

This Here...

"No bloody quality control, obviously." (J Nicholas)

EGOTORIAL

BITS OF HISTORY

Wikipedia:

The **settlement movement** was a reformist social movement that began in the 1880s and peaked around the 1920s in the United Kingdom and the United States. Its goal was to bring the rich and the poor of society together in both physical proximity and social interconnectedness. Its main object was the establishment of "settlement houses" in poor urban areas, in which volunteer middle-class "settlement workers" would live, hoping to share knowledge and culture with, and alleviate the poverty of, their low-income neighbors. The settlement houses provided services such as daycare, English classes, and healthcare to improve the lives of the poor in these areas.

Off I could go into a typical digression about a vanished "middle class" under the scheme of ultra-capitalism, but Victorian *mores* had an aspirational sensibility of some *noblesse oblige*, fueled and no doubt encouraged in no small part by the writings of Charles Dickens.

The Peckham Settlement was established in 1896, ending up with a building on the corner of Staffordshire Street and Goldsmith Road in SE15, and began to provide services like meals on wheels, daycare and even unemployment

insurance to the packed-in locals. That's "packed in" in terms of the density of population in what would indeed have been considered Dickensian slums. The country's average at the time was 80 people per acre, whereas in Peckham (and similar areas) it was 1,000. A very potted history can be read in the Southwark News [here](#).

So why am I mentioning this place in particular? You might have clocked that the building was, in part, residential with a number of mostly small rooms, and after getting more or less kicked out of Carr-Saunders halls of residence (LSE) in 1978 I ended up living there via a college mate known as "Mad Dave" (then again, aren't they all?) whose brother was employed there. The rent was nominally ten quid a week, reduced to seven on the assumption that you'd do some chores around the place. I shifted from room to room a couple of times and ended up claiming what was a bit of a palatial space (by settlement standards) which no-one else evidently had the nous to move into. The photo



shows the Goldsmith Road side of the building, with my eventual little gaff being behind the three windows (three! fuckin' luxury!) at top right.

I've got more than a few abiding memories of the place, mostly sort of rose-tinted, and one gruesome one.

There was the little pub at the corner of Goldsmith Road and Pennethorne Street, now it sadly seems not a pub anymore (via Google Earth) - the sort of real London rubber that got occasional visits from the Pearlies and had old-timers reminiscing about how nobody locked their doors much

when the Krays were in charge of things. It was only about six or eight steps from the door to the bar, but I could usually guarantee that by the time I got elbows down my pint would be set in front of me already.

Scrounging up the beer (and cigs) money was always crucial, and I was suitably larcenous about finding actual food. The Settlement had shared facilities (like the tiny kitchen), and I'd be in there in the very early hours when everyone else was a-kip to nick an egg and three slices of bread, soaking one slice in the egg and frying it up, making an eggy bread sandwich with a squirt of ketchup on one side and HP on the other. All the food groups...

There was a nice large space in the middle of the building (inexplicably with a better kitchen which nobody except me used at times when I had a few bob from illegally working temp jobs while term was in, making a big ole pot of curry to be shared by all), and we used this for band rehearsal, which was fun for our then starry-eyed ambitions which naturally came to o, although we did manage one gig at some boys' boarding school across town a bit, which wasn't too horrible, but not that great either. I must scan the photos from that sometime. The big rush off that, was - er - well, a big rush of lads piling from the back in as we went into our set closer, a cover of 'White Man in Hammersmith Palais' which I'd learned off the record. I vaguely recall that we opened with a cover too, 'All the Young Dudes', rearranged by me into a somewhat Dave Greenfield-like keyboard twiddle.

The Settlement was where I got my first (of only two, ever - not counting a childhood pet) cats - the runt of a litter that I named 'Luther' (after my favorite footballer) who sadly didn't last long, apparently having highly mangled guts, but was a feisty little'un while he was around. Sitting at a desk pretending to revise for exams I'd chuck him across the room onto the bed, a game he loved to repeat.

No, I haven't got to the gruesome bit yet.

I met this bloke, and I can't at this remove even remember where, but it was likely in a pub or at a gig. Or at a pub holding a gig. Steve "Prince Cardboard" Eaton is a name not likely to be known to just about all of you, but then I'll mention the iconic cover of the Selecter's album 'Too Much Pressure' with the rude boy on the cover (and his pork pie hat on the ground) and yes, that was him. For whatever reason (music, I suspect), we clicked and were good mates for a brief time - his other couple of pals from Coventry (Steve too, I reckon) regarded me with some amazement since I was steadfastly into the drink ("He's into *drink*", one of them said

with a tone of disbelief and almost admiration in an unremembered tube station) rather than any of the many and varied other mood-altering substances going around.

Any time Cardboard made it down to the Smoke we always got together, and since he was a bit famous for that album cover (although his locals knew him just as much as an influential DJ and crucially snappy dresser) I acted as his minder on those occasions, at least once having to retrieve his pork-pie from some half-pissed trophy collector.

I'm pretty sure it was that particular night (November 30th 1979) and, really, the following morning which leads to the gruesome. I'd bedded Steve down in one of the spare rooms and, having woken up on December 1st earlier than him realized that we needed milk for our tea, so I must nip out and get some.

I'm out the door to find Staffordshire Street festooned with crime scene tape, and a rozzar having it over on his toes to ask me if I've seen or heard anything untoward in the early hours, which I haven't, and I relate last night's itinerary as best I can in a typically hung over and dazed condition. This seems to satisfy the uniform, and I'm never contacted again about the events.

Sally Shepherd had been visiting friends in Essex and had got off the bus round the corner, copped an Indian takeaway and was on her way home when she was brutally assaulted, stripped and raped by an unknown assailant who dumped her body (and the curry, over her clothes) in the builders' yard across the street from me, a spot which was behind the police station, and no-one apparently heard a thing, since for whatever reason she didn't scream or cry out.

I can't remember if the police came and talked to Steve or not, nor can I recall what time we got in, but it was likely well close to the time of Sally's demise, within an hour or two at most.

The crime [remains unsolved](#) to this day.

Steve died in 2011 after an illness and was memorialized [here](#) by 'Marco on the Bass'.

There's people in life that you cross paths with who make an impression, and then often just are off somewhere else (or you are) and you lose touch, especially those from the before times of payphones, letters, and no internet machine. I had a chat on the phone once with Steve's mum while he was on his way back to Cov, and she said she was glad he had a mate like me (chair-plummeting, yes, yes) because I suppose my bad habits weren't as bad as she thought his were. I liked him a lot, and he remains one of the people I'm sorry to have lost touch with.



It's a bit jarring in many ways that my most solid memory of that night isn't finding out about Sally (whom I didn't know, although, as I allowed to the rozzer, I supposed I might have seen her up the pub), but of retrieving Steve's iconic pork-pie hat from that arsehole who tried to snatch it, with just a look that made him whimper and give it up.

It's all good.

May 2023

TAFFNESSABOUTS

First pass itinerary scheduling (and musings from the delegate).

S&ra Bond writes:

Hard commitments require me to be in the UK on the weekends of 1-2 July and 12-13 August.

4 July: fly into east coast – probably Boston due to:

6 July: Geri Sullivan attending They Might Be Giants gig, Deerfield, MA. Invite to accompany her. Geri offers to host me at Toad Woods, Wales, MA.

8 July: to Chicago. Nigel Rowe wants to see me.

Trips to Washington, DC and Long Island, NY are also possible around here if they fit better (see below)

Possible to squeeze a visit to Jason Chilton (Appleton, WI) in here if his work schedule permits?

12 July: to Minneapolis/St Paul - Larry Sanderson and Joyce Scrivner have offered to host

Gary Farber would like to see me at his apartment for an afternoon if he's feeling well enough

14-16 July: Diversicon, Minneapolis

18 July: to Winnipeg

20-23 July: Pemmi-Con - the Winnipeg Fringe occurs around this time according to Geri. However, I am likely to want a bit of downtime after the con, so...

24-26 July: possibly hire a car and drive it over the prairies to Calgary (or Saskatoon?) via the dinosaur museum which Farah Mendlesohn says is a must-see (Royal Tyrrell Museum, Drumheller, Alberta)

27 July: drop off car and fly Calgary/Saskatoon – Seattle. Jerry Kaufman wants me to visit Seattle but no word on any hosts yet

Here everything gets a bit vague... would like to do Bay Area, Vegas, then whichever bits of the East Coast (DC and NY) I haven't already covered

Serene Vannoy offers to host in Silver City, NM, but it's a long way off route and hard to get to. (Have told her if I can't make it this time I'll try to visit after Corflu 2024)

Anne Gray offers to host "mid-atlantic coast". Again I'm struggling to see how I can fit this in.

28 July: party night at the Fareys', Las Vegas. 4 August might be better for the schedule if it's possible for the Vegas fans??

30 July? To Bay Area - offers to host from Jeanne Bowman in Glen Ellen; Rich Coad in, er, wherever he lives (30m from Jeanne); Karen Schaffer in San Jose. Karen's summer party has a potential date of 5 August which might be nice for a final big TAFF event?

4-6 August Armadillocon. Tom Becker & Spike plan to go and want me to consider it, but it's in transphobe central, Texas. I am not at all sure I can see this being feasible sadly – for time reasons as well as the trans issue.

6 August: to whichever of Washington DC and NYC I haven't been to yet, then...

8 August: fly home

9 August: arrive home

Currently unassigned dates that I'd like to fit in:

Offer to host from Bill & Mary Burns, Long Island, NY

Offers to host (?) from Ted White and Michael Dobson, Washington DC area.

