

This Here...

"...just not interesting any more" (B W Foster)

EGOTORIAL

THEY FUCK YOU UP...

Shurely there's just about nobody who can't reflexively complete at least the first line of the Philip Larkin poem, is there?

I have, of course, forgot what it was that prompted me into this line of thought about parents, but I think it was something **Jen** may have said a few weeks ago, concurrent with some resurfaced memories of my own. This did, however, put me in mind of the "There are two kinds of..." tropes (often with the caveat "avoid them both"), some of which are even mildly amusing while perpetuating the either/or Aristotelian dichotomy I tend to abhor.

Related: one that did make me larf the other day - "There are two wolves inside you. Apologies for the transporter malfunction"...

Anyway, I got to pondering whether "there are two kinds of parents" in terms of expectations and encouragements. Or the lack thereof.

As a nipper I bore an unreasonable burden of ridiculous expectations, mostly off my fairly bonkers mum in which I was expected to end up being, I dunno, Prime Minister or something, because I kept getting told how clever I was (but at the same time useless because I failed to be the perfect little mega-achiever). I clearly recall one prevalent moan about me never doing any chores around the house and garden, and me saying "All right, I'll go and cut the grass". "Noooooo!" wails mum. "You'd just mess it up!" Sigh.



I got sent up to grammar school from Pirton Junior Mixed Infants a year early (at age 10), and I've always contended that this really did me no favors in many ways. Granted, it got me away from the primary school bullies, but also marked me as "the swot", and served to reinforce those expectations in unpleasant ways, especially when it turned out that I wasn't actually much good at certain subjects I wasn't that interested in (and also, fairly, not exactly fantastic at some I did quite like), resulting five years later in me getting what was considered a poor haul of 6 'O' Levels out of a top-streamed class, the rest of whom all got at least 7. (I took Art O Level as a sideline the following year to bump me up to 7, after retaking Latin and failing for a second time.)

For 'A' levels I did a pick 'n' mix of art, science and social science: English Literature (which I adored), Maths and Economics.

For reasons unknown (to me, anyway) I always did very well in the maths exams, but the subject never clicked with me - I genuinely felt

I didn't actually understand most of it, but somehow managed to regurgitate whatever answer was the good'un. Economics was all right (we had really good teachers in all the subjects), but Eng Lit, I felt, was my true calling.

When the time came around to look at university, Oxbridge was not merely in the frame but ('ere we go again) expected of me, so I took the "Oxford Use of English" exam which was then an entry requirement and ended up the only lad in the school to get a grade 1. Now that, you might think, would bolster my prospects for pursuing the Eng Lit, but when I stated my wish to go that route, much wailing, gnashing of teeth and rending of garments ensued. "But you'll only end up a *teacher!*" screams the mum (loudest of

all - imagine a Terry Jones pepperpot lady from Monty Python).

Strangely, this admonition is echoed by most of my actual teachers, except (DoBFO) Eng Lit man John Lewin, who thinks I might just about have the makings of an academic, and whom I shall always remember and revere for (in part) engendering in me a lifelong distaste for W B Yeats, whose output he usually referred to as “gibberish”.

I *must*, it seems, advance to Oxbridge to do maths, a subject for which I have at this point come to hate, despite still doing well in the exams for. I end up at the barely acceptable third way of applying to various institutes of higher learning for economics, with the supposed most venerable location of the LSE at the top of the list, and below that others as far away from home as I could fathom, including Strathclyde, Lampeter and perhaps a little more accessibly, Bristol.

To explain for readers unfamiliar with the university entrance requirements of the day, you’d get back a notification of the A level grades you’d need to be accepted. Expectedly, LSE was the most stringent, requiring an A grade and two Bs. I wasn’t especially confident going into the exams (except for the Eng Lit), so I was mostly expecting to end up in the hinterlands of West Wales where, I had been assured, there was nothing to do except drink and fuck, which seemed at the time to be a rather acceptable way of life (and one I ended up pursuing anyway).

Students of the Farey biography will be unsurprised to learn that Something Happened.

The exams had just got started, so having a fair bit of time off between them I decided I’d go up the Hitchin swimming pool on Fishponds Road (across the road from the Hitchin FC ground, Top Field, for the footy completists) and have a lounge about before heading to my part-time job at Woolworths cleaning the floors. At that time I was getting around on a Yamaha 50cc moped (like the one pictured below), known as the “bee in a bucket” due to the engine sound. I was coming around the one-way system and just around the corner from arriving at the back of the Woolies when a lorry, presumably not having seen me, squeezed me towards the kerb, which I struck heavily and went arse over tit onto the gravelly pavement (sidewalk, for the Merkans).



I’d instinctively thrown up my arms across my face and did a few rolls which served to rip a chunk out of my right elbow and scuff up the other arm a bit an’ all. Here, as you might expect, the recall gets well shaky, but I am carted off to hospital where seriously strong stitching is required to pull the elbow back together. I do the rest of my exams with my right arm in a sling, able to write half a page width before having to move the paper across, and under the influence of some serious pain medication. It is indeed “all a blur”, and the *only* question I remember from any of them was in the Eng Lit paper: “What do you consider ‘The Caretaker’ to be about?” which was off to the races as far as I was concerned.

My results came back as a rather surprising two As (Eng Lit and Maths) and a B (Economics), leading me to conclude that, given my condition, I’d been selectively marked up. So with that in hand, I pretty much *had* to go to LSE, didn’t I? (After taking a gap year, which is a whole other chapter.)

This here ‘Egotorial’ was started by thoughts of there being “two types of parents”, which I’ve actually written very little about, haven’t I? That happens.

It must be time for the flippant conclusion then. Yes, there are two types of parents: mine and other peoples’...

It’s all good.

October 2024

CORFLUX

42 FANTHOLOGY

I know that potential contributors have already been approached about this, but I’d like to give a plug to the Fantology publication planned for Newbury, which will be a collection of brand new writing on music edited by **Doug Bell**, who writes: “Work has started in earnest on the new Corflu Fantology, on the topic of music as suggested by **Dave Hodson**. I’m putting together a collection of original fan-writing on this theme tentatively titled “Dancing To Architecture”, hopefully around 14-15 contributions of 3,000 words or less. **Pat Virzi** has agreed to help me out with design and layout, so we know it’ll look awesome! I’ve spent the last couple of weeks sending out invites and still got a couple to go this week. So far, the response has been good, with a bunch of definites, a fair few maybes and one contribution already! Watch this space, more details to follow.”

43 BID ANNOUNCEMENT!

Now it can be told! There will be a bid for the 2026 Corflu to be held in Santa Rosa, CA occurring around the end of February of that year (to avoid more stratospheric Cali hotel rates). The crack organizing team consists of **Rich Coad**, **Stacy Scott**, **Jeanne Bowman** and **Alan Rosenthal**.

According to **Rich**, the hotel boasts “many nearby restaurants and boutiques. A comic book store, even.” For the presumed benefit of the anoraks among us, he also adds: “And trains.” **Jeanne** helpfully and possibly drunkenly adds: “Santa Rosa - the heart of the county with the most craft breweries (cider and weird booze) and wineries per capita of just about anywhere.”

Doesn't that all sound rather lovely?

corflu.org

F4S?

THERE WILL BE SPREADSHEETS

I'm not punting the whole itinerary again here (for now), but I'll mention a couple of fill-ins of dates and activities that have happened, as well as general updates and some fundraising news.

First off, convention hotel bookings are both in place. Thanks to Reconnect's advance reservation window for the infirm, we're in at the Hilton Lanyon Place - just as well since when general booking opened the joint was just about filled up in a day. I must commend the team for engineering a smooth and simple dedicated booking link, but - caveat - if you need to go and have a look at your booking details via Hilton's own website, they must have the absolute fuckin' *worst* interface I may ever have seen.

We're mostly chocker now with ~~pissups~~ appointments from our arrival on April 2nd until our descent upon at Corflu 42 on the 10th. This now includes Dinner with Kettles (great name for a rock band!) in Hitchin the evening before, as well as my long-lost sister Emma coming up the Smoke with a couple of the other girls the Sunday before.

The gap days between 42 and Reconnect are still mostly undefined, but we're looking at traveling up to the Midlands (likely to include a pint or two with my brother Peter, I hope), thence to Yorkshire for fannish bonhomie and flying to Belfast from Leeds. Still all TBA, really, and suggestions/offers welcomed.

FUNDRAISING THANKS

As delegates of the Corflu Fifty for 2025, we must thank them for punting the dosh for our Vegas-London flights and accommodations for 42 itself, and indeed the Corflu itself for comping us upgraded memberships.

Much ta also to Reconnect Belfast for comped memberships and a grant which will cover most of the hotel bill. Also to various and sundry Novacon habitues of old for chipping in.

Further fundraising efforts are on the go, and in that light we won't be announcing any other pleas for dosh until those are sorted, probably not until the New Year.

I'm going to mention (perhaps repetitively) that funds are being allocated specifically *for purpose* and won't be getting merged into some amorphous puddle. Thus, as it stands, the Corflu weekend is covered, as is a fair bit of Eastercon, but really fuck all else except for some accommodations sorted by fannish generosity (spare beds) for the first week or so.

Hence - spreadsheets for the Far-Flung Farey Safari Fund (F4S)...

HEALTH DIARY

THE RETURN OF SON OF MALAISE, PART 94

You do expect the ups and downs of aging, well, you kind of have to because they announce themselves pretty well, and you get to thinking “Where are the fuckin' ups, then?” on a regular basis.

One thing I noticed, really quite some months ago now, is that I have to put my bins on first thing, rather than being able to sit and peruse the various screens in this here FanCave (and fan publications in the lav) without ocular assistance. This also helps with not tripping over the dog, although at the time I get up (before the sparrows have even considered any kind of timely flatulence) she's usually asleep on the couch and won't be shifting yet other than to possibly change the direction of kip from west to east.

