

This Here...

"...what I'd expect from a Marxist report..." (J Nielsen Hall)

EGOTORIAL

THE WEEK OF MEH

And so it came to pass.

I went into work to start my week on Sunday January 9, feeling like, while not entirely the comparable eight buckets of shit, a bit debilitated, with both meself and **J L Farey** having suffered from sore throat, runny nose, headaches and fatigue for a few days previous, these being several check marks off the Covid (Omicron) symptom list. Not being much of a one for bunking off sick, I had a chat (from at least six feet distance) with supervisor Tyree, indicating that I honestly wasn't sure if I should be going out. He agreed, sent me off home and the Fareys resolved to get tested asap.

On a Sunday that's not such an easy ask, but I found that there'd been a couple of new testing stations opened up, one of which was at the YMCA on Meadows Lane, only about a fifteen minute drive from our house. In 20/20 retrospect, I should have woke the Mrs up by 8am (long before her usual moment to arise) so we could

get over there, but considerate husband that I am, I waited until she actually got up at her usual time, put a bit of food in herself and off we went, getting in the ridiculously long line at 10:30am. Over *five fuckin' hours* later, and not even in sight of the actual testing, we got told by friendly sorts exiting that they'd shut up shop for the day. And yes, I ran out of smokes, contributing to my overall grumpiness. Getting there much earlier might have got us sorted, but then **Jen** noted (the following day) having seen an aerial



Testing line for Sam Boyd Stadium, which is so far away as to be not even visible... (Photo: Las Vegas Review-Journal)

photo of Sam Boyd stadium, which had also set up a test location opening at 5:30pm and going on until 10 or 11 or thereabouts. The line there started filling at noon.

Having been recommended to this by various colleagues (should have fuckin' listened) I therefore resolved to get to the Urgent Care when they opened at 7am next day, with Jen saying that she'd assume that her result would be the same as mine, since we had identical symptoms. It's possible you might consider that reckless, but there y'go...

So off I went in just about daylight, got seen in minutes with a co-pay of \$10 because I needed to see the doctor to get a sick note (otherwise it would have been free - well, covered by insurance I guess). The result arrived next day, to the surprise of all concerned including the HR bloke at work, negative. Still feeling under the weather, though, I ended up taking the week off anyway, which did seem reasonable since there's still the risk that the negative was false.

An initial assumption might have been: "Oh well, week off, good time to play some ketchup on stuff including but not limited to fanac", but of course it never works like that, especially under conditions of more than the usual fatigue which was occurring both above and below the neck. So here I am a week later frantically writing away to get this bastard together before deadline. Fortunately I'll tend to do well enough under such pressure, although I did have to pass on the Vegas Writers' Group Round Robin (round 1) for the month, "head full of zombie", as Men At Work would have it. Part of that I attribute to this month's setting, which is Summer Camp,

something I have o experience of outside of Charlie Brown's travails in the 'Peanuts' strip, that and "Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah"...

So, yeah, it was a week of idleness, naps and I suppose a bit of trepidation in attempting to maintain something close to my normal schedule (wake at 1am, to bed at 5pm) knowing that I'd have to be back shoveling shit ere long.

We did, however, manage to clock some movies (rather than just the usual TV episodes, but them as well), and a fair bit of that is detailed in thish's 'Movie Night' column for your delectation and disagreement.

Foodwise, there wasn't too much of a lack of appetite, even though on my usual days off I'll tend to have tea & toast of an early morning (somewhat bugging up dinner), followed by the inevitable nap, but I should definitely mention, if I haven't done so before, that **Jen** makes a fuckin' excellent quiche. I like quiche...

It's all good.

January 2022

CORFLUX



PANGLOSS POSTPONED

[[Important news here, hence it's upfront. For those of you who may not have already clocked this from last week's mailout, various circumstances have conspired to require a delay in fanzine fandom's annual get-together. Here's the news release from the team:]]

The Corflu Pangloss committee have concluded that current circumstances make our original March dates unfeasible. The Omicron variant of Covid-19 has made travel much more uncertain (the US Centers for Disease Control currently warns US residents against traveling to Canada). We hope that moving the convention later in the year will reduce or eliminate the uncertainties and perhaps more fans can attend.

Also, several critical committee members have new medical issues that make it difficult for them to work on the convention in the coming crucial weeks, and could prevent them from working onsite or even attending. We hope that with a delay we will be able to see them attend and participate as planned.

We therefore announce NEW dates for Pangloss: October 21-23, 2022

The Sands hotel has moved our function space and hospitality suite reservations to October. We hoped for an earlier weekend, possibly in September, but the sleeping rooms would have been more expensive, and the function space was not available earlier due to the hotel's cruise business commitments. With the move to October we were able to retain our original hotel rates.

Hotel Room Rates: Stay the Same!

If you currently have a hotel reservation for our March dates, your reservation will NOT be cancelled automatically. You may either cancel only or cancel and rebook your room (s) for our new October dates by emailing sands@bwsands.com. Please include your name, reservation start date, and confirmation number in the email. If you elect to cancel now, you may, of course, book rooms for October any time up until the convention.

Note: Should you still want to visit Vancouver during our original March dates, the Sands will be glad to honor your reservation at the same convention rate. Let them know if you intend to do this.

What's Not Changing

The deadline for Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards voting remains the same (February 25) and the awards will be announced via Zoom on Sunday, March 20 as they would have been on our original schedule. The Zoom will also include a presentation for the 2023 Corflu bid. Membership rates also will remain the same for the foreseeable future.

[[For other Corflu news, see 'Indulge Me'...]]

RADIO WINSTON

MELBOURNE SKA ORCHESTRA

This ended up being just too fuckin' tempting, given the slight preponderance of discussion of Australian bands in here (with Melbourne alleged supremacy on full display) and my adoration of ska, so erewego lads...

Founded by Nicky Bomba (who used to be with the John Butler Trio) in 2003, this mob has boasted up to 34 members (but currently, I think, 26), and rather than just be another "niche" outfit (if can accurately use that term) drew their inspiration from the long and storied history of original ska, as well as the 2-Tone revival that began in the late 1970s and later Latin-ska crossover acts. I was put in mind just a bit to refer back to the New York Ska-Jazz Ensemble for comparison, although that lot have been going since 1994 and advertise themselves as "ska-jazz fusion", including gems such as [this cover](#) of Charles Mingus' 1959 slice 'Boogie Stop Shuffle'.

MSO might be said to have more traditionalist ska roots, while also putting the sense of fun front and center (not to say that the New York outfit are po-faced by any means), as

in [this 2013 version of the 'Get Smart' theme](#) - amazingly from their [first](#) (self-titled) album punted after ten years of existence already.



In 2019 MSO announced a weekly release ("52 Fridays") of ska covers, and the subsequent set released from that won an ARIA World Music Award for the heroic endeavor. Going back to that initial release, though, lest you might think they're just cover artists having a larf, [here's the original 'Lygon Street Meltdown'](#), a lyric of which is quoted at the end of this here virtual beermat, and a rare instance of the song title actually being included within.

One of the more intriguing aspects of the massive lineup is that it includes a steel drummer, something that's basically nonexistent in any other ska band incarnation.

Perhaps inevitably, we end up back with a cover, of the 1920s (!) standard '[The Best Things in Life Are Free](#)', one of which is, of course, listening to some fine ska, innit? **Leigh Edmonds** [has](#) to like it now, right? It's from Melbourne...

www.melbourneskaorchestra.com

TAFFNESSABOUNDS

Here's the direct link to the online ballot, voting is open through Tuesday April 19 2022:

<https://taff.org.uk/vote.php>

This Here... continues to commend **Anders Holmström** for your consideration...

Jerry Kaufman raises an interesting question (locs), having a dilemma in choosing between four excellent candidates, what would happen if "No Preference" won a majority of the votes? As far as I could tell from a reasonably solid look at the rules (and as always willing to be corrected) this possible if highly unlikely scenario isn't addressed. I'd be tempted to suggest that 'NP' votes would be effectively disregarded in such an instance, but it's all totally hypothetical innit, and likely to remain so.

Perhaps a current or former admin or two would weigh in on this?

OMPHALOSKEPSIS

NYE KULTURNY

Now there's a phrase which I've seen spelled several ways and has been seized upon by **Ulrika** publicly and privately with all of those variant spellings. The above is (after the usual minimal research) the supposedly correct presentation.

But what do it all mean, eh Archie?

The general definition given for this useful Russian term is "uncultured", a grave insult typically directed at thick tourists who, it is heavily implied, should fuck right off if they can't appreciate eg the Bolshoi ballet or the wonderful architecture of St. Petersburg, but I'm concluding that, while **Ulrika's** usage is typically correct, there's more of an undercurrent that means "not acculturated", especially when applied to the received wisdom of fanzine production.

What's prompted this analysis in no small part is the reaction of Farah Mendlesohn to my *BEAM 16* editorial which castigated her fairly thoroughly for her reaction to *Firefly*. Having immediately been blocked on FBF for my heresy, all of what was being said over on her page was thus behind my back, but thanks to the efforts of people both, it has to be observed, interested and disinterested (in the nature of what's been inaccurately termed a "feud" (which I should find Dr. Gafia's definition of, if there was one)) some of this has been reported back to me - in at least one case the person specifically mentioned that they thought I should know, realising that I'd been deliberately excluded.

Here's where a part of what I'd suggest we all consider fanzine *kulturny* applies. By and large, it's always been considered a courtesy to send anyone a copy of a zine in which they are mentioned in any significant way (perhaps especially if the mention is critical) to allow for a response, or indeed for the recipient of the attention to laugh it off and/or respond publicly in kind. In this spirit, Farah was sent a print copy of *BEAM 16*. This, however, was ultimately deemed an "aggression" rather than the courtesy we'd originally thought it was. *Nye kulturny*.

Now let's admit that the editorial in question was, ooh let's say "strident" and included a fair bit of mockery and name-calling, but of course I stand by it, in the fine tradition of writers such as the great Paul Foot, who, when writing for *Private Eye*, had been described as having the consistent viewpoint of "attacking the minions of Capital with single-minded and righteous fury" (from Patrick Marnham's *The Private Eye Story*, quoted from memory), and while I can't possibly aspire to Foot's skill, I may be considered to possess a similar "righteous fury" at proponents of the excessive wokeness which engenders such snap judgements without any accompanying actual critical thinking. To be clear, it's the absence of such critical thinking I find so egregious, not "wokeness" itself as such, despite the observable nature of

the philosophy as being a strict party line, as fundamentally authoritarian as any other kind of dictatorship.

