopped there for a burger and shake break. I never cruised myself (I didn't have a car in high school) but I did see it happening and had wistful thoughts about the scene. (But at that point I was already an active fan, so it was easy to sublimate the sexual aspects of the scene.)

The other term is “deadheading,” which I know in similar fashion to his “driving empty” when you've dropped off a fare in a remote area where getting a call for a fare in that area that would take you back from whence you came. In the '70s, as an outgrowth of the CB radio culture, I got to know some trucker slang. In that lexicon, “deadheading” was being stuck after dropping off your load, not finding any prospects there to make money hauling something, and having to drive back empty – either home or to a location where a new load would be available. Given the cost of diesel fuel and the crappy mileage achieved by 18-wheeler “tractors,” this was an expensive proposition and avoided if at all possible.

The other terms were unknown to me and the definitions most enjoyable.

“Don West Has Died” is a headline I had hoped not to read for many years to come, and like you I'm sad that he's gone. You had many more occasions to meet him than I did, my only times being back in 1989 when I was TAFF delegate. The most memorable of those was at a pub in some rural Yorkshire location. Mal & Hazel drove me there, and I watched in some amazement (and not a little culture shock) as Don cleaned up in that night's quiz. I forget what his prize was, something very minor, but I remember that he gave it to me with a flourish. The other time was at a Leeds Group party/gathering, where there wasn't as much opportunity to connect. Before that, back in 1984, when Don was the Other Candidate in the TAFF race that Rob Hansen won, he'd written me with the idea of preparing a humorous article about the race for what would have been an early issue of *Trap Door*. Again, I don't remember the details, but I do remember that sadly he never came through. He never sent me artwork nor responded to the many issues I sent him (after a LoC on an early one), and sadly I eventually cut him off my mailing list.

But this shouldn't be all about me. Like everyone else, I'm going to miss his wonderfully amusing cartoons as well as his occasional more serious artwork. I'm happy to read that you have some of his work and will be publishing them over time. The one on the back cover of this issue is fairly minor but its humor value is inflated by the loss in its background.

This isn't much of a LoC. I confess to having either burned out on some of the subjects under discussion and/or in the case of new subjects not having anything brilliant to say.

Also, the ever-larger issues – while evidence of how fans will gather around a monthly fanzine that comes out reliably like a moth to flame – challenge my available reading time when there are events in real life also crowding it out.

By way of lagniappe, let me tell you the highlights of a dream I had a couple days ago in which you and Pat were the main players – highlights because as with all dreams there are lead-ins to remembered scenes that aren't remembered themselves, as well as transitions that are also unremembered. In this dream, you are wearing a 10-gallon hat, a tan leather vest, blue jeans, a solid-color flannel shirt and ornate “western” boots. Pat is also in jeans and boots, with a checkered-print flannel shirt. You are in Texas, and both of you are overjoyed at having acquired a recently-born colt and are marveling at its weight which, for some reason, is 924 pounds. This makes no sense in real world terms, since according to the Pets on Mom.me site:

“No matter the breed, foals weigh approximately 10 percent of their mother’s weight at birth. That means the typical 1,000 pound thoroughbred mare gives birth to a 100 pound foal, the 1,500 pound warmblood mare's foal is about 150 pounds and the 2,000 pound draft mare’s offspring weighs 200 pounds. These proportional weights hold true even if the mare is bred to a larger or smaller stallion.” But dreams don’t follow what a search engine will reveal, and my dream had a long sequence in which this specific weight was dwelt upon by both of you. Time passed in my dream and a new scene unfolded. In it Pat says that she’s looking forward to the horse being one year old because since childhood she’s *always* wanted to be a jockey. In the next scene the viewpoint is in her head. She’s dressed in jockey clothes, whatever they are, and is at the starting line for a race. The starting gun is fired, and she’s off. Unfortunately, I woke up at that point so will never know if she and her prize horse won.

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### **TAXITIC by Nic Farey (Further Adventures of a Las Vegas Taxi Driver)**

Uber, and to a lesser extent, other "ride-sharing" companies are a bit of a topic *du jour* around here, since they've now been operating in Nevada (and obviously, primarily Las Vegas) in the last couple of months, after being "approved" with a set of regulations from the State legislature, after trying to muscle in a while ago and being summarily ruled illegal and kicked right back out.