To do

Check US and Canada visa waivers are in date and valid

Talk to account holders about how to deal with TAFF money

Approach Diversicon and Pemmi-Con regarding whether they want the TAFF delegate on programming

Consider the question of fundraising in general while on trip

Liaise with Garth Spencer (CUFF delegate) re the above two

Traveling giant Pablo Vazquez would like to meet up during my trip and will (apparently) come to me to do so! Let's see what he feels like once things firm up a little?

Am I trying to cover too much ground on this itinerary? I am trying not to impose on any one host for more than three days on the "guests and fish" principle...

HOW MUCH OF THIS DO I NEED TO NAIL DOWN BEFORE DEPARTURE AND HOW MUCH CAN I WING AS I GO???

CORFLUX

41 NEWS

Nothing brand new to report (37 attending members already, though!), but possibly worth reiterating that the online booking link (see PR1 at corflu.org) *does* appear to work for everyone not named "Mattingly", who did nevertheless manage to sort his room over the phone without issue. I'll note again that extra nights before and after the four days of the event are available at the Sunday rate.

Inquiries to vegas41@corflu.org

Expect PR2 in June or July...

42 BID PROSPECTS

It seems long, long ago that there was a plan of sorts for future Corflus going out three years or so (while adhering to a nominal bidding process for the following year's bash), but that hasn't been the case for a while. Since the second UK Corflu (Winchester in 2010), there'd been a general sense that the convention might occur on British soil once every five years or so - thus Newcastle in 2015 and Bristol in 2021 - but then Belfast in 2023, a mere 18 months after Bristol because Covid upended *that* concept.

Craic certainly upped the stakes in terms of both attendance and having a "big event" sense, and perhaps also illustrated by comparison the highly fragmented nature of the US fanzine Faniverse coupled with an apparently greater unwillingness (or inability) to travel the distances involved on these shores. (I recall that the Mighty Rob^t Lichtman wouldn't cross the Rockies for anything.)

I'm hearing arguments that the hypothetical "center of gravity" of a Corflu is shifting to the UK (and Europe), although this leads me to both observe and ponder that actual fanzine production is still much more prevalent in the US (and Canada, and, notably, Australia), implying a distinction (or even a disconnect) between fanzines themselves and their annual celebratory event, however grandly dubbed "the fanzine fans Worldcon", as it has been at times.

So where does this leave us?

The general enthusiasm arising from Corflu Craic has led **David Hodson** to poll interest in a proposal to hold Corflu 42 in the UK, likely in the Reading area, a week before Reconnect, the 2025 Eastercon to be held in Belfast. His plan in assembling the team is to have crossover synergy with the organizers of Reconnect, which seems to me like a sensible idea. It might be harsh to suggest that potential US organizers can't really be arsed to put anything together at the moment but, referring back to the opening paragraph, there seems to have been little or no discussion on these shores about who might step up and have a go. There's a monster caveat there, of course, that I'm not aware of *all* the Sekrit Smoffing that might be occurring under the radar (just, ahem, *some* of it).

The prime intent of this bit is to open public discussion on, specifically, Corflu 42 plans (as tentative as they may currently be), but also Corflu futures in general, so have at it!

MOVIE NIGHT

GHOSTED

Whatever disconnect there is between the "critics" and the viewing public was on full display with this'un getting thoroughly trashed by the former, yet the latter made it the most-watched new release on Apple TV+, at least for a minute.

Here's Ana de Armas ('Knives Out', 'No Time to Die') as a CIA assassin who hooks up with Chris Evans (Captain America, of course, but also 'Knives Out', lest we forget) doing a goofy turn as a loser-in-love farmer, and because he's a doofus of majestic proportions gets dragged into the plot largely by being mistaken for legendary operative 'The

Taxman', resulting in all sorts of mad events (including a substantial body count) and much bickering between the two of them in the proper rom-com formula.

We were baffled by the criticisms that the pair had "zero chemistry", since we were equating it at least somewhat to that of Milo Ventimiglia and Catherine Haena Kim in 'The Company You Keep' (sadly cancelled after one season, see 'TV Guide').

Scarlett Johansson was originally cast in de Armas' role, but withdrew because of scheduling conflicts. In part because Ana is slight of build, I did think that Karen Gillan might have been a bit better, but it is what it is, and de Armas is quite all right.

I'm also getting narked about almost any gripe that something is "formulaic", which 'Ghosted' is, sure, but it's lazy criticism, since there's not

so much out there that isn't, is there?

Formulaic or not, we found the movie well entertaining, including a decent turn by Adrien Brody as the main villain, albeit with an accent adjacent to the risible John Malkovich 'Rounders' school of verbals, and some rather hilarious cameos (most of which occur in a single sequence, possibly with a tad of influence from 'Police Squad').

As action movies go, this is a decent entry which didn't deserve the critical slugging it received, and round here it was deemed 116 minutes well-spent...



HEALTH DIARY...

...AND RELATED COMMUNICATIONS

This month's appointment with Dr Gollard was on May 4th, and as usual I got a blood draw done (six vials or so, I guess to check any effects of the Calquence) a week before. We were a bit nervy that the results hadn't shown up in my online patient records by the day of the appointment, but as it turned out there was a very good reason for that. As mentioned previously, a normal white blood cell count is in the range of 5-10 somethings per something, and my first pass at that back in February was a whopping 76, ticking down slightly to 69 over the next couple months. The latest reading was 96, and of course if we'd seen that number it'd be panic stations. Dr Gollard, looking pleased, tells us that this actually shows that the Calquence is working as it should, since the WBC peaks like that before starting to properly drop.

Side effects haven't been major or debilitating, although the aches and pains (and fatigue) have got a bit noticeably worse. I've had a couple of episodes of the squirrels and some occasional mild(-ish) nausea, but I can only choff any of the Ondansetron for that on a weekend - the boldface label warning "MAY CAUSE DIZZINESS" turns out to be accurate, so I DoBFO can't take it on a workday. One of the other concerns is the possibility of mental issues ("Oh ho, how could they tell?", yes, I know) and largely out of embarrassment I failed to advise that I've had a couple of episodes of getting a bit emotional (Mattingly Moments). I do find myself reluctant to spend time with the usual friends, often not feeling up to dealing with people (we could call that a Hessinger Moment) and that's perhaps because I'm putting up the front at work and being pleasant (ahem, mostly) all day, thus using up my reduced interaction quota.

Jen is an absolute fuckin' saint for putting up with me and dealing with much stuff I'm not fab at (like talking on the phone).

Update from this last week (beginning May 7th), which has been rough. I'm waiting for the doctor's office to sign me off for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) consideration, which means that if on any given day I'm really not up for work, I can call it in and the FMLA signoff is like a year-long doctor's note excusing me - not that I get paid for time off, naturally. Monday and Tuesday I could really have used that, having slept very poorly and feeling extra tired. The result of that was forced catnapping during the day and lousy productivity. Yesterday (Wednesday 10th) was a bit better, but then we heard from the doctor's office that they were a bit reluctant to sign me off on FMLA for reasons I typically didn't quite understand. They'll refer this back to Dr Gollard, and we shall see...

The subsequent week started sort-of all right. Sunday was the usual slog at work, but Monday morning I got up after a well decent night's sleep actually feeling pretty fair, but it all went downhill from there, being unable to sleep much the next couple of nights. We can at least partially attribute this, I think, to an outbreak of humidity here in the Meadows, which while at what other parishes would consider larffably low levels doesn't have to be much to get noticed. The big thing continuing into today (May 18th, as I write) is constant nagging pain in my lower hips, which is also not highly conducive to solid sleep, as I find it difficult to get comfortable lying down. The doc's office have advised me to contact them immediately in the event of "major" effects, but with my usual reluctance to do so, I'm still tuffing it out, since this isn't totally immobilizing... yet?

Not much change in the above from this last week - I'm occasionally feeling a bit better, but it's all very hit-and-miss. I learn that Calquence isn't chemo, it's a suppression medication that prevents the formation of cancerous blood cells and encourages the existing ones to die (or waits for them to do so, I'm not entirely clear on this).

Several folks (massive thanks to you all) responded directly to lastish's "Disease Reveal" Egotorial, as follows...

Curt Phillips :

I am deeply distressed to learn of your diagnosis of leukemia. I know that no words of mine can be of any help to you, but I have little else to offer and simply want to say that I have every possible best wish for you and hope that your treatment and recovery will go as smoothly as possible. Liz's battle against her breast cancer these past three years has taught me the value of taking every day one at a time. You have faced far more than your share of tough times in the past, and clearly the universe isn't tired of taking a kick at you again. But you have a spirit of hardened steel and have won every battle you've faced. I know you'll win this one too.

[[Curt also recommended keeping a "health diary", suggesting that this here catalogue of woe is a suitable venue for such. I'd already considered this, but I do worry that it might get a bit dull and whiny...]]

John Purcell :

Speaking of your diagnosis, thank Roscoe, Ghu, Foo-Foo, and any other fannish ghods it's the treatable kind of Leukemia. Granted, the cost is ridiculous - this is how medical care is mishandled in 'murica! - but I'm glad to hear that cost can be covered. With my luck, I'd probably have to sell my 1967 Harmony bass (valued at \$1300 even though it needs a new pickup) to afford a portion of the copay. Anyway, Valerie and I send you our love. Val also sends you kisses while all I can offer is a manly hug and a firm

handshake. Hey, you've got a fabulous woman by your side, too, so you're definitely good.

George Phillies :

I was sorry to read about your medical issue. I hope that matters turn out for the best. Modern medicine is very effective.