I believe it was Will Rogers who said "Racism is stupid. There are more than enough reasons to dislike people on an individual basis", and I apply that credo to that and any other "-ism" you can think of.

The fact is that I'm quite capable of *liking* people despite any or many differences that we might have, whether they be as trivial as musical taste or as more significant as political and cultural viewpoint. Or indeed the minutiae of fanac, as a certain esteemed co-editor might even grudgingly attest. There's a story related by, again, Patrick Marnham of Paul Foot going to interview Enoch Powell. Foot returned shell-shocked to the office and put his head in his hands moaning "My God! I *liked* him!". This, Marnham notes, did not prevent Foot from savaging Powell in the subsequent article.

One other item had occurred to me, as to the *kulturny* aspects of fanzine fanac, and that's the requisite statement that any and all published material by others reverts to the author's copyright upon publication - fanzine articles being considered as "first publication" permission only.

I noticed, perhaps in the '90s or '00s, that most zines were stating this outright, or mentioning something about a "creative commons" license to publish (whatever that is or was). I rarely if ever did this, gaily assuming that everyone *knew* that, right? I vaguely recall mentioning whether I should in fact specify this, perhaps in *BEAM* or even as long ago as *Arrows of Desire*, but I don't think I ever followed through on it, having received no comment on that specific ask. Given that *AoD* typically contained contributions from fealthy pros in most ishes, this should have been important, but never seemed to be, since the expectation was that we all "knew the form".

Circling back, therefore, we have two possible conclusions from the reaction (in particular) to the *BEAM 16* editorial. One is that we can't necessarily assume that certain "traditions" of fanzine publishing continue to be valid and may indeed be viewed quite differently by those not steeped in the history of the hobby. The other is, of course, that the lack of immersion or indeed much apparent knowledge at all of that history would make a person, guess what, *nye kulturny*...

FAANWANK

Voting for the 2022 FAAn awards closes (meaning ballots must be received by) midnight Pacific time, February 25 - four weeks after you should get this. *This Here...* #50 is scheduled to take wing on that day, so I suppose that's barely in time for a final reminder in these pages, but there'll be other reminders sent out to the mailing list a week or so before that, I expect.

Now, I am a fuckin' idiot, as many of you will I'm sure agree. While not at all in the "rainbows and unicorns" club of the Faniverse, and I suppose having a rep for being rather cynical about a lot of it, I do continue to harbor a fond yet apparently unrealistic hope that certain standards of behavior and decorum will persist (mass chair-plummeting ensues).

There are two things I didn't do for the 2021 *Incomplete Register* - one was deliberate, the second was a cockup of omission which has just become apparent.

The deliberate one was not including any admonition against self-voting, and in no small part this was out of a strong desire not to receive the exact same "Bah humbug" letter from **John Hertz** that I got in 2018 on that subject and the categorization of the awards generally, just about all of which he presumably still doesn't agree with (and please, **John**, don't send it again - we remain in disagreement). My point at the time (which I continue to adhere to) was that the FAAns are in part about "spreading the 'boo" (which **Hertz** got very crotchety about), but I know for an absolute fact that there are those who are quite pleased to get any mention at all in the final voting numbers which have typically been published (unlike, to pick an example not remotely at random, the Neffys). The 2018 admonition didn't prevent some people from self-voting, however, so it seems that there's no difference in whether I make the point or not (some ballots received so far are rife with it), but sticking with the **Hooper** Principle that "All votes will be counted, however silly" (or indeed egregious), in they go.

Fanwriters and faneditors may be more prone to this kind of solipsism since, let's face it, we must think that our own stuff is well good, otherwise why publish at all? I can't help but infer an implication that people vote for themselves because they know in their heart of fannish hearts that no-one else will outside of their immediate coterie. Fanartists, conversely, seem typically more generous. The always perceptive **Justin E.A. Busch** notes in his January 'Fanfaronade' zine review column in *Fanactivity Gazette* that, as I've said myself, not everyone reads everything, with few if any exceptions, and the point is to vote for what *you* liked (see also my loccol comment to **Eli Cohen**), broad participation being the goal so that a larger swath of fanzines, writers and artists are represented, and those having a gander at the results might see an unfamiliar title or name in the lists and think "perhaps I'll check that out". You might consider this as a drawstring threading through the fanzine Faniverse intended to pull together the disparate subgroups rather than drive them further apart.

So, on to the cockup. I noticed after the fact that I hadn't anywhere specified on the pro forma ballot or in *TIR* itself that the voter should provide their own name, blithely having assumed the decorum of doing so. Emailed ballots of course carry the identity of the voter, and paper ballots

received so far have also done so - until yesterday (as I write, January 15), when I received a ballot postmarked Grand Rapids, MI but with no voter name or return address. It's partially miscategorized and partially illegible, although the votes in the 'Fanwriter' category are discernible. If the voter recognizes themselves from this (or indeed if someone else thinks they might recognize them) I would appreciate some clarification. My initial reflex was to reject the ballot entirely (which would be a first for me), but given the validity of the Fanwriter votes and my own lack of request for voter identification, this seems a little churlish. I've entered into discussion with, I will say at least one previous Admin about this, but I invite interested readers of this here virtual rag to weigh in as well if any of you care to do so.

I clearly need to remind any paper ballot voter to identify themselves. It just goes to show that what's DoBFO to most of us isn't necessarily DoBFO for all, ey?...

Again, here's your **reminder** that the FAAn awards voting schedule will continue as originally announced, despite the postponement of Corflu Pangloss until October, so the deadline remains receipt of ballots by midnight Pacific time, February 25. As (also mentioned above) that's likely to be the day *This Here... #50* goes out, you'll likely receive another noodge before then. The award ceremonies will be Zoomed on the original date of March 20, and will run much the same as last year, I would imagine (and thanks once more to **Jerry Kaufman** for again agreeing to be the presenter). Hopefully the next *TH...* (as well as, no doubt, a mailing from the organizers) will be able to include the link...

MOVIE NIGHT

Friday night is usually movie night around here, the one evening I have available to stay up a bit late (sometimes too late) and thus have time to clock an actual movie rather than the usual single episode of TV which is about all I have time for over nosebag, all the while keeping an eye on the clock as it approaches the 5pm bedtime.

The Week of Meh, however, allowed for a bit more movie watching, and here's three of the views, seen in part thanks to **Jennifer** who has the admirable and adorable habit of adding things to the watchlist that she usually correctly surmises I might like, to the extent that the first several years of my putative but still awaited retirement are pencilled in as a couch potato existence...

Oldest to newest:

About Time (2013) : Another of Richard Curtis' usually exemplary efforts at expressing a "Britishness" that's rooted in his nostalgia for a mythical yet stereotypical time when we were all "nice" (with unthreatening quirkiness) here *not* demonstrated by Hugh Grant stumbling and mumbling about in that cutesy way he used to before much later

redeeming himself from dodgy hookups by taking on a serious turn as Jeremy Thorpe. Not that the requisite stumbling and mumbling is absent in this effort, and it's effectively done by leads Domhnall Gleeson (Tim) and Rachel McAdams (Mary). The skiffy twist, for those who aren't aware, is that the men of the Lake family have the ability to travel in time along their own lifeline (with certain limitations). This is done without any woosh or whizz-bang effects, although apparently this method was tried and rejected by Curtis, who considered that they added o to the movie. Some of the critics were a bit brutal about perceived plot holes (which I either didn't really notice or blissfully ignored) and the undercurrent seemed to me to be that it was all too *nice* and absent any real conflict, which I considered to be the actual fuckin' point. Nobody is fundamentally unlikeable, even Tom Hollander's miserable playwright, and as you might expect you're getting absolute star turns from Bill Nighy and Lindsay Duncan as Tim's parents...



Ocean's 8 (2018) : No doubt reflexively revered by the woke brigade as much as it was equally reflexively derided by the banning brigade, neither of whom by party line might even consider whether it's actually any good. It's a decent enough concept, mind, with only the "Ocean" connection bunged in as a framing device/hook for what is, in fact, a fairly



superior heist movie. I've always had an affection for this type of story involving a con-job, and this goes back to utter reverence of the TV series *Mission: Impossible* in my youth, and you can trace some of that back to *Topkapi* (1964) which Bruce Geller admitted as an influence. The ensemble cast here is on top form, but if there's any kind of cavil it might be that, as can happen with a mob of well good actors, it might be that some of them get a bit of short shrift, although that's less of a problem with 8 (as opposed to 11,12 or 13) participants. Sandra Bullock, as I suppose befits as the titular lead, gets the most screen time and knows what to do with it, but every other player knows what to do with theirs as well. I thought Cate Blanchett a little muted, though, but that's perhaps in comparison with Awkwafina and Rihanna, both of whom leap out of the screen at you in good ways. Speaking of "muted", the exceptionally matter-of-fact fence, Tammy (Sarah Paulson) is a treasure. And let's face it, you've got to admire something in which even James Corden is good...

Don't Look Up (2021) : Another one subject to shrill outbursts from both woke and anti-woke, with the former declaiming it a timely and necessary allegory for climate change and the latter accusing the movie of hectoring and/or indoctrinating the unwashed to believe its nonsense. That group does, of course, much prefer indoctrination of its own



and would suppress any dissent - as I've observed before the translation of wild screams of "left-wing bias" from would-be masters is "lack of right-wing bias". As advertised, though, the flick is supposed to be satire, a form I will always approve of and consider on the basis of if it's successful in its aim rather than whether it hews to some political stance or another. So is this successful satire? For the first half-hour or so, the answer is no, but then I suppose you have to allow a bit of time for the set-up which, once it is in place, allows the absurdity of the various responses to the Earth's impending destruction to be front and center. Despite criticism that there isn't a likeable character in the whole thing (the opposite of *About Time* complaints, make yer fuckin' minds up ey?), I'd contend that Dr. Teddy Oglethorpe (Rob Morgan) is consistently so, and despite a couple of clear blips Dr. Randall Mindy (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Kate Dibasky (Jennifer Lawrence) mostly so. The rest are broad-brush caricatures representing their roles, which not only is a standard satirical device but also gives any actor the opportunity for extensive scenery-chewing which is here taken advantage of with relish, but also with attention to the craft. It might be a bit dull to list all of these fine turns, some of which (eg a madly gung-ho Ron Perlman) are little more than cameos. You can't, however, *not* mention Meryl Streep as President Orlean and a frankly creepy-scary portrayal by Mark Rylance as tech squillionaire Peter Isherwell who has a Messiah Complex dialed up to infinity. Hopefully not too much of a spoiler, but there's a quite brilliant reveal involving Streep at the end, and make sure you stay for the end-of-credits scene. Jonah Hill cements his career path of playing absolute arseholes throughout, and that's perhaps paradoxically a joy to watch...

