

# This Here...

“...some sort of monumental cock-up...” (P Middlemiss)

## EGOTORIAL

THE YEAR IN REVIEW, SORT OF...

(INCORPORATING MOST OF THE USUAL COLUMNS)

People do this sort of thing, don't they? Being all seasonal & that, the tradition of punting a “Xmas letter” survives, so if you like you can consider this a rambling one of those, and feel nicely feliz up your navidads, ey? (Oo-er missus ect.)

The mastodon in room 2023 is, DoBFO, the leukemia diagnosis which was confirmed by the (expensive!) bone marrow biopsy, along with a fuckin’

load of other issues as a result of seeing doctors and specialists in several fields. Well, in medical offices, since they don't actually ply their trade in bucolic rural enclosures dedicated to the sustenance of the ovine and bovine, as pleasant, scenery-wise, as that might have been. So here I expect we'll fold this column (and all the others) in to get it out of the way...

### HEALTH DIARY

As I remark to **Leigh Edmonds** (loccol), there's always *some* sort of news, and the front-page headline here is that my WBC is now down to 22, still short of the target of 15 but progressing in the right direction. I learn, however, from nice APRN Hannah that I now have “thick blood”, mostly due, if I've got this right, to smoking causing over-oxygenation and not drinking enough water since apparently beer doesn't count. They'll be keeping an eye on this, having given me the paperwork for monthly blood tests which had gone missing because of the palliative care trial and none of us (Hannah included) having clocked that the blood work wasn't a part

of that. This isn't a serious issue (at the moment) but the potential is that I'll have to get in at some point for what's humorously known as the “vampire procedure” to drain off some blood. Just about every fucker I tell this to asks if it's “bring your own leeches”, which was funny the first time or two but rather loses whatever shine it might have had by the 94<sup>th</sup> go. Good excuse for the front page photo, though...

Other issues: the compressed disk seems to have eased off (and I sure as fuck hope saying that hasn't jinxed it), so little in the way of the severe back and leg pain that kept me off work for a week and, thanks to the heroin, gave me that horrendous bout of constipation (rejected potential page 1

photo number one, aren't you glad?). I do still have the leg aches when I try to walk more than a dozen steps, and it seems that's something I'll have to live with.

It all does sound like a pain in the bollocks don't it, and funnily enough (howls of derisive larffter) the other thing that's ongoing is - er - the pain in the bollocks. Well, single bollock, to be accurate. (Rejected page 1 photo number 2.)

Having clocked a lump in the left one - and before you start, this is of course a *separate* lump from the actual bollock innit, and getting the cheerful diagnosis from the bollock doctor that “It's benign, deal with it”, all it's done since then is wickedly alternate between being sore, or itchy, or genuinely painful. Like the constipation turd, or for *very* old readers, The Enormous Great Big Wapst (*This Here...* #3, May 2000) The Lump (as I feel I must capitalize it) presents to be of a size far in excess of the measured proportions, deemed by CT scan to be 4mm but feeling like a fuckin' grapefruit. As I've had done with a couple of other benign lumps in the past (which were



mercifully external) I really ought to have the bastard excised, but the potential co-pay or deductible has kept the idea at bay. When I'm on Medicare in a couple of months that could change. Speaking of which...

### BLOODY BUREAUCRACY

The American benefit system appears to be designed to be as inaccessible as possible - the idea seemingly being that they want you to die quietly before you get any. With the rapidly approaching last day of work (February 5<sup>th</sup>) we've been trying to sort out health insurances - Medicare for me and something via the ACA for **Jen**. Far from a typical European or Scandiwegian system along the lines of: "You are of retirement age. Here is your free bus pass ect", Medicare wants you to fill out a load of forms and, in a surprise to us and a lot of other people, isn't even free. That's before we even start the ACA signup process which has wrinkles all of its own.

At my oncologist office visit earlier this month we gratefully accept a referral to an Optum expert in all this gubbins, and get an appointment quickly. *Two fuckin' hours* of that, not that this is an excoriation of the consultant herself who is massively helpful, but more a condemnation of the quantity and difficulty of the hoops to be jumped through by both **Jen** and meself. We were told to fill out my Medicare application the night before to save time, which it ultimately didn't because I managed to fuck that up, thanks to some typically unclear notes on the form - and you do wonder whether some hack was charged with making those notes confusing enough to ensure that people will get it wrong. We're looking at Medicare Part A and Part B (and glossing past presumed parts C thru Z and beyond into what might be Greek letters), and after some screaming, tearing of hair and actual discussion deduce that I don't need to apply for Part B because I still have health insurance from work. Wrong. We camp out on the phone for half an hour to wait to talk to Social Security, eventually getting the references to more forms which will now need to be sent to Philadelphia, but after that's done it ought to be sorted. The utterly mental other thing with all this is that it says that if you *don't* apply for your Medicare as soon as you qualify (at age 65) you can be subject to a lifetime penalty. Decoding the cobblers suggests that one of the forms (to be completed by my employer confirming that I've had health insurance for the duration) knocks that on the head. Arse backwards or what?

Also contributing to screaming and a lot of ibuprofen round here was the process of applying for my UK state pension, which I probably should have initiated over a month ago rather than two weeks. Now in several ways this is quite skiffily neat, downloading an app from [UK.gov](https://www.uk.gov) which reads the chip in your passport and scans your face to ostensibly verify that you are indeed you. Proceeding to the DWP form (for which **Mark Plummer** will be inevitably if unfairly

blamed), it goes through reams of asks to ostensibly verify my identity, *which I thought I just fuckin' did!* This all had to go in the post to Wolverhampton, sent the week before Xmas so I suppose we'll have to wait to find out if I start getting my ten bob on my 66<sup>th</sup> birthday next month as requested.

The application for my Social Security here is the last hurdle, I'll be getting that next September since the qualifying age for the maxed out amount is 66 and 8 months, although of course I'm encouraged by the SSI to wait until age 70 when it's about \$300 more. Not happening.

### MORE MEDICARE TOSH

Typically all over the place, in a rush and not arsed to go back and rewrite previous bits, I should mention that my dear mate and Best Man Ken Vaden has been on the Medicare for a minute (being a couple of years older and indeed having retired earlier) and avows that once you're actually in, it does work rather well.

The other wrinkle is with Medicare Advantage, which according to our advisor will be free for me (as opposed to a \$400 a month alternative - no way that's affordable) and seems to have loads of good stuff in it, including but not limited to foot treatment every other month, something I sorely need. Then our good friend (and 41 consuite manager) Lori Forbes, who works in this area, urges us to not go anywhere near it, which seems highly counterintuitive. I know **Jerry & Suzle** have one of the Advantage plans, so any advice and comment there would be useful, please.

### TV GUIDE

As you'd probably expect, with all the guff (not GUFF) going on, I'd have a bit of a time recalling what it even was that we liked this year, especially with the writers' and SAG-AFTRA strikes kiboshing several series into hiatus.

Easy enough, though, to mention 'Slow Horses' which dropped its concluding episode of the current season yesterday as I write. Spoilers ahead. Jesus, there was a *lot* of gunfire and violence this go around, and you're forced to consider the situation where, rather than what we'd consider more subtle Jackson Lamb machinations, his team manages to get the better of a substantial and seriously tooled up squad of killers. They do, though. I'm ambivalent about this, because when I'm up for good spy stuff (James Bond notwithstanding) I want to see actual tradecraft (eg Smiley) rather than a shoot-em-up. That isn't to say you've got to be one thing or the other. The Jason Bourne movies, for example, merged both extremely well. 'Slow Horses' remains an excellent watch, and there's a nice preview of season 3 at the end which gratifyingly will also have some Jonathan Pryce in it. (Yay for Prycey!)

