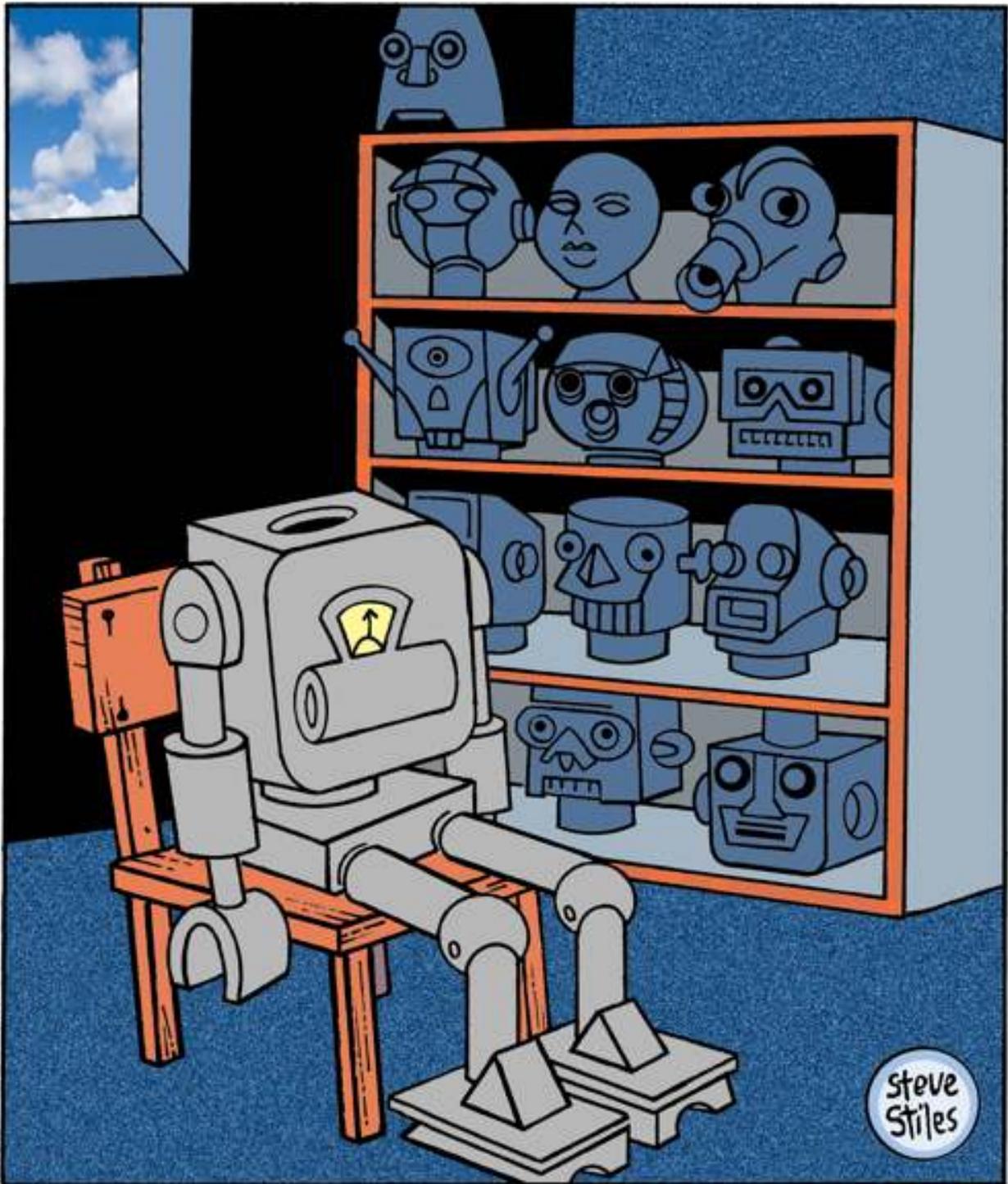




VIBRATOR 2.0.24
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Holy shit! A new year and a new issue of your favourite monthly fanzine, Vibrator. Do try and keep up Taral. Now don't ya'll go getting gloomy about all these old codger pop stars popping their clogs. Just think of who is still with us and marvel at the injustice of it: Phil Collins, Bono, Chris Martin, and all the members of every boy band ever invented since Simon Cowell first drew breath. Then there's Simon Cowell himself of course.

Thank to Steve Stiles for sending another cover out of the blue. This one is called Head Room. Clever stuff eh?

Look, we all have talents. Some people have a talent for writing locs and eating tacos. I bet you have both. Don't hide yours under a bushel, let it rise and spring forth with all the blatant idiocy of Donald Trump scratching his bum in public.

Contact me at either the local Y.M.C.A. or graham@cartilegeworld.co.uk. Wherever, a warm fully soaped-up welcome will be awaiting you.

ANOTHER HERO BITES THE DUST, ASHES TO ASHES, RUST TO RUST

I bought David Bowie's Space Oddity on a 45 single, when it was first released, but ended up playing the B-side Wild Eyed Boy from Freecloud more often, marvelling at the luscious twelve-string acoustic guitar. I bought the album that followed on from this and played it a lot, but as his career developed I soon formed the conclusion he was basically a musical opportunist with little musical integrity in his own right. I always tended to judge him purely on a musical level. I could have done without his dressing up and transgender showmanship, which seemed to demonstrate the worst elements of ephemeral pop. I didn't even think his white anorexic androgynous body looked all that attractive, and it didn't excite me any more than other aspects of so-called *glam-rock* did. The *glam* aspect of glam-rock was always going to be a distraction from the actual music. We wet ourselves as Mick Ronson and him jerked each other off on Top the Pops, but it really had little to do with music. In later years, he called himself called him a tasteful thief, but I prefer the term shameless whore, which I think he would also have been quite happy with.

When I heard of Bowie's death, unannounced and unheralded at it had been, and learnt that one of his last acts had been to make a pop album about the experience, I confess to finding it all a little strange.

It put me in mind of a peculiar kind of self-absorbed megalomania which seems to afflict the rich and powerful with a need to leave behind monuments consecrated to their earthly lives, a bit like the ancient pharaohs. Bowie was definitely weird. I seem to sense in his behaviour, even his vaunted privacy and especially in his self-confessed urge to collect different personalities, a certain disassociation between him and reality. Being worshipped by fans as a virtual deity didn't help, I'm sure.

Of course, one can take a psychoanalytic approach to Bowie too far. I can appreciate Bowie's mental state may have been a bit clouded by the trauma of his condition. But why did he not just settle down with his friends and enjoy a few bottles of wine and spare the rest of us the angst. Warren Zevon did it much better, I think, but he was probably not as rich as Bowie. I commented on Facebook on the differing responses between Zevon's reaction to his illness and Bowie's. But Zevon always was aware of his own mortality even before he was diagnosed, and his album *The Wind* had joyous happy songs as well as elegaic ones. He wasn't one to sit on his butt getting miserable and portentous, the way Bowie seems to have done.

There was no doubt he captured the public's imagination, and managed to parlay their fascination with his whoredom into a substantial fortune. In a fairly recent interview he chides the interviewer about isolating eighteen months of his Ziggy Stardust persona in a forty year career saying that "What I like doing now is writing and recording" and says that creating characters was **ancient history** as far as he was concerned.