John D. Berry :

I gather you've been hit with a shitload of health trouble: leukemia. I'm very sorry to hear this. I know it's not quite the death sentence it once was, but it still sounds like a pretty dire thing. Hope the treatment doesn't turn you inside out.

Tracy Benton :

Just wanted to drop you a line regarding your CLL diagnosis. Sorry to hear that, of course, but on an encouraging note:

My mum lived with CLL for many years, and frankly it never bothered her more than to make her tired. She would periodically have to have chemo, quite unpleasant, but then she would feel a lot better for many months afterward. When she passed away over 90 years old it had nothing to do with the CLL at all.

[[Encouraging to know, indeed...]]

In addition, my brother has CLL. (Which is weird, they tell him, because it has no genetic component, but as he puts it, "so what?") He was also troubled by tiredness more and less, off and on, until he ended up in a new drug trial and it was smacked into remission very nicely. He's feeling quite good at the moment.

So at any rate, more power to you, and if you want the name of the drug they put my brother on I can easily get it for you. Positive vibes coming your way from Wisconsin.

Rob Jackson :

[T]he news about your health is distinctly mixed. However the bright spots there include the chronic lymphatic nature of your Big L, which is just as I remember it from my days 40 or more years ago as a baby doctor. Even then we thought it was more treatable than some of the other types of leukaemia. The other bright spot was you having a really good doctor; thankfully healthcare systems everywhere seem to contain good people even in crappy systems, and your neck of the woods is no exception. May the Calquence do its job. I must admit, though, that I did do a bit of chair-falling on reading what sort of "moderate" drinking was advised for you...

Jerry Kaufman :

I'm glad to see that my first skim-through was right, and that you have a treatable form of leukemia. I'd keep my fingers crossed that the treatment is as successful as expected, but as I don't know how long you have to

keep taking the medication *[[six months]]*, I'm sure I will have to uncross the fingers at some point.

David Redd :

Sorry to learn about the seriousness of your health upset, and I offer a hearty "get well soon" to you and hope all gets sorted out. I note you are attacking the problem with your usual determination and drive, and wish you every success in dealing with it. I admire your spirit. You are in my prayers, if that helps. May good health come soon.

Garth Spencer :

Well, news that sucks is better than no news at all, I guess. And your condition is at least chronic, rather than acute, and you have palliative care. But I would far rather you could achieve complete remission. *[[That is what the doctor predicts.]]*

W^m Breiding :

I was not surprised by your news. I knew it had to be a fairly serious deal if you were delaying discussing it until all the data was in. But it was still very disheartening and upsetting news, especially on the heels of Justin Busch's myeloma and subsequent death. I do hope that it is as manageable as predicted by your doctor. Really, I hardly know what to say. My first reaction was, "For fuck's sake, Nic!" We are losing so many of us, fast and furious. But then here it is 2023. What else are we to expect?

Eli Cohen :

Very sorry to hear about your leukemia, though I'm happy to hear that it seems treatable. Good luck!

Leigh Edmonds :

Your health report made unhappy reading. Dealings with the medical profession are always unnerving but it appears that things are better than they could have been, but not as good as they could be. Good luck with that and the drugs you have to take. I'm amazed at the eye watering \$15,000 a month. You, my friend, should have moved to the Socialist Republic of Australia (which it isn't, but I'm sure many Americans think it is) instead of the Capitalist Utopia of America. I looked up Calquence on our Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme list and see that here I could drop into my local chemist shop and pick it up for a mere \$6.50. I'm sure that somebody is paying the difference between those two amounts, but that's what our kindly government is for and why we can't afford to have half a dozen carrier battle groups out on the world's high seas.

Gary Mattingly :

Very sorry to hear about the leukemia diagnosis. Good to hear that is treatable. I certainly hope your insurance company covers (fully) the prescriptions for treatment. Here's hoping for the best as soon as possible.

RADIO WINSTON

BITS AND BOBS

Once again having failed to construct a coherent single-topic column, I retreat to a hodge-podge of brief snippets...

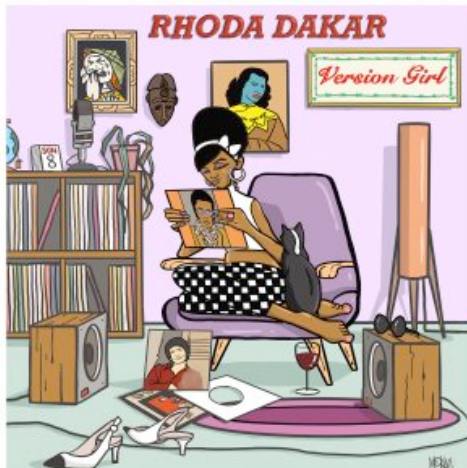
First up, via Our Sal, **Sarah Mooring**, I learn of a 17 year old aspiring singer/songwriter from Hull, who is apparently the nephew of an old mate of hers. All the best to Ellis Barraclough (is there a more Hull name than that, ey?), who should be a one to watch. Here's an original slice, '[Call for Me](#)' from his YoobToob channel...



Random Beatles trivia: only one of the famous people on the 'Sgt. Pepper' cover insisted on hearing the album before permitting her likeness to be included - Shirley Temple...

Rolling Stone magazine does love a list, some more esoteric than others. Probably specifically to annoy **Leigh Edmonds**, Michael Goldwasser compiles the '[20 Greatest Reggae Cover songs](#)'. He says in his preamble: "This list does not feature songs from popular artists like Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Jimmy Cliff, and UB40, but I think you'll enjoy the more obscure gems here." Fair enough, I suppose (but he does see fit to include Toots), yet there's such a massive list to choose from, keeping it down to 20 is a mere sampler. Let's not forget that Trojan records put out a double album set of just Beatles' covers. I (and just about any other fan of the genre) could have put together an almost entirely different list which in my case would certainly have included slices by both Nicky Thomas and Phyllis Dillon, for two. Still, moaning about what's missing in any given *RS* list is a bit of a given, innit?...

Speaking of cover songs, and to continue to piss **Leigh** off, I must give a plug for the just-released set from ska legend (and ageless beauty) Rhoda Dakar (ex-Bodysnatchers and the Special AKA). 'Version Girl' was largely recorded during lockdown, and it's getting loads of favorable reviews, including [this one](#) from 'Louder Than War'...



FAANWANK

RESULT RESPONSES

John Hertz commented (on his ballot): "I object to [the Letterhack] category. Fanwriting is fanwriting. Classic example: Milt Stevens, for years appearing mainly in lettercols, one of our finest fanwriters. Warner himself, while his modesty may have prevented him from objecting to "letterhack", was less miraculous because he locced everything, than because his locs were good. I also object to separating 'Cover' from 'Best Fanartist', and Perzine from Genzine, but I managed to vote there anyway. I also thank you profoundly for administering these."

[[Without the 'Letterhack' category, Milt wouldn't have had a sniff at a FAAn award. You've previously stated objections to "spreading the 'boo" (also complaining about a "Buggins' turn" mentality - two things which are somewhat mutually exclusive). You (correctly, in my opinion) laud Milt's skills while suggesting that the awards be structured to effectively have continued to deny him one, since loccers were underrepresented if not ignored entirely in 'fanwriter' voting, which is why the category was created...]]

Bruce Gillespie: "A pity there was no way of receiving or reading anything by Justin Busch in Australia. All I've been able to do is hear his praises. Is there any chance that issues of his fanzines could be scanned for [efanzines.com](#) or [fanac.org](#)?"

[[fanac.org might end up having them. Justin's fanzine review columns in 'Fanactivity Gazette' can be read on the N3F's website (<https://tnfff.org/the-n3f-newszine>) and he did have that excellent article in BEAM 17 which is on efanzines...]]

W^m Breiding: "We were surprised to win again this year—what a treat! I was actually quite enamored by the fact that you and Justin Busch tied for best fan writer. It showed the keen sensibilities of the voters. The acknowledgment of such dramatically different styles couldn't be more fannish. They do, indeed, walk arm-in-arm."

David Langford: "Good results, I thought, and that nice Mr **Hansen** is of course a happy fan. Congratulations on surviving another year of administrative hell!"

Steve Jeffery: "I was pleased as the names came up in each category during the Corflu FAAn Awards ceremony (though "ceremony" might be pushing it a bit far).

I was just checking the final tally against the voting form I sent you and pleased to see that I was spot on in three of the

categories (Genzine, Perzine and Fan Artist) and close in several others where my second or third choice won out. Pleased for **Jerry Kaufman** - was that the first time we'd met? I think so.

Given that I can probably list the zines I see and respond to without having to use all the fingers - or even thumbs - on both hands, I'm rather chuffed to be able to call it that close. Or maybe I have been sucked into Corflu groupthink. (While noting the caveat that while the FAAn awards may be administered by and presented at Corflu the voting is not limited to Corflu members).

[[You may have noticed that I've now set on stating that the awards are "sponsored" by the incumbent Corflu, basically meaning that's who pays for the trophies and hosts the award presentations...]]

Also I hold what are probably heretical views on the air of fanhistory ancestor worship that seems to run through a lot of Corflu, as if what fans are doing and writing now is a mere footnote to epic tales of attic ghoddminton matches 70 years ago. And yet if you could go back in time and hand those writers a copy of *Portable Storage* or *Outworlds* or *BEAM* they would be gobsmacked and filled with envy at what current fanwriters and editors have achieved. And who knows what they would think of the digital world and projects like efanzines, ISFDB and Fancyclopedia? Yeah, I'm being a bit unfair, but there seemed to be an acknowledgement and air of resignation that Corflu will likely die out with the current generation of fans, and we are just hanging on waiting for the end."