Genre shows that will have a delayed return and thus causing a bit of arg! Round here include 'Silo' (Spring 2024), 'Strange New Worlds' (late 2024 into 2025),

'Discovery' (April 2024) and 'Foundation' ("at least 2025, maybe even 2026" according to [polygon.com](https://www.polygon.com)), all of the above well enjoyed.

The superb 'Poker Face' definitely has an upcoming season 2 "in 2024". Sigh.

The most gutting news of the year for me had to be HBO declining to renew 'Perry Mason' for a third season, denying me further columns and articles about my adoration for the character and Erle Stanley Gardner in general. Well, possibly not denying entirely I suppose, but it's a definite downer. The ratings numbers didn't apparently match the critical slavering over another majestic turn by Matthew Rhys (and it's been jolly to hear him chat in some of the extra promos in his native Welsh accent), not to mention a fab cast throughout. Mind you, there's a solid Shea Whigham fix to be had in 'Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One' of which more shortly.

Going over various "best of" lists from various reviewers, I'm not finding much commonality with my likes (with the exception of 'Poker Face', but have just been usefully reminded that I need to check out the Boys spinoff 'Gen V' on Amazon Prime. Rotten Tomatoes' list does have stuff I'm into, including the ongoing second season of 'Reacher' (#3) and 'For All Mankind' s4 (#13). A couple of lists included 'Cunk on Earth', and I had a look (not having seen any previous Cunk) and quite honestly found it tiresome and one-note. The "joke" had already reached saturation point a bit over halfway through.

Having acquired BritBox via Amazon Prime I'm doing a **Tony Keen** and revisiting all the classic 'Doctor Who' they have, currently up to 'The Brain of Morbius', a serial with fairly legendary status, introducing both the Sisterhood of Karn and the rather fly-by concept (at the time) of there having been more Doctors than had previously been seen, (much) later to be included in the controversial 'The Timeless Children'. The rewatch has also reminded me how much I generally disliked Pertwee's incarnation ("the Dandy") and if I see one more bit of "Venusian ju-jitsu" and him shouting "HAI!" I'll chuck my beer at the fuckin' screen, I swear...

Also due "in 2024" at some point, season 4 of 'The Boys', which reminds me that I really must check out the spinoff 'Gen V' (when I'm done with s2 of Marvel's 'What If...?' On Disney+...

## MOVIE NIGHT

A lot less of these of late, it seems, but a couple of recent rentals have upped the quota. Having genuinely intended to go up the pictures to clock the new 'Mission: Impossible', both ennui, lazy, hatred of the smell of movie popcorn and whatever else (most likely typical last-minute frenzied fanac like - er - this) we never got to do that, so we ponied up for the rental off the streaming. The M:I movies, while

undoubtedly Tom Cruise starring vehicles, are really genuine ensembles in which the talents of eg but not limited to Simon Pegg are not subsumed. While this'un is all pretty much setup for part 2 next year, there's the expected OTT set pieces, the reintroduction of Henry Czerny from the first movie as the still slimy Eugene Kittridge, and (here he is!) a typically effortlessly good turn from Shea Whigham as another intelligence agent. Much to enjoy, and a timely AI villain. Writer and director Christopher McQuarrie is in the groove, clearly...

As is my wont, I'm well looking forward to Jason Statham's next gig, 'The Beekeeper', due out next month, which I also almost certainly won't find time to attend at the cinema. It irks me that the cheap seats are already taking the piss out of it for being all formulaic or whatever and adding snarky remarks about "Oh, so he's a *beekeeper* now, ho ho" while conveniently ignoring the DoBFO backstory of the "beekeepers" being an off-book governmental organization that (because Statham's one of them) you do not want to fuck with. And erewego yet again with the bollocks about it all being so unoriginal, yawn yawn. Go and watch your fuckin' art films, then, wankers, and leave the "stuff go bang" action genre to those of us who enjoy it...

There's still Statham movies I haven't seen, believe it or not, but we shortened that list by watching 'The Meg' and 'Meg 2: The Trench' back to back recently. These were also efforts where the critics were lukewarm, especially on the sequel, and yet again I see a failure to clock them for what they are, despite at least Scott Mendelson of *Forbes* calling the first one "a polished B movie that delivers the goods". Nothing wrong with that. Perhaps valid to note that these are also fine ensemble efforts for all that they're anchored by a typically solid Statham performance.

## RADIO WINSTON

I'm so out of it when it comes to new music these days, since it seems that all I listen to are my Pandora channels of old stuff (at home at the moment "Mott the Hoople Radio", which in part serves to continue to make me seethe that they've never got anywhere near the travesty that is the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, a view that admittedly results in gales of derision from many. At least they could get Hunter in there, I mean, fuck, he's 80 years old now!)

It seems the only exposure I get to whatever's considered hip or cool is whoever the musical guest happens to be on any given episode of 'Saturday Night Live', and generally I find most of them to be pretty dire.

I had a bit of an oo-er moment when the "lyrics box" at the end of the previous issue was from a Pogues slice, then Shane MacGowan went and died a week later. I mentioned this in front of esteemed *BEAM* co-editor **Ulrika O'Brien**, who accurately pointed out that I've tended to favor quotes

from bands or solo artists who are either very old or dead already. Guilty as charged ect...

That led me into a "whatever happened to..." rabbit hole thinking about the Regrettes, of whom I was inordinately fond until bassist Sage Chavis left the group, after which they seemed to go all meh. I learn that the band finally split in 2022. There was some mystery at the cause of Sage's 2018 departure, but apparently (according to Chavis' later account, anyway), lead vocalist Lydia Night went all rockstar and they had a falling out. Pictured below, the two in (presumably) happier times...



### ON WRITING (OMPHALOSKEPSIS)

DoBFO, punting a monthly effort such as this here assemblage of mediocre Advent calendar cheap American chocolate means doing writing, and I suppose a fair bit of it an'all.

This has led me to think about what might be risibly described as my own "style", and I've concluded that whatever that is depends on the venue for it. For example, 100 years ago in [BEAM #9](#) I wrote a book review of that year's "Las Vegas Writes" anthology, 'The Anarchy of Memories' which was straightforwardly laudatory, and I remain happy to recommend that particular collection especially for the skiffy nature of some of the tales. What I still remember most, though, was the subsequent startling (to me, anyway) observation by none other than **Killer Kaufman**, equally startled and exclaiming "I didn't know he could write like that!", having expected, I suppose, a more "typical" spew of quotes from Rude Kid?

Naturally my initial and internal reaction to **Jerry's** comment was along the lines of "Now you know I can do it *all*, wanker!", but that did give me pause for thought. It makes sense that, in having cultivated (if that's the right word, which it might not be since it suggests artifice) a reputation for being foul-mouthed, assertive and confrontational (shades of Pickersgill?) it'll seem jarring to readers when I'm

not, and that's undoubtedly exacerbated by the majority of my product being in-er-face in these pages. Fair enough.

The omphaloskepsis continues: I've previously noted that I do write somewhat differently for others (eg 'Something About England' for *Banana Wings* a while back, one piece I perhaps immodestly consider the tops) or indeed for *BEAM*. I went off on a mental tangent, considering fan writer awardees, observing that they tend to have a more consistent and recognizable style, whereas with me, as in the words of a favorite slice, Ian Hunter's '[Great Expectations](#)', "You never know what comes next"...

*That* having been said though, old friends such as the **Fishlifters** say they can spot me a mile off, whatever the topic, presumably giving them time to plan an escape route.