But he obviously didn't leave this compulsion too far behind, because *Blackstar* is based on his theatrical realization of the character of Lazarus, a project also embarked upon when he knew he was dying.

Some have claimed every artist constructs devices to either ward off death or ensure his prolonged fame after it. But I don't think so. I think of people like Iain Banks who simply dedicated himself to enjoy every moment that was left to him, without the need to make any grandiose last gestures.

Some people have argued that producing *Blackstar* was justified because making albums was what Bowie did, but I'm afraid that argument doesn't really wash. It was obviously something in his later career he **didn't** do. There was a ten year lay-off between his 2003 and 2013 albums, during which time he mostly did Art, in a sponsoring entrepreneurial fashion. Deciding to do a death album because you are going to die is definitely, in my book, weird, and evidence of someone egotistically seeking a form of immortality.

Warren Zevon's death affected me far more than Bowie's. No comparison in their talents I'm afraid. Bowie said he had never listened to Country Music. What a loser. Bowie was in the end to some extent nothing more or less than a musical snob

In the end I decided the best thing to do would be to actually listen to *Blackstar*, so that's what I did. Here's my view. I know everybody won't agree with it, and I wonder why I bother, except, yes, I do bother about trying to put such stuff in perspective. I know this review will only subject me to a lot more people's hatemail, and trolling. But what the hell, we all have to speak out.

Blackstar. Bowie threnodizes about the day of execution over a largely monotone rhythm pad laid down by **jazz** musicians whom I'm sure have lots of jazz credentials. Standard orchestral pads come in later in the mix. How many times does an angel fall. I'm a black star, I'm not a gangster. I'm not a film star. I'm not a pop star. I'm a star star. I am

the great I am. I'm not a white star. But he never says he is a porn star and so one quickly gets tired of all this. Minor Arabic progressions work their way into the mix, but still the big drone remains.

Lazarus starts off much the same. Look up here, I'm in heaven. Backed with power chords and distorted saxophones. On top of all this are garbled lyrics (drop my cell phone down below) When he launches into a bridge, by the time I get to New York, it actually begins to mean something, but then he goes back to droning over parallel chords. He seems to be obsessed by the idea of being free.

Tis a pity She's a Whore seems to be a standard reworking of an old standard. "You can't do that." Totally devoid of any merit and not something one would expect to find on this kind of album.

Sue or in a Season of Crime is loud and noisy but bereft of meaningful content. I assume it refers to some forgotten girlfriend.

Girl Loves Me is lightweight filler material. The lyrics are hardly decipherable and appear to center about *Girl Loves Me*. I wouldn't be surprised if this was reprinted material from another existence.

Dollar Days opens with parallel piano chords and a plaintive saxo melody. Which is quite attractive, but then descends into the worst of Bowie's *Nothing to me* stance and frankly more words in the verse than is necessary, although most of them actually rhyme at least.

Why am I wasting my time? Those wailing saxophones blanket everything else out and make me feel I'm dying, exactly like Bowie.

And so to I can't Give Everything Away. At last a song with a backbone, and possibly the best on the album, at least not as self-absorbed as all the others, although I do have a sense it results from pencilled notes written years ago.

And so, goodbye, friends.

THE LETTER COLUMN STARTS HERE

STEVE STILES

Happy New Year! The cold or flu hasn't gone away yet, so this will be brief; I've got zero energy and feel somewhat out of body focus, like everything is at a slight tilt. At least the sneezing and coughing has mostly gone away, knock on wood, and I sleep a lot. A few days ago I decided to call my brother and sister in law and wish them a belated happy new year. Mentioned to Randy that we wanted see the new Tarantino flick, *Hateful Eight*. Randy: "I wouldn't see anything by that cop hating son of a bitch." Sigh. Well, I've already succeeded in alienating one brother so I kept my mouth zipped about the trigger-happy storm trooper types that keep blowing away unarmed black people. As for *Hateful*

Eight, which we have now seen, they certainly were hateful! I hear that Tarantino would like to make a horror movie next—and I don't know if I'll have the nerve to go and see it.

I'm glad to see that you used my Piece On Earth piece for your cover. I had originally thought to post it on Facebook after Vibrator came out but obviously it's no longer topical now that it's January, at least as far as Christmas is concerned. No matter, in a way I am relieved; although the illustration came about from me being totally fed up and angered with all the gun violence insanity our country is infested with, I really had second thoughts about being a downer in that traditional season to be jolly. So I will bring people down and post it *next* December, when I'm sure it will still be applicable to the ordinary turn of events in The Land Of The NRA. I mean, it's January 6 and Baltimore has already racked up 170 gun homicides (for those of you concerned for my safety, I live in suburban Baltimore County, Beaver Cleaver's-ville, and only go to Baltimore for its excellent art museums).

Mike Meara mentions jazz guitarist Mundell Lowe in his letter, so I feel obligated to mention that my mother used to work for him as his house cleaner; he was a pretty nice man and had us proles over for dinner at his West Side apartment any number of times. In fact, he was one of three people who wrote a letter of recommendation that helped me get into the High School of Music and Art, the alma mater of my cartoonist ghods Harvey Kurtzman and Will Elder.

As for my other experiences with music and collecting, my very first vinyl album was Oscar Brown Jr.'s *Sin And Soul*, which was given to me by Marvel Comics artist Dan Adkins (one of the first fanzine fans I ever met) in 1962. Still love his *Signifyin' Monkey* and *Brown Baby*. My experience with music then was pretty limited, but Ted White later turned me on to Charles Mingus, whose albums I still treasure (thanks, Ted!). In fact, the first album I actually purchased was his *Pithcanthropus Erectus*, which I spotted in a record store window just moments after leaving the Grand Northern hotel having spent church money from Calvary Baptist Church—which was opposite the Grand Northern-- to lose my virginity with the kind help of Wally Wood's hooker—a fact that puts me one up (so to speak) on every Wally Wood fan on earth! Luckily, Gloria left me with a few bucks so I went in and bought the album by way of celebration. I long since replaced it with a cd, but the vinyl album cover is hanging in this room behind me. (I'm so sentimental!)

I have a fairly decent jazz collection, and in the last few weeks have been on a Miles Davis kick, alternating with Bix Biederbecke, but I tend more to rock and pop since the 1960s. My major exposure to pop/rock music came when I was in the army. Before that, I was a bit of a jazz snob, believing that the Beatles were a happy exception to mostly the schlock I heard on AM radio back then. But in the barracks and in the Enlisted Men's clubs suddenly I was hearing a new world of sound. Particularly remember hearing The Byrds' *Eight Miles High* for the first time, then the Lovin' Spoonful's *Do You Believe In Magic*. I was at a Neko Case/My Morning Jacket concert several years ago when some young whippersnapper asked me what an old codger like myself was doing listening to such music. After hitting the fucker with my walker, I explained that I had been enjoying

rock since my twenties and saw no reason to stop doing so --I don't know why it is that the common belief is that when you reach a certain age you immediately segue into Lawrence Welk and like that. Currently listening to the Lower Dens' *Escape From Evil*, a Baltimore-based ensemble fronted by Jana Hunter ("reimagining herself leading an 1980s alternative rock band, preferably British").

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IAN WILLIAMS ON VIBRATOR 21

So, another Vibrator to loc. Just for a change I'll get one in early rather than leaving it to the last minute. But don't worry, the low standard I have set myself will remain unchanged.