FOOTY

BY DAVID HODSON

As the Omicron variant of Covid ravaged the land whilst 2021 sidled into 2022, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, came under continuous waves of attacks from the media and not just opposition M.P.s but his own backbench "supporters" about his honesty about parties being held in 10 Downing Street whilst the rest of the nation was in lockdown during 2020. Almost daily during January new news stories about various cheese and wine, birthday cake, and other boozy gatherings in the gardens around the house and, ultimately, in the house itself were reported. Probably the most disgusting to the six-fingered, blue-rinsed Tory brigades of the shires were the not one, but two parties held the evening before the funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh. You may threaten in the pages of the Daily Mail to take away my over-60s bus pass and free prescriptions, but you'll never take the piss out of my Royal Family. Ancient Yorkshire Tea stained timber and mammoth ivory dentures, handed down through the millennia father

to daughter, mother to son, were bared in rictus snarls at the P.M. and his supporters, or maybe I just mixed the television news up with a re-run of Will Smith's version of 'I Am Legend'.

Simultaneously, half a world away, in Australia, Novak Djokovic, one of the leading proponents of belting a bouncy rubber ball over a netting barrier with a racquet made of wood and cat gut to another not-quite-as-good tennis player, was finding himself being persecuted to almost biblical proportions (if his mum is to be believed that is) for not being vaccinated against Covid-19 before jetting to the land down under to play in the Australian Open Tournament, and then claiming he had a medical exemption from being vaccinated because, well, because he's Novak Djokovic of course. It didn't take the wags in the press long to rechristen our hero Novax... *chortle*

Djokovic's claim of "medical exemption" seemed to rest on his having tested positive for Covid in early to mid-December which meant he would have been anti-bodied up the wazoo and then some by the time of the January tournament. Unfortunately, this part of the story fell apart when photographs of Djokovic giving out prizes to youth athletes at a public event in his native Serbia whilst supposedly Covid positive came to light. It only took a few more days for details of a trip to Spain, again whilst supposedly Covid positive, two to three days after the photographed event to hit the press. Despite having won an appeal in the Australian High Court against the initial revocation of his visa and the medical exemption issued by Tennis Australia and the state of Victoria, Djokovic found his visa and exemption was again cancelled by the Australian Federal government on grounds of "fanning anti-vaccine sentiment".

Johnson and Djokovic are both, at best, over-privileged chancers who "game the system" and expect their privilege to see them over various winning lines. At worst, they are a pair of sociopaths who aren't really invested in what they do and get away with their excesses because most of us in the great unwashed look on at their antics in disbelief: "Nah, that can't be true, there has to be some other explanation!"

In a world where PCR tests and rapid antigen tests have become commonplace phrases and practices, I have decided to instigate my own tests: the PTC test. The PTC, short for Piss-Taking Cunt, test is the filter through which I will now examine all future news stories that catch my eye and scream for inclusion in the sometimes it's about footy, but probably not as often as it should be column. Johnson has tested positive as a piss taking cunt several dozen times over since becoming Prime Minister; I'll leave you all to make your own decisions on Djokovic.

The back of the January 25th Daily Telegraph, not a newspaper I'd normally frequent, carried a story that has quietly simmered away on the back burner of football

consciousness since last summer's final of Euro 2020, when hundreds of football fans tried to storm Wembley Stadium to gain admittance to the socially distanced game, with a goodly few succeeding.

There has been a recent spate of violent incidents at football grounds, the latest at Everton's home game with Aston Villa on January 22nd, where two Villa players were struck by either plastic bottles or coins thrown from the crowd during their 1-0 victory. The increase in crowd aggression is being blamed on an upturn of cocaine usage by football supporters after a small but significant increase in arrests at football grounds for Class-A drug offenses.

It was always alcohol that used to be the driver of violence at football grounds back in the bad ol' days of the 70s and 80s, but beer drinkers at Premier League clubs these days are more likely to be members of [CAMRA](#). Spurs even have their own micro-brewery at their new stadium. The other issue is, at nearly a fiver (£5.00) a pint, it's probably cheaper to score a couple of lines of nose candy to get off your tits than to neck six or seven pints, especially if you're buying in rounds with a few mates (Don't worry Nic and Tommy, I've already opened the savings account to prepare for a couple of Corflu bar excursions; they're even putting up the interest rate on savings to 0.25% as of February 1st).

Maybe the issue has been exacerbated by the government itself after the BBC [news story](#) that a man by the name of Louis Glyn Maxwell had applied for and obtained a £50,000 government Covid bounce back loan for his tow truck company in Newport, Wales. Mr Maxwell spent £22,000 of the loan on a new tow truck, but splurged the balance on cocaine, then, needing another blast of toot, sold the tow truck and bought more cocaine. I haven't been able to check if Mr Maxwell supports or attends Newport County. Maxwell (a name that seems to be inextricably linked with wrong-doing of all kinds; it must be something in the water) definitely provided a two-line positive PTC test.



The Premier League is a bit of a shitshow at the moment. Multiple postponements of games due to Covid and other player absences, most notably the North London derby between Spurs and Arsenal on January 16th, have left Spurs,

Leicester, and Burnley in particular some five or six games behind all the teams around them in the table. The game between Spurs and Arsenal, for which Arsenal had several injuries, four players away on international duty at the African Cup of Nations, one player suspended after being sent off against Liverpool in a League Cup semi-final at Anfield, but only one player out with Covid, caused accusations of gaming the system and the rules have now been changed to make sure at least four players at any club must have Covid to enable a call for postponement of a fixture. Arsenal's cause against the accusations wasn't helped by the revelation that the club had loaned out two senior professionals to other clubs only 24 hours before the fixture was due to be played and it did seem fairly obvious that Arsenal were merely buying time to get senior players back for a re-arranged fixture against a team they, Manchester United, and West Ham (*snort*) are competing with for a place in next season's Champions League. Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta also records a positive PTC result.

entire history of English football. Ranieri is a nice guy, a reasonable coach, a manager that players like because he really isn't too demanding of them, but he was never going to succeed at Watford, a club run by owners who sack at least a manager a year, sometimes even two, and are really only ever looking at the bottom line. Ranieri would never test positive for PTC, but he's so bland it's doubtful he'd even register on the test.

At the time of writing, the Premier League is on a break for World Cup qualifiers and other internationals. The transfer window closes on January 31st, but very little business has been done thus far and it's doubtful that much business will be done before the deadline. Too many clubs are trying to offload unwanted players before buying (and the unwanted players are unwanted for a reason; witness Tanguy Ndombele at Spurs, the club's record signing who has barely featured in the two-and-a-half years since joining from Lyon in France, and who was booed off the pitch for a performance that stank the stadium out in the F.A. Cup third round game against Morecambe, a League One side, in early January. Ndombele's PTC test couldn't be completed because his mucus couldn't summon the energy to crawl off the cotton bud onto the test strip) and too many other clubs are unwilling to risk letting players go in case a Covid outbreak decimates their squads just before potentially important Champions League or relegation matches. Of course, the other factor suppressing transfer activity is clubs trying to rebuild their finances after months of empty stadiums last season and restricted attendances this season.

It wouldn't really matter which team bought which players at the moment. Manchester City is nine points ahead of Liverpool, who have one game in hand, at the top of the table and have just dropped their first points in 13 games after drawing at Southampton. It's entirely possible that City will win another 13 games in a row at a ridiculous canter and enjoy only the second 100 point Premier League total ever – the first one was won by Manchester City, of course. The Premier League is becoming as predictable as the German Bundesliga, where Bayern Munich will quite probably win their tenth title in a row; they are currently six points ahead of Borussia Dortmund with both having played twenty games.

Right, I'm off to play with my new Tefal soup maker. I've scored supplies of potatoes, leeks, cauliflower, cheese, and cream in order to cook up a batch of creamy leek and potato soup (obviously). I might also finally watch 'Breaking Bad' on Netflix, a series that has for whatever reason completely passed me by previously. If I have to keep coping with the various disappointments inflicted on me by both Spurs and the English cricket team, I could well end up cooking up something else entirely...

telegraph.co.uk/sport Tuesday 25 January 2022
SPORTS NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR The Daily Telegraph



Daily dig, city gone: Claudio Ranieri leaves Watford in the relegation zone, having lost 10 of his 13 Premier League matches in charge

Watford sack Ranieri – after 112 days in charge

By Jason Burt CHIEF FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

Watford have sacked Claudio Ranieri after just 112 days in charge and are considering British candidates as well as those from overseas as his successor.

The rules following Brexit, which tightened up the criteria for hiring managers as well as signing players, have complicated Watford's search. They could not, for example, employ a head coach such as Ranieri's Spanish predecessor Xisco Munoz, whose previous job was at Georgian club Dinamo Tbilisi.

One name on the shortlist, though, is Diego Martinez, who enjoyed success in Spain with Granada before allowing his contract to run down.

The 47-year-old has been discussed by the Watford board twice in the past and was under consideration before Munoz was hired. It is almost certain that Watford will hire a head coach who is currently out of work as they want to make a swift and uncomplicated appointment.

The final details around Ranieri's departure were finalised yesterday afternoon after the decision was taken to replace him following the damaging 3-0 defeat at home by relegation rivals Norwich City on Friday.

In their announcement Watford praised the Italian as "a man of great integrity and honour". His backroom staff are expected to leave with him.

Watford ready to gamble: Page 5

Sport
Cocaine use fuelling surge in fan violence

Football by Jeremy Wilson and Tom Morgan

► Football police chief calls for Class A banning orders

► Weekend trouble takes tally of incidents this season to 1,100

Cocaine use at matches is one of the factors behind a surge in crowd trouble and should be punished by a ban from all games, Britain's head of football policing said yesterday.

The Football Association has launched a series of investigations into incidents at the weekend which followed a trend in increased fan violence since Euro 2020 and Chief Constable Mark Roberts now wants police banning orders extended to include drug use as well as alcohol-fueled disorder.

Figures show that football-related arrests have risen over the first half of this season by almost 50 per cent to 802, but there have also been a further 99 arrests for what are not deemed "schedule-one" offences, of which the vast majority were either cocaine or drug-related.