The latest twist is that I now also have to put in the hearing aids right away an'all in order to combat the tinnitus, since without them in it's being a 24-7 bastard and undoubtedly contributing to the headaches. I mentioned this to nice APRN Hannah at my oncology appointment last week - it does tend to surprise me that so many medical professionals don't seem to know that hearing aids very much alleviate if not totally obviate tinnitus - so she's referred me for a CT brain scan, after which you can all expect tiresome repetition of “They didn't find anything ho ho ha ha [falls off chair]”. I remember right, three of four outbreaks of tinnitus a day is considered serious, so you'd consider “all the fuckin' time, mate” to be at the far end of the curve. Hence Hannah's desire to have me 'ead looked at, although the last time I got that done (a couple of years ago) they didn't find anything then ho ho ect sigh.

The blood cell counts are still at the annoying plateau of being not quite at remission level, the WBC in particular stubbornly staying in the 20-22 range (healthy “normal” is supposed to be 4.5-11), but I get the impression from Hannah that they aren't too bothered about it, perhaps since almost all the other numbers (and vitals) are good. It's possibly the case that if you went in with a 20-ish WBC from the off, they'd be “Yeah, we'll keep an eye on that” rather than thinking about a more serious diagnosis, and I am well down from *my* initial number in the 70s (and peaking at about 90 before the drug-induced steep decline).

I'm kipping 8-10 hours a day (not all at once), and my "schedule", such as it is, needs a bit of a tweak, I reckon, given my announced publishing plans and the genuine desire to not have that go tits up. I awake between 4 and 6am, and the following 3 to 5 hour session has thus far been fanac time, but the problem has been that if I wake up with the malaise and I don't get any done, there isn't a ketchup plan to rearrange the rest of the day. That makes me upset and thinking how useless I am for as much as three or four days of moping and doing fuck all, although (more brightly) I should remind myself that the last coupleishes of this here tabernacle of bakers have been done ahead of schedule, awaiting only an Old Sod to get his wordage in.

So I can't be *that* useless, right?

OMPHALOSKEPSIS

PINING FOR THE FJORDS

As millions flee in terror and Hugo administrators shrug with indifference, the perennial headline "Fanzines Are Dead" is resurrected on FBF by Don D'Ammassa, of whom more later and who should really know better.

"Fanzines. Their time is past", he says.

What started as a typically tedious "Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be" grumble driven by the factually incorrect statement that there aren't any print fanzines (implied) any more actually got interesting as D'Ammassa dug into his trench, proclaiming that what we call fanzines these days really aren't: "They have the same name, perhaps, but they are not the same thing". Inevitably (and correctly) **Magister Burns** pointed out that there's *loads* on efanzines, almost all in printable format, and they look like fanzines of old but likely with better production values in terms of formatting.

"That's like comparing print books to ebooks", says D'Ammassa. Well, yes and no, since ebooks are formatted quite differently, but we'll let that pass. I had remarked that the skills of fanwriting, fanart and fanediting are still all required, but the methods of presentation and distribution have changed (as indeed they have all along: mimeo, stencil, photocopy ect ect) and the accusation that creativity is now absent is tincture of pure bollocks. I suggest that he's lauding form over content, and quite lengthily argue that this doesn't hold water since if a recipient of a pdf zine can print out the ish and hold it in their inky fingers, which is effectively indistinguishable from the original idea of "form". I mention newer methods of production eg print-on-demand technology employed by **Wm Breiding** for *Portable Storage* and **Geri Sullivan** for *Idea* as two notable recent examples.

Still not good enough, says D'Ammassa, and I finally realize that what he's nostalgic for is the former *process* of fanzine production: cutting stencils (or whatever), duplication,

collating parties and so on, the hands-on business of creating the physical object, and for him *that's* what defines "fanzine".

I assert that this, then, is his actual viewpoint, after having previously noted that there's nothing wrong with nostalgia *per se*, while it's also daft to not take advantage of newer means of production with much lower cost - I mention that issue #1 of *BEAM*, for example, cost about \$1,000 to print and distribute in 2008 (I had the money for it then, DoBFO), but now the hobby is more widely available to the less well-off.

The response is: "There is a difference between having a third party create your physical copy and doing it yourself. If you have never done so, it might be understandable that you do not recognize the difference." After the quite extensive discussion which preceded I saw this comment as well patronizing, since I had also mentioned that I'd been fanzining for almost 40 years.

So I say (qq): "Yes, so it is about the *process*. And if you weren't being so patronizing you might realize that".

Then this happens:



Oh dear, oh dear. The cardinal sin. "He skipped disagreement and went straight to insult" is a bald-faced fuckin' lie, and friends will know well how much I just *adore* being lied about. You could, if feeling exceptionally charitable, call this a misinterpretation of what I'd said, but at best it's a thorough one, and (DoBFO) my lengthy comments were excised from the thread (as far as I know, anyway) perhaps to bolster the lie. The whole thread may even have gone away. I wouldn't know. (I later learn that it hasn't.) Thanks, by the way, to the friend who sent me the

screen cap, and I take full responsibility for reproducing a presumably “private” post.

There’s two takeaways here. First, don’t you dare disagree with Don D’Amassa, even when he’s being a lying, pompous and patronizing sack of shit, but secondly (and more interestingly) the original “Fanzines are Dead” contention here has served to add another strand to the fanzine definition discussions - that of *process* as well as form and content. Again, I’ll say that there’s nothing wrong with a bit of nostalgia for older processes, especially since these will evoke fond memories of the social aspect of printing and collation parties.

Even a selectively Luddite fan such as meself, though, (cf podcasts *passim*) isn’t going to go as far as to suggest that something can’t be a “real fanzine” unless it was self-produced by 50-year-old methods.

So, Don, *ave atque vale*. With very little *ave*...

MOVIE NIGHT

WHAT WAS THAT, AGAIN?

I think you all know by now that I’m utterly waah! crap at preparing notes on anything at all, a habit I’m shurely going to have to break in April 2025 for the F3S trip. For comparison, my last UK trip in 2007 was mostly written up *in situ* as it went (much like my dear bruv **Martin Tudor’s** TAFF trip report) on LiveJournal and later collected as *Tits, Sausages and Ballet Shoes* which you can clock at what’s turned into my “miscellany” efanzines page [here](#).

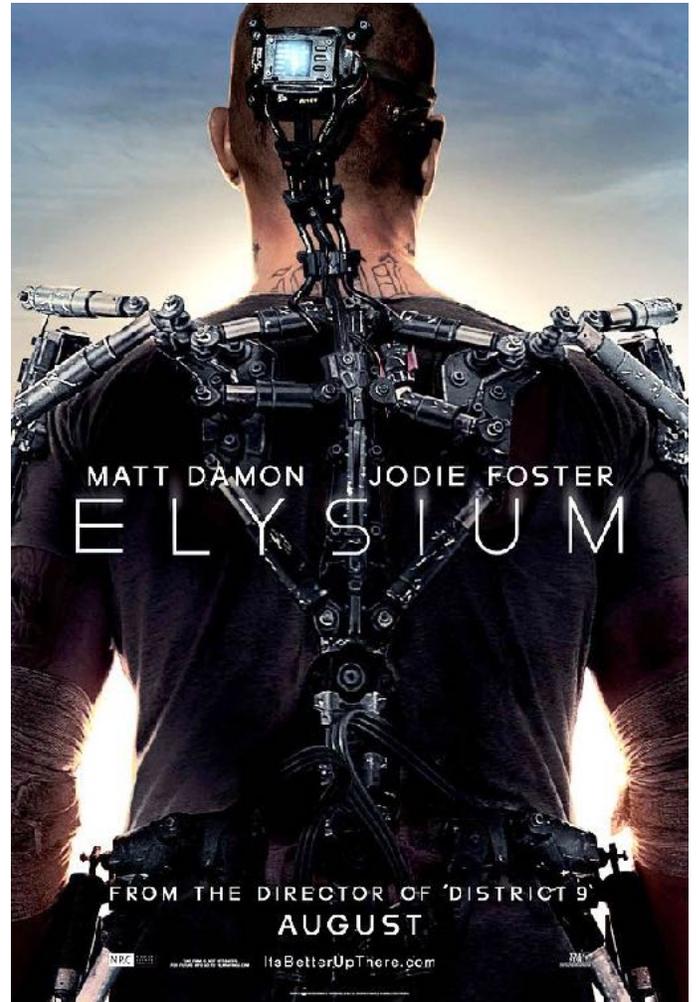
An ‘Omphaloskepsis’ aside here: perhaps not all of you know that I typically write for my own fanzines straight into the ish rather than drafting something separately (as I do when writing for others) and then carefully stitching it all together. I suspect *most* revered faneds of my acquaintance do the latter, draft and redraft ect - I’m pretty sure that’s the case with the **Fishlifters**, but I’d be happy to be told otherwise, or indeed to hear from other notables about their own methods.

That preamble leads me to the possibly well fuckin’ sorry realization that I spend something like 6 hours or more a day slobbed in front of the telly, mostly clocking various shows but with a few movies sprinkled in here and there, which I’ll often forget I’ve even seen shortly thereafter (cf **Leigh Edmonds**). Perhaps I should get that iPad properly set up so I can put the thing in front of me and practice taking notes, however cursory they might end up being.

ELYSIUM

One of them genre-heavy sites recently punted a column on “the best anti-capitalist” movie, DoBFO right up my street, and there was ‘Elysium’ (2013) which I’d fairly recently seen,

remembering that I’d clocked it in Netfux’ SF section, and oo look! Matt Damon and Jodie Foster...



The setup is by no means original, not only with its “elite vs downtrodden underclass” situation, but also the fact that a lot of genre viewers will immediately think of the *Star Trek TOS* episode ‘The Cloud Minders’, as I did. City in the sky and all that. Director Neill Blomkamp had previously helmed ‘District 9’, to which ‘Elysium’ got unfavorably compared. “... a bit of a comedown” says the critical consensus on *Rotten Tomatoes*, which nevertheless concludes “it delivers just often enough to satisfy”. “Workmanlike” might be a fair adjective, although meself I’d suggest it’s a bit better than merely that.