Oooo, you mention cats! How can I resist that? You obviously get sick of receiving cute cat posts seemingly because a lot of them aren't cute except to their owners. Well, I make no such claims for my cats. All, bar one, are bog-standard moggies: a black and white female that looks like millions of other black and white cats; a smallish grey female that looks like every other grey cat in the world, a rather unprepossessing male with patches of black and patches of white and a sad-looking expression due to an operation on his eyelids to remove ingrowing lashes; a ginger and white male; a slender dark tortoiseshell female. Really, you wouldn't look at any of them twice but I love them just the same. Mind you I do have Aelfric a handsome pedigree British short-hair with an odd sort of creamy and tabbyish soft coat, a beautiful flat blue-eyed face with a playful and affectionate nature.

You get the occasional cat post from me (and others) because you're on my friends list along with cat people and lefties (politically that is, not as opposed to which hand you use), just as they get bits about stuff which interests people in sf fandom and they get politics and cats, and any other crap which engages my attention like Cuffs the recent and very good BBC cop drama. They focus on whichever aspect interests them just as I do with the stuff I get. My commenting today seems to be a series of: Fuck Britain first! They're a bunch of racist cunts. In response to several pieces of their propaganda shared by people who should know better.

So it's nothing personal. You just gotta take the wuff with the smooth (yes, doggy joke, but I couldn't think of a feline equivalent).

Hey, at lunchtime today I re-homed a friendly grey female I'd been fostering in my bedroom for a week or so to a nice couple from Blaydon -Harry Bell knows where that is.

Graham West's tribute to his father was an excellent and moving piece which revealed so much about D that I never knew and made me wish I'd known him better. Mind you, I believe it must be at least a quarter of a century since I last saw and spoke to him so that's hardly surprising. But it revealed so many different facets of his life and personality that I have no doubt were very new to many other people, not just myself.

IAN WILLIAMS ON VIBRATOR 22

Another Vibrator to loc. Why? I mean you didn't even publish my last one. Though, God help me it must have pretty bad for that to happen.

Now do you seriously expect this to be any better? I'm five days out of hospital after major surgery to replace my left knee which has result in constant pain only partially reduced by painkillers, though not the morphine I got when I was on the ward. I'm washed by waves of self-pity -an emotion I normal despise but I'm making allowances for myself on this occasion. I find it difficult to focus on my usual internet stuff -social media, news, comics, movies, popcult websites because I'm so worn out. I can just about manage to watch fairly lightweight stuff -Castle (new season started this week), Death in Paradise (ditto), Casualty and Holby City medical soaps (yes, ironic, isn't it?). In a moment it's the new series of The Voice, followed by Casualty which should get me through till bed time and painkillers. (Later: they did.)

I've a massively reduced appetite, which will hopefully result in some weight loss. I have, however, just had my largest meal in 9 days -fried turkey breast stake followed by a yogurt. Even then it took a conscious effort. Still, as long I'm eating just enough to keep my metabolism going as normal I should be okay.

It's Sunday morning now and my head is relatively clear. Let's see if I can come up with something coherent before the pain killers start wearing off.

It's me, not you, Graham. But there honestly wasn't much for me to get to grips with.

Where was Alison Scott's Star Wars review? I could have commented on that. Simon's piece was mildly amusing but nothing more. My own opinion is that they did a very good job of refreshing the franchise, perhaps a little too much in the vein of the original film. It picked up as it went on and the multiple climaxes contrasting space battle with individual combat were great. And Daisy Ridley as Rey was wonderful.

I'm completely in agreement with Dave Cockfield on Jeremy Corbyn. Never, in the whole of human history, has so much shit been dumped by so many on so few (Corbyn). The way he has been maligned and his words distorted is frankly appalling. He is a politician of sincerely held principles which are firmly of a humanitarian basis. Many of his ideas, if you look at them carefully (particularly on society) are both compassionate and practical. He has a vision of British society which will benefit everyone, not just the super-rich (the Tories' best pals). There's not a day goes by when I'm not disgusted by something new the Conservatives are trying to pull or angered by another misrepresentation of Jeremy Corbyn. He's not a naughty boy but he might be the Messiah.

Right, that's it. Time to drop back into the deep well of self pity. No, sorry, have to hold off a little while. Colin, my next door neighbour, has just arrived with the Sunday Times which he kindly went to the local newsagent for. Might keep me pre-occupied for a couple of hours. Ian Williams can be found at ianw700@gmail.com

PHILIP TURNER HAS STOPPED BEATING HIS WIFE.

Vib 2023 had a very festive cover; and a very Charlie Hebdo back cover. Which gets me straight to the proposition that it's all a matter of spotting the real problems as a preliminary to solving them. Thus we need to lynch all the fraudsters who claim they can change the Earth's climate and get on with Natural Disaster Anticipation, and responses to natural disasters which either couldn't be averted or were allowed to happen for political reasons such as the European Water Framework directive. Same with the Moslems. the allegedly "good" Moslems should be tasked with sorting out the bad ones as Western snake-oil salesmen just make things worse. Strikes me we're long overdue a holiday from climate change fraudsters picking our pockets with the government's connivance and pissant terrorists with imaginary grievances.

Oh, Lord, give us the strength to tolerate those who are unworthy of toleration. On second thoughts, don't bother. I've had enuf of them.

On that theme, Graham, I'm sure you enjoyed reading about the bloke who was booted out of Kyrgyzstan for daring to suggest on anti-social meeja that their national dish (a long horsemeat sausage which looks like a horse's hosepipe) looks exactly like a horse's hosepipe. The man himself reckons he had to be saved from a lynch mob by the police, who told him he could have started a war between Kyrgyzstan and Britain!!! Then they obligingly cobbled together an "irregularity" in his documents and deported him as an alternative to 5 years in gaol. He's also been banned from going back there for 5 years. No wonder Brits are wary of foreigners -- they're all nutz!

I'm with Paul Skelton on the austerity issue. I didn't feel stricken by it when growing up in post-war Manchester. It is possible to live well, and within one's means, even if they are modest. Intolerance should be shown to all those who bang on about austerity only because they hope to get other people's cash out of it and/or put taxpayers' cash into their supporters' pockets to their own benefit.

If someone in a pub asks your astrological sign, tell them it's Minky the Whale, or Arnold the Schwarzenegger, and give them a look of totally withering contempt if they're still using those so out-dated old signs.

Thanks for the Grey Cup score, Lloyd, but I was able to watch the whole of what turned out to be an action- and suspense-packed 2015 CFL season on ESPN here in Englandland. And I was cheering the Eks on to their win last November. Shame about your home team, the Argos, being booted out of their home stadium by all sorts of Mickey Mouse events, and having their quarterback of choice on the injured list until the end of the season.

Oh, dear, what happened to the milque of 'uman bluddy kindness in the shadow of the festering season? See that big, white puddle over there, around the heap of broken glass?

Yrs intolerantly and feeling a lot better for it, Philip Turner.

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DAVID REDD

Hope this finds you and yours well, and sailing on a good course into 2016. Thanks for V 2.0.23. Your 12 Days of Christmas hark back to the glorious days of Eric Frank Russell silliness. Fun.