There's a definitive distinction, I'd assert, between the likes of *This Here...* which is conversational (and as some observers have opined, represents as well as it can "the real me") and - er - *writing*. In some ways (and you can tell I'm having a rambling moment, can't you) I can compare this with, say, *Banana Wings* (on my mind since issue 79 arrived recently) or indeed any given ish of **Rob Jackson's** *Inca*, both of which are inherently conversational in the editorial contributions, but also formalized to the extent that they produce idealized versions of what could easily be real-time convo if you had ages to think about them and spend months editing before you actually opened your gob. That the editing process, (which I know gets agonized over) when as successful as it is in these examples, doesn't remove the spontaneous joy of the theoretical interchange is a tribute to the careful skill at work. Equally, it was sheer joy this year to get a new ish of **Christina Lake's** *Nowhere Fan*, since she, I and the rest of the fuckin' world should know (if they don't already) that I've always considered her absolute Premier League in terms of that ability to make you want to just cosy up and listen, all the while still despising her for being my age and running marathons while I struggle to take the few steps to the beer fridge.

Returning to "style", because this is mostly about *me* innit, I now consider my own cadences, apart from just being "liberally strewn with "fucks" and "arses"" as I believe **Bob Jennings** has observed. (Sorry if that wasn't you, mate!)

I'm certainly guilty of a fuckload (there y'go, **Bob**) of thievery from the likes of Spike Milligan, Richard Ingrams era *Private Eye* and the great Simon Hoggart, all objects of admiration if not outright worship, and the argument there has to be that if you're going to steal, nick the *good* stuff, right?

In the non-fannish arena, the *Grauniad* continues its attempts to guilt me into coughing up a bit of dosh since I've apparently read 4,172 articles this year (as of this moment) which seems like Too Many but represents 11 and a fraction a day which is about right. I'm assuming that the definition

of “article” includes stuff like clocking the usually excellent editorial cartoons. I must somewhat sadly confess that after earlier riveted enjoyment, I’ve quite gone off Marina Hyde who now comes across as a bit of Cunkish (note to spellchecker: *please* get that one right) one-note blather. I’ve enjoyed Barney Ronay on sports, parliamentary sketch-writer John Crace, who really is approaching Hoggart levels but with a much more acerbic eye, and perhaps most bizarrely, since I’m likely never going to patronize any of the venues he describes, restaurant critic Jay Rayner who manages to remain grounded and accessible even when describing ridiculously expensive eateries, thus earning (not that I expect he’d be arsed) the photo below in which he does represent as a bloke that you’d almost certainly enjoy having a pint with. I know I would...



## ENVOI!

Normal service (at least in terms of the regular and irregular and even possibly new columns going back to the usual format) will be restored in #72.

**Leigh Edmonds** is asleep...

It’s all good.

**December 2023**

# CORFLUX

## 41 NEWS

PR3 is out as advertised, with only a couple of glitches, accessible as usual at [corflu.org](http://corflu.org) by the Grace of Burns as well as posted in the FBF group...

Headline notes: get in with your hotel room bookings if you haven’t done so yet. We’re still having some ups and downs with members’ problems using the hotel website, but then again I hear from **Rob Jackson** that he got his booking done seamlessly and easily. Go figure...

**S&ra Bond** wisely points out that we should have mentioned that those of a mind to do so shouldn’t just be turning up with auction items and expecting them to be included. Such offerings could end up on what’s going to be a fixed-price sales table, or even in the tat bin, who knows? We’ve already got a pretty substantial list of auction lots - anyone who’d like to contribute other stuff should contact **S&ra** directly - if you don’t have her email addy, ask me for it or send to [vegas41@corflu.org](mailto:vegas41@corflu.org) and I’ll forward it...

There’s a fair probability that we’ll be punting a memo of sorts with these kinds of reminders at some point in January, with PR4 going out a week or two before the convention...

It seems we’ve settled on a Friday Outing, with a goodly number of members goshwowing over the new Ice Age Fossils State Park which opens next month: <https://parks.nv.gov/parks/ice-age-fossils>. We’ll plan to hire a bus to go from the hotel to the park (about 30 minutes away), with the overall cost to those going about \$20 each, maybe less if we fill the bus (provisionally a 28-seater). The question is whether a 2-hour visit might be sufficient, or if 3 will be better (and please let us know what you think), which is relevant since the bus costs by the hour, including waiting time, but I’ll get that nailed down since we’ll be hiring off Lucky Limousine and I might even get an employee (or ex-employee by then) discount. For a 3-hour go, we’d envisage the bus leaving the Gold Coast at 10:30am, thus getting back at 2:30pm or so in time for a potential first program item at 3...

We’ve also announced the availability of spiffy t-shirts in two designs: the ‘silhouette’ logo plus a more in-yer-face design by Alan White (see ‘Indulge Me’). Check out <https://rusty-rose-lv.creator-spring.com/>, click on any shirt for the choice of sizes and colors. We won’t have stock for sale at the convention itself, so, again, get in!

## GIVE US A CLUE

**Nic** : The one column by me (ok and **Eli**) that retains its independence thish...

**Eli Cohen** : Thank you so much for allowing me to cheat on your crossword clues, which I never would have gotten without Google's help.

"Hillary's challenge as first lady: to do nothing (7)". Very clever, and nasty, putting Hillary and "first lady" together; I'd never have thought of Sir Edmund and Eden when there was such an obvious reference to the former secretary of state, and thus would never have come up with the obvious answer: "EVE + REST"

"Shitfaced from a drink that's drug-free (5)". Answer: "DECAF". I confess that I don't really understand how "shitfaced" is somehow telling you to reverse "faced" for the answer.

*[[Although the solution is a simple reversal of FACED, here "shit" is an anagram indicator...]]*

"Possible John D. Berry design backfires (5)". Answer: "SERIF", from "backFIRES"; I might have gotten this, since "back" (in hindsight) seems like an intelligible clue, but I probably would have wasted too much time on it even then. So thanks again, Google.

**Nic** : As an evial holiday gift for **Eli** I shall attempt to contrive some possibly unGoogleable clues of my own:

"Shaken, stirred, but his real name in famous fantasy (7)"

"Larrikin correspondent, an intermediate failure? (10)"

All right, though, here's a one you can cheat on:

"Uproar when wearing gaudy jewelry that's very bright (8)"

And here's a later one I came up with, as usual likely larffably easy for Fanglord-level mavens:

"Sick, for example, holy book with no introduction is impossible to read (9)"

## FOOTY

**BY DAVID HODSON**

It is the morning after the night before when, whilst Tottenham were being handed their arses in a 4-2 defeat by Brighton and Hove Albion, Arsenal were also being beaten 2-0 at home by West Ham. Manchester United's 3-2 win over Aston Villa earlier in the week's post-Christmas fixture list meant the Spurs defeat did little damage to their top four Champions League qualification chances, but it

killed off any lingering hopes of the most optimistic supporters that they could win the title, and that Arsenal loss has definitely put the skids under their title pretensions. It would be fair to say I don't know whether to be a bear with a sore head or walking on clouds this morning.

I will admit I've been known to swear and curse at the telly whilst watching football and some of my language whilst watching last night's game would have made a pissed-up navy in a Friday night brothel blush. Spurs were woeful and deserved to lose the game, but too many players, like Son Heung-min and Pape Matar Sarr of South Korea and Senegal respectively, were probably thinking of international tournaments they are due to be involved in during January and not really playing at full pace. There's also an undercurrent of something I've written about before in these columns: referee bias.