Uber is the noisiest operation, not least because their owner (backed and massively overcapitalized by the usual suspects) is seemingly a dick of the highest order, apparently not unlike the bloke who bought the rights to the AIDS drug (was it?) and jacked the price by some gazillion percentage. Apart from the fact that the presence of rideshare companies in Vegas could well affect my livelihood (although I've not noticed much difference yet), as the child of a man who served in WW2, the very name "Uber" tends to conjure up images of swastikas and mass mindless rallies (sorry, Germany) or maybe a Donald Trump political event. [*Non-taxi-related aside: The Donald's personal wealth has been estimated at between \$3 billion or so (Bloomberg) and \$5 billion or so (Forbes). Somebody took the trouble to work out that if he'd just took the money he got from his*

*old man, invested it in an S&P-linked fund and spent his whole life wanking and eating Cheetos, he'd be worth \$8 billion.]*

Anyway, somewhat foolishly I do get involved on occasion in the comments section of articles in the Las Vegas Sun website when they mention (inevitably) Uber, and Lyft (in parentheses). I try to give myself a good hour and a quarter of a morning to get properly awake, chug some coffee and chase out the squirrels as well as attempt to catch up on email messages (which I still haven't figured out how to do on my genius phone), ITB digests and the like. I know, I'm a bleedin' idiot for expecting anything like rational discourse, but as a professional driver in the Vegas market, I somehow feel obliged to correct factual errors, and point out some practical issues which never seem to get addressed, inevitably getting answered by "all Vegas taxi drivers are long-hauling scum" ect ect *ad nauseam* by people wishing that we'd all disappear so Uber and the like can make it all better with luxury vehicles and a swath of fairy dust.

What's been of inside interest is the gossip around the taxi stands that drivers from some of the most notoriously long-hauling companies have jumped to Uber, suggesting that they reckon they'll make more money off that platform than by their usual sharp practises. By my own observation, there are definitely less of their guys visible on the roads and on the stands. Curiously (or perhaps not), the firm I work for now (Lucky Cab) seems to have been largely immune from the bleeding of drivers, as have the other smaller outfits like us, Deluxe and A Cab. Another side-effect has been that all the companies have rushed in their own ride-hailing phone app. This might be a bit irrelevant to the Vegas market, at least in the volume areas of the Strip, downtown and airport, where you pretty much walk out and get a cab off the stand, although at busy times there will be a wait in line. The bigger players (Yellow-Checker-Star, who I used to work for, and the Frias companies) signed up with an app called "Curb", which as far as I can tell isn't advertised, and no-one has ever heard of. Ours (also used by Western cab, possibly others) is Way2Ride, which might have a couple of advantages, in that (a) it was developed by Verifone, the operators of the credit card processing devices and software, and thus seems to be well integrated with our other systems and (b) is actually being advertised and promoted. We find it amusing that YCS cabs (who don't use the Way2Ride app) are carrying roof display ads for it.

I don't have a "regular" cab, although I've ended up in the same vehicles quite a few times. The form is, as technically an Extra Board driver, that you show up on time and drive whatever cab you get put in. Unlike YCS, with it's 4 billion staggered shift times, Lucky has just three start times for each shift (day, night) : 12-12, 2-2 or 3-3. Without a bit of seniority, most of us won't have a "regular" cab that we'll drive every day, so we'll end up in whatever the Road Supervisor decides needs to go out, and puts us in. Lucky's fleet includes Chevy Malibus and Impalas, Toyota Prius, PriusV and Camry hybrids, as well as a couple of Cadillac hybrids and VW Passats. Since I'm paying 100% of my fuel right now, it's nice if you get a hybrid, since that'll be maybe \$12 a shift as opposed to around \$30.