Ah Mike Meara? I agree with you that aMfO is missed, but at least he's writing you LoCs. And he has again mentioned my once-favourite Spotnicks. Besides their home-tweaked sound and their 6-track EPs, the Spotnicks also appealed to young impressionable SFR fans (i.e. me, and evidently Mike) with their space-suited stage presence, which carried over into cartoon versions on some sleeves. Evidence attached. Great stuff from the years when rockets were the future.

Sorry Nic etc., but despite good stuff I can't leave Mike's letter alone: "We're doomed!" Oh yes. taxing the poor not the rich. Destroying our climate, sea level and life-sustaining ecology. Fighting terrorism as if it's a physical enemy not an infectious virus ... well, you're there with your front and back covers, aren't you? Where is (again) Eric Frank Russell's public-spirited telepath from *Three to Conquer* when we need him?

Another good Christopher Evans novel is *Omega* (2008), probably the last modern sf novel I read in full.

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PAUL SKELTON

Excellent covers Graham, but I'd be a bit worried about that back cover cartoon about 'The Face of Mohamed'. I know it is obvious that you are complaining about 'Islamophobia', but your average rabid ISIL guy is usually not well versed on foreign language subtleties. You have to watch that with your Johnny Muslims, they are cut from a different cloth. Anyway, I don't want us all to be walking around later in the year in 'Je suis Graham' t-shirts. Partly because I don't want terrorists trying to kill you, of course, but mainly because I don't want people thinking I might actually **be** you...and not just because you seemed to miss (what I took to be) the irony hash-tags in Philip Turner's first paragraph. Surely it was clear that the suggestion Muslims should be considered "guilty until proven innocent" was Donald Trump's and not Philip's, unless...could you be suggesting that Philip is the sort of a severely brain-damaged individual who would actually agree with Donald Trump? Surely not! I also thought you were a bit clumsy pointing out his use of the, now less-common, alternative spelling 'Moslem'. You must admit one thing that spelling had going for it was it made (not so) clever comments like mine above less likely.

Kevin Williams seems to have picked up what I perceive as your poor sense of direction when he writes that 45rpm records came from subtracting 78rpm from 33rpm. This would of course have resulted in 'minus 45rpm', requiring them to be played on an anti-clockwise turntable or with the stylus starting in the centre and working outwards, which would of course play the music backwards. He should of course still patent the idea as it would be a mega-seller to all those idiots who wanted to check out the 1970's folk wisdom that many records revealed *secret* messages when certain parts were played backward.

Cas was thrilled to see that you agreed with her take on that the twelve Days of Christmas end on January 5th, Epiphany Eve. Apparently there is some revisionist tendency claiming that they start on Boxing Day and that therefore the twelfth day is on January sixth, Epiphany itself. This would of course be a nonsense on two counts: first that it would make Christmas Day not a 'Day of Christmas', when obviously there is no day in the year more a 'Day of Christmas' than Christmas Day itself. The second reason of course is that Epiphany is a 'Feast Day', and the last thing you want to be doing when preparing for a feast is to be prating around taking down your Christmas Decorations. That's *precisely* why you take them down the day before.

Also, why didn't *spellchecker* flag up my fumble-fingered 't5o' instead of 'to' back there? I Googled it – apparently they are a type of 10mm staple. As well as in fanzines, apparently all knowledge is also contained in typos.

Steve Jeffrey is correct about age-precision waning with age simply because it becomes less and less relevant. Whenever certainty is required I am still capable of doing the calculation from my year of birth, albeit that since the millennium this now requires both a subtraction and an addition.

Steve's letter also reminds me that, like Roy Kettle (in the previous issue) we too have been bothered over the last few months by an infestation of eentsy-weentsy flies. Logic dictates that these must be coming in with either the potatoes (I don't think so), the spring onions (unlikely), the tomatoes (hmmm), the bananas (aha!) or the grapes. Given that this is a non-segregated infestation, featuring both black flies and white flies, but that there is a great preponderance of black flies, whilst at the same time most of the grapes we seem to be buying lately come from South Africa, my money is on the grapes.

Nice to see my agent Mike Meara getting off his arse and promoting my LoC-writing abilities ahead of this year's upcoming Corflu. He should of course have declared his interest in that he gets 15% of any resulting egoboo. I do fear though that he might have made his move too soon given that there are months to go yet and all that will happen is that all the fans who don't agree with the agency line will have lots of time to write back pointing out the non-good LoCs written or even the good LoCs not-written. Possibly a bit of an own-goal, this.

Maybe I should change my agent, especially as he has now pointed out that I should cut large numbers of offensive words out of my vocabulary, for just as coarse reference to female genitalia is offensive and demeaning to women, so similar references to male

organs must also be considered demeaning to men. He and Claire are of course quite correct, but I have been left to wonder, when we are **really** annoyed and simply have to blow-off steam, what words do we have left? Just the 'f' word I suppose, as that activity requires as a minimum either one of each sex or two of either. But that's an adjective – where are our nouns? I mean, you can't even call somebody a *wanker*, as that is sexist and therefore potentially offensive. After all, only men wank. Women invariably masturbate, thus raising the experience and practice to an almost philosophically refined plane. Of course men do masturbate too but I would suggest that, when you really want to vent your spleen, screaming "Oh, you, you, you... MASTURBATOR!" at someone is not going to do much for either your blood-pressure or your street-cred.

But enough! I don't think there was a weak letter in the issue. I even saw suggestions for two separate articles...which alas I no longer write and, so as to underscore that point, I haven't even tried to string these various comments together into some sort of thematic whole, just in order to avoid the accusation (indeed it has been made) of trying to write articles disguised as LoCs. Hope you appreciate the sacrifice.

*(EDITOR: Paul, I am always confused in working out my age from my acknowledged birth date by the fact that in the year you are born you are in fact *nil* years old and you only become one year old the year after you were born. Well, that's my excuse. My guesstimates rarely vary by either plus or minus one year, but that is enough to confuse me. I would only add that any distinction between wanking and masturbating is lost on me, and of course we all know women are far too fragrant to indulge in anything of that nature.)*

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JOSEPH NICHOLAS SUGGESTS WE ARE ALL DOOMED, DOOMED, I TELL YOU!

The recent Paris agreement on climate change is, as you correctly observe, a pretty toothless document; as *The Guardian's* George Monbiot observed, "Shorn of targets, timetables and binding instruments, it is a highly effective programme for salving the collective conscience of the delegates, and little more ... even if every pledge nations brought to the talks were honoured (and already governments such as the UK's are breaking theirs), by 2030 the world will be producing more greenhouse gases than it does today. At that point we will have 14 years to reduce global emissions to zero, to stand a fair chance of preventing more than two degrees of global warming. If the Paris agreement's 'aspirational' aim of no more than 1.5 degrees is to be achieved, other estimates suggest, carbon emissions must fall off a cliff soon after 2020. The festival of self-satisfaction with which the talks ended was a 'mission accomplished' moment, a grave case of premature congratulation." Some optimists are taking refuge in the requirement that the signatory nations come together every five years to review their progress on meeting their paper obligations on emissions reductions, which it is claimed will embarrass them into taking such action; but what's more likely is that the signatory nations will note that they haven't done much if anything to honour their pledges,

solemnly agree that they Really Should Do Something About That Quite Soon, and go their separate ways pursuing business as usual while the global average temperature continues its remorseless rise.