Ever since the 2-1 victory over Liverpool in September, where Liverpool had a perfectly good goal disallowed for offside due to the officials not being able to communicate with each other in words of more than one syllable and two players sent-off for genuine red card offences, there have been a few games where referees seem to be letting fouls against Spurs go unpunished in some perverse "evening-up" exercise, despite Spurs having done nothing to engineer the advantage. Last night Brighton's Lewis Dunk really should have seen a red card instead of just a yellow for a nasty challenge on Dejan Kulusevski and this is just weeks after Matty Cash of Aston Villa wasn't sent off for a foul on Rodrigo Bentancur that was deliberate and targeted against the best player for either side on the field that day. Bentancur had just returned from nearly a year out with an anterior cruciate ligament injury of his left knee, only for Cash's tackle to rule him out for another three months with ankle ligament damage.

Regardless of how much I may be accused of conspiracy theorising or the like, refereeing standards in the Premier League have plummeted this year and the Video Assistant Referee system seems to be making the situation worse rather than better. It seems that some of the video referees are terrified to intervene with on-field decisions, whilst others want to take complete control of the game and a crunch is coming because England seems to be the only country that's having such a plethora of problems with the system. Offside decisions in this country can take minutes to resolve whereas all over Europe an automated system is used that settles most decisions in seconds, and an incident in last night's game between Arsenal and West Ham brought up a particular bugbear of mine; why can't automated systems similar to hawk-eye in tennis be used to

tell if the ball is fully in or out of play when decisions about throw-ins and corners or goal kicks are made?

I have said, semi-seriously, to fellow Spurs fans that, if I was to magically become team manager overnight, I'd include two broken-nosed, cauliflower-eared, ex-bricklayer hard nuts on my substitutes bench for every game just so, once we're gone either 3-0 up or down, I could send them on with instructions to maim, injure, or otherwise cripple the best players on the opposition side and care not a jot if they got sent off. Obviously, this doesn't paint me in any kind of positive light. I'm not a good sportsman, I have no Corinthian spirit anymore, but I doubt I'm as bad as the President of Turkish club MKE Ankaragucu, Faruk Koca.

When Ankaragucu conceded a late equalising goal in a clash with Turkish Super Lig rivals Caykur Rizespor, Koca stormed onto the pitch and punched F.I.F.A. approved and World Cup officiating referee Halil Umut Meler in the face, knocking him to the ground, at which point Ankaragucu fans also stormed the pitch and attacked the referee, kicking and punching him whilst he was helpless on the floor. Meler was hospitalised as a result with bleeding in one of his eyes and a fracture of one of his neck vertebrae and was pictured being visited by the Turkish Interior Minister, Ali Yerlikaya, as he recovered. The Super Lig was immediately suspended indefinitely, and the incident has raised questions about Turkey's proposed co-hosting of the 2032 European Championships with Italy, although Turkish FA [TFF] chairman Mehmet Buyukeksi has denied any risk to the country's participation.



I would suggest what made the incident worse than it already was is the fact that Koca is a former Turkish parliamentarian who still has political ambitions and should maybe be a more measured character, but, hey, we've elected Boris Johnson and Liz Truss in the UK, so who am I to throw stones? Koca and two others have been arrested and charged with assault and the incident suddenly threw up reports from other parts of Europe of increases in incidents of violence or threats of violence against referees, with Eastern European leagues being especially guilty. As someone who went to a Romanian League game at FC Unirea in Alba Julia, a region of Transylvania, back in 2005, I've seen how hostile

and outright terrifying some of the venues in Eastern Europe can be. I went to the old Yugoslavia in the 1970s to see Spurs play a UEFA Cup game and visiting fans weren't treated particularly well by the local police and other authorities, but they were protected from the criminal gangs and other troublemakers because they were a source of foreign currency whilst they visited. In 2005 Unirea were still playing in a crumbling, soviet era concrete bowl which was open to the elements and the elements in Transylvania can be extreme at any time of the year due to the influence of the Carpathian Mountains on local weather systems (one day several inches of snow, the next blazing summer sunshine). At full-time, the local black shirted Ultras, a known fascist group, tore the seats from their concrete footings and hurled them, and some sizable chunks of the stadium itself, over the barriers towards the referee and linesmen, who had to be escorted off the pitch by riot-shielded, baton-wielding, armed security guards. When I questioned my local companions about this incident later whilst drinking in a city centre bar, it was treated as just the usual high jinks of the local fans.

As critical as I am of British referees who seem terrified of making decisions that upset the home crowds at certain British clubs (Liverpool, did I hear anyone say?), I don't think most worry about being attacked by club officials after fixtures, although the sight of a wildly gurning Jurgen Klopp baring his two rows of gleaming implanted false gnashers approaching might loosen the bowels of more than a few (there is no truth in the rumour that Imodium are the official Liverpool football club diarrhoea treatment sponsors).

The other major football news has been the judgement by the European Court of Justice that UEFA and FIFA's threatened ban of clubs that wanted to join the proposed European SuperLeague back in 2021 was illegal and an abuse of a dominant market position. The judgement also said that "their (UEFA and FIFA's) structures mean there is no way of checking whether their operations are 'transparent, objective, non-discriminatory and proportionate'" and "moreover, given their arbitrary nature, their rules on approval, control and sanctions of (tournaments and clubs) must be held to be unjustified restrictions on the freedom to provide services". In other words, both UEFA and FIFA could be accused of operating monopolies.

Immediately on release of the judgement, A22, the development company set-up to push the SuperLeague project along, and Spanish clubs Real Madrid and Barcelona issued statements saying the proposed league was back on the table with a revised format and that "Uefa's monopoly is over. Football is free. Clubs are now free from the threat of sanctions and free to determine their own future."

Many of the clubs involved in the initial proposal, including all the English teams that were approached – Manchester United, Manchester City, Liverpool, Arsenal, Tottenham, and

Chelsea - appeared, on the surface, to have cooled their interest, but that's only whilst new proposals and formats are put together and UEFA and FIFA's legal responses are awaited, although both would be well-advised to study Apple's fractious relationship with Europe and the European Court of Justice, who once they've decided an organisation has been abusing a monopoly tends to be completely unforgiving on the subject.

A meme that has been doing the rounds on various football related facebook and reddit groups shows the December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1963, Division One results whilst Pep Guardiola looks on aghast, the suggestion being that it was an absolutely bonkers Boxing Day. It was nothing unusual to have a full fixture list the day after Christmas Day all the way into the 1990s; for many it was the highlight of the festive period and the pubs certainly did a roaring trade (\*hic\*). Back in '63, players also had Christmas Day off to spend with their families, which meant a full turkey dinner, Christmas pud, brandy butter, and probably enough alcohol to sink a battleship (tales of the drinking sessions involving Jimmy Greaves and Alan Gilzean in the Corner Pin pub at the junction of Tottenham High Road and Park Lane after Spurs games in the mid-to-late 1960s are legendary and the pub was only 100 yards away from the stadium). I'm not surprised at the results back in the day, I am surprised the games took place full stop, especially in the days before substitutes being allowed. Fulham 10, Ipswich Town 1? Ipswich were the reigning champions at the time as well!