Blomkamp himself, interviewed on uproxx in 2015, says this:

I feel like I fucked it up, I feel like ultimately the story is not the right story... I still think the satirical idea of a ring, filled with rich people, hovering above the impoverished Earth, is an awesome idea. I love it so much, I almost want to go back and do it correctly. But I just think the script wasn’t... I just didn’t make a good enough film is ultimately what it is. I feel like I executed all of the stuff that could be executed, like costume and set design and special effects very well. But, ultimately, it

was all resting on a somewhat not totally formed skeletal system, so the script just wasn't there; the story wasn't fully there.

I reckon he's being hard on himself. While not as original and arresting as 'District 9', 'Elysium' is hardly a piece of shit, and if you ask me worth 109 minutes of your time. Trivia bit: Damon was actually the *third* choice for the lead role after South African rapper Ninja (an avowed 'District 9' fan, who declined) and Eminem, who kiboshed his chance by insisting the movie be filmed in Detroit. Being not first up doesn't appear to have imbued Damon with the arse over this, since he's as Matt Damon-y as always...

ACTION!

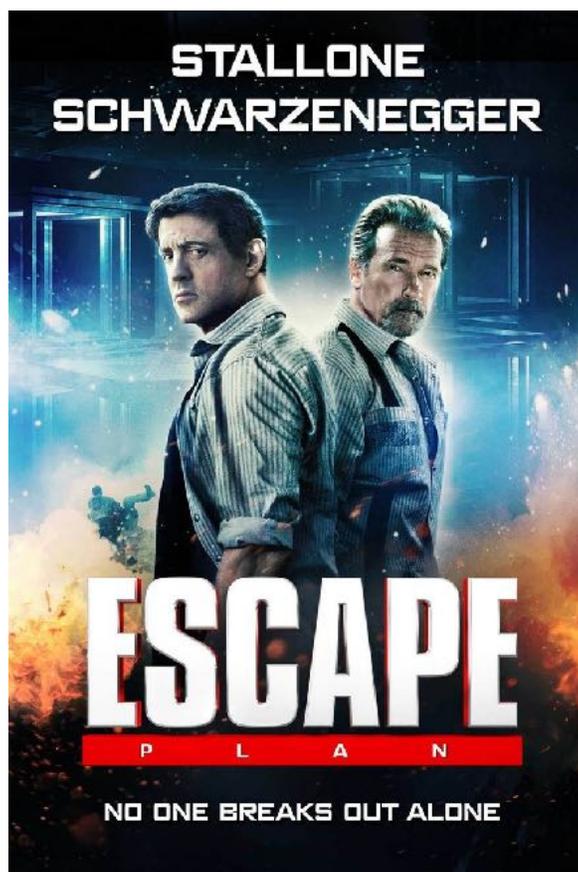
While I'm always mocking those who habitually and lazily deride the action genre, like with 'Z' grade horror flicks, for example, some of us will punt an *apologia* for titles more generally deemed total crap, or "guilty pleasures" as they might be more charitably termed. I'm beginning to realize that I was clearly out of the loop for a period beginning at about 2013 (which is when I started doing the taxi driving) since I seem to keep turning up stuff from that time of which I'd been blissfully unaware. Netflix gently nudges me toward 2013's 'Escape Plan', not only with co-leads Stallone and Schwarzenegger but other cast coo'er gosh notables like Jim Caviezel, Curtis ("50 Cent") Jackson, Sam Neill, Vinnie Jones, Faran Tahir, Vincent D'Onofrio, Amy Ryan and a bit of Catriona Balfe.

The setup is that Ray Breslin (Stallone), who runs a specialist security firm, has a rep for testing (and getting out of) supermax prisons after going in as an undercover inmate. Like, oo, *loads* of action flicks, the plot is nowhere near Christopher Nolan levels, but this'un is actually more than serviceable, with a bit of anti-capitalist undercurrent since this particular prison is a for-profit private enterprise.

So, locked up (and fucked over), Breslin befriends inmates Emil Rottmayer (Schwarzenegger) and Javed (Tahir) to plan their escape. Reviewers were disappointed in the lack of expected quotable sparks in Sly & Arnold's scenes together, but I reckon what they missed is an appreciation of the very cerebral bits of this which come across as somewhat classic 'Mission: Impossible' style solutions based on the brains

rather than the outright brawn of the protagonists, and I was much into those aspects of it.

This'un made enough dosh (mostly overseas) to get a straight-to-DVD (in the US) sequel, 'Escape Plan: HADES' which even Stallone remarked was "the most horribly produced film" he'd ever been in, and got a very weedy 7% positive rating on *Rotten Tomatoes*. It does suffer a bit from having Stallone offstage for half of it, but then again redeemed in part by Dave Bautista replacing Arnold as the equally buff old mate. Once again, those expecting non-stop fisticuffs were disappointed by the mental cleverness required which, granted, does slow things down perhaps more than it should.



A third movie in the series went into production while 'HADES' was still filming - I doubt it would have been after dismal numbers just barely covering the \$20m production cost. 'Escape Plan: The Extractors', again straight-to-video in the US, only got a \$3.6m budget, talk about wing-clipping, but did get slightly better reviews than its predecessor. Again, we get less Stallone and Bautista than we might like, since it's clearly geared toward the Hong Kong audience and there's loads of Chinese dialogue from the actual main characters, unhelpfully not subtitled, although that's possibly because I failed to press the right button on the remote. Big pops, though, to the actual main protagonist of the story, actor Zhang Jin (who began his career as Zhang Ziyi's stunt double in 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon') and can pretty much stand still and exude charisma. Which he does. A lot.

Yes, I clocked all three of these, and that's diehard, innit? I should warn any fellow diehards, though, 'The Extractors' has violent scenes that are *very* violent indeed, and incredibly bloody.

A swift last-minute mention for 'The Union' (2024, Netflix), tagged as a "spy action comedy thriller" and led by a typically engaging Mark Wahlberg and a clearly enjoying herself Halle Berry. Bog standard plot, which I won't bother to enumerate, but a nice entertaining watch, enlivened by the inclusion of J. K. Simmons and Jackie Earle Haley, two actors who inevitably improve anything they're in...

RADIO WINSTON

BADFINGER

There's more than a few bands and artists whose careers ended in abject tragedy, and the Welsh outfit Badfinger are certainly one such, and quite possibly no thanks to Apple records where they were the first artist signing who were not Beatles.

Trigger warning: suicide.

The Iveys, as they were originally named, had been going since 1961 when they got together in Swansea, formed by Pete Ham and Ron Griffiths. They had a decent career going as a cover band with a little bit of original material sprinkled in. A turning point came in 1967 when original guitarist Dai Jenkins got the boot ("was politely asked to step down") for being supposedly more interested in the birds than the tunes, and was replaced by Scouser Tom Evans, who would become pivotal.

Beatles roadie Mal Evans (no relation) clocked the band at the Marquee in January 1968 and subsequently shoved their demo tapes around the Fab Four to eventual approval by all, leading to their actual signing in July. Their first few single releases did pretty much



fuck all in the US and at home, but rather well in overseas markets eg mainland Europe and Japan. The chaotic bollocks going on at Apple undoubtedly didn't help.

Bass player Griffiths had a moan in *Disc & Music Echo*, saying (per Wikipedia) "We do feel a bit neglected. We keep writing songs for a new single and submitting them to Apple, but they keep sending them back, saying they're not good enough." This was clocked by McCartney, who then offered them the slice "[Come And Get It](#)" which he'd written for the soundtrack of 'The Magic Christian'. Although it turned out a hit, I'm of the opinion that this didn't do the lads any favors since Macca insisted on having his demo recorded by them note-for-note and that engendered plenty of dismissive talk that they were just his pet house band.

The band's name change occurred before the release of "Come And Get It", and after some to-and-fro alighted upon "Badfinger", suggested by Neil Aspinall and inspired by the working title of "With A Little Help From My Friends",

which was supposedly "Bad Finger Boogie". It's much funnier that George Harrison later claimed, no doubt with tongue firmly in cheek, that it really came from the name "Helga Fabdinger", a Hamburg stripper.

"Where's all the slices, then?" wail the readers, except **Leigh Edmonds** who has been asleep since the second paragraph, if not sooner.

It's perhaps yet another egregious gap in my musical nous that I never knew that one of the greatest power ballads of all time, '[Without You](#)', was written by Tom Evans and Pete Ham and scooped the Ivor Novello award for "Song of the Year", albeit in 1972 after [Harry Nilsson's version](#) became a worldwide #1. The original was off the 1970 set 'No Dice' with the band members getting the arse over continual comparisons to the Beatles eg: "It's as if John, Paul, George, and Ringo had been reincarnated as Joey, Pete, Tom, and Mike of Badfinger." (Mike Saunders, *Rolling Stone*).

1970 was when the lads signed a management contract with New York

New York

"businessman" Stan Polley (who had reputed Mafia links), and his well shady financial shenanigans would contribute mightily to their demise.

December 1971 saw the release of what's generally considered Badfinger's best album: "Straight Up", but the

cockups and disorder

at Apple and Polley's malign goings-on were starting to take a toll. The band also had issues with the production by Todd Rundgren, who they felt was stifling their creativity. The set, however, included what's arguably a "perfect song" in '[Baby Blue](#)', written by Pete Ham about a bird he met on tour. This'un meets John Peel's definition that you couldn't improve it by adding or taking away anything. The basic guitar riff is as memorable as it gets, as are the fills, and it made #14 on the *Billboard* charts. The disarray at Apple, though, meant that despite having sleeves & that printed up, this slice never got a UK release!