The other week I got one of the wraps, which as it turned out had a very awkward placing of the distress light switch, practically right under the brake pedal. Older readers

(ie all of you) will remember that the headlight dipper switch used to be on the floor, and this is exactly like that. Needless to say I hit the switch by accident more than once. I picked up four young lads (reeking of weed) at Circus Circus, who wanted to go to the scuzziest available titty bar ("I want to see bullet scars", said the lad in the front). I thought of the Platinum Club, basically a dive bar with topless women, although it turned out to be shut. As I pulled in around to their door, three (or four) cop cars screamed in to surround me, and all the officers leapt out with guns drawn, ordering the lads out of the cab and up against the wall. I followed driver procedure (grab your TA card, get out, walk backwards toward the officer as instructed with the TA facing them). Of course, I'd accidentally switched on the distress light, and had to explain that no, really there was no problem, the lads were fine and it was unintentional. I have to say that Metro's finest were very professional about it indeed, and the incident ended up with handshakes all around and a palpable sense of relief from all. I have to say I really found it quite gratifying to know that the cops are on the ball for this, and no doubt it's one of the reasons why Las Vegas is one of the three safest cities in the world to be a cab driver.

As we left the scene, I remarked to lad in front, who had asked me what was the craziest thing that had ever happened to me driving a taxi in Vegas, "That was it mate, and you were in it."

#### **THE LICHTMAN REFERENTIAL UBERTERRESTRIAL GLOSSARY (WINDOWS 10 VERSION)**

**Distress light** : Like Christmas, we are all lit up. The orange lights on our cabs ("cheater lights") show whether the meter is on or off (lights on, meter off). There are also green flashing lights which are activated by a footswitch and act as a distress signal.

**Passat** : "Give me your Stetson"

**Squirrels** : The squirrely shits, common of a morning where you've had hot sauce on it the night before, especially when if you're like me, you scarf down the nosebag at rates approaching lightspeed lest you fall asleep face-down in the plate. "Chasing out the squirrels" therefore becomes clear to you, does it not O Mighty Robt?

**Taxitic** : Something to do with volcanic action, I think, possibly the effects of last night's curry (qv "squirrels")

**Uber** : *cuntscuntscuntscuntscuntscuntscunts*

**Wrap** : A cab with an all over design (ours are either promoting the Way2Ride app, or Mystere at Treasure Island) rather than the simple company colors. It's a vinyl overlay, not a paint job, so the vehicle is actually "wrapped", hence the name.

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## **D. WEST TRIBUTE by Graham West**

*(D's son Graham West has graciously given me permission to reprint the text of the speech he gave at his father's wake)*

Hello Everyone, Hello can I have your attention. Hello I'm Graham, Donald's Son, On behalf of D's family and Hazel we just want to thank everyone for coming today to celebrate the Life of our dad. D.West

So it's a great honour to be able to say a few words on behalf of Myself, Mick, Paula and Nina about Donald, Don, Dave or D as most of you know him. I just want to talk about his family, books, fandom and his more recent years.

### **Firstly, .... Wasn't he a grumpy man!?**

But to be honest that was mainly an act. He usually had a twinkle in his eye and wry smile when berating something or other.

My earliest memories of dad were of his Attic ...which was an almost mystical place, full of books, drawings, paintings, rolled up cigarettes and various weird and wonderful objects. It was a dark and forbidden place. You couldn't even see the carpets there was so much stuff scattered about ....like Science Fiction Fanzines

Then there was his endless typing on the kitchen table, intricate illustrations and quirky cartoons. **But as a kid you just think that's what all dads' are like.** Making models of Daleks out of baked beans cans, conjuring up strange mythical landscapes and surreal cartoons in amazing ink detail.

### **Dad's home life.**

Dad met Ann our Mum whilst working at Bingley Library. They married young and soon they had four children together: Paula. Michael, Nina and Graham. Dad's often bewildered to see 4 kids when he came downstairs. He was like, **'Oh where did they come from?'**

He tried out a variety of jobs, like a postman, barman, odds man in the bookies, which he loved as he was so good at it, writing up odds and hustling people out of their money. But he spent so much time in his parallel universe of doing Fanzines that my mum decided it would be better if she was the breadwinner. Whilst D became a stay at home dad. So our Mum went out to work giving dad the freedom to be creative.

Like many fathers he was reserved and not that demonstrative but he brought us up with love and tenderness. One of the things we enjoyed were his teas, which featured his twice fried crinkle-cut chips followed by scotch pancakes. We'd queue up to bag the best ones. Perhaps not the healthiest food, I know.