[[I probably foolishly hope you're wrong. The imminent demise of fanzines (as we know them, Jim) has been confidently if sadly predicted ever since I've been doing fanzines (not to suggest any cause and effect there, shurely?). When (and I must add "if") the heat-death finally occurs, I'm sure that I won't be around to see it...]]

Claire Brialey : "A Little Light FaanWanking:

Arguably this is a letter of comment to *The Incomplete Register* but - in what's probably a little-used sentence - Nic's other organ seems much more appropriate. Or convenient, anyway. So, belated congratulations to all the FAAn award winners, and thanks to everyone who contributed to fanzine activity last year (I'm so sorry that once again I haven't written any letters of comment). However - and without disagreeing with the results - I have questions.

Marc Ortlieb might accuse some of us of having 'delusions of relevance' again, but to every memory of the halcyon days of Ditmar disruption I counter merely that the rules of the Ditmar awards are written into the constitution of the Australian National Convention, for which there has to be a business meeting; and if that weren't enough there's a Ditmar sub-committee too. So let's just all be grateful that

the FAAns don't have pro awards attached to them too, or else where would we be? (But this is not, let's be quite clear, one of the questions in which I'm encouraging any answers.)

42 ballots were received; that compares to 66 in the previous year and 49 the year before that (Nic having been the administrator in all three years, and evidently making similar efforts to publicise the awards and encourage voting). Is it significant that voter numbers dropped back? Is it cause for concern? I'm not asking any of these questions so that I can then declare answers from on high; if I could explain them I wouldn't still be asking. One thought that did occur to me is that in both 2021 and 2022 the announcement of results was made, as a separate online event, some months in advance of Corflu (the conventions in those years being pushed back due to the Covid pandemic and other unpleasantness); is that a coincidence, or was there more focus on the FAAn awards when the con wasn't imminent too?

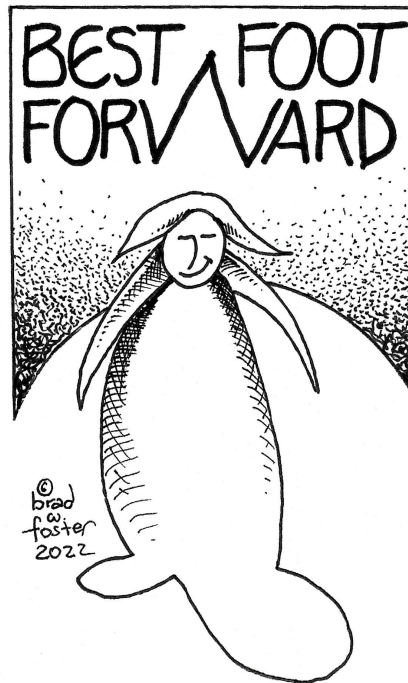
Was Corflu, in fact, such a distraction that this is why only about 22% of the members of this year's convention for fanzine fans voted in the Fanzine Activity Achievement awards? Answers there seem cynical about either Corflu or the FAAn awards or both; are there others beyond 'Look, hardly anyone gives a toss'? Accepting that these are all going to be overlapping categories, although a slightly higher proportion of people who received *TIR* (over 23%) voted, the percentages and voter numbers in all the sources sampled do seem to back up an almighty sense of disinterest in awards for recent fanzine activity among people with a nominal interest in fanzines. Perhaps fans are just much more interested in fanzines and their contents and all that goes along with publishing and reading them than in awards, or indeed discussing them afterwards.

[[My own general recollection is that typical participation from actual Corflu members stays at around 20-25% of that population. One of the most common reasons for not voting (that some people state, anyway), is "I've only seen a small number of fanzines and thus don't feel sufficiently informed", to which I inevitably (but increasingly uselessly, it seems) reply with necrophiliac bestiality that this isn't at all the fuckin' point! If more of the overall constituency voted, however minimal the overlaps in the Venn diagram of the Fanzine Faniverse might be, the results will be more representative and valid. It's a sad conclusion that the highly Balkanized community doesn't actually want fully representative and inclusive voting, and I can only speculate on the reasons for that, although as I've pointed out on many occasions (and no doubt increasingly tediously) there are strong elements of elitism involved, but also DoBFO ingrained antagonism (or at best, indifference) from some groups toward the entire process. As to the Corflu itself being a "distraction", I note (in 'Corflux' above) that the event itself, while purposed to celebrate fanzines, has

gravitated to the fanhistorical rather than the up-to-the-minute...]]

I also pondered, briefly although sourly when Nic was telling me yet again when his deadline was for this issue, how effective it is to chase people to vote. I don't respond well to being reminded of personal deadlines or appointments, as if I were someone who'd just forget otherwise and let everyone down; but for optional activities in which I'd like to participate (especially those with long timeframes that at some point become pressing) it can be useful to have it pointed out that time is ticking along. Especially when they require a bit of effort, such as reflecting on a year's worth of fanzine activity, which is partly why I don't just rush to contribute as soon as voting is announced to have opened. No one who's administered awards would be surprised by the curve of ballots being received, and the near-doubling in the final week seems wholly characteristic (including me, this time, which is actually later than I like to leave it); but despite that, and despite seeing the reward for Nic's efforts in successive prods about the voting deadline, my question here is: should this be necessary? And does doing this make everyone lazy, so that most of us not only leave it until close to the deadline but now expect to have someone remind us of what we need to do? And, perhaps, whine if that doesn't happen?

[[It's duly noted (and a very fair point) that there's a risk/reward element to punting reminders over the two-month (or so) voting period. Some are grateful for the noddges, others may well resent being treated like children with the attention span of a medicated goldfish. Would it make a difference if there was a much shorter window, or even a straight up "Election Day"? I'm understandably reluctant to test that reductio. In keeping with the backward-looking nature of a lot of the community, Andy Hooper, for one, has lamented the passing of the "old days" in which the Admin would go round the Corflu of a Saturday night badgering the attendees to fill out a ballot (as also typically occurred at Novacons for the Nova awards). This isn't something that should be entirely ruled out, in fact, and it's something that's fallen by the wayside mostly, I suggest, by Corflu deciding to create pretty trophies for the winners. A return to last-minute exhortations either creates a "to be engraved later" situation, or an up-all-night administrator having to complete and check the tallies and then spend the Sunday



morning getting the personalization done, subsequently likely passing out face down into their banquet plate...]]

Nic reported that 38 of the 42 ballots included votes in each of the genzine and perzine categories (so a few fanzine fans weren't voting for fanzines?), with numbers then dropping all the way down to 17 voters for the best fanzine cover – although quite a lot of different covers then received votes. The highest number of votes cast per voter was also in the genzine category (nearly four titles on average) with the lowest for special publication (three) which also – although not surprisingly – had the smallest field of contenders. The only question I've got about all that is whether fewer people vote in the cover category because it might require even more research? The other possible conclusions are that fewer voters care about covers – although more had opinions to express on individual fanartists than on any other category except genzine and perzine – or that fewer covers now stand out or indeed feature images of any sort.

[[I did note that there were a number of single-vote ballots in the 'Special Publication' category...]]

Meanwhile, I know – and won't rehearse for you, because it's very tedious – all the reasons why I personally have been less active in fanzines over the past eighteen months or so. But I look at the results, all the way down across all the categories, and at the list of voters, and my overwhelming impression from that is that fanzine fandom once again looks like a mainly male activity. Is that really the case? Has that changed recently? It's not just about awards recognition, is it? And if so – in respect of all these

questions – what's going on? I don't even feel involved enough in fanzines recently to speculate, although it does renew my determination to do something about that soon. If only I weren't so tired.

And finally: does any of this matter? Is interest in the FAAn awards, or in fanzines as we tend to define them, dwindling – and does *that* matter? These are surely discussion topics destined to spiral around very quickly to vanish up their own arse; for the awards themselves, we're all meant to say that of course they don't matter and they're only a bit of fun – unlike, for most of you, this sort of nerdy response. But that, like worrying about stuff so that you don't have to, remains one of the services I offer."

WAHF (CONVEYING THANKS AND CONGRATS)

Tracy Benton ; Bill Burns ; Gary Mattingly ; David Redd

TV GUIDE

CLIFFHANGERS

Spoiler alert paragraphs ahead...

A couple of cliffhangers, anyway - the season-ending episodes of both 'The Big Door Prize' and 'The Power' both contained major levels of dangle, the first with the ominous line "It's never done *that* before" (from its most mysterious character), and the second uniting the two most obviously powerful young women, unrelatedly with a sideshow of one US senate candidate zapping her opponent at their tv debate...

'Rabbit/Hole' (starring Kiefer Sutherland) also had a "What?" moment as the story arc ended with the denouement of the villain only to suggest that there's a greater Big Bad behind that one. All of the above leave me (and **Jen**, except she's not so much into 'The Power') well up for what happens next, writers' strikes permitting....

Our recent favorite 'The Company You Keep' also wrapped up nicely, not so much with a cliffhanger but with more like a "To be continued..." suggesting that it was going to turn into a version of 'Leverage' (no bad thing, that), setting up what would be the team, but the bastards-that-be have cancelled it. This has given us the arse, being fans of the somewhat underrated (YMMV) Milo Ventimiglia in just about anything at all - action movie fans should check out his turn as the bad guy in the Jason Statham movie 'Wild Card'...