You are optimistic about the human species' ability to pull a technological fix out of its back pocket; I am not. There are a number of high-concept geo-engineering ideas which have been advanced for mitigating the impacts of anthropogenic global warming -- pumping sulphur dioxide aerosols into the atmosphere to reflect sunlight back into space, dumping iron filings in the oceans to promote plankton blooms that will absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, massive reforestation projects to achieve the same, even putting reflective mirrors in Earth orbit -- but what they have in common is that they would cost vast amounts of money and achieve very little by way of climate mitigation (additionally, most geo-engineering ideas -- you can find lengthy lists online -- have never been tried outside the laboratory). Real mitigation -- and adaptation -- requires wholesale changes to our current economic and societal models, but politicians in general are too cowardly to tell their electorates what they need to hear (because they fear they may not be re-elected), and the electorates, while doubtless understanding the problem, cannot grasp its enormity (because it is outside their compass of experience, because it is happening across a longer time-scale than a human lifespan, because some of the effects -- species extinction, ocean circulation -- are invisible to them). The result is that the responses to increasing global average temperatures are likely to be largely cosmetic: more solar panels and wind farms, more electric cars, more thermally efficient houses, *und so weiter* -- but not the wholesale shift away from the industrialised lifestyle of the past two centuries. And once global average temperature have risen past the six degrees of warming which most scientists agree will be catastrophic, it will be too late to do anything at all.

Six degrees doesn't sound like much, but this is the average which separates us from the last glacial maximum -- and six degrees of warming will massively accelerate the rate of species depletion that has already been referred to as the Sixth Great Extinction (there have been five such events in the Earth's history), the one which we ourselves have triggered. This matters, because it means a loss of biodiversity: not just charismatic megafauna such as polar bears, elephants and howler monkeys, but the arthropods and bacteria which make up the substrate on which life in general depends (without them to -- among other things -- recycle dead vegetable matter, our soils will lose nutrients). Biodiversity matters to us because, as the evolutionary record demonstrates, a more biodiverse world is one which supports not just more species but more complex species; and we are the most complex of the lot. It is impossible to predict what may happen to us as biodiversity is destroyed, because we have nothing like it in our species' history; but the prognosis does not look good.

Most species (animals, plants, arthropods, bacteria) have evolved to tolerate a fairly narrow temperature range; as average temperatures rise, they will therefore either have to move or die. On the assumption that this will actually happen, this means that parts of the world -- generally, those parts between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn -- will

become uninhabitable for our species: soils (thin in the tropics anyway) will blow away, there will be insufficient or no water, it will not be possible to grow food crops, temperatures (daytime and night-time) will be above what we can tolerate. In the ultimate worst-case scenarios, one can imagine our species retreating towards the Earth's extremes -- Canada, South America south of the River Plate, the West Antarctic peninsula, Greenland, northern Scandinavia, the southern African cone, Siberia, northern Japan, Tasmania and New Zealand -- and abandoning everywhere in between as the raw materials on which our technological civilisation has been built are exhausted and we find ourselves slipping back into a world powered by wind, wood, water and muscle. (A technological decline which will happen anyway; Fred Hoyle once argued that technological civilisation was a one-shot affair: one exhausted one's resources, and that was it -- which was why we've never heard from alien civilisations elsewhere in the galaxy, because they've all gone the same way.) Ultimately, extinction will loom: the evolutionary record demonstrates that the long-term destiny of all species is to become extinct, and the only difference between ourselves and the others is that we will be the architects of our own extinction.

My own guess is that the human species will be extinct by the end of the third millennium. But that will make no difference to the Earth in general: as the long tail of what's being suggested as the Anthropocene Epoch winds to its close, opportunities will open for new species to evolve and radiate into the new niches that we have cleared out. The only evidence that we were ever here -- should Fred Hoyle be wrong and an alien archaeologist one day visit our solar system -- will be a thin layer of carbon in the geological record. And then, five billion years from now, the cooling sun will massively expand to gobble up our planet, and even that evidence will be no more.

(EDITOR: Never mind, Joseph, we can always cheer ourselves up by putting David Bowie's latest album on...)

A gloomy note on which to end. I really would like to throw in my own observations on the music (and the music of one's parents) with which I grew up, following on from the contributions by others on this topic, but it's now two-and-a-bit days before I fly off to Australia to rejoin Judith and I've lots more to do between now and then -- redye my hair, clean the kitchen, HTML-up new text and photographs for the Events page on the Tottenham Civic Society website, do the laundry, make a quick visit to the Natural History Museum for its temporary exhibition of 18th century nature paintings by the Bauer brothers (and try to avoid buying anything from the bookshop using my 10%-off NHM supporter's card -- I have enough of a reading backlog without adding more to it), and of course pack for the trip. But perhaps others will continue the "music I grew up with" theme in their letters in the next issue, and I can then have a go at saying something about mine....

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FRED SMITH

Your film reviewers Phil Palmer and Simon Ounsley seem to have rather low opinions of the new Star Wars movie and I've got to agree; went to see it with my son in 3D on the big IMAX screen and, although spectacular, I felt it was a lot of explosions about very little, although son enjoyed it. Also, to my mind, it might just as well have been in 2d on the normal screen - at less cost.

Jim Linwood's mentioning his listening to Willis Conover on Voice of America prompts me to ask if he was aware of Conover's fan background, his writing and pubbing fanzines, etc. and his correspondence with H.P.Lovecraft?

Steve Jeffrey seems to have me confused with Fred Lerner. Not so bad because Lerner is a fan and contributor to letter cols unlike the serial killer that Simon Ounsley calls me: Fred West! Anyway, Steve (and John Neilsen-Hall) both take me to task for saying that record producers are not musicians, when, in fact, I meant that they produced records not music. (noted that you agree with me, Graham!). You're both quite correct, many of the "producers" are, in fact, also musicians in their own right. Quincy Jones, for example, is a composer, arranger and conductor in addition to being an instrumentalist first and, later, a producer. A composer/arranger writes dots on paper, while the "producer" turns out something round (with or without a hole in the middle!). Neither is music until somebody else blows, scrapes, plucks or taps on something or else places the disc in or on some kind of mechanical/electronic device, in both cases to interpret the coded messages written or recorded. It's only the blowers, scrapers, pluckers and tappers that are musicians, however. not the technicians who operate a device. Without opening the can of worms that comprises the various definitions of "music", you could say that it is "organised sound" and, therefore, not "thinking". I hasten to agree that a certain amount of thinking is necessary when composing, or playing, music and, of course, musicians "hear" music in their heads, hence the deaf Beethoven and the likes of Nat King Cole who could instantly play anything he thought of. And anyone worth his salt can look at those dots on paper and hear the stuff in his head - even me, if badly!

As for my definition of jazz as improvisation, John, that was too narrow. While there is a lot of that, particularly in "live" performances, jazz can be composed, organised and even written down, a case in point being Duke Ellington, who might even write out soloists parts. So, more finished works rather than "daubs on canvas".

Paul Skelton's "reasons for post-war moves to London" are interesting and seem logical. Pot-of-Gold at the end of the rainbow and all that, glamour of the Big Smoke for people out in the sticks tired of the austerity at home. I didn't move there but I did visit London for the first time not long after the end of the War and was immediately struck by how well-dressed and glamorous the women were compared to the dowdy creatures our homebodies had become!