Drug use was specifically highlighted following the shameful disorder at the Euro 2020 final between England and Italy with the FA-commissioned Casey review finding that "reckless, drunken and drugged-up thugs" could have caused death after they stormed Wembley Stadium.

"The view we have seen from lots of people is there are more incidents this year," said Roberts, who leads the UK's Football Policing Unit. "It is really worrying. We are lobbying government – they are obviously amending relevant legislation to ensure that people can get a banning order for a hate crime online –

and we would like to see it that you can also get a banning order for cocaine use or Class A drugs.

"People who are experienced, who work in football, and probably a lot of fans, know that cocaine use is very common at football. Cocaine use does fuel violence. We see it in the night-time economy, we see it in football.

"Every experienced football commander would tell you that there have been issues with cocaine use for a long time."

A football banning order lasts for three to 10 years and Roberts says that, although there has been an increase in arrests this season, this is not being translated into banning orders.

Individual reports of disorder are understood to have passed 1,400 following the weekend matches, with increases across offences relating to pyrotechnics, alcohol, thrown missiles, pitch encroachment and hate crime.

This is all despite slightly fewer games across the Premier League, the English Football League and the National Leagues during the most recent comparative reporting period in the 2019-20 season.

"This will require a collective effort – not to wag fingers – [but] to recognise there is a problem that needs a team effort from everyone to get people who don't behave kicked out of football," Roberts said.

He also said that police were not consulted over the Government's fan-led football review and stressed that it was the wrong time to bring back alcohol. One of the review's proposals, which was endorsed by former sports minister Tracey Crouch, was a pilot scheme to allow

Continued on Page 2

David Gower exclusive The Englishman back from Australia with his reputation enhanced



Call for a captain Jones to make 11th-hour decision after Lawes ruled out of training



LOCO CITATO

[[*"For better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure...than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."* (Theodore Roosevelt)...]]

From: srjeffery@aol.com

December 30/31

Steve Jeffery writes:

Absolutely fascinating discussion between you and **William Breiding** on fanzine design, layout and art in the lettercol of this issue. This is a subject that would make a good panel discussion but equally, I think, cries out for more space in something like a round table discussion (I'm hesitating to use the word symposium for this, but the thing I'm thinking of here is the Jeff Smith's format for the "Women in Science Fiction" discussion in *Khatru* 3/4) perhaps conducted via email or one of them new fangulated social media forums and then written up as an article (perhaps somewhere like *BEAM*, or maybe just left as an online discussion hosted in a blog or group post? I admit I don't know much about the possibilities of latter outside of Google Blogger and two or three fannish group pages on Facebook.)

Or is this likely to have only three interested readers: you me and **William**? Maybe **Ulrika** has Things to Say about the use of her art as random fillers between blocks of text.

[[*There is never a day that passes without Ulrika having "Things To Say"...*]]

On that latter topic, I think *TH...* hits the right balance. It can be wearying - especially on screen - to scroll down through page after page of solid text, far more so than it is in a physical book (some of us still read actual books on on paper, yes?) and it's much easier to lose your place, if not focus, so breaking it up into more eye-friendly screen or half screen chunks using judiciously placed art of graphics perversely helps you concentrate more on the text.

But it has to be done by a sympathetic designer. Too much of the internet these days, from blogs to online newspaper columns appear like they have been designed to actively disrupt and prevent reading. I'm talking here about the

horrible visual clutter of randomly placed ads, pop up boxes and overlays that seem intended to maximise the advertising income over comprehension, as if the words were merely an excuse to hang and advertising opportunity on to. (They might as well fill the page with *lorem ipsum* in that case.) I can't count the number of times I've started to read an interesting sounding review or article only to give up in frustration half a page later.

What a lovely picture of Judith alongside **Joseph's** letter in this ish.

Before you get too congratulatory about the hormonal balance in this issue, I should point out that men produce estrogen as well, just not so much of it as women. Somewhere about a fifth as much, and in fact pretty much on a par compared to post menopausal women, so you also need to take age into account. (If you're at all worried about this, the advice seems to be that you should eat less meat and more broccoli and kale.)

I should also point out that women also produce androgens, but markedly less, around of tenth of that in men.

While I'm intrigued by your notion that we have an *idea* fan version of other people, and this *idea* fan is different for different people, it seems a bit self evident to me, as well as

the *idea* that this may more nearly approximate the real person based on how well and for how long and in how many different contexts you know them. There are still quite a large number of fans I only know vaguely, and some only through other people's writing about them (Tobes is one that immediately springs to mind) and so my *idea* fan version of them is not so much a quick sketch rather than a recognisable portrait but perhaps even more a caricature.



I can pretty much guarantee your *idea* Steve Jeffery is wide of the mark, while - picking up on **Claire's** original thought that we each have a fan persona that we choose to present as a version of ourselves to others - it may be closer the *idea* fan Steve Jeffery. In fact **Claire's** *idea* (which I should really dig out and re-read) is to me the more interesting. We all have multiples selves, or at least personas (personae?) of ourselves that we curate and present to different people in different situations. The "me" I present to fandom has little overlap with the "me" I present at work, and neither have much in common with the one I present to my family. And none of those contain a "me" that I consider a core part of

who I am and how I see myself. But how accurate is even "my" version of myself? We constantly rewrite memories and past events in our heads, and those are what contribute to our idea of who we are. And this is before someone offers us the choice of the blue or red pill and we discover everything we knew is a lie. (Tobes has never touched a drop in his life, and you have been *Gentleman Quarterly's* Man of the Year three years running.)

From: cathypl@sympatico.ca

December 30

Cathy Palmer-Lister writes:

Flux was so weird, my husband gave up on it entirely. It seemed to be an excuse for special effects. Things and people popping in and out everywhere, really hard to follow what the heck was going on. And the backstory about the Doctor being immortal, the Division, and what not? Where did that come from? How can they fix this without the Doctor having dreamed it all?

[[The 'Division' and immortality bits were set up in the 2020 episodes 'Ascension of the Cybermen' and 'The Timeless Children', although there was some conjecture at the time that the latest nasty incarnation of the Master may have been lying his arse off - although it seems from 'Flux' that he wasn't...]]

I'm about to give up on *Discovery* as well, all the characters seem on the verge of tears all the time. Nothing wrong with tears, but save them until the crisis is over? The Academy must have lowered its standards! I keep wanting to yell, "Grow up!" Geez, even the computer needed counselling. The weird thing is, the crew never seems distraught about the fact that they will never again see home and family, which is something that would put me over the edge for sure.

[[I kind of see what you mean, but I think the implication might be that the future Federation is all a bit weedy (except for David Cronenberg's character, of course). We're actually engrossed with it - the mid-season finale was well good...]]

I didn't bother with *La Brea*, the whole premise was absurd.

[[No more absurd than a lot of other genre stuff, shurely?...]]

From: johnsila32@gmail.com

January 3

John Nielsen Hall writes:

Yes I did appreciate the puff in the fanzine reviews, though I'm not sure I shouldn't object to the "comfy" characterisation. But if it really is the case, it's down to me, because I won't have people viciously slagging each other off in my pages - not that they do very often, with the exception

of **Charnock**, who I don't think has written to VT since I last censored him.

[[At risk of banging on about it and/or reading too much into it, I'm really using "comfy" as a kind of shorthand for a bunch of mates who could well be having similar convo around a table up the pub - in other words, a group whose company you pretty much know you're going to enjoy. I'd like to think that the geographical (at the very least) disparity of the chitchat in this here virtual beermat is much the same...]]

I know this gives away the fact that I have actually been reading **Dave Hodson's** column (which I have previously denied doing), but I think his giving the race director credit for fixing the race in Abu Dhabi, might be going a bit far, unless **Dave** is also alleging that he arranged the crash that put Latifi out. While I was very disappointed that Hamilton did not win the race and hence the championship, to allege that it was all done to appease wicked Netflix, is just about what I'd expect from a Marxist report on F1, no cock up being able to pass without dark motives of capitalist exploitation and greed being suspected of somebody. Wot Shit!

[[I don't watch F1, but from all the reports it did seem that the crash was seized upon, and who's to say (as I'm sure someone has) that there wasn't a conspiracy involving secret radio messages and Jewish space lasers for all I know to engineer the crash. Anyway, old lad, as you well know I'm going to respond to "dark motives of capitalist exploitation" with the observation that capitalism is an entirely exploitative system, innit?...]]

Lovely to see some sensitive fannish faces around your Boxing Day table, particularly the Fareys™ and seldom seen or heard from **Jacq Monahan**.

You responded to **Dave Cockfield** that you suspected that old fashioned Transport Caffe were long gone. Well, here in far ooff exotic Wiltshire, we can lay claim to at least two (that I know of) greasy spoons - that being a more accurate description, since haulage industry operatives are of necessity mostly confined to dual carriageway roads where no space is provided for eateries except at designated "service areas". So these are places where the menu is confined to variations on eggs, chips, beans, sausage and bacon, with toast (or even fried bread, but don't tell the NHS!) and black pudding being provided for the connoisseur. All of these to be washed down by large mugs of tea or maybe instant coffee. Expect to leave the joint very replete and lighter in the bank account by no more than five or six quid. I don't know if you would get a tomato - you can always ask. The clientele tends to be bikers, old gits in 4X4's (guess who?), local ne'er-do-wells and the soldiery, of which there are quite a lot in these parts. Yes, I am a vegetarian. I simply eschew the sausage and bacon.

I had a vicious mother too - well, she went through a phase of whacking me about a bit, which with the benefit of hindsight I can see may have been occasioned by the primitive state of both gynaecological and psychiatric care in nineteen fifty hows-yer-father. But it made a right mess of my head and hence made me into the amazing character you find behind this keyboard today.

And lo! That is all I can find to remark upon, which is no reflection on your fine fanzine, of course. Please send me another next month.



From: dave_redd@hotmail.com

January 5

David Redd writes:

Thanks as always for *This Here...* and the wire-recording supplement, which is nostalgically full of enthusiasm for new directions, progress, and all that optimism we had about the future. Ah well, onward into 2022!

[[Once again, full credit to Kim Huett for sending that - the lad does tend to find interesting and relevant bits of fanhistory which I'm happy to append to TH... mailings...]]

My usual struggle to decipher notes on a used envelope - should really use larger envelopes. Most goshwow moment: **Dave Cockfield's** "I drank Red Barrel" being left without comment.

[[Yeah, I think I was in shock over that one...]]

Agreed, **Justin E.A. Busch's** *Dreams Remembered* mini-zines are a treat.