I finally got around to slogging through season 1 of 'Foundation', although "slogging" might be a bit unfair. It's a decent compromise between Asimov's procession of talking heads and sort-of-Star-Wars-y action bits (without having to make up exotic aliens in the resolutely human-only universe). The obviously not-early-Asimov bits (gender-swapping of characters, perhaps most notably Salvor Hardin and Gaal Dornick) and the inclusion of nooky as well as women can be considered improvements on the original. Overall I'm glad I stuck with it, since the series did build nicely and I will be clocking season 2 when it appears. I couldn't help but keep thinking, though, how weedy an anagram "Cleon" is of "clone"...

Good news, because I say so, for UK readers: you've now got 'Poker Face' over there, [very favorably reviewed](#) by the *Grauniad*...

FOOTY

BY DAVID HODSON

It's been another busy month, so let's get the boring stuff out of the way first:

Manchester City won the Premier League title with three games to spare after Arsenal blew-up in the title run-in (sorry, **Tommy**, but we did discuss this and we both expected it); indeed, I'm writing this column in the days preceding the final weekend of the Prem and the smart money is on City to do the Premier League, F.A. Cup, and Champions League treble. They probably are the best football side in the world at the moment. Tottenham's shitshow of a season continued to go from bad to worse as we've slid down the table to eighth and Nic's Watford failed to win promotion back to the Premier League from the Championship, so none of us are happy. Never mind, the cricket season has started and, yay, it's an Ashes season, so, in a little over a month's time, I can start being depressed about England being handed their arses by the Aussies (I will studiously avoid the letters column here for the next two months).

The end of April and the start of May found me going back to Fleecefields School in Edmonton to talk to the year three (8-year-old) children about Egyptian archaeology, the year fours about the Mayans, and the year fives about Greece, absolutely none of which I would regard as a speciality of mine. At the end of June, I'm helping escort the year fives around the Greek sections of the British Museum and have been asked to concentrate on artefacts showing daily life; the Gods; the Parthenon; and the birth of democracy. I haven't herded kittens on this scale since my youngest daughter was in primary school, over twenty years ago. I suspect I'll just wibble on about Corinth, the city of lamps, as much as possible.

Proof that any deities that exist truly hate me and that no good deed goes unpunished came when my friend Richard phoned me to ask if I could do the same sessions at his great-grandson's school somewhere out in Hertfordshire. "Yes," says I, "of course," says I, "it'd be a pleasure," says I. Richard tells me I'm an idiot and should never volunteer for anything. I suppress a heavy sigh and console myself with thoughts of the Rom, Spaceknight and Micronauts Omnibus reprints just announced by Marvel. I get knocked down and I get up again, and we're off on a Chumbawumba earworm...



On the seventeenth of May I went jetting off to Berlin for Metropolcon, a multi-media SF, fantasy, and horror convention held in a lush and picturesque former crematorium and grounds that has been converted into a community and arts hub called the Silent Green, a name that lent itself to several jokes about Soylent Green, the film based on the novel *Make Room, Make Room* by Harry Harrison. Although I didn't know Harry well, I suspect he'd have enjoyed the venue and the jokes.

The convention had more of an academic conference feel than a traditional British con. Much of the programme was split over four small rooms on an elevated "mezzanine" level with doors that opened out into the fresh air. There was a larger auditorium in what would have been the old crematorium proper, where the opening and closing ceremonies and live performances by bands took place. The book room was large and spacious and attached to the art show. Most of the dealers were actual, dyed in the wool, booksellers and I've not seen so many books in a con huckster's room in years, but reports were that most of the dealers were a little disappointed with takings. To be fair, I've been a bookseller at cons, and I've never yet met a dealer that was happy with their takings over a weekend. The one trader that would have been happy with their takings was the tattoo artist because, reportedly, every member of the con got a tat done; I can definitely vouch for the fact that several did at least.

I learned some modern history that had previously passed me by completely whilst at the Silent Green. The original crematorium, built in 1911, was closed in 2002 because the city had a second, more modern crematorium that was built due to a flu pandemic in 1968/9. I had never heard of this pandemic before (probably not surprising, I was only seven or eight-years-old at the time), but, lo and behold, one google search later and the H3N2 Hong Kong flu strain that emerged in 1968 was estimated to be responsible for between one and four million deaths worldwide and East Berlin, as it then was, was particularly badly hit by it. At this point in time, covid is estimated to have caused 6.8 million deaths worldwide since 2019, but because information gathering techniques and general news reporting is so much better now, it's highly likely that the 1968 figure is a gross underestimate.

Whilst refusing to have a Guest of Honour, Metropolcon did have a Special Guest: Mary Robinette Kowal. I had heard of Kowal but have never encountered or read anything by her before, and the two writer's workshops by her that I attended showed her to be an interesting and thoughtful guest, so I will investigate more. I'm currently going through my audiobook collection to see if I've inadvertently purchased any of the books she's been a voice performer on.

The same team are planning a bid to host the 2026 Eurocon with the vote to be held at next year's Eurocon in Rotterdam

(I shall be there. I've not been to the Netherlands in decades and this seems like a good excuse). The bid is likely to be unopposed and it would be an interesting continuation of this event, but that doesn't mean there aren't issues to address. Although I'm told that the membership of the convention was around 500 including dealers and con com, I doubt I saw more than 200-250 people at the complex at any one time; this could be accounted for by a large number of local fans who could come from and go home as they pleased, plus there was a significant discount for attending individual evenings, a time when I was usually out eating, so walk-ins could account for a reasonable number. None of the membership badges had numbers on (except for Dave bloody Lally, who pointed out the number six under his name to at least fifty people and then proceeded to explain why at great length), and there was no membership list issued anywhere (there were no Progress Reports issued at any point either). It's only when these things aren't in place that you realise their value to a convention; there's more than one convention I've attended because I saw in the P.R.s that such and such a person was going or I could count on seeing a(n) (un)usual bunch of suspects in the bar, and this will have to be put right for a Eurocon.



L-R: Hanno Schreiber, Heidrun Tribukait, Dave Bloody Lally

One of the other problems, which is a problem with the venue as much as anything, is the lack of a main bar. There are three small bars cum snack bars, one outdoors, around the complex, but none of them would have been able to cope with an onslaught of people between programme items. The main snack bar was subterranean and a little dark and lacked any soft furnishing, so wasn't particularly welcoming, and the main bar above ground in the crematorium complex was turning people away before 12 noon as it had a brisk local brunch trade to deal with. It's lucky the weather was so good over the extended weekend, so people could sit in the

sun outside whilst chatting and eating or drinking. Although the con com would like to go back to this venue for the Eurocon, I doubt it could handle the uptick in numbers or put in place the amenities to make the majority of potential extra attendees happy, especially if the weather took a turn for the worse, so it's good that alternative venues are already being investigated. The point was made to me that European fans don't have the British (and, to some extent, American) drinking culture and thus bars aren't as important to European con runners, but I'm afraid I don't really buy this reasoning. The bar areas are about socialising and the drinking comes as a consequence of the socialising.

The convention closed with an auction and the two most successful items were Mary Robinette Kowal offering a "Tuckerization" in her next novel, which sold for 500€, and an approximately 4' (1.3metres) high Playmobil display figure of Mr Spock, which sold for 600€ although I'm sure this could have raised much, much more if offered on zoom to a wider audience, but again, this is about experience and an older and wiser con com in three years' time will address this issue.

The dead dog party was a thing of both beauty and horror. Following a mammoth trek through central Berlin, stopping only for an entertaining hour-long meal in a German restaurant, Jonathan Holmes, Carolina Gómez Lagerlöf, Britt-Louise, and I arrived at Charlie Beach, an inner-city beach drinking hole on the site of the old Checkpoint Charlie, to top up the already considerable alcohol levels of at least two of us. Several beers later, including two very last-minute closing time Brit specials and we were off to the Zyankali (which seems to translate to potassium cyanide) Bar, where most drank a Pangalactic Gargleblaster whilst I stayed firmly on the beer. Somewhere between Charlie Beach and Zyankali, we lost Jonathan; he'd fallen asleep on a bench. One more bar and I had to bail as well as I remembered I had a flight the following day, although it might have helped if I'd known where the fuck I actually was in the city, so I arrived back at my hotel at about 3am after a 30€ cab ride from Gawd only knows where.

So, congratulations to Claudia Rapp, Constanze Hofmann, and crew, for running a good first convention which, once the few issues have been addressed, should serve as a solid dry run for the 2026 Eurocon; thank you to Alexa Pukall, who only ever seemed to have a smile on her face which made recovering from hangovers (and Dave Lally) so much easier; and hope to see you again soon to Jonathan Holmes,



Hanno, gargleblaster, columnist

the only other sane (?) Brit in attendance; Hanno Schreiber, a man who really should have been at 1980s Novacons, he'd have fit right in with Nic, Dave Holmes, Gamma, and myself; and his lovely wife Heidrun Tribukait.

Right, that's me done for another month. I'm a few hundred words short because I want to encourage Nic to include photos from Germany and of my lovely little chums from Purple Class at Fleecefields, so I can forward this issue on to most of them (I know I can't forward it to the children, I'm not that irresponsible no matter what some may think). I am on a mission to get Hanno, Heidrun, and Alexa to the Belfast Eastercon at the very least if they can't make it to the Glasgow Worldcon next year, and just like Nic at deadline time, I know how to nag, so expect to meet them all soon!

CLERIHEWS AT DAWN

S&ra Bond writes:

Nic Farey
Has sometimes been known to get larey;
I believe I have heard
The Kaiser Chiefs also use this word.