Polley ended up contracting the lads for two albums a year at Warners, amid increasing niggles among the members and rising suspicions of financial mismanagement. A lawsuit from Warner muddled it all even more. Salary cheques for the band members either didn't clear or didn't show up at all, and in April 1975 Pete Ham ended up getting a phone call from the US informing him that all the dosh had

vanished. He went up the pub with Tom Evans, consumed a fair amount of whisky then upon returning home in the very early hours proceeded to join the 27 club, hanging himself in his Woking garage studio. His suicide note read, in part: "Stan Polley is a soulless bastard. I will take him with me."

Band members dispersed at this point, but some attempted reunions occurred later, with two competing versions of the band both active at one point. The Warners lawsuit took four years to settle (Polley had to pay them back substantially), and Apple money was *still* essentially in escrow and would remain so for some time.

By 1983 all this shit was still going on. Tom Evans had put together a US touring version of Badfinger vs a rival outfit led by Joey Molland. Evans was subsequently being sued for \$5million for fucking off the touring contract. In November 1983 he ended up having a major barney with Molland on the phone over 'Without You' royalties, and hanged himself in his garden the next day. He was 36.

Molland remains the only surviving member of the "classic" line-up after drummer Mike Gibbins died in his sleep from a brain aneurysm in 2005 aged only 56.

It all seems such a fuckin' waste for a band who really ought to have been appreciated as power-pop pioneers in many ways, but all the various bollocks they had to contend with ultimately and sadly did for them...

TV GUIDE

KAOS

Netflix was remarkably quick on the trigger cancelling this'un after a mere 6 episodes (of the 8 in the season) had been aired. Serious lack of buzz might have had something to do with that, since after having noted its arrival and fully meaning to clock the show, I'd forgotten about it due to Jen doing the transcription job (see lastish), but the news that it had been canned prompted me to have a look, which turned into a binge.

Linda Krawecka summed it up perfectly on FBF: "Took me a couple of episodes to catch the pace / direction this was taking but very much enjoyed it once I got there."

I don't really have anything to add to that concise review. The performances are universally top-notch, although it does suffer somewhat from not having a central likable character. I ponder whether it's all just a mythology version of something like 'Succession', and bemoan the fact that I seem to have forgot most of the Greek Gods stuff that I used to know quite a bit about. I suspect this may have been the case for a lot of the viewership, hence the hook. It *is* worth a look, though...

'TIS THE SEASON

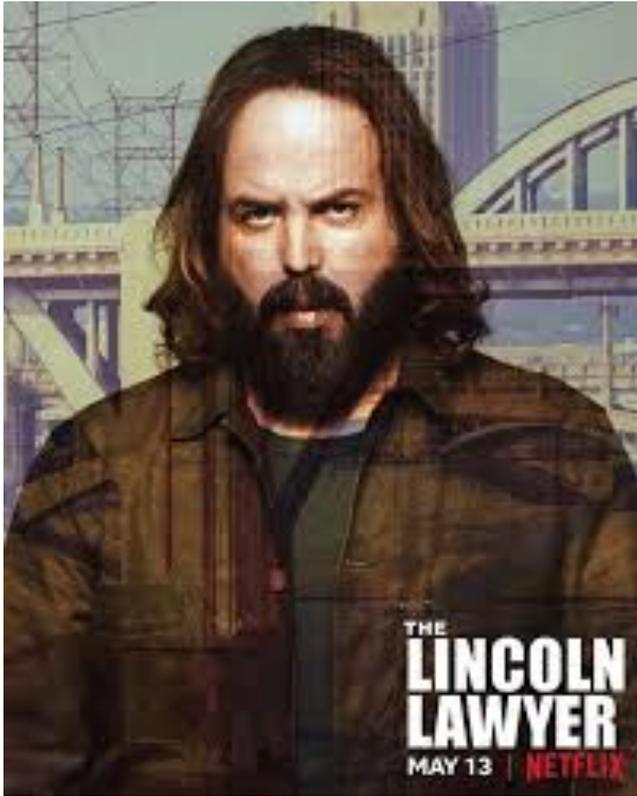
After the hiatus of clocking old shows, "our" titles are re-emerging for their new seasons and we are dutifully watching and enjoying. 'Tracker' (CBS/Paramount+) is back with its second season, with Colter Shaw (Justin Hartley) being advertised as "America's New #1 Hero". I wonder a bit about this, since he's (accurately) described as "a skilled survivalist and tracker" so you'd reflexively imagine he'd be triflicly popular with the Red Hat brigade, except that his team includes a disabled black guy, a lesbian couple (half of which is missing in s2, though) and an Asian-American attorney. That, and he helps people, so he can't possibly be a Republican, shurely? Two episodes in, and off to a good start...

'The Equalizer' season 5, also a CBS/Paramount+ show, started back after what seems like fuckin' ages but is in fact a mere four months, which is fuck all when we're having to wait over a year for some stuff. The group dynamic here is changing, and it is as much about the relationships and interactions of the ensemble as much as the action and plot. The opener sets up a new "big bad" for the season and efficiently bungs in dramatic tension of the interweaved plot lines. Queen Latifah (is there really anybody who doesn't like her?) is as good as always and Lorraine Toussaint in particular continues to be magnificent as "Aunt Vi". I'm also hoping we'll get some Donal Logue as the CIA man in upcoming eps, because he's always solid...

'The Lincoln Lawyer' (Netflix) bingeably dropped all ten episodes of season 3 on October 17th and we obliged by spreading that over three nights (3+3+4). Since we've had to wait *fourteen fuckin' months* since the cliffhanger ending of s2, the "previously on" lead-in was definitely needed. As a reminder, that season ended with the discovery of the murder of the prostitute Gloria Dayton ("Glory Days"), played by Fiona Rene (who also happens to be attorney Renee Greene in 'Tracker', good for her!).

Mickey Haller (Manuel Garcia-Rulfo) is defending the accused murderer, and in the process uncovers a conspiracy involving (mild spoiler) various bent cops, corrupt agents and a major drug cartel. I'm still a sucker for legal dramas, and this is a well twisty and intense example. It's almost always unfair to single out performances in what's really an ensemble effort, but since I do that anyway I'm going to heap admiration on Angus Sampson (an actor who is perhaps implausibly Australian) as Dennis "Cisco" Wojciechowski, Haller's investigator. Do I even need to mention that Elliott Gould is also effortlessly fine as Mickey's mentor?

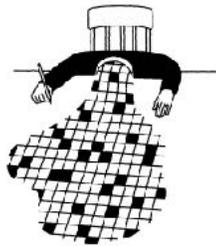
Again, this season ends with a cliffhanger lead-in to the next one, and I fervently hope it's not another year or more before we get to it, although I sadly suspect it might be...



Speaking of legal eagles, there's a new 'Matlock' (CBS/Paramount+ *again*) but far from being a straight remake, it's about ostensibly impoverished elderly attorney Madeline "Matty" Matlock (who invariably introduces herself with "You know, like the old TV show") getting a job at top law firm Jacobson & Moore for Reasons which quickly become apparent. No spoilers, though, just have a shufti. I mean - it's [Kathy Bates](#) innit?...

GIVE US A CLUE

Eli Cohen: I guess I had better get this LoC done before the next issue drops. Which means giving up on most of your crossword clues (the neighbors will appreciate the end of the noise from banging my head against the wall). And thank you so much for that **Langford** link, which does, indeed, demonstrate how insanely worse these clues could be...



Lastish:

"Content of wise, venerated fanzine, that's not too many (5)"

Eli: Anyway, I think I can take a shot at [this] one. The problem here is the vagueness of "content", even presuming the fanzine in question can be correctly identified. I mean, if, for instance, we picked a wise, venerated zine like *This Here...*, 5-letter content words could range from "music" to

"train", or even "Farey". Focusing on "that's not too many", an ancient fannish catchphrase, we could go back to its origin in Burbee's *Burlblings*, certainly wise and venerated, where it was used in reference to fifty player pianos. So I'd say a possible answer is the word FIFTY, which has 5 letters — that's not too many.

[[*Nope. I will admit that the definition "that's not too many" was perhaps unfairly vague, but it's merely meant to suggest that the solution is a number. Wordplay: "Content of" points to a hidden word in "wiSE, VENERated" = SEVEN ...*]]

"Core principle for Harry, for example? (6)"

Eli: I don't even know if this refers to Harry Potter or Prince Harry. No idea in either case.

[[*Definition: "Harry, for example?" (which you did more or less determine). Wordplay: "Core" in the sense of removing the middle of (although not exactly the middle here), so taking "ipl" out of "principle" = PRINCE ...*]]

"Pale grand queen, a person doing the five-knuckle shuffle? (6)"

Eli: Well, this was hopeless, even though I did learn another bit of rude British slang.

[[*Definition: "a person doing the five-knuckle shuffle".*

Wordplay: "Pale" = WAN + "grand" = 1000 = K + "queen" = ER, yielding WANKER ...]]

Thish's efforts:

"Roughly nothing with intent that the survivor takes all (6)"

"Close study of broken nails, say (8)"

"Randomly occasional fanzine? (8)"

ANORAK

GONE AND LARGELY FORGOTTEN

Apart from admiring the actual locos of years gone by (and engaging in some coo er gosh at new ones), there's also a fair amount of anoraking that goes on in relation to now disused lines, stations and station buildings. I previously mentioned the old [Bedford-Hitchin line](#) which included stops at RAF Henlow Camp, and in whose disused cuttings we used to occasionally play as kids when I was over at my Uncle Ben's farm off the A600 Bedford Road.

There were, it seems, quite a few branch lines and such which carried substantial traffic during the war years but fell into disuse thereafter and suffered inevitable closure either due directly to Beeching ("Bastard!" (c) **Tony Berry**) or around that era. Idly navigating some rabbit holes the other week a mention of the town of Newbury caught my attention for DoBFO reasons, leading me to investigate the history of the Didcot, Newbury and Southampton railway (DN&SR).