Lots of talk about vinyl in the lettercol and i must express surprise at Mike Meara's preference for 10" as opposed to 12" as it was my understanding that the 10" size was discontinued fairly quickly. In fact my collection has only a handful of 10" (and even fewer 7" 45s) as opposed to over a hundred 12" LPs. mostly jazz but some classical and "easy listening". I've also downloaded stuff from Amazon and (even more cheaply) home made CDs from taped radio recordings. And then there's free stuff from Deezer, listed on my computer as "favourites". There's a lot of music out there that you don't have to pay for including even video recordings from concerts on You Tube which I've downloaded and , in a few cases, burned to DVDs, playable on television. Quality is excellent on the whole, depending on the original recordings, some of which are HD. I won't get into the debate about vinyl v. CD except to say that nearly all of my LPs are free of "clicks, scratches, crackles, wow and flutter". Depends on how well they've been treated and the standard of the turntable / cartridge playing them.

John Purcell is very good on gun control although owning two or three guns needn't necessarily send up red flags. I think it was Dean Grennell back in the Fifties who had three (if memory serves me), a .45 automatic, a .357 magnum and a .22 target pistol (with complicated hand grip). As far as I remember he didn't kill anyone! It was also, at that time I believe, in Wisconsin you could buy anything apart from a machine gun. May be different now, of course!

Lots of other goodies this time but that's all causing comment! A guid New Year to all of yez!

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ROBERT LICHTMAN JOINS THE GLOBAL WARMING DEBATE. LOOK AWAY NOW.

For me, the meatiest parts of *Vibrator* 2.0.23 are in the second paragraph on page 2. "I believe they should not be looking for ways to prevent global warming, but should be looking for ways to manage it." I certainly agree, since prevention is so last-century. In 1990 the Farm's Book Publishing Company put out *Climate in Crisis: The Greenhouse Effect and What We Can Do*, by a Farm resident, Albert Bates, who'd been studying the issue for years at that point. The thrust of the book is that even back then the evidence was clear: "By January of 1989, the scientific proof was in: 1988 had surpassed the previous record for the hottest year in history by 0.02F. For the previous record holder, we had to look all the way back to 1987. The top six warmest years in the history of recorded temperatures were: 1988, 1987, 1983, 1981, 1980 and 1986, in that order. Six records in nine years." And we continue to set new records, alas! The suggestions for managing global warming are laid out logically (and if anything are more applicable now than ever), but sadly with the view that mankind is capable of looking ahead beyond the next quarter's profits to providing a livable world for our children, grandchildren, and on down the line. The continued new-high-temperature records don't offer much hope.

You suggest a rather different scenario: “Still I would like to see more concrete funds (no pun intended) spent on flood defenses and raising ground levels of territories threatened by rising sea levels. That should not be beyond the will of man. Meanwhile how about relocating portions of humanity to areas not so vulnerable to predicted rises in ground temperature?” That’s a tall order, since so much of human settlement is in what are already or will become flood plains. Think much of Bangladesh for “now” and much of Florida for “will become” – and in the latter case the process is well underway. Some areas, such as greater New York City, will have the money and means to deal with flooding, and the Netherlands has been at it for centuries; but outside the richer countries this seems unlikely to happen in any targeted and (especially) well-financed way. (I think of that tiny island nation in the Pacific that’s likely to disappear soon as sea level continues its inexorable rise.)

“I am as always perhaps stupidly optimistic about the human race’s ability to rise above its ape origins and deal with the evolutionary problems that confront it. Certainly one of the boldest steps where no man has gone before would be to address the redistribution of wealth, perhaps freeing up money from corporate offshore bank accounts and converting it into resources we can all use and benefit from before our planet goes down the plug hole, just before which I expect to see the Very Rich building Virgin spaceships to take them and their families to Mars, or Beyond.” That’s the ultimate redistribution of wealth – relentlessly upward, and the bulk of humanity be damned. I think you and I are in equal measures both hopeful and cynical about humanity’s long-term prospects.

Still, there are perhaps some vaguely hopeful signs, albeit (and sadly) tied to the quest for profits: solar and wind power are becoming more “popular,” and in some areas the cost of producing electricity by those methods is now competitive with fossil fuels. And despite the backward choices of car buyers towards gas hogs whenever the price of petrol drops (a reliable pattern, oft repeated as those prices ebb and flow) the percentage of all-electric and hybrid cars in use continues to rise. It used to be that the Toyota Prius was the only game in town, but now many manufacturers are producing hybrid and all-electric vehicles and the prices are gradually coming down.

I’d like to recommend Albert’s book with its optimistic foreword by none other than Al Gore, who at that point was still “only” a U.S. Senator and not the “star” of the 2006 movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*. Copies are available for under five dollars (in a Bookfinder search). It’s a manual from the now-distant past of 1990 that’s equally applicable today.

In your comments on Mike Meara’s letter you write, “I think it’s a pity you seem to have given up on *aMFO* which was for a long time flying the banner for British Perzines. It’s a pity too that you seem cowed in the face of *Vibrator*. Come on in and play, there is room for everybody and the water is usually warm.” I certainly second this emotion! Mike’s fanzine has a flavor entirely unlike yours, one that I find tasty and enjoyable, and I for one miss it.

Milt Stevens writes: “Back when I was a teenager, teenagers were supposed to be

obsessed with rock and roll music. They were supposed to exhibit their obsession by buying lots of 45 records. I wasn't obsessed with rock and roll music. I didn't even much like rock and roll music, and I was spending all of my money on science fiction magazines anyway. All in all, I wasn't really cut out to be a teenager." Since Milt and I are the same age, I feel safe in pointing out that then, as now, teenagers come in all sizes and flavors. Unlike him, I liked rock & roll music a lot – and also science fiction. I don't know if I had more income than Milt, but I was buying both 45s and science fiction. I did, however, phase out record buying when I stumbled on fanzines and wanted to produce my own. After a couple years of that, I largely cut back on buying science fiction, too, since with fanzine fandom enjoying an incredibly active and productive period there was little time to keep up with anything but fanzine reading. (It didn't help, either, than I began joining and producing fanzines for apas, too.)

Nic Farey's column was interesting as usual. I particularly liked learning about how he as cabbie must deal with those passengers who pass out – no touching, call emergency services. It sounds eminently sane to me, and undoubtedly saves Nic (and other drivers) the possibility of altercation leading to lawsuit/claim that could result if he had a more (ahem!) hands-on approach. As for the glossary: I *did* remember "nut," Nic!

Enjoyed both "The Twelve Days of Christmas Inventions" and "A Selection of Fannish Christmas Recipes" – the first, truth be told, more than the second – but can say no more.

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LLOYD PENNY IS ONLY ONE ISSUE BEHIND

Thanks kindly for Vibrator 2.0.22, and it's Friday, so there's time to have a casual look, and make some pithy comments. Who am I kidding?

Saturday Nite with the Cougars? Are the Cougars anyone we know? If Chris Garcia were here, he'd be commenting about Milfy goodness, whatever that might mean

Happy birthday! Whenever...I know how old I am, I have trouble believing it, and if told I should act my age...well, that answer shan't appear in a family fanzine. I do like the graphic that says that if I haven't grown up by the time I reach 50, I don't have to. So, I'm not going to. So there! Nyeahhh! (oops, way past deadline).