I respond that "Farey" rhymes with 'safari' and not 'lairy' (the spelling I was accustomed to), and receive the following by reply:

Nic Farey
Should commit hari-kari
For not pronouncing his name "Farey",
A fact of which poets should be chary.

I continue to nitpick: "hari-kari" is a less used alternative to the proper "harakiri" which of course rhymes with "beery", as we may both have been when writing. **S&ra** then ponders whether she can rhyme "seppuku" with "sudoku". I contrive the following:

Sandra Bond
Could think about going blonde
Because trying to give my name the shaft
Is utterly fuckin' daft...

A mere five minutes later the *coup de grace* arrives:

E. Clerihew Bentley
Never treated his subjects gently,
And I shall respect that tradition
Even if it dooms me to perdition.

LOCO CITATO

[[“Australia is an outdoor country. People only go inside to use the toilet. And that’s a recent development..” (Barry Humphries)...]]

From: askance73@gmail.com

April 29

John Purcell writes:

Hard to believe you’re the 64th issue of this zippy little fmz, and based on the news you shared, I bet you probably will make it to 99 issues. That’s a heck of a goal to shoot for, so I say go for it. Herewith, a zippy loc to give myself a break from grading freshman comp essays. Forgive me if I slip into poorly phrased sentences with messed-up pronoun references and double negatives.

[[Um, well, if I don’t skip a month here or there (which might well happen), #99 would be dropping in March 2026, and that seems a fuck of a long time off...]]

Yay, to **Sandra Bond** on winning TAFF! She most definitely deserves it, and I really hope she can figure out which beer goes well with Pemmican and write that up for *Askance*. Inquiring minds want to know. I think. Well, at least I do, so there’s one challenge for her upcoming trip.

So Corflu 41 is gonna be a four-day event. Cool deal. Seems to me that a leap year Corflu should have some kind of special event to mark the first day of this convention. It will be interesting to see what you folks come up with. A good crew working on this, already, which means it will be yet another grand success.

[[You didn’t notice that it’s our 2nd wedding anniversary?...]]

Reading about the Telstar Curse put that earworm into my head as background music while I read that article.

Interesting about the numerology connection with other events occurring on February 3rd. Not all things happening on that particular date are bad things, though: our younger daughter was born on that date in 1991, and it is also the birthday of Felix Mendelssohn. Right now I need to listen to something else to blast this danged “Telstar” melody out of my head. Thank you so much for the earworm.

I have no real comment about the FAAn Awards except that all the winners are most worthy, and I agree with you completely about Justin E. A. Busch. In the short return he made to fanzine fandom Justin certainly made quite an impression. I enjoyed his zine and his writing. Also, you definitely deserve the honour of being the co-winner of Best Fan Writer with Justin. You are most certainly in good company. Like I said in my loc back on page 10, I am pleased just to be part of the fan community. Awards? I don’t need no steenking award... The problem for me right now is having to wait until after the semester ends in two weeks time so I

can finally get onto working on *Askance* #55, which sports yet another fantastic cover by the incomparable **Alan White**. Geez, that guy does *not* do crap work. Ever. One of these years I really have to meet him. Yeah, yeah: next Corflu is my chance. All I can say is we have to wait and see.

[[Your reluctance to leave the confines of College Station (TAFF trip notwithstanding) is ingrained, innit? It would be a pleasure to see you in Vegas - it’s only a 20 or 21 hour drive you know. (I know because, as you know, I did it)...]]

In response to your response in my loc regarding our mutual “what should we watch tonight?” debate with our spouses, Valerie and I have settled in on mostly skiffy and supernatural fare. We liked ‘Mandalorian’ just fine, and sad that it’s over, but there will always some kind of related offshoot spewing forth, so we’re not worried. Right now it’s the Stanley Cup playoffs that have our attention, even though my team got knocked out in the first round yet again! What else is new? Some year the Minnesota Mild will make it past the first round again. With luck that might happen during my lifetime.

I have been following **Liam Proven**’s postings on Facebook and marveling at the collection of hardware now residing in his arm. What a fuckup he has had to deal with not only with the injury but mostly with his battle to get to someplace where he could have some decent medical treatment. Poor sod! Hope his recovery goes well.

Anywho, it’s time to wrap this up. Many thanks again for the snappy issue, and I might just break out the guitar for an hour or two this afternoon to give myself another break from grading student essays this weekend. The fun never ends, eh?

[[Millions flee in terror (or in search of earplugs)...]]

From: robjackson60@gmail.com

April 29

Rob Jackson writes:

[[The Doc follows on from his comments in ‘Health Diary’ above...]]

Oh my God – make that almost 50 years of doctoring. Am I getting old or something? Having volunteered to help **Tommy Ferguson** and James Bacon out with publications on Reconnect in Belfast in two years’ time, I realise to my horror that I will have been editing the publications for two Eastercons 51 years apart. The first one was of course Tynecon in 1974.

Talking about things from a long time ago, it was great to hear from my old mate **Kev Williams** once again in the lettercolumn. I suppose I’m slightly reassured to find out that he also has an imperfect memory in that he can’t remember Pete Weston’s wife’s name, which was of course

Eileen. Kev has also been writing something about Kingsley Amis, who has connexions with Kev's old alma mater Swansea; fingers crossed a tale of all this will be in the next *Inca*. Still on *Inca* and blasts from the past, Coral was dead chuffed for her pen-portrait of Seventies room parties to be noted favourably.

[[I admit that I didn't remember Eileen's name either. And Coral, you're most welcome - that was a brilliant reprint much enjoyed round here...]]

I must have been doing too many crosswords, as I found your clues rather easy. Your Howard Carter one was a simple anagram of the first 12 letters of the clue, and a one letter party drug in the plural followed by a bird with black plumage gives the legal term for your second answer. Many of the *Guardian* crossword clues have complex subsidiary bits, with (for example) a mix of anagrams and a different form of reference entirely. I am not up in the **Langford** or **Edwards (M)** league – both of them can do crosswords of stratospheric weirdness. At the last Novacon, during a conversation over dinner another crossword-savvy friend and I discovered that, however clever she is with words in other ways, our newly minted TAFF winner **S&ra** has a bit of a blind spot for crosswords. Well, never mind...

[[The Lord o' Fang has also supplied thish's efforts...]]

From: jakaufman@aol.com

May 3

Jerry Kaufman writes:

I'm tempted to attend Pemmi-con just to keep **Sandra Bond** company, but need some other reasons to attend before I succumb. I feel like I've done all the international travel I can handle this year.

I listened to a bit of "Telstar", and realized that I've gone my entire life without hearing it before now. Not only that, but I would have guessed it was by the Ventures.

I'll return **David Hodson's** compliments in kind. Suzle and I enjoyed meeting him at Craic and spending more time with him at Conversation. (That was, by the way, a well-named Eastercon.) I look forward to seeing him and so many other Corfluvians in Las Vegas. Another by-the-way, do you prefer "David" over "Dave"? I note the by-line on the column, plus a signature on an email in a discussion list I'm on.

[[Well, I use "David" for his writing (and in references to his authorship) since I consider it formally proper. I've never called him that to his face, when it's always "Dave", or often Claire Brialey's least favorite word (which in our circles may be considered a mutual term of affection)...]]

When President Obama eased restrictions on USA travel to Cuba and tried to improve relations, I had a minute of wanting to travel there. Then, as you recall correctly, Trump undid all that. I have the impression that other countries have better relations with Cuba, so that Canadians, Brits, and Europeans could gather there more easily. But I would think arranging a convention there would present huge challenges. Still, it's fun to think about - the Buena Vista Social Club could provide entertainment at the banquet.

[[I occasionally but very idly considered a visit at times (or even moving there because of the superior healthcare and longer life expectancy) which, being on a British passport, I could do, albeit by a roundabout route...]]

Yes, I needed translation of the named beauty on your final page. I figured that the surname worked out to "Brennan" and the middle name was a variation of "Patrick", but that's as far as I could get unaided. I looked it up in Google and found it was Enya Patricia Brennan. The Wikipedia entry showed she was born in 1961, so I assumed the photo was from decades ago. To my surprise, I found it dated 2022. So I'm astounded. She's over 60 years old!

[[Indeed. She used the Anglicized 'Enya' mononymously for her career, of course. As a little side note, I had a bit of a fling in my LSE days with a girl named "Eithne", but she pronounced it "ETH-na"...]]

From: garth.van.spencer@gmail.com

May 5

Garth Spencer writes:

In response to your news about **S&ra's** TAFF win, I look forward to seeing her in Winnipeg. I really must coordinate with her about how to promote fan funds. (Would you be so kind as to put us in touch? I do not have her email.)

[[Done...]]

The May issue of my fanzine should include the Corflu 41 particulars, for those readers who may not have gotten the word already.

[[And thanks for that, of course...]]

I see the ongoing discussions of mundane issues still approaches the mathematical description of chaos. Maybe there should be a publication titled "All the Troubles of the World" where the monthly miseries can be summarized: just the facts, all the facts, and only the facts.

Maybe the U.N. and several intelligence agencies already do this, buried in several different departmental publications, and at least six months out of date.

Loved **Marc Ortlieb's** description of Ditmar debates of old. I want to write a Canadian fanhistory in that vein. Unfortunately I am advised that there are Politically Correct

restrictions, legal barriers such as libel laws, and non-disclosure agreements in place. We shall see how much trouble I can get into.