It's not an entirely unfair generalization to say that, like all roads leading to Rome, all railway lines went to London and rarely around it. We can also note that wartime tends to substantially gee up industrial activity, as shown by the supposed alarmist headline from the *Financial Times* or possibly the *Wall Street Journal*: "Real Threat of Peace".

The point of having the line in the first place was to link the coalfields of the Midlands (and the Northwest, although that route ended up going via Reading west curve which was faster) with the south coast and port access.



though at wartime peak over 100 train movements a day were happening.

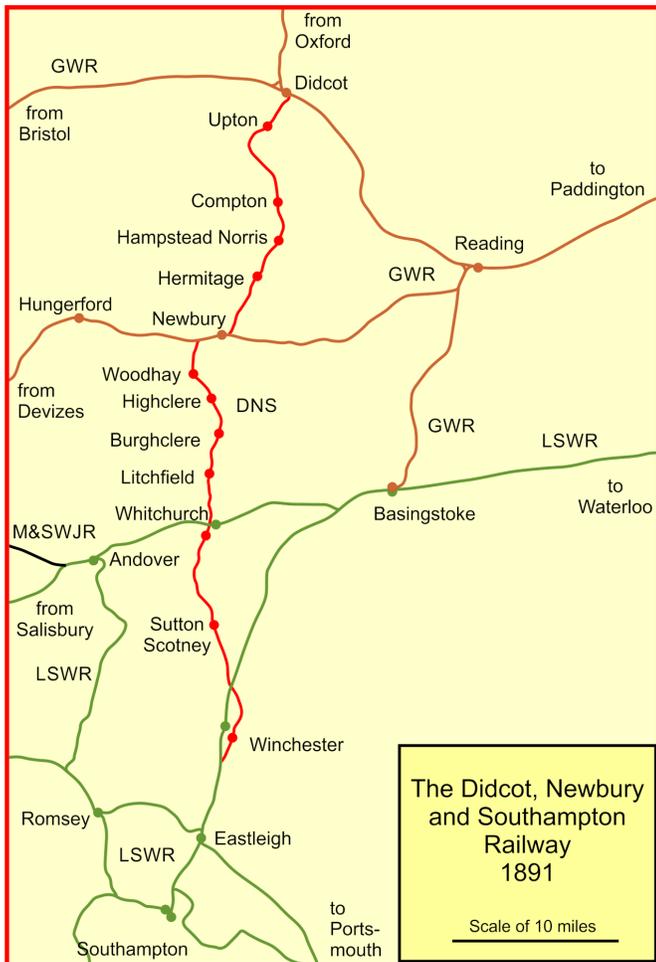
Then came post-war decline, although through goods trains were still using the well into the 1960s after the steep passenger decline of the 1950s when road transport (particularly buses) became more popular, and the line was losing money, despite trying to economize by shifting to DMUs for passengers on the northern bit, particularly that dear old workhorse the Class 121 "bubble car".



Passenger service south of Newbury had been discontinued in 1960, and Newbury-Didcot eventually followed in 1962, both in fact pre-Beeching, but even British Railways could see which way the fart was wafting. Goods services continued (but declined as well), and the Newbury-Southampton southern section shut up shop in 1965, with the Didcot end closing two years later.

Bits of the old route and its earthworks from Newbury to Winchester (let's petition to name it "the Corflu line", ey?) are now used by the A34 which follows the old line closely. Most of the infrastructure Newbury-Didcot is still there, though.

More manic anoraks might think about nipping up the line to Hermitage, the next station north of Newbury, but it's now a private house with no access to the old platforms so we couldn't go and wistfully stand there, gazing up the old



The 1880s were boom boom time for constructing railways, so no surprise really to learn that it was all in place by 1891, as shown on the above map, having got past typical wrangling among the approx 3,486 separate railway companies of the time, but more importantly the 1891 completion of the Hockley Viaduct in Winchester, crossing the valley next to what's now the M3 motorway (pictured above right in 2020).

The DN&SR was vital for troop and supply movement during World War II, particularly in the lead-up to D-Day. Bits of the line were actually closed during the daytime to allow improvements to be carried out, including double tracks on several sections. Since the important stuff was shifted at night, this wasn't considered a hindrance, even

line. The owners did let photographer Grahame Larter take a snap for a *BerkshireLive* piece in 2021, though, so here's that...



<https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/berkshire-history/berkshires-long-forgotten-railway-stations-20398688>

THE OLD SOD

BY DAVID HODSON

Since the Worldcon, I've been feeling distinctly off-colour. Nothing serious, but lacking energy and very rundown. Off to the quack I went. September is when I'm due to have a whole host of annual blood tests, so the stars aligned quite nicely, and, lo and behold, I'm seriously deficient in vitamins B (various flavours thereof) and D. Easy enough to sort out, off to the hospital for an intravenous transfusion of the B vitamins, followed by a couple of months of folic acid tablets (and, boy, have I been on the receiving end of enough jokes about wanting to start a new family) and a repeat prescription for vitamin D tablets to add to the rattling sound you already hear as I walk around.

Feeling crap has its advantages.

For all of September and the greater part of October I cut back on a lot of things I usually do (including the October Bishop's Finger meeting; it was probably best to skip alcohol for a little while) and just vegetated in front of the idiot box. The problem was there was precious little on the boob tube to keep me entertained until the start of the new season of 'Slow Horses'. I really wish I still had a full head of hair like Gary Oldman's that I could allow to get lank and greasy...

One of my all-time favourite television series, one that I re-watch at least once a year, is 'The Leftovers'. HBO has been lauded for so much over the years, but I really do believe 'The Leftovers' is the finest show they've ever produced. All three seasons have story elements that choke me up every time I watch them, which is why I will never sit and watch it with anyone else in attendance.

The problem was I wasn't ready for another re-watch yet. 'The Leftovers' fits into a pattern of watching I've developed over the years and, for some reason, it's in my April/May viewing cycle, starting around about the time of my birthday. Other things that only feel right being watched at certain times include Marx Brothers movies, Bogart/Cagney/Robinson gangster movies, and Universal horror movies, which are all late-night advent viewing due to their constant transmission in the 1970s on BBC2 in exactly those time slots.

The upshot was I hunted around for something I hadn't previously watched that might keep me entertained as I crashed out on the couch but was only partially successful. 'Manifest' is a show that I remember trying to watch when the first season appeared but really couldn't get beyond the first half-dozen episodes or so for some reason. The decision was made; rewatch the episodes I'd already seen and push on through to the other side. It seemed a good idea because I recalled that 'Manifest' had been cancelled after three seasons, but a write-in protest had convinced Netflix to bankroll a fourth and final season to wrap-up all the loose ends, so surely there had to be some inherent quality to the show to convince all those fans to write in and all those executives to pay attention to their letters or emails, plus we had a definite ending to look forward to; something not many shows actually plan for (looking at no particular George R. R. Martin here, you understand).

Christ on a fuckin' bike; 'Manifest', even with the advantage of knowing exactly when it was going to end, still couldn't stick the landing (I was going to say pardon the pun, but I checked (because I'm paranoid about looking like the ignorant git I really am, especially after the Farey/Kaufman Old Sod definition episode) and it has nothing to do with aircraft and everything to do with gymnastics, so move along, no puns to be seen here).

Basic premise: Montego Air Flight 828 from Jamaica to New York City experiences severe turbulence, vanishes completely presumed lost to those on the ground, and reappears five and a half years later in exactly the same place and is redirected to land at an isolated airport, where the passengers and crew learn that, whilst no time appears to have passed for them, everyone else has moved on over half-a-decade.

Everything after that is exactly what any veteran television watcher would expect. Whodunnit? How'd they do it? Why'd they do it? Can it be weaponised by the insidious pre-covid US government? Who can the passengers trust, especially given their newly discovered precognitive powers?

Actually, none of those questions matter a damn. 'Manifest' is a series that was hamstrung before it even started by its casting director, which allows the script writers to get away

with one for their later faux pas. The lead characters are brother and sister Ben and Michaela Stone, a college mathematics professor and police detective respectively. Why are none of the lead characters in US dramas ever plumbers, or janitors, or dustbin men? No one ever seems to do a job that involves getting mucky, dishevelled, or sweaty. Ben Stone is played by Josh Dallas, an actor whose method seems to comprise lifting the fingers of his right hand to his temple and pouting slightly to signify any level of bafflement, confusion, thought, reflection, or just about any other emotion. It would be fair to say that Josh Dallas, as an actor, is most successful at conveying mild puzzlement at the location of the nearest public toilet as his anticipates an attack of irritable bowel disease.



Michaela Stone, played by Melissa Roxburgh, comes back after five and a half years to find her fiancé, Jared, who also happens to be a detective at the same police precinct, has now married her remaining best friend after she is shown to be guilt ridden about killing her other best friend in a drunk-driving accident. Over the course of four seasons, Michaela ping-pongs between Jared and a character added later in the first season, Zeke, who also accidentally shoots Michaela whilst involved in a bust-up with a jealousy enraged Jared. Oh, Jared's wife, Michaela's other best friend, has left him by this point because he's been unfaithful to her with Michaela and is never seen again. So far, so very, very 'Soap'; if only Robert Guillaume hadn't died in 2017, he'd have been perfect as one of the passengers looking on at the various shenanigans with bewilderment.

The character that really belongs in a satirical comedy soap opera is Ben's wife, Grace. Grace is such a dope that, after mourning Ben for two years, she gets involved with a guy, Danny, who hits on her over coffee at a bereavement counselling group (I thought it was supposed to be weddings and funerals that were the richest hunting grounds for lonely, vulnerable women). To add a further lathering of slime over the greasy nature of their meeting and hooking up, Grace allows her teenage daughter to get close to Danny in a soon dropped storyline that had

absolutely no one's grooming red lights flashing at all. Grace is also fully aware of the increasingly weird, wacky, and supernatural goings on that surround the flight 828 returnees, but is constantly whining that she isn't supported by Ben in giving her family a normal life, completely ignoring the droves of newspaper reporters outside their home, the nutjob conspiracy theorists who think the returnees are the spawn of the devil, the other lot of nutjob conspiracy theorists who, encouraged by one of the passengers, think they are angels sent by God, and all the other various nutjobs who work for various government agencies that want to run nefarious experiments on any of the passengers they can get their hands on. Grace is stabbed to death at the end of season three by another religious nutjob; it was just a shame we had to wait so long, but she then gets better by the final episode (comic book readers joke), and I suddenly feel sorry for Ben and his future mental health.