## LOCO CITATO

*[[“When you first rise in the morning tell yourself: I will encounter busybodies, ingrates, egomaniacs, liars, the jealous and cranks. They are all stricken with these afflictions because they don't know the difference between good and evil. Because I have understood the beauty of good and the ugliness of evil, I know that these wrong-doers are still akin to me . . . and that none can do me harm, or implicate me in ugliness—nor can I be angry at my relatives or hate them. For we are made for cooperation.” (Marcus Aurelius)...]]*

From: tiki@interlog.com

November 25

Tiki Leibowitz writes:

Interesting [email cover quote, above], Nic... But I rarely encounter those sorts... I guess I'm lucky or something... And all the relatives I knew are no longer among the living...as far as I know. I guess because I'm a bit over 71 years old! And many of my friends are also gone... So sad. But we saw some live music yesterday at a jazz venue, and one of the singers thanked me because I was singing along/mouthing the words, and he'd forgotten some of them... A First! Two great singers, Joe Sealy and Colin Hunter... And good food and drinks - a great evening all around... I'm so lucky (again) because my wonderful guy can afford to take me to that sort of thing!

*[[Always good to hear from you...]]*

\*\*\*

From: phillies@4liberty.net

November 25

George Phillies writes:

As always, an interesting read. I do not have a solution to the gradual loss of fen willing to run Corflu. The N3F Treasurer ran a convention this year, and will likely run another one, in Vegas, this coming year, probably in the Fall. I have no idea if forces could be joined. The convention with two names is perhaps not stranger than “The Man With Two Heads”, the latter being a classic sy-fy video.

*[[Your Treasurer had in fact been in touch over this, but the structural differences between the planned events (Corfu being essentially a small relaxacon) make a “joining of forces” in terms of organizational efforts impractical. Although Corflus in 2021 and 2022 ended up being later in the year, the usual timetable of Spring was reestablished this year, so the timing is also off. We did, I recall, agree to cross-promote, though...]]*





I will continue, if I remember, to propagandize for the FAAN awards.

*[[I thank you for that, although given that Neffers seem disinclined to even vote in your own awards, hope of much take-up is minimal. I would love to be pleasantly surprised to the contrary...]]*

\*\*\*

From: gandc001@bigpond.com

November 25

**Bruce Gillespie** writes:

Wouldn't want to be a busybody, ingrate, egomaniac, liar or jealous crank -- but I am covered with shame that I did not write the loc to *TH... 69* that I fully meant to write. In particular, you can't blame **Leigh Edmonds** for his attitude (or otherwise) to Tommy James and the Shondells. I am the person who owns a four-CD pack of everything they recorded, but found that the tracks recorded as album filler prove to be very much inferior to their great singles.

*[[You can still write the loc, Arch...]]*

\*\*\*

From: jakaufman@aol.com

November 29

**Jerry Kaufman** writes:

I'm sorry to read that fanzines created the appearance of dementia in Lulu, your dog. Imagine what actually reading them would have done to her mind. And I'm glad to hear that she's pretty much back to normal.

When we're all in Las Vegas and stuffing bags or whatever Thursday night, some of us will be glad to pick through those seven boxes of fanzines. I think that amount of zineage will be too much to sell in even a two-hour auction, so triage will be in order. You'll probably want to sell some of them in a silent auction, and the bulk could be sold for best offer or in grab-bag batches, etc.

*[[There's no fuckin' way that the lot of them will even end up at COR41U, although with the valuable expert input of Andy Hooper and S&ra Bond we've come up with a selection for live auction, and there'll be a fixed-price table as well as a freebie pile. See COR41U PR3...]]*

I hope **Dave Hodson's** efforts bear fruit and don't wear him out entirely. I expect there will be a few other folks who will eventually pitch in and help Dave to create a good Corflu. Not sure we'll travel to it, however. We're planning to fly to Glasgow for the Worldcon, so another trans-Atlantic trip less than year later will take careful consideration.

I don't have anything further to add to the discussion about the FAAN Awards, except that I'll do the honors once more (and hope to remember to bring a sound effects toy I forgot to carry to Belfast). But that may be the last time.

*[[Thanks as always...]]*

We've watched a couple of episodes of *Bodies*, and enjoying the mystery and the contrasts between the detectives of each era. There hasn't been much of Stephen Graham yet, so can't yet agree (or disagree) with your assessment of his acting chops. But **Suzle** and I agree about your reaction to Shira Haas looking so very young.

Thanks to **Bob Jennings** for his encouragement regarding a Doc Lowndes collection of *Outworlds* columns. I decided to give it more thought by reading a few of the columns, starting with the first, which appeared in *Outworlds* #8. This installment of "Understandings" was a review of Wollheim's *The Universe Makers*, a survey of science fiction's history, which gave Lowndes room to discuss different definitions of sf and to express his preference for the "Vernian" style over the "Wellesian" style of sf writing. But he included the term "Spingarnian criticism," which made me turn to Wikipedia, to discover J.E. Spingarn, a literary critic and historian from the late 19th and early 20th century, and New Criticism. Rather obscure to someone not versed in the subject.

I'll continue to explore, but I would like to ask that anyone in possession of *Outworlds* #9 to see if there's another column and if so, to scan it for me. I'd also like to see any comments on the column in #8. (Neither my collection nor FANAC.org's collection include #9. Say, if anyone has it, why not scan the entire issue and send it to **Joe and Edie**?)

**Bob** also suggests that a Zoom discussion of fanzines would be just like all those convention panels that never reach any conclusions. Right he is. Good thing I only thought that such a discussion would be about the future of Corflu: where to hold it, who could run it, how to entice more people to attend, things like that.

\*\*\*

From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

December 5

**Eli Cohen** writes:

Re FAAN Award voting, I don't really have anything new to add. As I've told you, I feel a bit uncomfortable about voting due to my only seeing a small slice of current fandom (i.e. choosing "best" without knowledge of the entire field), but you've convinced me that it's better than not voting at all (in comparison, for Hugo voting, one is ranking 6 candidates that are there in the packet, for the fiction awards, at least; lack of exposure only applies to making informed nominations). Anyway, with the FAANs, I'm voting for things/people that impress me, whether or not they are the most impressive of the year, and that's a reasonable criterion for them getting an award. To quote someone we know, it's all good.

*[[Exactly!...]]*

Well, I think you've definitively proven that the plural of "Batman" is "Batmen", even if they're all playing cricket, though I'd say a pile of the comics would more likely be considered a batch of Batmans. (Would it be a school of Aquamans?)

"Triptych plus one" is, of course, a "tetraptych" (or, alternatively, a "quadriptych"), another special case of a "polyptych". You're welcome.

\*\*\*

From:  
garth.van.spencer@gmail.com

December 6

**Garth Spencer** writes:

Season's Greetings!

Condolences on your dog Lulu acting for a while as if she lost her marbles. Good that she got back to normal, although I wonder what was affecting her.

*[[Proximity to fanzines, shurely?...]]*

You mentioned about 95 items on your Things To Do list. Recently I entered a phase of trying to list All The Things, and came up with a system of at least 15 major tasks or projects or obligations on my plate, constituting My Life In General. Which is not a bad thing, I have needed some such concrete practical tool for a long time, although I admit a lot of the major items are less like Finances, Medical, Legal and Housekeeping, and more like fannish self-imposed projects. At least I have specific tasks to put in order of priority.

**David Hodson's** blunt article about the future of Corflu is very welcome. Since 2022 I have been convinced that fanzine fans have somehow missed the boat on outreach to new fans, and have been out-competed by other fandoms.

It was a bit surprising, though, to read **Hodson's** assertion that no East Coast fans are offering to run conventions. I just got done reading the Boskone concom minutes in *Instant Message*, and have been uneasily aware of DragonCon for some years; is **Hodson** talking about no one attempting any *new* conventions, or no new East Coast bids for Corflu?

*[[Corflu specifically...]]*

It's time to consider seriously how to attract neofans to fanzine fandom.

A conversation *with non-faneditors* about where they share their writing and drawing – whether it be held online or in fanzines or in person – may or may not already be going on, but it would be good if faneditors like you and me and Corfluvians are included. But I take **Perry Middlemiss's** point about a Zoom meeting, at least on Corflu, turning into a nightmare.