From: excellenceingardening@gmail.com

May 6

Joseph Nicholas writes:

I have been successfully avoiding today's feudal throwback exercise by spending most of the day in the conservatory, planting up window boxes and hanging baskets, and sowing trays of flower seeds for later planting out in the garden (should they all germinate, of course). This required micro-sifting of commercially-bought compost to remove the incredible quantities of junk one finds therein -- stones, broken glass, bits of plastic: no bloody quality control, obviously. All the while the rain has been hammering down outside, prompting in me great feelings of *schadenfreude* at the thought of all those monarchy fans lining the streets for a glimpse of their new leader -- may they all get pneumonia and die horribly, thus reducing the size of the likely pool of Tory voters.

[[Likewise, I was narked that the nice kicking the Tories were getting in the local elections (which I was enjoying reading about, of course) was replaced at the top of the Grauniad website by jug-ears. Unable to ensconce myself in the nonexistent conservatory, I fanacked a bit and slept a lot instead...]]

Anyway. I of course recognised who Eithne Pádraigín Ní Bhraonáin is; I even have her first two albums, and can still remember most of the lyric of "Orinoco Flow". Looking up her Wikipedia entry -- from which I note that you have lifted her photograph, you naughty boy -- I see that she really is ageless: I expected someone born sixty-odd years ago to look more lined, but perhaps she has discovered not just where the Orinoco flows but the philosopher's stone and the secret of eternal youth (possibly somewhere around the Orinoco's source).

Googling away, I also discovered that Clannad is the name of a Japanese manga and anime series, about which I was entirely unaware, although information of how and where the originators of same derived the name is nowhere given. (Not in anything I've been able to track down, anyway.) Did they steal it from the Irish, one wonders.

[[I discover that they did, and send Joseph the link to a manga blog. One of the writers was a fan, and assumed the



name related to "clan" (which I suppose it very vaguely does, though not exactly)...]]

Your crossword clue for **Eli** was easy-peasy! I imagine that most people will try to anagrammatise "Howard Carter" rather than grasping that his name is the pointer to the answer, which is of course (answer redacted).

[[See above, the Doc also considered both lastish's clues larffably easy, and below, Eli figured it out...]]

From: portablezine@gmail.com

May 7

W^m Breiding writes:

Gail and I just returned from apartment hunting in Albuquerque. And in an astounding moment of luck we found our perfect environment. The casita is a bit small and we will have to downsize even further than expected. Like *way* more.

And yes, the rent and utilities and other monthly costs are higher than we were hoping to pay on our restricted retirement income, but it will be worth it to be an easy stroll from the Rio Grande and among the towering cottonwoods. The only caveat is that it's not available until late October, so we will be living through another hot and humid summer in the low Sonoran desert here in Tucson.

[[Near enough to come along to the Vegas Corflu next year, of course...]]

From : eli.cohen@mindspring.com

May 9

Eli Cohen writes:

Re the FAAn Awards: Wow, I climbed from "Best New Fan" to 5th in line for "Best Letterhack" in only a year! I'm overwhelmed! I guess that means I have to finish this loc... But then I have to go do a loc on this other Farey zine that just appeared! What happened to normal fannish publishing schedules of once every year or two?

[[That "normal" tends to apply more to magnificent genzines than scrappy little bastards like this...]]

"Google typist randomly finds Howard Carter, for example (12)". Hmm... Howard Carter is the King Tut guy, right? And his name has 12 letters, but I don't see any plausible

anagrams. "Google typist" has 12 letters also, and it looks like there's an "egypt" buried in it, which is encouraging... I would say randomly re-arranging "Google typist" to get EGYPTOLOGIST would be a way of pointing to Howard Carter, so that's what I'm going with. I guess I should address my answer "tomb it may concern". Now, don't you go "tut tut" at me!

[[Groans. But yes, you have it...]]

"Party drugs getting bird in a legal limbo? (6)???" I got nothin'. Hope **Dave Langford** can do better...

[[See 'Indulge Me' for the solution. both Dave and Rob Jackson solved that one easily...]]

Ulrika's illos are, as usual, lovely. I especially like the one on p. 13.

OK, now on to that *Jenzine* thing.

From : leighedmonds01.com

May 15

Leigh Edmonds writes:

Your comment about Australia being an outdoor country where people only go inside to the toilet must be a fairly recent quote. Indoor plumbing is a recent innovation and no doubt there are some who still have outdoor dunnies, as we all did once. That aside...

[[Not "my" comment, of course, but a memorial quote from Barry Humphries...]]

Is the **S&ra Bond** you refer to on your second page in reference to TAFF the same **S&ra Bond** that you refer to on your first page as being 'tight' at Corflu Craic? If so, it should be a memorable TAFF trip and the report might be somewhat hazy in places.

[[There can be only one...]]

For once I didn't have to hit the link to listen to 'Telstar' since the thing is still engraved somewhere in my neurons and pops out from time to time. I thought of it as a branch of the surfie music which was popular for a few years before the Beatles came along. I don't know if they had surfie music in Britain, I've heard that there is surf somewhere around the British coast but I can't imagine that it is much fun to ride in most of the time. It was, however, very popular in Australia and I thought it was better than the pop music coming out to America at the same time, which might not be saying too much. I never knew any of the other stuff you wrote about in this column so I consider myself informed, but still not very interested.

Friend **Hodson's** column was full of good non-football stuff. By which I mean that I recognized the names of most of the people he wrote about for a change. The football business he

did write about, dissension from the umpire/referee's ruling had been something of a topic here in AFL land. I don't know if this has been going on for some time and I haven't noticed, but this year the umpires have been more attentive to the 'dissent against the umpire's decision' rule and so there has been some heated discussion. What, the pundits ask, is dissent? Is it a mouth full of abuse, a gesture of dissent or merely a raising of the eyebrow? It seems that different umpires have differing opinions on this so the crowd is often left wondering what this or that free kick was awarded for. I'm quite happy for the umpires to do whatever they like, so long as Melbourne isn't playing.

I was amused by **Steve Jeffery's** comment about the BBC having done a screeching U-turn, shot itself in the foot and then blown its whole leg off at the knee. Sounds just like some political parties we know, except he left out the bit about them trying to pretend that none of it had actually happened.

If Steve ever happens to be in Ballarat I can show him the shower in my house which is cunningly designed so you can manipulate the control while standing well out of the way. The control is simplicity itself, one lever. Clockwise for more hot and counterclockwise for more cold, push it in for less water and pull it out for more. Since, however, I am the only one to use that shower the control lever is always in the same position for the heat of the water so all I have to do is pull it out and the water comes out at just the right temperature for me. That is, until a cleaner (there is some advantage to being old and infirm, at least in the minds of the people who decide such things) comes along and cleans the shower with gusto, paying no attention to the location of the shower control. It's even worse should I forget that this might have happened. Which is worse, too hot or too cold? I still haven't decided but it's an experiment/experience I try to avoid.

[[It seems we have similar shower controls...]]

I wish I was more like **Joseph Nicholas** sometimes, the idea of blocking out ideas of what he's going to write in a letter of comment is a novel idea to me, but perhaps a good one. More often than I care to think a brilliant idea about what to write by way of comment comes to me only a few minutes after I've hit the send button. Perhaps more blocking out ideas and less writing the first thing that comes to mind might be something I could think about - but not too hard I expect.

I was affected a little by Joseph's comment "'we' because there were still two of us)". It's something that I'm still trying to get my head around, that this is now 'my' house and 'my' cats rather than 'ours'. I suppose **John Harvey** is in the same boat too. Which reminds me that I think we (Valma and I) met Eve and John Harvey only once, I think, or it might have been twice, at one of the Aussiecons too. I'm pretty sure that we met them at a convention in Perth and on

the day before or after the convention went with them on the ferry to Rottnest Island off the coast from Perth. There we rented bicycles and rode around the island all day. I was a lovely day, warm and a clear blue sky that showed off Rottnest at its best. However, what I remember most is the following day. I don't think we'd been on a bike for years and the muscles we used that day protested vigorously the next day, making it hard to even walk.

I was also interested in reading about how Joseph spends his evenings post Judith. Unlike him, I have two cats who are of the unshakeable belief that the evenings must be spent reclining on a human who is reclining in front of the tv. I've argued with them about this but they will have none of this tomfoolery that evenings might be spent doing something else. In the end I've given in to their pathetic whinging and watch a movie in the evening just so they can recline on me. Since we subscribed to the Disney channel I've been educating myself in all the Marvel Movies they have. I tell myself that it is an education of some sort but the real reason is that I tend to nod off in the middle of the movies so missing out on the middle half of them seems to be no great loss. I did finally get to watch 'The Martian' which was interesting enough to keep me awake right through, I don't think I went to sleep during 'Interstellar' but maybe I did because a lot of the ending didn't seem to make much sense.

Having read my way to the end of this issue I see that the Capitalist Utopia in the United States is providing you with Calquence for even less than our \$6.50. This being so, I wonder who is paying the difference between \$15,000 and \$0.00 and how can the US Navy afford so many carrier groups with all this largess going on. Good luck with it all anyhow.

From: daverabban@gmail.com

May 16

Dave Cockfield writes:

Just a short thank you Nic as I'm currently experiencing "double trouble".

Kitchen getting flooded from the flat above and vertigo attacks.

Probably the worry about whether we will get through to the Play Off Finals tonight.

At least the Hornets can now rest up and contemplate who their next manager will be.

*[[I send Dave commiserations on the Black Cats losing to the hated L*ton, and of course Watford's next manager has already been appointed...]]*

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

May 25

Gary Mattingly writes:

We'll see if I got this to you under the wire.

[[I'm beginning to suspect that you note the "nextish" date in 'Indulge Me' and set up a calendar alert...]]