There are endless other paper-thin, cipher-like characters that come and go over the course of the show, and most of them make absolutely ridiculous decisions about how they live their lives, do their jobs (all of the police characters would have lost their jobs if they'd have behaved in the real world like they do here), fall in and out of relationships with absolutely no consideration for consequences to themselves or anyone else, or even decide what to have for lunch (quick aside: does it not occur to any of the continuity people on these shows that not every café, coffee shop, or deli will be using exactly the same size, shape, and colour of takeaway coffee cup that comes from the catering truck serving the film unit? These are the little points that help the watcher suspend disbelief, even when the characters are as batshit crazy and irrational as Grace and may even allow us, the viewers, to draw some conclusions about her mental health; reinforcing even minor real world elements allows the viewer to draw conclusions about not explicitly stated happenings and might have helped rationalise why Ben was mostly looking at Grace with bafflement and confusion most of the time when she spoke. Don't make the characters just ask for a bottle of lager when they're in a bar, use a brand name like real people do and build those onion skin layers of reality.

This is all part of a much bigger gripe for me, as I hope should be obvious. I am finding it almost impossible to watch much modern television or film drama these days and the reason for that is summed up by one equally modern phrase: high concept.

Wikipedia helpfully defines high concept as "a type of artistic work that can be easily pitched with a succinctly stated premise", but now comes the truly damning part of the definition: "it can be contrasted with low concept, which is more concerned with character development and other *subtleties* (my italics) that are not as easily summarised."

Now, some high concept movies I can accept. Let's take 'Godzilla vs Kong' or whatever it was called as an example. A giant monkey and a vaguely mystical sort of prehistoric lizard having a dust-up is exactly what it says on the tin; it is only meant to be about CGI carnage. But any movie or television series that involves people as the main protagonists should actually be based in some kind of psychological reality, otherwise the characters are all exactly like Grace – batshit fucking crazy for absolutely no apparent reason!

Remember when I mentioned 'Slow Horses' up there in paragraph three? Someone, I can't recall who, recently asked if Jack Lowden's character, River Cartwright, was aware that he really was a fuck-up rather than just unlucky enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time to cause his exile from The Park to Slough House. That question rather misses the point though. Through all four seasons of 'Slow Horses' it's made plain that none of the characters, be they Top Desk, Second Desk, one of the Dogs, safely ensconced behind a desk at The Park, or a Slough House reject, are truly competent; they're all just winging it and hoping for the best and the characters who come out looking best are the ones who know how to cover their own and the organisation's backs from the consequences of the many and varied fuck-ups that occur. 'The Walking Dead', a show that is ostensibly as much of a fantasy as 'Manifest' albeit in a much grimmer and grittier milieu, had a storyline where a young girl murdered another, younger child just to see her come back to life from the dead. Carol, one of the shows major characters, realised that this child had a complete lack of empathy and could never be trusted around other children again or, indeed, around other adults as she got older, so she concocted a story to make the child lower what defences she had and executed her as gently as possible. It was a really quite heart-rending and challenging episode to watch. There you have two examples of TV shows that treat characters realistically within the bounds of their worlds; no one in this world, at least in this time period in the western world, would execute a child for being a psychopath, but in 'The Walking Dead' world everyone has to watch their and everyone else's backs at all times. It's especially annoying when 'Manifest' at times has characters objecting to internment because they come from a Japanese American heritage and have family histories of experiencing same, but then just breeze past a potentially interesting sub-plot to the next airheaded and contrived episode.

Speaking of airheaded goings on, I was criticised recently for objecting to

the amount of airtime the BBC news was giving to the death of Liam Payne, a minor celebrity who was once in a boyband put together from various rejects on a television game show by the odious Simon Cowell. Payne, it seems, decided to get coked up to the gills and pissed (in the British sense) as a fart and fell off the balcony of a hotel in Argentina. I was accused of being "salty" (unreasonably annoyed or upset) and of lacking empathy for Payne's death. I wasn't being either, I was being pissed (American meaning) off at the amount of time the BBC news was wasting on a non-entity when, the last time I looked, there was still a war going on in Ukraine (and one that could become a whole lot more dangerous should the orange buffoon Trump win the impending American election), genocide was still being committed by a rogue state in the middle east, and climate change is now accelerating at a rate never previously seen in the entire history of the planet. I'm pretty sure that thirty or forty years ago, Payne's death would have rated maybe 30 seconds at the end of the evening news transmission at most, but in this age of 24-hour rolling news, there's a desperation to elevate any piece of information to earth-shattering importance. And before anyone says Elvis Presley's death was a top news story (classic whataboutism); yes, but then Presley genuinely changed the way the world looked at itself, something very few manufactured television show bands could ever be accused of, not even The Monkees!

To add further insult to injury, 120,000 morons have signed a petition to insist the British government introduce legislation, to be called Liam's Law, that would necessitate "regular mental health check-ups, adequate rest periods, and the presence of mental health professionals on-set, including any ongoing support during their career" for young artists in the entertainment industries. I wonder how that ongoing support would have dealt with flying to Argentina, stopping the 31-year old, so, by definition, a grown arsed adult Payne from chopping up his lines of coke, putting the cork back in the bottle of whatever hooch he was necking, and telling him to go to bed and sleep it off – all at taxpayers' expense – in the real world?

As a friend said, dog bites man isn't news, but man bites dog is, and the various woes going on in the world at the moment have become sort of mundane and ignorable, but, fuck me, I will never understand people who have such small lives that the lives and Darwin Award winning deaths of imbeciles like Liam Payne become so important (if anyone wishes to delete me from any social media, block me, or report me for any of the views I have presented here then feel free; you won't be fucking missed I suspect).



LOCO CITATO

[[*"Talking about things that are understandable only weighs down the mind" (Alfred Jarry) ...*]]

From: srjeffery@aol.com

September 28-29

Steve Jeffery writes:

I just wanna say that I want some of whatever **Kim Huett** was on when he wrote his loc to this issue. If only I hadn't been drinking a cup of coffee at the time. Your inclusion of Joan Rivers' gag may have contributed to an "up the nose" moment. Where else it may or may not have come out of I am advised not to say.

I'm guessing, but if you, or anyone else, in the persona of an Anglo Saxon warrior* were going to strip naked and daub yourself with blue and white in order to intimidate a bunch of legionaries whose leader describes himself as "weeny, weedy and weaky" then I would think that you would probably paint your three piece suite in a violently contrasting colour for added emphasis. Or paint little googly eyes on your balls and hack down your enemy while he's still giggling.

[* but maybe not in Sainsbury's. Or a job interview.]

Farah's an historian. Have you asked her about the colour of Anglo Saxon scrotums (scrotae? scrota? What is the correct plural of scrotum? I realise I have never been in a situation where I've needed to ask. I have led a very sheltered life.)

[[*Minimal research reveals "scrota", "scrotae" or indeed "scrotums" as correct forms - a topic in which you suggest Farah (Ms. East Ham 1977 to present day) may be expert, then?...*]]

I wonder if you or **Dave Hodson** might like Nick Kent's "The Dark Stuff", in which he reprises a number of articles and interviews (NME, Rolling Stone etc.) on rock and roll's more terminally self-destructive figures and careers.

Also Viv Albertine's "Clothes Music Boys" which is fun up to the point where shit happens to almost everything, everywhere, all at once (multiple IVF fails, depression, cervical cancer) and it becomes somewhat of a hard read, though the fact she's writing about this in the past tense (though actually most of this is written in the present tense, with italicized comments from the present on those events) and the fact I remember her talking on Radio 4 a while back reassures me she gets through this period of personal hell.

From: jabberwocky2000@hotmail.com

September 30

Brad Foster writes:

This Here... #79 came in this weekend. Just finished two conventions in last couple of weeks, one comicbook related (Denton Comic Art Expo) and one skiffy related (P-Con 2024), and getting ready for the big Denton Arts & Jazz Festival this coming weekend. Each requires a different mix of materials brought and set up equipment assembled, so find I am busy and getting things done, and even answering emails within a day or two of getting them. How long can this last??

I see you made a home for one of my little guys this time, so a new one is attached to maintain your on-hand supply at three to pick from each time. Proper levels must be maintained for optimum fanzining... fanzineing... doing of the fanzine.

Great news that there is a new *BEAM* on the horizon. I see I had sent you a full color robo Santa Claus piece back in 2019, fingers crossed you were able to fit him in somewhere!

[[*I actually remember that Santa Claus, and thought I had used it - er - somewhere (but as usual, can't be arsed to look...)*]]

Kim Huett's opening comment: "I just realized that washing my hands is really just allowing them to indulge in a little foreplay while I watch. I wonder if they enjoy the process as much as I do?" won the ish for me. Now just need to release a slow-mo video of the action, complete with sexy saxophone musical score to the internet, and watch the bucks roll in!

Haven't been out to see a movie in a movie theatre in years now, and don't subscribe to any streaming services, so we are always a year or three behind in what movies are "current". Only just saw the second 'Black Panther' this past week, and realized after that and several other recent ones, have mostly lost interest in the superhero stuff. Made me think of how I approached comics when I was a kid—loved them, collected them, but I was never really a fan of the characters as much as I was fascinated by the art and visuals of how comics were made. If I ever had gotten into wearing costumes as a wee lad, rather than dressing as Captain America, I probably would have tried to put together a Jim Steranko cos-play. And so with the movies, they are starting to look the same, and since I don't really care about the characters, just not interesting any more.