I can't say much about the FAAn Awards, except to observe that unawareness, apathy, cliquism and misconception have also tended to influence the national Canadian award I'm involved with.

*[[Sadly it seems ever thus...]]*

On English accents: You may remember my telling you that my father had a Cockney accent. Understandably your short piece on the survey covering changing English accents caught my interest. Probably my feeble grasp of regional accents is way out of date. I thought my own accent had disappeared, but recently I had to explain to a new Canadian that I came from the city of Victoria, which used to harbour a lot of Prisoners of Mother England, as well as actual British expats.

\*\*\*

From: perry@middlemiss.org

December 15

**Perry Middlemiss** writes:

As you note "Fanzines Are To Blame...". But if it wasn't that then it would be something else, and given a choice, I'll take the fanzines. I am sorry to hear about Lulu's health problems and I hope you can find your way through to the end of them, successfully for both you and her.

*[[She's doing all right, thanks, though in common with the rest of the ageing household she limps around a bit and her bark has got hoarsely quieter. Jen got a raised-up little stand for her food and water bowls to take the strain off a bit, and she's taken to them well enough. Her appetite is still ok, but it's always been a bit variable. We'll strive to enjoy the companionship of however long the rest of her span will be...]]*

I've had beers and food with **Leigh Edmonds** a few times recently and I can attest that he's raring to go for Corflu. But



remember he's a bourbon man which I'm sure can be accommodated in and around the con.

*[[I didn't know (or also possibly and typically had forgotten) that Leigh's tippie is bourbon, which is in fact just about traditional for a Corflu, at least a North American one. That goes back to Tucker and his fondness for passing around a "Smooooooth" bottle of Jim Beam, but latterly it seems that we've gravitated more to my personal favorite label, Bulleit, which has a lovely Rye whiskey as well as their nice bourbon. There's a new (to me) one which I had recommended by a passenger in the taxi - it's called 'Buffalo Trace' and I plan to try it over the 'olidays, so expect a report on that at some point...]]*

After all the discussion about your administration of the FAAn awards I've come to the conclusion that those who are okay with you doing the job will keep thinking that until some sort of monumental cock-up occurs (and I can't see that happening), and those who think the opposite will continue to do so until the Last Fanzine rolls out of the printer. Same as it ever was...

*[[Fair enough. As narked as I get by suggestions that, as an award contender, there must be some shenanigans going on, to be fair to Andy Hooper I believe he's just of a mind that the optics are bad, whereas Mike Glyer was the one who baldly stated that it's all a fix. Both those opinions may serve to depress participation to the point that it might be decided that the FAAns have run their course, as happened with the dear old BSFG Nova Awards. We'll see what the take-up is next year - what I find most distressing is that the actual Corflu membership (you would think, the natural constituency) don't vote in the numbers you'd expect. For 2023 I included a table of participation sampling in the TIR Results Issue, and the turnout of Corflu Craic members was a weedy 22.4%...]]*

Rather like **David Hodson** I had some reservations about Pat Cummins as a captain but they were dispersed by the ODI World Cup Final vs india. That was a masterclass in confidence (by bowling first when the accepted wisdom was to do the opposite) and in manipulating the bowling attack to suffocate the Indian batters into a total that was achievable rather than completely out of reach. He went up a long way on my opinion. As they say, the silence of the home crowd was deafening. Music to an Australian cricket fan's ears.

And regarding my plan to chat to **Leigh Edmonds** about the future of fanzine fandom, I had the beer and the armchair last night but neglected totally to bring up the issue. Next time.

*[[Make sure you record it when you do, it'd be a solid fanzine article...]]*

\*\*\*

From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

December 26

**Leigh Edmonds** writes:

*This Here ... 70* has been sitting here for what seems like an eon waiting for me to find the time to let you know that it was yet another enjoyable issue. Little Izzy let me know that she was not happy to see the picture of a dog on your front page and signified the fact by using her claws on it.

Speaking of cats and dogs, you note as some of Lulu's symptoms knocking things over, getting into tight corners and that sort of thing. Is Lulu just showing her feline side because I've got a couple of little monsters who love doing that sort of thing. Young Tristan also like wandering around the house yelling for no apparent reason which might be the feline equivalent of barking for no reason. I'd reckon that if Lulu takes to seeking out and sitting in boxes her feline side has definitely reared its lovely little furry head. As for putting up the Christmas tree, Valma and I weren't brave enough to try putting one up with these two terrors in the house. So there you are, all explained.

At least I hope so. Having crook furry companions is always difficult.

*[[Lulu's also limping around a bit with back leg issues, poor old girl, although she's giving no indication of being in pain. Jen theorizes that she may have had a mini-stroke which contributed to that odd behavior (now not happening)...]]*

Speaking of health, I hope the news from your visit to the doctor on 15 December went well and there will be no news of any consequence in the next issue.

*[[There's always news of some kind. See 'Egotorial'...]]*

I'm with **Bob Jennings**; "I don't get poetry, never have, never will." I'm glad that he wrote that because I thought it was just me and there was something wrong with me that poetry just seemed words arranged in odd patterns. I can get the point of haiku mainly, I think, because they are simple enough and don't go on for too long. I don't mind the Shakespearian blank verse either, which seems to be ordinary prose cut into lines that are short enough to say in one or two breaths. So, like **Bob**, my eyes glaze over when it comes to poetry fanzines. Not that I'm denying fans the right to produce them, just admitting that I don't look at them with any enthusiasm.

Continuing on with another comment in **Bob's** letter that he thinks that most of the people who vote in the FAAn awards vote for their friends. For me that is not always the case but often is. Can I help it if my friends publish the best fanzines going around at the moment? Should I vote for inferior fanzines (if you want to put it that way) simply because they are published by people I don't know and don't consider friends? Looking at it another way, perhaps I consider the people who publish the best fanzines as my friends because I

tend to judge people by the quality of their fanzines.

*[[Exceptionally well put...]]*

I spent a lot of time traveling down to Melbourne on the train in the pre-Christmas period and read *This Here ...* on one of those journeys. Had I not been on the train crowded by bored looking Christmas shoppers I would have fallen off my chair and rolled around on the floor laughing at a comment made by friend **Hodson**. Here he writes that the only reason the Australian Men's Cricket Team wins as much as it does is because they just never knows when they are beaten. Would I be too cheeky in suggesting that the only reason Britain was on the winning side in 1945 was because it didn't know it was beaten in 1940? They say that sport is a metaphor for life, perhaps it works the other way around too.

And on the matter of World War 2, as I understood it the word 'Jerry' was the collective noun for Germans in the mind of the British soldiers during the war - and still might be. I don't know how it goes in America but the fuel cans invented by the Germans and still in use today are still called 'jerrycans' here because the British first came across them during the Desert War and knew a good thing when they saw them and started copying them.

Unlike you, and like **Eli**, my knowledge of prisons is on the theoretical side. A few years ago the state government was closing down the last of the prisons that had been built during the Gold Rush era (1850s) and commissioned me to write short histories of two of them. As a result I got to see the inside of the Beechworth Gaol that was decommissioned and around the non-secured sections of the Bendigo Gaol that was still in operation. They had both been built along panopticon lines with two levels of grim little thick walled cells with thick doors to make them as silent as possible. The grimness was enhanced by the gangway on the upper level with the trapdoor and thick wooden beam above for executions. It was interesting to write their histories but they were sort of administrative histories. A social history of those places would have been as much more distressing business.