Corflux: I still had problems on the hotel web site but I was able to book a room on the phone. I have no idea what my personal issue is with the website. I also booked a flight from SFO to Las Vegas and back to SFO.

Radio Winston: I was unaware of the movie, 'Telstar: The Joe Meek Story'. I now have a copy of that on the to-be-watched shelves (well, actually in a pile on the floor to be shelved on the to-be-watched shelves).

TV Guide: Yes, I'll be watching the new series to come out of 'Picard'. Of course at the moment there is that writers' strike so maybe it is all in the TBD universe at the moment. With respect to 'The Ark', the internet seems to indicate there will be a Season 2. And yes, I could tell that 'The Big Door Prize' was going to get darker and although I like many dark series I'm not initially enamored of it in this series. Still pondering 'The Power'. I can't remember if I mentioned 'Will Trent'. I have watched the whole season of that and quite like it. Another new series I liked is 'Silo'. I find it moderately entertaining and interesting. Not sure where it is going yet. Also I watched all 8 episodes of 'American Born Chinese'. Also okay and probably in the Young Adult category. It has Chinese gods, Kung Fu, American High School and young romance, plus cosplay. Let's see, watched all of 'Mrs. Davis'. Enjoyed that. It was moderately bizarre. I also plan to check out a new series, 'The Gryphon'. Watched all of the episodes in this season of 'Sweet Tooth'. It seems there is to be one more season. Watched a couple of episodes of 'High Desert' with Patricia Arquette. Still pondering whether I will watch more.

[[We're a little (though not too much) behind on 'Silo' and 'Mrs. Davis', but into both of them well enough...]]

With respect to movies, the last thing I saw was 'Ganja and Hess', a rather strange "blaxploitation / vampire movie." Although it is really sort of an art house / auteur movie. Also rewatched 'Brokeback Mountain' which I haven't seen in a really long time, such that I didn't remember most of it. I enjoyed it but it is not a happy movie. Also rewatched 'Dragonheart' which I last saw a long time ago. It's okay, or maybe in the just fair category. Hm, watched 'Interstellar' again. I know lots of people are greatly enamored of this movie. I enjoyed it but definitely don't think it is as great as other people do. I saw it originally in the theater and the sound effects were so loud that they drowned out a lot of the dialogue, at least for me. The sound was much better at home and I could hear and understand all of the dialogue.

Watched 'Weathering With You' directed by Makoto Shinkai which I definitely enjoyed. I've seen one other film by him and have a number of his others on the to-be-watched shelves. I watched 'Ip Man' which I thought was pretty good. Interesting background to the mentor and teacher of Bruce Lee. Watched 'Outlander', a movie about an alien, vikings and a monster stowed away on his crashed ship. He gets together with vikings and fights the monster. It's okay but not great, IMHO. Also watched 'Darby O'Gill and the Little People' directed by Robert Stevenson which I think was the first movie I ever saw in a theater, at least the first one I remember. I was around seven years old and probably went with a church group to the one theater in Fort Scott, Kansas. I was living in Bronson, Kansas at that time, which had no theater. The movie has a fairly young Sean Connery in it, fully clothed. It's not a bad movie but also not great. It has leprechauns and banshees too. I watched both 'A Man Called Otto' and 'A Man Called Ove'. I liked them both but I thought 'A Man Called Ove' was a much better movie, at least for me. I watched the new 'Peter Pan & Wendy' directed by David Lowery on Disney+. I didn't think it was that great. Let's see, I also watched 'Dreamer of Oz' directed by Jack Bender and starring John Ritter, It is a partial biography of L. Frank Baum. It was all right. I happen to be an Oz fan and also recently bought tickets to go see a documentary on David Lynch and the Wizard of Oz. That's at the Roxie Theater in San Francisco. It is near **Jay and Dixie Kinney's** flat. Maybe I'll get a chance to see them. Anyway it seems Lynch was greatly influenced by the Wizard of Oz. The night I'm going the director of the documentary will be there to answer questions. The same week I have a ticket to see a new Wizard of Oz play with music from the 1939 movie. It is a "family friendly" play, or so says the ads for it. Hopefully there aren't too many noisy children around me.

[[Do you ever sleep? If you do see Jay, please tell him I said 'ello and COR41U...]]

Footy: Interesting and entertaining con reports. Too bad I never talked with **[David Hodson]** while I was at Corflu. Of course, I didn't really talk with a lot of people. I should have talked more with the Mearas than the

few words I had with them. At least I didn't catch covid again. My sympathy for those that did test positive.

Some entertaining poetry, and on to Loco Citato:

Steve Jeffery: I saw Jeff Beck live once. Quite enjoyable. I don't have the box set he mentions but I have all the individual albums in that set. Actually I think I have most of his studio albums and some of his live albums, also numerous collections on which he appears.

With respect to travel to Cuba, "The 12 categories of authorized travel to Cuba are: family visits; official business of the U.S. government, foreign governments, and certain intergovernmental organizations; journalistic activity; professional research and professional meetings; educational activities; religious activities; public performances, clinics, workshops, athletic and other competitions, and exhibitions; support for the Cuban people; humanitarian projects; activities of private foundations or research or educational institutes; exportation, importation, or transmission of information or informational materials; and certain authorized export transactions." Would Corflu fit under one or more of those?

[[Possibly. The idea of defining a Corflu under "religious activities" is tempting as all fuck...]]

Fanzines received: I've received several of those. Now I just have to read them, along with the last issue of BEAM.

[[It's been seven months since BEAM 17 came out! Maybe clock a few less iffy movies to make time for it?...]]

Ageless Beauty: Not that I'm a Martha Stewart fan but did you see the latest *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue with her at 81 in a swimsuit?

[[Hasn't everybody, at this point?...]]

Glad to see the Calquence came through with \$0 co-pay.

Sorry to hear about your old friend **Liam Proven**. I do wish him the best. One person I know has had really bad health problems recently. She's not a fan but is a friend. She has had a number of brain aneurysms and has been in the hospital a number of times. Up to this point I think they still haven't figured out what has caused



the aneurysms. Unfortunately I just heard she is back in the hospital today and in a coma. They've taken her off life support to see if she can survive without it. Haven't heard the results but none of it sounds promising. She's much younger than I am and a very nice person. I hope she makes it.

[[Best wishes to your friend, also. Liam is progressing - he's a tuff little bugger...]]

Also sad to hear of the death of Tina Turner.

[[Turner is getting extensively memorialized, of course. My abiding memory of her is the fairly unbelievable statement that, having played the Acid Queen in Ken Russell's 'Tommy' movie, that she had no idea what the song was about [falls off chair]...]]

WAHF

Kim Huett ; Perry Middlemiss

FANZINES RECEIVED

Gratefully acknowledged with a (very) little comment...

dot-fanzine (John D Berry) - "Once every ten years seems like a reasonable publishing schedule, doesn't it?" asks John in his cover note, which cries out for a response along the lines of "For this, yes" which of course I could not possibly agree with...

JENZINE #4 (J L Farey) - My darling **Jen** has fully embraced the fanzining ethos now, in part by having an ish come out late, though not yet at *Littlebrook* (or indeed *dot-fanzine*) levels. Describing this'un as "the penis issue" may not endear you, but ey...

LOFGEORNOST #151 (Fred Lerner) - Back into detective/mystery fiction with female protagonists, one set in Melbourne post Great War, and an apparent "remake" of that transplanted to 1930s Shanghai. Fred also warily dips a toe into pronouns...

INDULGE ME

✘ **SCIENCE AND NATURE (AUSTRALIA)** : Because everyone loves marsupials, right, [here's a good news story](#) about the recovery of the endangered brush-tailed bettong (pictured right)...

✘ **CROSSWORD CLUE FOR ELI** : Another gratefully supplied by the Deaf Twit, which I've fannishly adapted slightly: "Makes a patterned shirt for Robert L - all square, of course! (3-4)"...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1)** : Not *too* willfully obscure, perhaps, but here's Iranian-born **Tanya Lemani**, who, for the likely baffled, played the belly dancer (which she was in real life, among other things) in the *Star Trek: TOS* episode 'Wolf in the Fold'...



✘ **SCIENCE AND NATURE (2)** : Planetary geekery is inevitable, but I do wonder at what level a chunk of anything orbiting a planet becomes a "moon"? Saturn regains its status (for now) as having [the most moons in our solar system](#)...

✘ **THE LANGFORD CONTRAPTION** : **Dave** correctly solves "Party drugs getting bird in a legal limbo? (6)" as ESCROW (Party drugs = 'ES' + bird 'CROW'), and supplies the following which he asserts has "a certain redolence that you might enjoy" [falls off chair] : "Fart aloud finally with baked beans cooked in guest house (3,3,9)"...



✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : One of the original MTV “VJs”, Martha Quinn...



✘ **SCIENCE AND NATURE (CHUCK TINGLE EDITION)** : Because apparently, and to mass groans (ahem), the headline ‘[Uranus Has Experienced A Colossal Pounding](#)’ is tiresomely irresistible, though it does explain why the planet’s rotational axis is all sideways...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (3)** : Realizing there was no Brit for Jerry Kaufman to be suitably baffled by, here’s Selina Scott...



✘ **CROSSWORD CLUE EXTRA** : Came up with this in my sleep, I think, and so I’m chucking it in before I forget: “America First hairstyle on actor Charles? That’s too much! (9)”...

✘ **NEXTISH** : Oh, 23rd / 24th June, I expect...

MIRANDA

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**“No whiskey for sale
You get caught, no bail
Salt pork and molasses
Is all you get in jail”**