Best Visual was **Ulrika's** p.17, very nice indeed. Also liked seeing the Plug image - but, can we still call him that (abbreviation of Plug-ugly) in these tender times? Other Bash Street Kids are being renamed for the sensitive, with Fatty and Spotty reportedly becoming Freddy and Scotty, which might be progress I suppose.

Impressed with **Dave Hodson's** column again, not least by his topicality, dateline of 28th December being a tribute to the speed of your e-publishing. Nice work both.

[[I'll usually have most of the content done, with the 'Footy' column coming in last, leaving me to bung that in, pick some photos for it if needed then lay out the rest of the ish (locs and 'Indulge Me') which follows. That takes a couple of hours or so, is all...]]

Also thanks for *the Incompleat Register*, again showing me what I've missed. Will have to send in a ballot after all your trouble!

[[As should everybody...]]

From: jakaufman@aol.com

January 11

Jerry Kaufman writes:

There's a trend to larger issues over time, isn't there? Number 48 isn't quite as big as *Beam*, but it's getting there. That's not bad, as you're including interesting writing and good art, and hyping my supposedly "typically thoughtful" letters into the bargain. Your praise of **Bill Burns'** computer skills is also welcome. He deserves it.

[[#48 was unusually lengthy (in part due to the availability of additional material from Ulrika and Jennifer), and got somewhat that way because of a bit of ketchup having missed November to get BEAM done. I expect thish to be back to whatever "normal" is round here...]]

I haven't yet voted for a TAFF delegate, and as all the candidates are people I'd like to meet or re-meet, I might just have to vote No Preference. I hope there are only a few voters who feel the same way. I wonder what would happen if No Preference were to win a solid majority? I'll have to the rules on the ballot again to see if this possibility is addressed.

[[I've just had a fairly thorough look meself, and it seems like it isn't. Although it's a massively unlikely outcome, perhaps it ought to be addressed? See 'TAFinessabounds'...]]

"Omphaloskepsis" is skepticism regarding the navel's place in the process of gestation and birth. The first humans, Adam and Eve, didn't have or need navels, so the existence of such in their descendants is theorized to be a trick of Lucifer, editing the human body after Adam and Eve left the Garden. (Have I got that right?)

[[Er... no? 'Omphaloskepsis' is, translated from the posh, simply "navel gazing"...]]

As for your development of your idea of “idea” versions of people, I don’t have any ideas of my own to add. I think what you’ve hit on is a truism. We can’t know what’s certainly in someone else’s head; we can only go by our perceptions of them (compared to our own assumptions about how people in general and fans in particular act and how they’re motivated) to make better or worse guesses.

[[That’s certainly a part of my point, Killer...]]

Yes, let’s institute the O! Ghu Awards with a ceremony at a Top Pot donut shop (if the ceremony’s held here in Seattle) or whatever shop has the best donuts in the hosting city. As for the Hugo Awards, as I have recently voted for them, but only in a few categories, I understand the call for limiting new categories. I suggest that adding new award categories should only be done if other categories are dropped, so that the ceremony does not exceed my own attention span. (Let’s keep the ceremony under two hours.) Also, categories should only be added if they will be in media that I pay attention to, or that my personal friends can benefit from. I know some people who do podcasts or write computer games, so those are okay. (Even if I don’t listen to podcasts or play computer games.)

We still haven’t seen *Dune*, and it’s been decades since I read the book. (I find it odd that I don’t own a copy.) I don’t remember more than half of the characters you comment on. Sad for me.

I still like Jodie Whittaker as the Doctor, but also still think most of the plots of the show nonsense. Maybe I just like Whittaker’s accent.

[[The phrase “hobbled by abysmal writing” seems to crop up a lot, don’t it?...]]

I’d enjoy coming back to Las Vegas for a Corflu, as it’ll give me a chance to tour all the casinos that have sprung up since my last visit. That includes the New York and Paris casinos (whatever their actual names are), as those are two cities I’ve been to (you know I’ve lived in one of them).

[[I’m pretty fuckin’ sure you must be wrong that your implied only visit to Vegas for a Corflu was in 1995, before either New York New York (1997) or Paris Las Vegas (1999) opened. Subsequent Vegas Corflus occurred in 2004, 2008 and 2012, so I reckon we’re due one...]]

I’m going to break off here. I may return to this issue to trawl through the magnificent letter column (in which I do not appear, not even if the WAHFs (and I’m sure I wrote you a simple note apologizing for not writing).

[[You almost certainly did, and it must have been concealed by the Kaufman Kloaking device with which we are now familiar. What I reckon happened is that you possibly suggested a loc would be forthcoming, so I didn’t immediately list you in the WAHFs, expecting one...]]

From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

January 14

Eli Cohen writes:

I must say I’m flattered by you choosing **Leigh Edmonds** and me as your ideal fans. What’s that? Oh, I misread it -- your *idea* fans. Maybe it’s your ideal idea of us. Well, I hope your *idea* of me isn’t influenced by any Sandra Miesel sensies from 50 years ago. For some reason this reminds me of Rita Rudner’s advice on how to preserve a relationship: In a simpering voice she says “you have to let the other person be themselves”, and in a normal voice, “while you pretend they’re somebody else!”

[[Ageless beauty extra for you right here, Eli...]]



About Faan voting: I don’t really feel qualified to nominate/ vote on these, as I’ve only read about 5 of the genzines and 5 or so of the perszines listed, plus a couple of one-shots. It doesn’t seem fair, kind of like voting for *Locus* in the old days because it was the only fanzine you’d seen. I suppose I might read a few more by the deadline -- if a new issue of *This Here...* didn’t drop into my mailbox every time I turned around...

[[I will continue, interminably, to bang on about how it’s spectacularly irrelevant how many fanzines you’ve clocked - and at over ten by your own count, you’re almost certainly in a high percentile. The point is to vote for whatever you most liked (see also ‘FAAnWank’ column), and broad participation increases the validity of the awards themselves and adds awareness of some perhaps cobwebbed corners of the fanzine Faniverse. The notion that everyone

who votes has to be some kind of total expert has always been, in my mind, tincture of pure bollocks - you might as well have some self-appointed tin Ghod make the awards as they might see fit. As I'm sure you realize, such a concept is anathema round here...]]

I detect a hint of sarcasm in **Ulrika's** O Ghu award categories; I can almost think of some real-life events that could, with a stretch, be dimly related to some of them, except that sweet **Ulrika** couldn't possibly be so mean-spirited as to target real people with her fantastical descriptions...

[[falls off chair...]]

Kim Huett and wire recordings -- back in the day, a group of us would sometimes make cassette tapes for far-flung friends, isolated in, for example, the wilds of Saskatchewan. We used to send the tapes back and forth, recording over the responses, which for me was the downside -- instead of letters, which could be kept forever (some of us even kept carbons of those we sent!), the tapes were as ephemeral as a convention room party.

Like **Claire Brialey**, I've never really been a fan of short fiction -- all my early "this is the best thing I've ever read"s were novels (all library books, course), from Edward Eager's *Half Magic* in 2nd grade, to Alan E. Nourse's *Rocket to Limbo* in 4th (a digression: in 1976 I visited Seattle, staying with Frank and Anna Jo Denton, with whom I saw Wagner's Ring Cycle; one evening before a performance we were wandering through the grounds, and ran into two people. I was totally tongue-tied as Frank introduced me to Alan E. Nourse; more so than when I was introduced to his companion, Virginia Heinlein. I mention this because Frank passed away last week. Rest in peace, Frank.) -- anyway, while I have no recollection of the first SF collection I bought, I vividly remember the first SF book I bought with my actual own allowance money: It was an ACE Double, *Edge of Time* paired with *The 100th Millennium* (I guess they were technically novellas or some such rather than real novels). I still have it, though I'm sure if I tried to open it, it would crumble to dust.

[[We learn stuff as we go - for example I never knew, or had forgotten (despite many years of solid friendship) that Claire wasn't much on the short form, whereas I'm the opposite. I could also conjecture that that early novels I read would have been much shorter than what seems to be the requisite housebrick of today (Heinlein would have been the exception, and 'Number of the Beast' remains just about the only novel I have actually thrown away in disgust) eg Asimov's juveniles and earlier works, of which two were the 'Robots' fix-ups, as well as a ton of Van Vogt. I had to wait until my poor brane expanded, though clearly not to giant proportions, to discover the immensity and brilliance of Ballard...]]

And just as our hero spots the exit, and begins his mad dash for freedom, what's this?? Oh no!!!

"Calendar mix-up improved species (8)"

Gaahh! OK, calm down, I can do this, I've trained with the best, from icebergs to Cockneys to rude noises, I can handle this: "mix-up". Hah, my highly trained senses deduce that this means an anagram, undoubtedly of "calendar". With the obvious hint of "improved species", the 8 letters just proving "calendar" will be the source. Now what in heaven does calendar have to do with species??? Well, I won't bore you with the agonizing details, but I eventually felt that "race" had to be connected to "species", and the remaining letters were pretty slim pickings except for "land". While I was sure that "landrace" really should have something to do with very fast cars, I was surprised and pleased to discover that a) it's an actual word and b) it's defined as:

noun: **landrace**; plural noun: **landraces**

1. a local cultivar or animal breed that has been improved by traditional agricultural methods.

Ta da!

[[Ta-Da! Indeed. Well done. I've tried a different type of clue thish...]]

For my next trick, I will completely exit the fanzine without the computer at any time leaving my fingers!

From: perry@middlemiss.org

January 15

Perry Middlemiss writes:

It's interesting to read letters discussing the vaccination requirements for travellers to either Canada or the UK just as Australia is smack bang in the middle of this year's "sports beat-up of the year" story. Namely, Novak Djokovic and the Australian Open. Typically the current Australian Government has done all that is practically possible to appear to be totally incompetent. It continues an enviable track record in this regard for the past two years of this pandemic. Australians would be hard-pressed to name a single issue that has been handled with any sort of planning or forethought. "Yes, you can come in... no, hang on, no you can't... oh, okay you can stay then... no, maybe not, off you go." Even as I write, the day before the Australian Open is due to start, no final decision has been made.

[[The best comment I saw about that was that the England cricket team had appointed Djokovic as their new batting coach on the basis that it took Australia three weeks to get him out...]]

My thoughts on the matter: he wasn't fully vaccinated so should not have been allowed in; a point that could only be determined at the border when he arrived. Being given a visa for travel to a certain country does not always imply that you can enter. The final arbitration takes place on

arrival, as it does for all of us. Anyway, it's put Australia back in the spotlight for a few seconds. Beats bushfires and shark attacks I guess.