**We all remember how well he cared for us when we were ill too - Like soothing our upset stomachs – which we got usually on the nights he cooked! ?**

He could always be relied on to help with any tricky homework, debate current affairs or help out with art projects.

Although often hands off, the flip side was he gave us our freedom. So we could do what we liked. We made our own rules and he left us to it. This continued into our adult lives. We would communicate through letters and he would offer us assistance and some tentative advice. Reminding us that he was there for us and that he loved us. Which was good.

## **Books**

Now, something D was well known for was his love of books....

D was always into his books from a young age. Pre-TV He used to get the Eagle Annual, which featured Dan Dare and the Mekon. He was brought up surrounded by books and said, "***Well if you are surrounded by books you tend to read books!***"

Something he did throughout his life. He was also an eager recipient of discarded library books and so we did end up with a rather random and unconventional collection of children's books. He also bagged a few rare first editions.

***"They're idiots! They don't know what they are doing!!"***

His drawing began by copying pictures from books. Although he read all kinds of fiction, he started out with horror and fantasy like Tolkien and Edgar Allan Poe. He then **progressed on to science fiction.....a LOT of science fiction!**

A few years ago Dad finally admitted to Nina that his **extremely** extensive book collection **may** have got a little out of hand? Despite being a prolific reader, He said...

(D sounding thoughtful) "***Hmm, I've calculated that even I read a book a day and lived beyond 80 I MIGHT not have time to read all the books I've got.***"

He had thousands, rooms full of them! And to be fair, he and Hazel did sell quite a few. But it was often a case of one out and another one in.

Of course from reading books came writing. Paula discovered that dad showed some early promise, **winning a short story competition in the Morning Star** at the tender age of **11**. (Although he was less than impressed with the prize of just 5 bob – which he felt **was extremely tight.....Marxism or no Marxism**).

A more impressive achievement was winning the **Sunday Times Science Fiction short story competition with 'The Pit'** A copy of which sat proudly in the local authors section in Bingley Library

He also used his vast knowledge to make a few extra quid entering pub quizzes around Keighley. '**Oh not him again'** He usually won.

## **Art - Fandom**

His world of fanzines was another world.

He dabbled in being a landscape painter and was talented but the demand wasn't there.

It was whilst a student and at Leeds University, that he discovered the world of Fanzines, where like minded individuals could share their passion, have heated

discussions about Science fiction, writers, stories, films articles and ....the fact there was **lots of booze and silliness** involved was a bonus.

**D revelled in the creative Fanzine world where his art and cartoons came alive.** He could channel his vast knowledge into smart cutting cartoons. In doing so, he created his alter ego in a long running series of minimalist cartoons. Slicked back hair, fag in mouth, jacket. His laconic, dry sharp wit was showcased for all to see.

He also created a hand built duplicator made with a paint tin and a **door handle** to hand print out copies of these fanzines.

He was known for dispensing his wisdom but mainly insults. He became a scary figure, 6'2 tall with intense features, often wearing black. In fact, locals in the pub thought he had the black eyes of someone in league with the devil. Whilst SF fans feared his critical eye too.

But in reality he just had very high standards and he wanted others to excel themselves too. He often took people in fandom under his wing and was sure to make them feel welcome. But you had to earn his respect.

His fanzine world was a mystery to his children. We knew he would disappear somewhere on Friday night, but had no idea where. But one thing he did share with his children was when he created **a cult called the 'Astral League'** A kind of strange alternative religion with a science fiction twist to it. Where devotees would do a Astral pole dance to join. To us it was known as the **Broomstick trick**, all us could do it with ease. Nina managed an amazing time of **4 seconds!**

It was through fandom that dad found his role or calling. And if asked to state our father's occupation we'd probably all say he was a **cartoonist**. Whilst he never made his fortune from this profession, it was undoubtedly the one which brought him (and many others) most pleasure.

### **And to the last few years....**

It was through fandom that Dad met Hazel and found happiness living here in Embsay. He became a grandfather to six children (five girls and finally a boy). Sophie, Amy, Emma, Katie, Lucy and Elliot.