Which is not the kind of thing we are supposed to think about at this time of the year, which I hope you are enjoying.

\*\*\*



From: daverabban@gmail.com

December 28

**Dave Cockfield** writes:

I hope that you and your family celebrated a great Xmas (formerly known as Christmas as Stephen Fry would say).

*[[Oh gawd, please don't quote that bloke...]]*

I have been having a Happy Gastroenteritis, without broadband that was down for a week and thankfully restored today. Only 132 emails to catch up on.

But, the CD and DVD players worked, so I consoled myself bingeing on my Xmas present of the 'Babylon 5 Blu-Ray' box set.

*[[I scored the complete 'Batman: The Animated series' Blu-Ray which has loads of lovely*

*extras...]]*

Thoroughly enjoyed 'Foundation' season 2 that links in Asimov's Robot series spectacularly.

*[[I liked that an'll, but it's a one that does seem to be Marmite for fans, don't it?...]]*

Also the wonderful 'Katy Keene' tv series. Probably anathema to *This Here...* readers.

But surprisingly for a Brit I grew up with Archie, Betty, Veronica, and the denizens of Riverdale in comic form. Katy Keene and Josie and the Pussycats are right up there too.

*[[I had to look 'Katy Keene' up, and I doubt it'll feature on my to-be-watched lists any time soon, I suppose especially since I never watched 'Riverdale' either. Enough trouble keeping up with our current shows, although there's a gap in the schedule since 'Slow Horses' just finished...]]*

I also like musicals. This is the first "Woke" show that actually seems to treat diversity and gender naturally as it is and something not done to push an agenda.. I really liked that.

Our footy teams playing a great game of Leap Frog.

*[[The less said about the Boxing Day footy the better. My lads looked like they were hung over and too full of pud, and yesterday (Thursday) Tommy Ferguson's Arsenal looked like they'd been on the piss with them...]]*

Looking forward to New Year. I will raise a drink to you.

Take care, and cheers for a Happy New Year to come..

\*\*\*

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

December 29

Gary Mattingly writes:

[TH... 69]

'Egotorial': Many things that I like also get dropped. This particularly happened over the period starting with the introduction of Covid and the following two years. Fresca was my then current soda of preference when Covid intervened. It was more often than not, not on the shelves. Eventually I just broadened my soda tastes. Mostly I have to order them from Amazon also. Then there's the toilet paper I prefer which is sometimes available and sometimes not. Of course there are shows which frequently are ended. I never fully understand why shows that I hate just keep on getting renewed. So many small annoyances in my life.

I must (why must I?) admit that my own tastes change over time. Ever since I had my brief and mild encounter with Covid my taste in many things has diminished or even grown into dislike. Due to covid or time? I don't know. I change.

*[[I believe it's well-documented that tastes can change over time (with the possible exception of Marmite, or cilantro), along with allergies...]]*

'Corflux': I continue to look forward to Corflu. I too am curious about what bids for the future Corflu will appear. (Canberra?)

'Movie Night': I've watched and enjoyed 'Ghostrider', 'Ant-man', and 'Ant-Man and the Wasp'. I have not yet watched 'Quantamania' but it is on my to-be-watched shelves. I have not watched 'Loki' either but just acquired Season 1 so I'll probably eventually get around to it. I am a fan of Wes Anderson movies and enjoyed 'Asteroid City'. The staging reminds me of 'Strange Way of Life' directed by Pedro Almodóvar and starring Tilda Swinton. It is a short film but the setting is also an obvious stage set. Almodóvar is another of my favorite directors. I've seen many films by both him and Wes Anderson. You really might consider watching 'The Fantastic Mr. Fox' or 'Isle of Dogs'. Of course there's always 'The Grand Budapest Hotel'. I'm not really particularly enamored of 'The Royal Tenenbaums' or 'The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou'. I probably will re-watch both of those to see if that is still the case.

Have you seen 'Poor Things' directed by Yorgos Lanthimos yet? I personally quite enjoyed it. It is definitely an odd film. I actually have been going to the theater more of late, even twice a week at times. I'm currently trying to decide if I will go again tonight in order to see 'Dream Scenario' (I didn't). However I am currently trying to get two LoCs done, this one and number 70. Plus I'm watching 'Rebel Moon - Part One: A Child of Fire'. (And it was not very good) Ah, too many things.

*[[Several others I know have opined that 'Rebel Moon' is dire. Tommy Ferguson for one. As to me creating any kind of "to be watched" list (or pile) that will have to wait until post-retirement, and even then it's still well up in the air what my schedule of idleness will look like...]]*

'Faanwank': FAAn awards. I don't know why others vote the way they do. I'm not 100% sure I know why I vote the way I do.

*[[That's not as dismissive a point as you make it sound. There's a case to be made for reflexive voting as much as there is for agonized and protracted consideration...]]*

'Radio Winston': So when are the "warehouses full of unreleased material" from Prince going to be released?

*[[That's what I'd like to know...]]*

'TV Guide': Why didn't I like 'Terriers'? I watched one episode (hm, part of one episode) and was bored. I thought the buddy theme had been done better before and it just didn't excite me very much. Just my own personal opinion, obviously.

*[[It comes down to the actors involved (in our case Donal Logue for this'un) and whether you're predisposed to like them...]]*

'Footy': **David Hodson** sounds busy. I thought I'd throw in a totally unrelated bit of sports news. Showtime has just stopped its televising of boxing. HBO stopped a number of years ago. Now only DAZN and ESPN+ (I think) televise boxing events. Unfortunately a lot of what DAZN televises, even if one has a subscription is still PPV. So I'm just going to stop my subscription to DAZN.

*[[Boxing has definitely had its ups and downs in popularity. Back in my Sarf Lunn' days it would have been considered a working-class sport at the grass roots, despite the moneyed lot populating ringside. At the professional level it was a bunch of mob-style wide boys (eg Mickey Duff) fixing everything, but there was no shortage of British boxing heroes including but not limited to "Our 'Enery" (Cooper) and much later Frank Bruno at heavyweight, but there was also a lot of dedication at the lower weights, Barry McGuigan being the first name coming to mind. The dodginess of a lot of management (cf Don King in the US) contributed a lot to the loss of popularity, I think...]]*

'Loco Citato':

**Eli Cohen**: Side note, **Rich Coad** just retired. **Bruce Townley** retired earlier this year. I've been retired for a number of years but I still have many to do lists although most don't get done or I'm incredibly late doing it like writing this LoC.

**Jerry Kaufman**: My retirement plan was to get healthier/ stay healthier, continue doing bikram yoga (both for exercise and balance), do some weight lifting (old people lose muscle tone more quickly), do a bit of running, keep my weight

down, hike, listen to movies, watch lots of films, pet and take care of my dogs, get better at / learn more Spanish, do some traveling (mainly South America), read some more books, listen to more music (old and new), attempt to get some yard work done, go to Corflu now and then. I won't say any of those are major projects, well, maybe traveling to South America and other countries is, but they all take up all of my time and then some. I don't really have any major fan projects. Off and on I've been collecting names and dates of fans who died but I must admit slacking off on that due to using up time in other areas.

*[[Naturally I got quite exhausted reading about all that exercise stuff, and would have had a nap except I have this here fuckin' zine to get done...]]*

Relative to Zoom sessions to discuss Corflu and other fannish things . . . I don't like Zoom. I don't like volunteering to do things, except to myself and I frequently don't finish up things I volunteer to myself anyway, so how could I finish up things that I might volunteer to do for others?

*[[I conclude that you are therefore the Mirror Universe Claire Brialey...]]*

And yes, that's Denise next to me in the photo.