The Alien Review as a bi-monthly publication? Nope. Couldn't keep that schedule up if you paid me. Too many other things on my plate. Probably too many. The latest issue of *TAR* is still in the works. Life and other stuff keeps getting in the way. But I can see the end of it now. Just need to knuckle down and do the work.

[[Looking forward to it mate...]]

Re football tickets: I couldn't actually tell you how much a general admission football ticket costs to watch a top-level Australian Rules Football match in Melbourne these days, but it is possible to buy a membership ticket for your team that gives you entry to all home games (probably 10 or 12 a year) which can be had for under \$A300. The recent Boxing Day Test Match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground between England and Australia had general admission adult tickets starting at \$A30. You'd probably spend more than that on beer before the lunch break - the beer being especially poor and expensive at the ground.

Claire Brialey notes that "I can neither confirm or deny that my long absence was simply to confound Perry's contention that I'm everywhere." Which leads me to be happy to know she's thinking of me (cough); but also to note that such statements are always issued by people attempting to obfuscate a situation that is bleedingly obvious. On the other hand, it should be pointed out that the "ubiquitous Claire" is a perfectly acceptable situation.

Lastly, my thanks for your kind comments re *Perryscope*. But I say that all the time, don't I? But to describe me as "dapper"? Hardly. More crumpled and shop-worn methinks.

[[I thought I was pretty self-denigrating but I think you got me in spades. Of course there might just be a slight element of taking the piss in my capsule reviews, but I'm happy to reiterate that your ishes are ones I continue to greatly enjoy...]]

From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

January 16

Leigh Edmonds writes:

What are you doing to me? *This Here ... 48* is verging on becoming a Big Fat Fanzine and one has to take them seriously. And spend more time giving the contents some sercon consideration. Don't know how that is going to go.

[[It might be a conclusion that #48 was a bit of a bumper ish because of skipping a month, but that wasn't actually the case - it was all put together in December, and there just happened to be extra material at hand...]]

Thanks for your Radio Winston on Paul Thompson, somebody I knew absolutely nothing about. Somehow Roxy

Music had completely evaded my radar except for knowing that it was the band that Bryan Ferry emerged from. Now I feel slightly more informed and this is something that I will follow up. After having taken in the two tracks that you linked to I followed up with some live performances that were more than interesting. In many ways I was reminded of Talking Heads, though less warped and perhaps more musical. After having watched Roxy Music for a while and seeing how Brian Ferry moved about I then had to go and look again at some Talking Heads to see how David Byrne did the job. Ferry was definitely smoother and - perhaps - more British. Anyhow, I had to turn You Tube off or I would not get this letter written and it's back to genial Papa Haydn's string quartets as background to this LoC.

[[I may finally have got past periodic crogglements about people not knowing bands I'd have thought they must be aware of. In part I think that's due to having been mocked myself for perceived gaps in musical knowledge...]]

I was interested that my name came up a couple of times in 'Omphaloskepsis' as a kind of unknown. Which is fine because I'm more or less an unknown to myself. Things happen and I react to them, but often I have no idea where that comes from though I suspect my sub-conscious has a lot to do with it all. You and **Claire** are right that there are many different versions of each of us and the fannish ones are only partial representations of an entire personality.

[[I don't think "unknown" is quite right in that context, but then again see Steve Jeffery's loc earlier...]]

I'm afraid that you would find the 'in person' Leigh Edmonds rather dull, a reserved and shy person who really only talks when he thinks people will be interested in what he has to say and invites his contribution. There is another Leigh Edmonds who learned to be quite gregarious while doing his PhD and got inveigled into chairing committees and running things while he was in Perth. These days that version only emerges occasionally when called upon, and circumstances in the quite back waters of Ballarat don't have much call for his services. So he emerges occasionally when writing a letter of comment or when he went (and may again go) to a history conference. It may be that a more personable amalgam of personalities could emerge in fannish company where he feels safe and secure, but current circumstances are not encouraging to that kind of thing. Basically, I think, I am only a grown up version of the little quite Methodist boy my parents brought me up to be, but I've got used to it by now.

This makes me wonder what I think about you from the written contact we've had. In summary, perhaps, the thinking fan's punk fan. I try to imagine the different kinds of Nic there are; the one who drives a cab and has to cope with all kinds of people and events, the one who likes to hit the turps, hard, the one who has to take care of all the daily routines, the one who talks with fellow fans and the one who sits down and generates a thoroughly entertaining fanzine.

No doubt there are others that never come to light in the pages of *This Here ...* so I can't even imagine what they are.

[[...the thinking fan's punk fan." [falls off chair]. Actually that's not a bad summation, really, certainly a recognizable descriptor in several ways, radicalized as I was in the seminal LSE years of 1976-79...]]

As for the rest of the people who make up the *This Here ...* cosmos, I have of course met **Perry, Kim** and **Archbishop Bruce** but the only one of all your regular contributors I recall meeting at all (and that was back in 1974) is **Eli Cohen**, and that was only briefly - still he was one of those fans that I would have liked to spend more time with. An interesting thought occurs to me, does the way in which we happily get to know each other through our writing signal that we are more likely than not to get along if we were to also meet in person. There's a few pages here of stuff about stf, let's skip lightly over them.

[[For me, perhaps also interestingly, it can tend to be the opposite. There are fans I've met who are very likeable and sociable but whose writing or other fannish output I simply can't stand. These people's niceness in person tends to obviate the possibility of actual fisticuffs, which is probably a Good Thing...]]

Dave Hodson's passing comment on the qualities of English cricket rang a rather loud bell here. Watching the Ashes test cricket was like watching a man kicking a dog, repeatedly, so I didn't. Listening was much more bearable, mainly because of the entertaining commentary that fills in what would be dead air between the snail's pace over rates. Even then, I had to turn off listening during the final test when it was clear that the English team had forgotten how to play cricket, if they had ever known how to in the first place. At the same time as this farce was going on the World's Greatest Tennis Player was telling the Federal Court why he should have been allowed to come into a country when thousands of others had been kept away. That was all too much sport for me for the months, so let's glide on to more worthy stuff. And it wouldn't have to be too worthy to get over that bar. Happily the following photos qualified, and the happy host and hostess look, well, genial might be a good word.

Wm Breiding's comments on his disappointment at the silence that resulted from the large number of *Portable*



Storage he sent out did not surprise me. *Portable Storage* is a very worthwhile project but the weightiness of the most recent issue was such that I ran out of momentum about half way through and have not yet finished reading it. I don't know whether it is lack of energy in my old and tired fannish bones or the other demands on my time, but it is likely that I might never get around to reading the rest of that issue for either or both of those reasons. Truth be told, a 40 page *This Here ...* is becoming something of a test of stamina too. So I imagine that one of the reasons for the lack of response to *Portable Storage* is because many of the readers lack the energy or time to finish reading it. Thus is the fate of Big Fat Fanzines in the present era.

Wm's long exposition on the art of fanzine editing makes me think that he and **Archbishop Bruce** have a lot in common. I have tried, more than once, to talk the Archbishop into publishing a smaller SFC more regularly but he stoutly refuses. While I can see that there is a certain challenge in assembling a Big Fat Fanzine into a work of art, it seems to me that the point of and success of the enterprise is not with the editor but with the reader. I might not go so far as to say that presenting readers with a BFF - no matter how excellent it is - and expecting a commensurate response is a futile exercise, we have **Bruce's** long letter columns to suggest otherwise. However, speaking personally, I know that I find it harder to keep in my mind an overall appreciation of a BFF than I do a 20 page *This Here ...*, and

I wonder if others have the same trouble. Apart from anything else, publishing an issue of your fnz twice its normal size is not going to get a letter of comment twice as long from me (for which, Roscoe, much thanks, he mutters).

[[Was that a "Thank fuck!" from the back? I think your key words here are "overall appreciation" in the case of BFFs. Even with a stated theme such as occurs in 'Portable Storage' (or even the perhaps accidental unifying thread in 'BEAM 16' observed by Justin E.A. Busch) it can, I'm sure seem all a bit much, and I had the thought that this could be paradoxically in part because of the theme, since you're reading a lot of text on a single topic, albeit with different approaches. 'This Here...' and other usually much shorter perzines could be considered to gadfly between disparate stuff, which in here include Corflu, TAFF, FAAn awards,

music, footy, TV and movies - the presumption I suppose being that by the time you might get tired of any given subject, there's another one right along, and then there's the odd tangent into stuff like wire recorders, speaking of which...]]

This seems to lead to the topic of wire and tape recorders, being another way of preserving the past as fanzines do in their own way. My father bought his first tape recorder in about 1955 and played with them for the rest of his life. I remember seeing a wire recorder or two and being told that they worked the same way as tape, with magnet impulses recorded on the wire. I'm sure my father told me that when the wire broke you fixed it simply by tying a knot in the broken ends of the wire, which would have left some interesting gaps in the recording. Perhaps **Bill Burns** knows more about them. Dr Google tells us that it was a technology invented in the 1890s that reached a peak after World War II, to be snuffed out quickly by tape around 1954. It also confirms that a break was solved by tying the ends of the wire together but that the speed of the wire was so fast that the break in sound might not be noticed. No doubt Kimball Kinnison used more modern versions of wire recorders in his struggles against the evil Eddorians. In any event, tape recorders soon replaced wire and Australian fans were using them from 1952 or 1953 and, so one snippet of evidence tells us, sending tapes to overseas fans.

As for the question of how long a wire recording would last. I have no idea about that but I can imagine that the cross-talk between the magnetic images on individual strands of wire would have been a lot stronger than the cross-talk between layers of tape, so the sound may have remained but been so garbled by cross-talk as to be unintelligible. When I was still interested in such things I knew that the oral history collection of the Western Australian Library was played through once a year (with nobody listening) to reduce the cross-talk of its tape collection.

Two of your correspondents have picked me up on getting wrong the name and date of **Joseph Nicholas'** GUFF trip. Don't worry about not checking it, it's not that important and if any future historian takes my comment as 'gospel' they're not very good. Such is the fragility of memory and I hope folks don't expect me to research and footnote all such comments in future.

Joseph raises an interesting point about the music rivalries between Melbourne, Sydney and those other places in Australia. He is incorrect, however, because from a Melbourne point of view there was no rivalry, there was Melbourne and then the also rans. His point about radio has the potential to be relevant but I'm not sure and perhaps **Archbishop Bruce**, who knows more about these things, could comment.