Countries like Britain, France, Germany and others stand out as beacons of freedom to so many, and terrorist groups see them as targets instead. I am still of the opinion that if we understood the terrorists' thoughts, we could then act to shut them down.

My loc...the Canadian government has taken on a lot of responsibility at the Paris summit, and right now, it looks like we'll have to radically cut down our emissions over the next few years. I doubt we will meet our targets, but expect that we will still do better than most. Is my past employer in trouble with the assorted levels of government? Nope, they can hire and fire at will. Not good, and not sure when it changed. The jobhunt

continues anon...

Philip Turner should know that the CFL Edmonton Eskimos are under some level of pressure to change the team name. Not the same pressure the NFL Washington Redskins are, but still, it's there. Might happen over the next couple of years. I think Edmonton won the Grey Cup this year, and there might be an expansion team in the new season

Record speeds...most record players have the 33, 45 and 78 rpm settings, but I know that some school record players, and some turntables at radio stations, have a 16 rpm setting. I remember a vinyl disk about a foot across, and it was played in a class, and contained an approximate one-hour lecture. Yvonne still has all her vinyl, and she was a big Beatles fan.

Actually, Robert Lichtman, I think we have about the same e-zine storage. Just checked my folder of locced e-zines...3,699 files and folders, about 6.72 Gb in size. The folder they are in is titled Zines to Print, but I am never going to actually print them out, not unless I want to try and fill another bedroom with printouts.

Almost the page, so not bad at all. Off it goes in the æther. Many thanks, and see you with the next one! Which might be in my IN box right now...

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MY SPORTING LIFE

“See this boy,” said Jock, pointing at me in a way which suggested the object of his attention could only be me. The rest of the spotty youths lined up for his Cricket Theory class recovered quickly from their cowering positions with various expressions of relief.

“He will be playing cricket in the first team next year,” Jock continued. “He will be one of the stars of my team when we beat those provincial oiks from down the road.”

We were in the school gym and Jock had put a bat in my hand. Jock was also the woodwork teacher. He had put worse instruments in my hand and had never previously had any kind words about the carnage I had wreaked with them. I wondered if he had made the bat, chiselled out with his own fair hands, but it proved in fact to be standard issue, for use in hitting balls, I believed.

“Lunge forward,” he had insisted, so I did, pushing my left leg forward and placing my bat in front of it at what I thought was a natty angle. I knew very little about cricket but I'd somehow managed to absorb eidetic memories of cricketing poses, possibly from the cigarette cards of my youth (Dennis Compton and W.G. Grace) and could easily reproduce these, especially when threatened by a mad Scotsman.

Apparently, according to Jock, I would soon be playing not only for my school but for one of the county clubs, and then possibly for England. It didn't work out that way, of course. Jock was as deluded as any Grammar School PE teacher has ever been.

I think I did get a try out for the cricket team, but blanched when big burly Ron Meadows bore down on me and skittled my wickets with one blow, despite me presenting an absolutely straight bat to him.

Before going to Grammar School I hadn't even realized what sports were, but my mum gave me a kit bag on my first day with plimsolls, shorts, and socks, but not replacement underwear, which on reflection I could probably have used. Sports bags were standard prescribed issue when you went to Grammar school. Some mothers didn't have the resources to produce them and they were castigated and their sons and daughters removed from higher education immediately.

There was a huge open field in the rear of our grammar school, which was dedicated to sports. I imagined it has now been largely built over and covered with desirable residences. Mostly I remember sitting out there on summer days with my school chums, avidly avoiding sports.

Some sports however could not be avoided. There was cross country running. In those days, before the industrialization of suburban London, there were still areas which could be called country and we ran in them, across fields, alongside tow-paths, through people's back gardens. I was quite good at it, developing a surly pre-Albert Finney view of life, plodding ever onwards, whilst my compatriots stopped at every stile to strike up smokes.

There was also the annual Sports Day, of course, in which I found myself conscripted along with a host of other chain-smokers and bullies. They had approached me beforehand with their idea of who should win a quick gallop round 440 yards, who was the head bully of course. No names no pack drill. But Mike Sheldon, I hope you are already rotting in hell. When the pistol started us, I launched out slouching along in kindred spirit with everybody else, but soon it became apparent I just couldn't run as slow as the rest of them were conspiring to, so I stretched out ahead and managed to win by a comfortable margin. I was immediately taken behind the gym block and reminded by my fellow thugs of how I had transgressed my allotted role. I think from that day on I was a Socialist.

One day a new PE teacher showed up. He was called Mike Riley, and in contrast to Jock, he was a gentle-natured man, softly spoken, and never said a harsh word even against the most klutzy of his students, preferring to encourage us with soft words. Needless to say he didn't have much success in encouraging his teams to win. He had been a paratrooper and one summer he went off in the school holidays to do stunt work on the film of John Hershey's *The War Lover* which involved parachuting into the English Channel. He was apparently dragged down by his parachute and drowned. You don't come up across death so often, when you are a Grammar School Kid, so I always remembered this.

When I left school I put organized sports behind me. It seemed to me from my experiences with Mike, you very often ended up dead, so it was not something I wanted to pursue.

I don't suppose Bar Billiards counts as much of a sport, but it was something I very much enjoyed after being introduced to it by Graham Hall. That other pub game, pool, never much interested me.

In 1983 I moved to Harringay in North London. For a while the area was a bit of a fan Mecca, with Malcolm Edwards, Rob Holdstock and Roy Kettle and Phil Palmer living in close co-existence. It may have been Roy's idea to get together every week to play badminton at a local sports centre, and we kept it up for probably four or five years, every Thursday. Rob's partner Sarah Biggs would join in and our other local non-fannish friends Lesley Levine and Stuart Brenton. Most of us convinced each other we were doing it for the good of our health, but after a badminton session inevitably we usually went out to get drunk and retired with a curry to undo all our good work. But I can openly say I've never before or since found any sport as enjoyable.

So much for all that. I will have to leave my memoirs as a prize-winning Graeco-Roman wrestler and World Champion Afghanistan Goat Tipper to another occasion. And as for mud-wrestling...

AT YOUR CONVENIENCE – More Tales of a Las Vegas Taxi Driver by Nic Farey

We had a nice Indian food bash here last night, which we do annually to celebrate Harry Bell's birthday for reasons lost in the mists of various distilleries, so this latest addition to the *oeuvre* is being bashed out under the influence of the expected fierce overhang ((c) Lord Kettle) caused by not only the expected bottle of strange-colored alcoholic piss conveyed here by the infrequent Don Miller, but other expectedly fine booze brought in by others. My culinary efforts included a slow-cooker biryani, a Jamie Oliver "balti" recipe, aloo bhaji and prawn gravy, which the multitudes in attendance scarfed up with alacrity. Photographic evidence suggests that quantities of Newky were also consumed.

Now of course, all this copious consumption inevitably makes you think of the bog, that being the inevitable destination of not only the recycled consumables, but also my arse, for several extended sittings. My regular reader (J, Unc) may recall a previous column about the necessity of holding it in, but I probably mentioned the availability of facilities at certain taxi stand locations. So for the continued delectation (and the continued inexplicable boredom of John Purcell), here is the convenient (ahem) review.