He also branched out into films amassing a diverse collection of DVDs ranging from the Simpsons to cult Japanese martial arts films. Also crime being a favourite. There's surprising few Science Fiction films probably due to the fact he was so knowledgeable. He didn't like the Matrix as that was a remake of another film and the characters were ripped off an obscure graphic novel story. It really got him wound up that so little stuff was original. Suddenly he'll point out things and moan...

(Said in the grumpy voice of D)

***"Oh they copied that from another story and borrowed most of the ideas from 1950's film and some Japanese director did a version 10 years ago!!! ..... The whole thing was stolen from a book based on a German short story, which came from a Russian play. No. No, its rubbish! That idea has been done to death!!"***

He.... clearly.... knew... toooooo ....much!

But the great thing about living here in Embsay was that he spent more time outside, providing the willing labour for Hazel's gardening projects. **It was probably the first time I'd ever seen him with a sun tan..... after years hiding away in a dark attic.**

Hazel even went on to win some local Gardening awards. She came back with her cups and Dad said, **'Show me the trophies, come on let's have a look!'** he was absolutely delighted for Hazel, he wanted to see the trophies and hear the stories. He was so happy for her. Which was a revelation to me. It wasn't often you saw dad animated in a positive way. So that was nice.

It was actually gardening which led to another new and rather unexpected passion, **Paperweights with beautiful designs.** It was a curious trinity of things. Firstly as a boy in York he'd seen a large paper weight in a window, Then his Nova Fan artist awards featured Paperweights. Finally Maralyn – Hazel's sister gave him a Victorian paperweight as a thankyou for work on a gardening project.

*(Hazel pointed out this was for a pathway he built)*

This paperweight gift lead to a stunning collection of over **500 paperweights!**

**Finally, we come to the last part of his life.**

The most remarkable time was probably the last 6 weeks of his life..... when he faced his own mortality with such bravery, humour and love, tenderness and consideration for others...mixed in with a liberal dose of stubbornness. Like insisting he was at home and not at hospital. It was possibly one of, if not **the**, most extraordinary and laudable parts of his life.

We spoke about the end and he said,

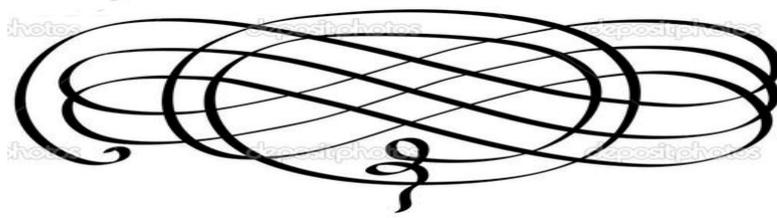
D sounding thoughtful) **'People assume you have lofty ideals about life and deep thoughts about your existence on earth, .....but in reality, I just want a cup of tea and to watch the Simpsons.'**

My Dad was my creative hero, I love cartoons and work as a creative in advertising and he was respected and loved by many of you here today. He certainly was a one off and great thing is....**He will live on in us all here in this room today.**

Please raise your glasses to 'D

**'TO D'**

Oh, one last thing, D always got his round in. So the next drink is on him, so make it a good one!





Graham West at The Cavendish, Embsay

Time, Gentlemen, please! Drink up and go home. Time to wipe down the bar, wash up the empties, turn off the lights and close up. We've had a few regulars in this time, possibly fewer than usual. Maybe the cabaret was a bit lack-lustre – must try better this time. We obviously need more tassel-twirling and come-hither stares from our star performers.

This is ostensibly the Halloween Issue, although this seems to be a custom which means more to our American brethren than us. As a festival it customarily starts on All Hallows' Eve, and signifies a three day period of remembering and celebrating the souls of the dead and departed, including saints (hallows) and martyrs. As such it obviously has more significance in Catholic countries rather than others. In Mexico and South American countries, especially, the celebrations of the Day of the Dead are undertaken with a particular rigour. In the UK we seem to celebrate by sending out young children to prowl the streets looking for candy, and we seem to be doing that with declining enthusiasm, at least based on the number of kids who ring my doorbell every year.

Next up will be the November 2015 issue. It is my birthday on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Celebrate by sending me a loc or a long review of *The Martian*. Closing date for copy will be 27<sup>th</sup> November. Thanks to Pat for proofreading this.