From my creaking memory I'd say that most of the pop music played on Melbourne radio in the second half of the 1960s was British because that's what the record companies were distributing. There was a little local recording so some local music being played on the radio, but if you wanted to hear local bands you had to go out to hear it live. By the late 1960s I wasn't doing much of that, I was sitting at home cutting stencils and listening to whatever was on the radio.

Alison Scott makes some interesting points about fanzine production and theory and then goes on to mention podcasts. I have been known to listen to the occasional episode of *Octothorpe* but am always at a loss to say anything that is worth saying about them apart from, "Hey, I liked that". I gather that there is a way in which I could send such a message but somehow the way in which an episode sort of evaporates into the aether after it is heard doesn't remind me to do that. On the other hand, something like *This Here...* hangs around in my in-box annoying me until I do something to get rid of it. Usually I print a copy which I put in my 'to be done' tray so I can remove it from my in-box and stop annoying me, but it doesn't go away. The point is, however, that there seems to be a tradition of responding to fanzines in a way that there isn't for podcasts, which might have something to do with the medium of transmission in the first place.

OMG Ms J L! I'm sympathetic, of course, but I'm glad that didn't all happen to me.



Youtubers

HARRY BELL

From: mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com

January 26

The [self-described] Essentially Trivial M Strummer writes:

It is, I think, a common trajectory across a fanzine's run for both the page count and interval between issues to grow presumably with both tending towards the infinite, so congratulations for getting back on track after the mammoth #48, always assuming you do.

[[Well, yes, and thanks. As noted elsewhere, the double-sized #48 was more accidental than deliberate, so here we're back to what might laughingly pass for "normal" I suppose. I don't have any kind of set page count limit (because with a non-printed effort I DoBFO don't need to) so the size of the thing (oo-er missus ect) is always down to the length of the contributions. I do try to come out with an even number of pages, though (but haven't always done so cf thish)...]]

It's crossing the streams, but as you started it I'll say that I can't claim to have got more than a few pages into *Beam* #16, and yes, I did notice that 'ridiculous' unreduced 75mb file size. I still can't quite shake the notion that even 4mb is beyond the bounds of sensible, but then I carried on for far too long confined by what would fit on a floppy disk.

Perhaps because I haven't got more than a few pages into *Beam* I hadn't especially noticed the prevalence of female contributors that you note here, although I think that if asked I'd have guessed that *Beam* generally manages a better ratio than most. It did though occur to me recently that most of the best current fan art is being done by women. **Ulrika** and **Sara Felix** are two widely-published examples, and **Ulrika** has quite the diversity of styles from the colour work you publish to the more conventional fan art cover for the last *Littlebrook*, but there's also **España Sheriff**, **Alison Scott** and **Jeanne Gomoll**, for all that Jeanne's *Beam* cover is a relatively rare foray for her these days. Oh, and of course **Sue Mason**. Perhaps because it's a small field it doesn't take much to tip the balance.

[[Julie Faith McMurray too. BEAM also got graced with a superb cover from Lesley Ward back in the day (thanks in part to Steve Green for making that possible, as I vaguely recall)...]]

I'm sure you're right that not many people would include Paul Thompson as among the core players in Roxy Music. I'd not heard of him although I'm not especially a fan, and I don't think I knew that they're one of your favourite bands. That may be betraying my at best imperfect recall if not completely overlooking some of your previous writings on the subject. I just wonder how many bands there are where people would generally include the drummer as among the core players. It just goes with the territory that it's a fairly anonymous spot. You even have to sit at the back, mostly hidden behind a drum kit.

[[I do recall in a long-ago This Here... in the then named 'Tunes' column which had a series of retrospective album reviews doing one on Roxy's 'Siren' set, which at the time was the soundtrack of my life. As far as drummers being integral, there's more examples than a short comment could fit, but I'll have to mention Paul Di Filippo's short story 'The Moon-Bonham Effect' (I think I got that right) as one inspiration, and how can you not attach Rush, ELP, Cream or really just about any "power trio" setup to disabuse such dismissiveness...]]

This is a bit tangential to your 'Ompaloskepsis' musing but you got me wondering, just how many people on our mailing list have I ever met? The answer is just about all of them. Having checked I make it only one out of the 51 people on the UK print copy list that I've never met (Philip Turner) and rather remarkably only two out of 55 on the international list (Dale Speirs and Sheryl Birkhead), and another seven of the 83 names on the digital list. That's pretty good, although I accept that in large part that's because we've been lucky enough to be able to afford regular trips to North America and Australia in the last twenty years. Now obviously, there are many people in there who I have little more than met: as you mention them, **Wm Breiding**, **Leigh Edmonds** and **Eli Cohen** are examples here, to the point where while I know I have met them I'd be entirely unsurprised if they don't remember this.

[[Because you end up making me go and look at such things ("Bastard!" (T Berry)), out of the 120 or so inhabitants of my mailing list I've never actually met over 40 of them...]]

And just to confirm your idea, yep, *Portable Storage* and *This Here... s3* did start at about the same time. Our copy of *PS* #1 arrived 23 April 2019 and *TH* #16 on 10 May. Worth checking, if nothing else because my first thought was, no, surely that can't be right.

I should probably keep quiet about this but I once had to pass some **Geri Sullivan** fanzines to **James Bacon** so I'm quite literally the person from whom James gets his *Ideas*.

[[Not so much [falls off chair] as "you wouldn't even have printed that in 'Roadrunner', shurely?" ...]]

I like and have some sympathy with **Ulrika's** 'O, Ghu!'s and even get most if not all the references. In the interests of balance we should perhaps add categories for 'Best denunciation of the ballot using the expression "back in my day"', 'Most convincing claim to have never heard of any of these people', and 'Most predictable assertion in a fanzine that there are yet again no fanzines on the best fanzine shortlist'.

[[I'd have a shot at the middle one at least...]]

Jumping ahead a bit, you suggest in reply to **Alison Scott** a couple of When It Changed moments for the best fanzine Hugo. While it's true that *Emerald City* was mostly online in 2004 (and had been from the start) it was to my mind largely

indistinguishable as an artefact from the titles found on efanazines, then and now. I mean, it was formatted like a print fanzine, and was available as an emailed PDF or from a website. Sound familiar at all? And if we're talking of 'mostly on-line', surely that was true of *Ansible* by the time of its win in 2002. I'm sure most of **Dave Langford's** readers were looking at some digital incarnation by then, especially the mostly US-based Hugo voters.

[[Fair points all...]]

I view *Electric Velocipede* as only technically a fanzine – I agree with whoever it was who said at the time that it presented as a semiprozine – while recognising that when it comes to awards that 'technically' bit is what matters. Revisiting its Wikipedia page I see the word 'fanzine' is only used to make reference to the award, one up from their own now-gone website which triumphantly proclaimed their status as a 'fanzein' for some months after their win.

On one level I see its win as less as a turning point than a blip. It was a for-sale fiction magazine which paid its contributors and that was unusual if not unique amongst Hugo best fanzine finalists up to that point, but it also retains that unique status. Other similar works didn't appear on the ballot, and dreadful-recidivist-approved publications – in a technical sense – remained in the majority until 2013, although the winners were generally 'new media' works, podcasts or websites with a sercon bent. It's only with 2014 that the balance tips. From that point on, the only works with even the faintest smear of a stamp of recidivist approval are *Journey Planet* and *File 770* and the latter has been entirely a website since 2016. There's a content shift too. While most of the pre-2009 fanzines were fandom-centric, or perhaps more accurately not-sf-centric, the new media blogs and websites that replaced them were largely given over to sercon material.

Also in 2009 – and yes, I know you're probably glazing over by now – *Weird Tales*, a for-sale fiction magazine which paid its contributors, broke the *Locus* domination of the semiprozine. From the category's inception the finalists had been a mix of fiction and non-fiction publications, although prior to 2009 only one fiction title, *Interzone*, ever won. *Weird Tales* did set a pattern in that after 2009, and setting aside a last hurrah win for *Locus* in 2012 before a rule change made it ineligible, the majority of the finalists and all the winners have been fiction publications.

So 2009 marks the point at which the content of the best fanzine finalists starts to flip from fan-centric material to science fiction reviews and the semiprozine flips from non-fiction to fiction.

[[That's actually of mild interest round here, certainly given that your analysis is well more informed than any of mine might be. Given that this is a topic that will engage (some) readers, I'll continue to include further discussion on it,

should any arrive, but don't expect too much in the way of editorial comment, although you may engage me yet...]]

Moving on, all the Corflu stuff has been Overtaken By Events, obviously. A shame but the right move, I think, both collectively and for us personally as it increases the chances we'll be able to go. I can only hope none of the people who had already made plans for the March date end up too far out of pocket. **Bill Burns** says **Michael Lowrey** is planning his trip around Eastercon, 'should it actually happen.' As best I know it is, the Eastercon that is, although yep, still no word on the hotel at (now) two months two weeks and six days out as the counter on their website helpfully tells us. Most English restrictions have already been lifted and anything remaining will probably have gone by March, so it could be a near-normal Eastercon although personally I'd be wary committing to an international trip without some kind of cancellation provision. I have no real idea of what this Eastercon will be like. Right now it has about 450 members, lower than usual for this point I think. There are doubtless plenty of people who are really keen to get to a convention but will there be many who having missed in-person Eastercons for two years conclude that the money would be better spent on a fortnight in Blackpool?

William Breiding is interesting as always. I'll concede we came close to [x] boxes on the last *Banana Wings*, switching some people from whom we'd heard nothing for years from print to digital and appending an 'Um, are you still there?' comment on some of the digital distribution. I realise digital distribution doesn't cost anything, only time as we email copies individually rather than in bulk, but we would like to know. And on this 'the creation of a fanzine is an art and an artistic expression', I always find there's a certain point when an issue is transformed from a document into a fanzine and becomes real, as it were. Often it wouldn't have happened until the first near-finished copy rolled off the laser printer. Now I sometimes have to wait – and hope – it happens when the printed copies come back from the printer.

We only had a few letters from Mike Glicksohn, but my sense of those and of his letters that I read in other fanzines was that they always had a natural, conversational flow to them. And I'm going to agree with you on Harry Warner. His letters were doubtless encouraging to new fan editors – you could always rely on Harry and so on – but yes, as you say, 'you were going to get your two pages out of him no matter what'. I like getting tangential letters because I like knowing that something I wrote or published seemingly inspired the tangent, but it follows that it needs to be a good and interesting tangent rather than a space-filler.