Different types of Scotch taste differently, Islay, Highlands, etc. And of course how old they are make them taste differently. And also (again?) some distilleries are good at making good tasting scotch, and some are good at making bad tasting scotch.

**Leigh Edmonds:** Ah gee, I like "The Low Spark of High Heeled Boys" and I also like "You Really Got Me" by the Kinks.

Something I've noticed a lot this year (I'm slow) is that a lot of songs repeat the same words over and over and over again. There's some phrase or sentence and they repeat it five or six or ten times in a row. That doesn't make it any better. Honest. And personally I think it makes the artist look lazy because they don't go to the effort of thinking up other words. Some artists are good at thinking up lots of good words. Obviously some are not.

*[[That's always been the case hasn't it? ("Yeah, yeah, yeah") but I suspect you're referring to more egregious examples...]]*

Today being International Cello Day I listened to Jacqueline du Pre & Daniel Barenboim perform the Elgar Cello Concerto. Sad story though. Her talent as a cellist was considerable but "Her career was cut short by multiple sclerosis, which forced her to stop performing at the age of 28; she died 14 years later at the age of 42." (Wikipedia)

The Elgar Cello Concerto:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPhkZW\\_jwc0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPhkZW_jwc0)

And yes, bit of an understatement, Stevie Ray Vaughan was pretty great as a guitarist, IMO.

With respect to the name "Reese", my niece considered the name relatively gender non-specific. She was looking for a non-gender specific name so her son, born earlier this year, is named Reese.

I'm sure my sister thinks her first grandchild is quite handsome.

Wow ("Guau", that's Spanish for wow), that picture of you. You're very young in that picture. (Stating the obvious)

*[[“Very young”? 1989, so I'd have been 31 - I suppose that is more than half a life ago...]]*

Very nice artwork in the issue from **Ulrika O'Brien** and **Jose Sanchez**.

Sorry this is so horribly late. Will I be able to do a LoC for issue 70 tomorrow morning? Geez, I don't know. I think you said you'd do the nextish tomorrow so I have my doubts that even this has any possibility of getting in.

*[[This one's in (DoBFO), and I suppose I'll find out about part 2 at some point in the next few hours...]]*

I blame it all on Spanish and the evil people using Duolingo app that keep forcing me to do more lessons just to stay in the bracket where I currently find myself. Admittedly there is no particular reason or need for me to stay in any bracket or to maintain my 650 (or somesuch number) days straight without missing a day of doing a lesson.

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#### WAHF

**Kim Huett** : "Busy with Christmas. Come back in January" ;  
**Jeanne Mealy** : "Happy 70<sup>th</sup> issue!!" ; **David Redd** :  
"Wishing you happiness, peace and joy at Christmas, and a happy and healthy New Year" ;

#### FANZINES RECEIVED

Gratefully acknowledged as ever and again without comment, as regretfully as ever...

**PERRYSOPE 38 (Perry Middlemiss)** - ...

**SF COMMENTARY 114 (Bruce Gillespie)** - ...

**THE STF AMATEUR** December 2023 (**Heath Row**) - ...

**THE MEGALOSCOPE 10 (David Gregg)** - ...

**BANANA WINGS 79 (Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer)** - ...

**MY BACK PAGES 29 (Rich Lynch)** - ...

**JENZINE #8 (J L Farey)** - ...

**KNOT A FANZINE #5 (Marc Ortlieb)** - ...

**CAPTAIN FLASHBACK #61 (Andy Hooper)** - ...

# INDULGE ME

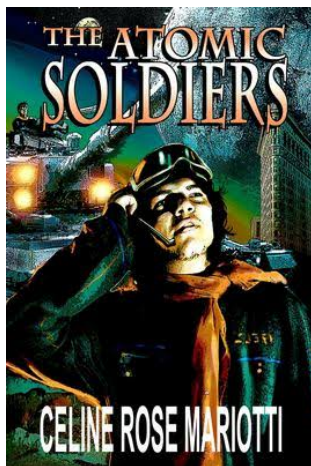
✘ **SCIENCE AND NATURE** : A topic I'm often drawn to - here's a nice round-up from Space.com of particle physics weirdness from 2023 : <https://www.space.com/mindblowing-particle-physics-stories-2023> ...

✘ **POLITICS!** : Not a subject I'm even remotely keen to bring up in here, though sometimes you can't help it - I tend to leave that topic for commentary to the likes of *Spartacus* which does it consistently and better. I was quite taken by a comment, though, debunking the orange wankbucket's contention that all his indictments were a wicked plot by Old Joe to eliminate his presumptive opponent. If that were the case, then, why hasn't Joe locked up Nikki Haley, who in the hypothetical head-to-head wins the election at a canter? Not that she'd be objectively better other than being Not Him...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1)** : Inevitably seasonal, **Brenda Lee**, of course...



✘ **AUTHOR! AUTHOR!** : I hear from **Celine Mariotti** who is looking for somewhere to serialize Book 2 of her YA 'Atomic Soldiers' having unsurprisingly (round here anyway) parted ways with John Thiel's *Pablo Lennis*. I reply that, sorry, don't do fiction (although I assuredly did so 500 years ago in *Arrows of Desire*), but I'm happy to give her request a mention and include a plug for Book 1, so here it is: <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-atomic-soldiers-celine-rose-mariotti/1133342547>



✘ **POSH T-SHIRT** : Alan White's spiffy design: ...



✘ **NO PICTURES!** : We seem to have got all "Waaah! Crap!" about taking party photos lately, and thus have fuck all from this year's 'Waifs & Strays' Boxing Day party, which was as fun as ever despite the absence of regulars **Ken Vaden** and **Roy Hessinger**, both sending in sick notes. Nice to see **Alan White** and **Ross Chamberlain**, who managed to time their attendance so that we didn't have any fab fan artist overload (**Alan** leaves as **Ross** arrives) which could have led to, oh I dunno, some kind of rift in the space-time continuum or something. **Don Miller**, his usual drily avuncular self, advises that he had to book a day off work *eight fuckin' months* in advance to ensure his presence. I continue to demand the respect that is my due by being six months older than he, to much larffter from all. Since we majorly cut back on having "Fifth Saturday" parties (a holdover from Vegrants days), there's people we don't see as much, so a definite joy to clink glasses with my piss'ead partner **Tee Cochran**, although the days are long past when we'd be up until the small hours working our way down a whiskey bottle with alacrity and driving everyone else mad listening to Steeleye Span very loud. That, and when she's being ably chauffeured as usual by **Brenda** ("**Brenderrrrr**")

Dupont and she's ready for the off, well then off it is. Another revenant who I haven't seen in (we think) about three years was **Don Pitchford**, who supplies a fancy bottle of *very* nice Indian rum. Blessed with better memory for DoBFO reasons, he tells us that he brought one last time we got together, and it was down to fumes by the time he left, Tee having scarfed about half of it. We wound down with a COR41U team meeting to go over hospitality suite stuff with **Lori ("Toes") Forbes**, **Jacq Monahan**, **Chris Clay** and **JoHn Wesley Hardin**, moderated by **Jen** and with me reiterating my management policy ("Fuckin' get on with it!") at appropriate and inappropriate points...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : Irresistible inclusion of a Xmas **Carol (Vorderman)** whom I don't recall as having what I tend to term an "implausible shelf", but she freely admits to having had a fair bit of work done...

✘ **NEXTISH** : Looks like January 27<sup>th</sup>...



## MIRANDA

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Art credits: **Ulrika O'Brien** (pp 10,12)

**"I just want to know  
Who broke your nose  
Figure out where they live  
So I can kick their teeth in"**