We managed to tape the latest Indiana Jones when it was broadcast last week, I wonder how blasé I am going to be when I get around to seeing that one?

From: mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com

October 2

Mark Plummer writes:

A degree of personal joined-up-ness with #79. It showed up here in the very early hours of Sunday morning as we were sitting round the dining table with **Christina [Lake]** and **Doug [Bell]** who had earlier been telling us about meeting up with **Dave Hodson** who in turn gives his side of that same meeting in #79.

But really I'm only writing in case #79 doesn't pass **Alison Scott's** personal threshold for limited responsibilities. In your 'fanzines received' notice for *Ornithopter MkIV* you include "a surprising note that *Octothorpe's* Hugo acceptance speech included a staunch "fuck off" to Gaiman, which I apparently totally missed..." No, you didn't miss it -- because it wasn't there. Although we didn't go to the Hugos we had watched some of it on the catchup service including the *Octothorpe* bit, and I didn't remember them saying anything like that and I've just rewatched it to confirm that memory. The comment about Gaiman was made by Adri Joy of *Nerds of a Feather*, winner of best fanzine.

And to be fair to *Ornithopter*, it doesn't say that *Octothorpe* said anything about Gaiman. It doesn't mention *Octothorpe* at all. Rose Mitchell does say, "As to the lady in the Jelly Fish Hat (winner best Fanzine) nobody cares about your opinion of Neil Gaiman (who did not contribute to your fanzine)".

[[See also Jerry Kaufman's loc and Kat Templeton in 'WAHF' and doubtless more to follow, upbraiding me in the gentle manner one uses with the elderly and confused. I DoBFO misread or misunderstood the reportage. I was watching the live feed because certain admired friends were up for rockets, but switched off immediately once "Best Alleged Fanzine" was announced and therefore missed whatever was said by Jelly Fish and/or Mushroom Hat person...]]

From: jakaufman@aol.com

October 4

Jerry Kaufman writes:

You've set yourself an ambitious schedule of publishing, especially for a guy who says he sleeps a lot. But I believe you'll make it, just like *The Last Dangerous Visions*, which has now officially been published. *The Kerosene Papers* intrigues me, largely because I have no idea what you're talking about.



[[Well that's interesting, because I seem to recall you commenting on 'Kerosenology' in a loc to Banana Wings 66 (2017). I bet you can't remember what you had for breakfast yesterday either (and, DoBFO, neither can I)...]]

Claire Brialey says that "The Far-Flung Farey Safari" can be abbreviated to "FFS." Even better, as there are three capital Fs in that title, it can be abbreviated "F3S," in imitation of the N3F. Speaking of abbreviations, later in this section you refer to your band at the London School of Economics as the "DVs." What does "DV" stand for?

[[The original name of the band, after thinking on what would be quite disgusting, because punk, was "Decaying Vomit". Later, when we started to take ourselves a little more seriously (but not too much at that point) we became "the DVs", keeping the original initials so as not to alienate our original fanbase. As to the kip, I'm sleeping about 8-10 hours a day, but not all at once - 6 hours overnight (typically interrupted, though) + morning nap + after lunch nap, although it's 50-50 whether one of those naps goes missing. I try to get some fanac in most days, which I'm guessing I manage half the time...]]

I tasted some of the Mowery tunes you suggested. Not bad, liked the riff on "He Doesn't Like You." The band looked like they were really playing, though I'm sure they're lip-syncing the lyrics.

I'm sure that **Doug Bell** will be able to put together a spiffing collection of fan writing about music. I think it should include reprints as well as new material, and can suggest a few places to look for material. I myself wrote a few items for *The Spanish Inquisition* and maybe *Mainstream* (memory fails), and Stu Shiffman published a piece by me about "rock 'n' reel" in his one-shot zine *Folkal Point*. Additionally, I published a music zine that was planned by Barry Smotroff before his death, which I called *Roundabout* (named after a Yes song much beloved by people who otherwise didn't like Yes). I know there have been several apas devoted to music that could also be mined.

[[The concept (as far as I know) is to collect wholly original writing done specifically for this collection. It'll be up to Doug whether that changes to include reprint stuff, and I suppose we'll see. I'm getting the impression that there'll be enough newly commissioned bits without going to the well, but ey, it's not my gig...]]

[**Dave Hodson**]'s musings about music and books on the subject make me want to find my copy of *Outlaw Blues* by Paul Williams that so influenced my thinking about pop music fifty or more years ago. I hope it has

the same mental kick it gave me back then.

By now you've probably learned that your note in your bit about *Ornithopter* was a bit confused, but just in case... It wasn't the *Octothorpe* gang who made the remark about Neil Gaiman as they accepted their Hugo, it was the gang from *Nerds of a Feather*, in particular the woman in the mushroom hat. (They won for Best Fanzine.)

[[Indeed, see Mark Plummer's loc above and my comment thereon, but also thanks for the additional confirmation that I Got It All Wrong...]]

Dave Langford and the InTheBar elite are assembling a fair-sized collection of John Nielsen Hall (or Nielsen-Hall)'s fan writing, due to be out in the near future.

[[In Comic Sans, I hope. I suspect John would have liked that...]]

And that's the news from around here.

* * *

From: klepsydra@gmail.com

October 7

S&ra Bond writes:

Thanks for #79, and all the other *TH*... you've sent since I last acknowledged them and thanked you for them. Rest assured I read and enjoyed them all, every single one.

The schedule you print is useful, though it makes me groan because *everyone* I have promised a chunk of TAFF report to has a deadline in the last few months of this year. I know you wanted a little bit ("Is there a little bit in the corner of your life? I know there is in mine" - Alan Bennett) but I've just written a chapter for *Banana Wings*, and **Rob Jackson's** deadline is next and then **Dan Steffan's** - did you know he's in the throes of one final epic issue of *Boonfark*? Sense of wonder! - and I have a novel to revise too and, oh, you get the idea.

[[A final Boonfark? Nope, hadn't heard, but that's rather exciting innit? Now there'll have to be a decision on how to categorize that for the FAAn awards...]]

Look, when do you plan to put out *Beam Nineteen*? Give me the deadline for *that* and I'll put it in the diary. (Great things, these online diaries. You can schedule things for several years ahead, you don't need to wait till you can buy a paper diary for 2028 from WH Smugs.)

[[Um, well, BEAM #18 is genuinely almost done and dusted, honest guv ect. As to #19, I honestly haven't given it any thought as yet - one would hope for mid 2025(-ish) but as you say below there's a trip (and a trip report) to fit in, as well as contending with the known glacial pace of my

esteemed co-editor. You'll know when I do, is all I can say for now...]]

Of course we (by which I mean you) have to fit your UK trip in, somewhere along there, don't you? Look forward to it! Wheee.

Glad your health annoyances are getting no worse. I had to go have my bloods taken this morning, as the medicos put it, to make sure my liver still isn't falling out following the scare of a couple of years ago. I've gone from zero to Enough Pills To Make Me Rattle in next to no time. Wretched.

Jerry Dammers as mad genius? I'll endorse that. There's something about the children of vicars... Terry Hall's autobiography (no, dear heart, not the bloke with his hand up Lenny the Lion's arse, the other Terry Hall) is well worth a read too. **Jerry Kaufman** -- go and listen to the first two albums by the Specials. I don't know how they would come across to non-UK ears -- to Britons, any archive footage of the Brixton riots must be accompanied by their "Ghost Town; that is the law" -- but "Gangsters" and "Rat Race" are stone classics and probably others too.

[[Not a duff slice on those sets - my favs edging out the perhaps more well known tunes are 'Nite Klub' and particularly 'Little Bitch'...]]

My musical recommendation *du jour* is Theo Dussek, the Pirate Troubador. This is a bloke (and like many FTMs, bloke to the max) who dresses up in buccaneer clobber, tricorne hat and the lot, and sings his own folk songs accompanying himself very well on the guitar. I met him at Shrewsbury Pride the other day where we both had gigs. He's bloody ace, and my write-up isn't doing him justice, so just go check out <https://theodussek.com/>.

Are you still printing bloody crossword clues for the delight of **Eli Cohen** and **Dave Langford**? They don't delight me. You'd think someone as completely devoted to the written and printed word as I am would be all over crosswords, but I can never fathom them at all. Blank spot, dunno why.

[[Yes, and I'm also still printing other stuff that not everyone is into. You don't have to read it all...]]

I still boggle every time **Hodson** reminds me he knows Charles Shaar Murray. Him, Glanville, Orwell -- this man has good taste, you know? No wonder you keep printing him. He can even make football writing interesting -- I'm back to talking about **Hodson** now, you understand, not Murray -- but I'm glad to see him tackling something else this time around. Terry Southern -- there's another fascinating writer for you. The Holy Bee of Ephesus (a blog which should be much better known) covered him, to my fascination.

<https://holybeeofephesus.com/2023/03/04/act-naturally-the-films-of-the-solo-beatles-part-2/#more-14211>

[[To add to the crowded publication calendar I've long considered a collection of the 'Footy' (and now 'Old Sod')

columns, because, yes, the Hod-Me-Son is that fuckin' good and I'm eternally grateful to be able to publish him...]]

Jon Del Arroz claims to be "the leading voice in Hispanic sf". He's certainly the shrillest...

Official Secrets Act, not Secrecy, **Kim Huett**. Secrets are tangible, concrete, individually wrapped things. Secrecy is a concept, and as with things like liberty and happiness, making laws about abstract qualities is difficult.

John Nielsen-Hall. (Hyphen optional -- he wasn't like those Nielsen Haydens who get huffy if you put one in.) I dunno if word's reached you but I think this eulogy of **Rich Coad**'s would be perfect for the memorial volume of his fanwriting which is coming together under the steady hand of the **Langford**. It should be a top class volume. O do sa yes you weed. (I suppose we should ask **Rich** too.)