I don't think that the 'good old greasy spoon transport caff' is a thing of the past. I mean, maybe what we have now is slightly better than that designation implies but there's a place just down the road from here offering set breakfasts in the traditional mode and a near-infinite variety of build-

your-own alternatives. Plentiful, and reasonably cheap too. Haven't been there for a couple of years, mind, but it was a regular port of call when we had visitors (can't now recall if we went there when you stayed with us). **John Coxon** told me that when he went there with **España** it was the first time he wasn't embarrassed by British breakfasts.

[[Good to know if I ever get back over. I recall getting a decent Indian takeout while at yours, but not the caff. Given my unreliable memory which is apparently capable of not recalling an entire several hours' worth of road trip, though...]]

Claire's covered the plugs for **Anders Holmström** so I don't suppose there's a great deal of mileage in adding a further endorsement from across the landing. Claire describes him as 'sociable' and I think that's bang on. I've seen him walk into a pub he's never visited before and in about 30 minutes he's on first name terms with all the staff, has been given a personal tour of the cellaring arrangements and invited to make suggestions for their

improvement, and emerges from that with a tasting sample of some obscure beer that's technically not on sale yet. And then he'll introduce you to one of the regulars, somebody who he met before when they were both helping out at a mushroom festival in Trondheim.

And I'm not sure of the merits of conducting intra-household debates through the pages of somebody else's fanzine, but I think I'm with **Alison** on the multi-tasking utility of listening to podcasts in that it's something that could be done in parallel with something that doesn't require 'verbal processing'. Not if it's something where I might want to make notes towards a written response, sure, so in my case not for *Octothorpe*. But others could. (Like **Claire**, I'm way behind on *Octothorpe* and need to concede that I'm not going to catch up and simply dive back in. Any day now...)

About being 'not willing to bitch about specific people publicly', I wonder whether fans are generally less willing to do this than they once were? Whether your approach, now an outlier, was once more common? And if so, whether that's because of the greater visibility of most fan commentary? Or the increasingly vitriolic nature of fast-paced online communication? Or because we are generally older? My sense is that fans were once better able to engage in robust written criticism in a way that didn't lead to dark looks when the protagonists met. Cy Chauvin said something interesting in *Portable Storage* recently, citing Franz Rottensteiner's belief that the Australian fans were more interesting critics because they were untainted by personal

acquaintance with the authors about whom they were writing. And yes, I am conscious that I transmuted your 'tipping point for Fanzine Hugo Goes to Shit' into an anaemically less contentious 'When It Changed moment'.

[[It's a possible consideration that with the perhaps more generally held thought that fanzine fandom is circling the wagons (not to mention the circles within circles) that we perhaps ought not to be infighting and should unite against whatever the rest of the Faniverse has become. I, of course, consider that to be tincture of pure bollocks - the Balkanized nature of things manifests in utterly fuckin' lazy adherence to party lines and a general unwillingness to engage in the effort required for critical thinking. I genuinely believe that there's a "middle ground" of sorts, even though I don't care for that descriptor particularly, between reasoned critique (however acerbically it might be expressed by the likes of me) and outright KTE, which after all was nothing more than a wickedly done and often unnecessary stylistic choice.

Again, I'd like to point out that I continue to intend that This Here... remains in no small part a venue for frank discussion and indeed disagreement on fannish matters. How well I'm doing at that will be measured by the welcome quality of responses such as yours...]]

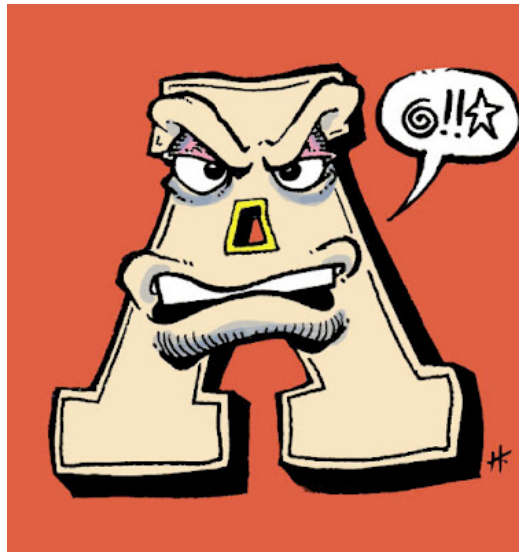
If my 'so casual' description of the *Banana Wings* creation process gives the impression that it's anything less than a fuck of a lot of work then it's a misleading impression. It gets easier through repetition, yes, but I had to relearn a lot of it after the hiatus between #76 and #77 (thanks for the kind notice, by the way) to an extent

that's rather embarrassing. And I didn't even mention the extra time to produce **Alison's** own personalised copy, overloaded with references to **Alison**. The consolation is that it's still not as much work as duplicating and collating as we did last century.

[[Ha! I've considered doing a hit-job singular version of TH... that would be all goes at a given individual, and now I'm more than tempted...]]

I could probably say a lot about the Worldcon site selection business but I suspect you've already exceeded your interest on the topic with the limited wordage in #48. I doubt anything I could say would be particularly original.

Which may be true of all of this. Having promised a letter and even supplied a progress update I'm not at all sure that this justifies its advance billing. Oh well...



WAHF

Wm Breiding ; **Claire Brialey** ; **John Hertz**, who apparently locced #47 and wasn't even WAHFed. I'm not sure I even got that one, but apologies for missing it nonetheless ; **Guy Lillian III** : "GAWD! What a great issue! **Ulrika's** piece is righteousness in ink!" ; **Taral Wayne** : "All you said about [*The Balobius Sixth*] was that it contains my complaint about not getting locs. I wouldn't worry about future complaints. Once it seems obvious that my point has been made so that it has been noticed, then it is time to steal the silverware and move on." ; **Alan White** : "This issue has prompted a slight confession. . . being that I actually wrote a fan letter to Sally Geeson after a couple of those Vincent vehicles in the 60s. No, no reply." ...

...

FANZINES RECEIVED

It's very likely that I've not been paying attention, because I'm well sure there ought to be more than two titles for this month - but again I'll reiterate that these are notes on ishes I've received directly (or more accurately, those I *remember* receiving and/or actually had a shufti at) rather than a broad review of the field of lilies that is efanzines...

VITA TRANSPLANTARE 23 (John Nielsen Hall) - One of the titles that I always *really* want to try to loc, and as Dear Ole Unc knows, I don't always succeed, despite the best of intentions. It's still and all a bunch of mates going on about various bollocks around a hypothetical pub table, environs in which I find myself comfortable and relaxed. This time, mate...

FROM SCRATCH 4 (Nigel Rowe) - Making the beleaguered editorial collectives of *Banana Wings* and *BEAM* feel rather better about themselves, Nigel reveals that it is a croggling 27 years since the previous ish, but you have to be quietly impressed that he *still* has the locs he got from it. *FS4* was apparently done for Corflu Concorde (dated October 2021), but I only just got my copy, thus it's missing from *TIR* listings where it belongs. A goodly chunk of Corflu memories (and I'm envious at the lad's apparent ability to not only take notes but also not to lose them in the interim), which include both a photo and a mention of yrs truly, as well as CoNZeland commentary (including, fascinatingly, its ten or more years in development). Good little read, this...

INDULGE ME

✘ **CORFLUX EXTRA** : I'm exceptionally pleased to announce the top-line Cor41u bid/planning team. Co-chair will be **S&ra Bond**, UK Agent/Treasurer will be **Keith Freeman**, with US Admin/Treasurer duties covered by **J L Farey**...

✘ **DISRESPECT** : A story I'm sure I've heard before, shared by **Avedon Carol** on FBF: the actress Shelley Winters had (later in her career) rather pompously been asked to audition for a part, and to compound that felony was asked to bring her headshot photograph and resume. She arrived carrying a large carpet bag, and was indeed asked if she'd brought the photo and resume. Producing her Oscar statuette from the bag, she announced "Here's my photo", proceeding to bring out her second Oscar, placing it on the interviewer's desk, stating "And *that* is my fucking resume"...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (BRITS IN THE NEWS #1)** : **Maureen Lipmann**, who popped up to complain about Golda Meir, in the upcoming biopic, being cast to a non-Jewish actress (Helen Mirren)...



✘ **DOCUMENTARY** : A discussion programme, really, on the old Uncut Bicycle Service which I have mentioned before erroneously under this heading, is 'The Forum', hosted by Dr. Bridget Kendall which almost always covers engaging subjects, recently including those as diverse as Boudicca and Agatha Christie (separately, of course). This is the sort of stuff I'm on about when mentioning listening to the steam radidio (also available as a podcast) that you can't really just let it witter on in the background...

✘ **PERSONAL SOLSTICE** : That time of year when it's becoming more like daylight rather than dark at the 5pm bedtime...

✘ **SCIENCE FACT** : The big news of late is of course the Webb telescope which may end up solving some origin questions of the Universe, such as how [insert name of your favorite fan here] came to be the center of it. A brief but good summary, with phoots comes from SciTechDaily...

✘ **I'LL GET ME COAT** : In a recent survey of men who were asked about women's legs, 10% responded that they liked chunky legs, 15% slim legs, while the 75% majority said they preferred something in between...

✘ **CROSSWORD CLUE FOR ELI** : Not mincing words, sounds like less than a third is correct (10)...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (BRITS IN THE NEWS #2)** : **Sue Gray**, windswept and interesting pin-up of civil servants everywhere...



✘ **MOVIE NIGHT (2)** : I've happily discovered that most if not all of the DCAU (DC Animated Universe) movies are on HBO, and while most of our TV shows are on mid-season breaks, these have filled in quite admirably for nosebag-time TV, typically running at only about an hour and a quarter. As usual, I might mention doing a column on them, but that's akin to similar remarks made in the past - and to quote a venerable fanzine title, *This Never Happens*. If he isn't busy cycling the coastlines of Cornwall, perhaps **Doug Bell** could guest that one...

✘ **REPRESENT!** : Happy Birthdays on January 29 (that date seems familiar) to **The Grate Aitch**, **Harry Bell**, acknowledged in here by some artwork, and of course to the **Sainted Strummer**, of whom it has been said, hasn't it? Also of note, happy two year anniversary to **David Hodson**, who files his 24th 'Footy' column thish. Yes, I *know* it's technically 25 months, having skipped November, fie on your pedantry, I say!...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY NON-BRIT** : So the Merkans don't feel all left out (Sue Gray, whoshe?), here's **Pat Benatar**...



MIRANDA

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**“Rivalry was cutting deep,
So many vendettas how could they sleep?
Tonight the prince is losing his crown,
Here comes the Lygon Street Meltdown.”**