The airport, as you might expect, is suitably appointed with actual little buildings which contain the lavs, and the only ones I know of that have separate mens' and womens' sides to them, any of the others mentioned below do carry the risk of tripping over the occasional vampire's teabag from the more slatternly user. The mens' sides, by midday or earlier, do pretty much smell like hundreds of carefree taxi drivers have relieved

themselves with the casual flick of the wrist which displays utter indifference to the actual destination of the spray. The installations are institutional in a way that inevitably reminds me of jail, although there anyone who displayed such a disregard for the facilities would have got a pretty serious talking-to, including but not limited to the American equivalent of a clip around the ear'ole as a useful incentive to future aim. It's probably a bit surprising that given the volume of taxis cycling through the pits every day that they actually stay as minimally clean as they do - there is some poor sod who has to go in and mop and clean every night, and twice after Aitch's birthday.

Any hotel that has a tunnel for staging has a lavvy (also there are one or two that have them very nearby the staging line, such as Rio and Treasure Island). A lot of drivers don't like working the tunnels, since once you're in there you're pretty much stuck with it until you get the ride out, and being underground the radio doesn't work and the cellphone gets fuck-all reception. Despite the availability of the secret taxi shitters at Rio and TI, the regulations say that we aren't allowed to leave the cab while staging, although everybody does it when you really do have to nip in for a desperate Jimmy or a pony. Tunnel etiquette is a bit different. At the Bellagio, for example, if the tunnel isn't that full, you'll pull up in the left lane (nearest the lav), and if the stand isn't moving much you'll keep your place in line, but if it is it's incumbent upon other drivers to let you back in as soon as you've done your bit. Mostly they do. The Bellagio bog isn't the best, but pretty much on a par with the other tunnels at Encore and Wynn, you can hold your nose for that long and try not to slip on the floor, although the Bellagio rarely has any paper towels, which the others do better at. It's not unusual to encounter said paper towels spread all over the seat, since some buggers are obviously too lazy to flush or bin them. I should revive the old graffito: "It's no good standing on the seat, the crabs in here can jump six feet".

The nicest facilities all round are undoubtedly at the Aria tunnel/pit. There's a parking area to the side as you go in (although the access is a bit snaky) where there's *two* little restrooms, albeit undesignated as to gender, and they always seem to be nice and clean. There's also a little side space that the Muslim drivers use for their daily prayers at the given times, which is a nice provision. Off the pit area itself there's another restroom as well as a little break room with soda and snack machines, all very well kept. Encore, Wynn and Bellagio also have vending machines, and of course they're trying to get a bob or two out of us, but it's nice to have them there, especially in the summer months when it's good to be able to grab a water without having to stop at a store.

Not much (if anything) to report on the unusual passenger front, though I did meet a new driver while staging at the North Premium Outlets, a lovely Irish bloke called Mark, who wryly bemoaned the fact that his teenaged daughters just see him as "a big fookin' fat ATM".

THE LICHTMAN BOOK OF SQUIRRELS

Aitch : An affectionate term for those named "Harry". I may be the only person who still uses this?

Bog : You would call that "john", O Mighty Robt, or "the head" if you're feeling naval,

or "the dunnee" if you're regretting that case of Canadian Fosters (qv "Newky").

Clip around the ear'ole : A good kicking. Fairly typical jail understatement. Anyone who'd been in for a year or more (like me) would inevitably be described as "He's been here for a minute".

Inexplicable boredom of John Purcell, The : I think this movie rated quite well with the art crowd at Sundance this year?

Newky : Newcastle Brown Ale, properly imported. Arriving in the States lo, those many years ago, I was pleasantly surprised to find one of my old staples, Harp lager, on the store shelves, but it didn't taste quite the same as I remembered. Closer examination of the labelling revealed that it, along with other dodgy piss like Fosters, were all "brewed under license by Molson, Inc", so calling them "imported" was technically true but a bit of a fuckin stretch if you ask me.

Pit : The airport staging areas, particularly (room for over 200 cabs each), also occasionally used to describe similar but much smaller staging at the Aria and the Palazzo.

Strange-colored alcoholic piss : Any beverage brought to a party by Don Miller, in this case Crown Royal Regal Apple, which was actually quite drinkable. Also brought by different suspects, a fifth of my favorite bourbon, Bulleit, and a smaller bottle of the very nice indeed single barrel Four Roses (thanks to Roy Hessinger!), who informs me that Four Roses actually supplies the hooch for Bulleit's rye whiskey.

Vampire's teabag : A used tampon. Your ewwww moment for the day.

VIBRATOR BACKSIDE

There, that was fairly painless, wasn't it. Dead easy this fanzine lark.

What's going on with Donald Trump, eh? My American friends keep telling me that he hasn't a hope in hell of being elected, while British TV commentators seem intent on convincing me his rise is inevitable and, in the words of the estimable Mr Meara, we are all doomed. I am fairly interested in the dramatic potential of what might happen if by some fluke he does manage to get elected President. How, for instance, will Cameron deal with a nut-job who wants to ban Muslims and Mexicans from even existing? Will he welcome him with open arms, even as he welcomes the Saudis for the opportunity to exchange arms for their oil? It is impossible to believe he will display any principles this late in his career and refuse him entry to the country on the grounds of inciting racial hatred. There is a hope, of course, not the say the certainty, that if Trump is elected he will soon be assassinated, but that might leave Palin as President. It's so easy to see how farcical international politics can so easily become. Then there is the Democratic race. Both Clinton and Sanders have things going against them, not least there has never been a female president and there has never been a Jewish president. Obama is hated for

being black. A woman and a Jew are never going to have an easy time in that most Christian country.

Disappointing TV schedules part 64: The TV Guide listing on my TV interestingly shows up a programme described as The Great Rod. Intrigued by the prospect of circumspsect porn, it turns out to be an abbreviation for The Great Rod Race, a fishing programme. I should have included fishing in my feature on Sports, except my experiences have been exceedingly ignominious. Fish and I do not agree and I've always had difficulty in viewing sitting for several hours watching a float do nothing in a pond as a sport. I grew up next to the Grand Union Canal and would occasionally try my luck, but couldn't tell a roach from a tench. Of course the waters were not so polluted in those days so there actually were roaches and tenches. Our greatest success was achieved by stretching some sackcloth over an old tyre and dangling it from a nearby road bridge, baited with bread, but we were soon made aware by local residents that this was a degree of fun which was considered unsporting. At the behest of my brother in law I tried beach and pier fishing but never even managed to catch a crab.

Nicotine, what is that about? It's an addictive substance, but when found in cigarettes combined with cancer inducing tars, it is contra-indicated. So let's just give people nicotine without the cancer threat, then. That's okay, right, pander to their addiction. Like allowing people to drink alcohol, because it's fun, but disregarding that it r ruins their livers. Vaping also mystifies me, but that's another story, especially when it is banned in public because it might provoke people to smoke actual cigarettes. Or perhaps wear nicotine patches. Take my advice folks and steer well clear of all addictive substances. Live a Clean and Christian life and vote for Trump.

Oh well, last time I looked I was Graham Charnock. And I still appear to be operating from graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk, to whom all letters of complaint should be addressed

THE

EP 7075

SPOTNICKS

ON THE AIR



ORIOLE

EXTENDED PLAY

ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL - MOONSHOT - SPOTNICKS' THEME
THE ROCKET MAN - HAPPY HENRICK'S POLKA - AMAPOLA