[[As I've already informed you, ask Rich first, since the general principle round here is still that any rights & ownership of such bits revert to the author upon publication. I would consider it a courtesy to mention that the piece first appeared in this here cackle of hyenas (like Journey Planet didn't when presenting a lengthy essay which had previously featured in BEAM)...]]



From: leighedmonds01@gmail.com

October 7

Leigh Edmonds writes:

To get it out of the way first, I didn't go to sleep or dislike Nick Evans Mowery. Didn't love him either. I quite liked

the tracks "Now That I've Found You" and "He Doesn't Like You etc" but even as I write this five minutes later I've already forgotten them. He's a fully professional artist who probably make a living out of his craft, but he doesn't stand out from the crowd so far as I am concerned. Must try harder.

[[I expect better from you than a "meh", so yes, I will endeavor to be more annoying...]]

You are a brave lad setting out your publication plans in advance. I may have some but I like to keep them to myself, just in case they go right off the rails. I have been known to mutter that the next issue of *Ornithopter* might be out around Christmas, but that is mainly to encourage people to write something for it. I know that this may support the thinking of certain fans among us, but my main publishing effort is for apas, and I've been thinking about that a bit. For me, writing for apas is like having a conversation with a few people and jotting down some thoughts from that. On the other hand, writing for or publishing a genzine involves real mental effort in thinking up something decent that stands alone as a piece of writing, actually writing it and then a bit of redrafting to make it readable. No such effort goes into apa contributions, apart from a quick read through after its written to make sure that I haven't written something that I will *really* regret later on.

[[I find it highly interesting that you suggest apa writing requires substantially less quality control. I can't personally imagine eg the Fishlifters lowering their standards for any of their product. Perhaps other apahacks would like to weigh in on this contention?...]]

On this business of health, I think that you are still worse off than me but I'm not feeling as good today as I did a couple of days ago. A week or two back I went to see my GP and blood doctor and they both declared me relatively fit for my age. Then my GP sent me off for a bone density scan and when the results for that came in he was on the phone to me quick smart that I should come in for a chat. That didn't sound promising. It turns out that I have very weak bones and so falling over or even bumping into something hard could cause real problems. As you can imagine, I'm not real pleased with this but, as with most medical conditions, it is what it is and has to be dealt with. I don't feel at all crook, which is the good part, but the fact that any missed step could have me feeling really crook is concerning. Despite the dangers now inherent in going to Corflu and drinking to excess with you, **David Hodson** and some others I could name, I'm still coming. But if I fall over, can't get up and start screaming, you'll know why. The other thing about this is that before this I felt like I had the body of an ageing and overweight person and now I feel like a fragile skeleton with some squidgy bits attached.

[[Let's be careful out there...]]

Moving on to much happier business, I am in complete agreement with your assessment of the first three seasons of *Marple*. What made them for Valma and I were the things you mention, the constant twinkle in McEwan's eyes and the undercurrent of amused cynicism. They made her a person we could identify with, maybe a lot of people of her age have a similar outlook on life and can similarly identify with her. The woman in the final series reminded me of a rather cranky and bossy aunt and while I know the type it doesn't entertain me much. Rather, she made me feel rather nervous, a hang over from my childhood perhaps.

I haven't seen *The Ark* but I will watch it if it comes onto a streaming service I'm paying for. Like you, I'm a sucker for almost anything set aboard a space ship. Unfortunately, there seems to be a lot of material being made that involves men and women with swords and/or mysterious magical powers, so many of them that I'm over the whole thing. I'm looking forward to the time when there are so many shows set on space ships that I'm over them too.

[[I'm certainly hoping there's going to be a season 3 of 'The Ark'. Although the finale seemed a bit rushed, there's been some good plot twists, and a decent setup for further episodes with two significant dangling plot threads...]]

I hope it will not boost **David Hodson's** ego too much if I write that I always look forward to his column and this one was especially nice and enjoyable. Of course, I know nothing about the football he mentions in passing and the details of the recent one-day competition have not made it to my awareness. This is because the local AFL football competition has reached its climax for the year in which it dominates the sporting mediasphere, so only now is the attention turning to cricket. **Perry Middlemiss** has already organized a little fannish gathering to spend a day at the MCG to watch the Indians play and I'm looking forward to that.

[[Wish I could be there for that...]]

The part of **David's** column that did set me off was his mention that **Doug Bell** is putting together a collection of fannish writing about music for the coming Corflu. Fortunately for me, my knowledge of music is so limited that I would have nothing to contribute. I mean, in comparison to **David's** dithering about what he might, or might not write about, my deep thinking about music is limited to knowing what I like and liking it. Back in the good old days of the 1960s the most common review of the current pop music was "it's got a good beat and you can dance to it", and I'm not much further along than that.

[[Nods sagely in agreement...]]

As part of my preparation for reading this issue of *This Here ...* I caught the train down to Melbourne to have lunch with Elaine and **Archbishop Bruce**. Knowing that Bruce is a dedicated Stones fan I thought I'd listen to one of their albums to prepare myself and chose one of their lesser ones

which happened to be *Between the Buttons*. I was not impressed and happened to mention this to the **Archbishop**. I don't know if he was outraged at such a blasphemous statement or puzzled beyond belief that I could not see the creative genius in the album. On hearing my comment Elaine added "You like the Beatles don't you!". I would not say that there was a sneer in her tone of voice, but others might.

[[Which version of 'Between the Buttons' was it, though? UK and US versions had different track listings, with only the latter including 'Let's Spend the Night Together' (which is all right, I suppose) and the most excellent 'Ruby Tuesday'. I found an interesting bit of "Beatles v Stones" argument somewhere or other a couple months ago which pointed out that the Fab Four were yer actual working-class lads whereas the Stones were college boys...]]

On the way back the train passes Festival Hall in North Melbourne. It was, I think, built to house the boxing and other sports during the Olympic Games in 1956 and became the main venue for visiting bands for decades thereafter. It is, for example, where I saw several bands including the Who, Little [sic] Faces and Animals. In later years Valma and I saw quite a few acts there including the last performance of AC/DC before they left our shores for fame and lots of fortune. (We didn't know that when they performed here again it would be to immense crowds that we didn't want to have to cope with so that's the only time we saw them, and it was memorable.)

Another band to play there was The Beatles so, in reaction to the **Archbishop** and Elaine, and in memory of the great times had there, I changed from the Stones to the Beatles and listened to *Beatles for Sale* which is far superior to anything the Stones produced until at least the early 1970s, by which time the Beatles has withdrawn from the field. I noticed something quite interesting about early Beatles albums which kept my ears busy all the way home and which I need to think on some more.

But I've bumbled on enough for now.

From: necronaut13@gmail.com

October 9

Steve Green writes:

Dave Cockfield's mention of Nick Drake reminded me of the afternoon in 2008 Ann and I took **Chris Garcia** to see Nick's grave in leafy Tanworth-in-Arden, during the Midlands leg of **Chris's** TAFF tour. I did the same for **Jacq Monahan** a couple of years later, but now without Ann.

[[Ah, Chris Garcia - whatever happened to him?...]]

Alexandra Bastedo, incidentally, was the same dress size as Annette Andre, which enabled them to swap outfits between *The Champions* and *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)*, making it appear both shows had a slightly more generous wardrobe budget.



From: portablezine@gmail.com

October 11

Wm Breiding writes:

I had to Google "RL" because I am so quaint. I am finding that there is a huge swathe of RL scenarios that are in search of Unobtainium for fuel when they need look no further than this here fanzine. Hoping all is resolving well with **Ulrika** in RL. Exciting news, your publishing schedule. Tim Marion announced that the recent issue of his FLAP zine *Fanimesto* would be its last. He maintains that "fascism and fanzines don't mix." He is fully expecting Trump to win the election in November. So, exciting news issuing from the Vegas frontier. A hopped up schedule worthy of any old school faned. According to **A Phineas Hooper**, *BEAM* is the "American SF Commentary". That's a one eyebrow lifting comparison (take your visual, Spock or The Rock).

[[Hooper said that? What a prawn! As you (later, in to-and-fro not related here) remark, "Apples and oranges", although I might rather suggest "Peaches and ghost peppers, shurely?" I'm now wondering whether the Archbishop or meself & Ulrika should be more offended...]]

I am in extreme anticipation. I haven't the faintest idea what *The Kerosene Papers* might be but if it issues from **Farey & Plummer** I'm expecting greatness silliness. *Old Farey's All-Fanac* should prove interesting and likely amusing. Leah Zeldes and Dick Smith issued a fannish almanac prior to their deep gafiation decades ago, including a Farmer's mock cover. I can't imagine *Farey's* being even remotely similar. Figuring in the financial decimation of retirement I'm hoping to receive at least a .pdf of these exhilarating publications.

[[The 'Almanac' parody will be print on demand, at least that's the plan, and there'll be the usual (minimal) number of actual print copies of the others. I shall endeavor to include you on the list for the latter, as well as getting the pdfs, all of which ought to surface on efanzines by the usual Grace of Burns ...]]

In America if you were listening to other than Top 40 in the 1980s it was impossible to ignore ska and 2 Tone Records, particularly The (English) Beat and The Selecter. Have those first issued LPS nearly memorized. (The other Beat was a super-great power pop band from LA. Are you familiar with them at all? Paul Collins was relentlessly productive, doing shitloads of studio sessions.) I had the pleasure of seeing Madness open for the Dead Kennedys at the Mabuhay Gardens in San Francisco's North Beach. It was a wild night. Of course, a year later Madness were well beyond playing as an opening band at a shithole punk club.

[[Never ever heard a single thing off the American Beat...]]

Nick Evans Mowery - wow! Thank you for the tip. This guy is great, power pop straddling blues rock. I may one day pop for a download of his entire back catalog. This was the perfect kind of thing for plugging into and listening all day while grounds keeping at the University of Arizona. On "He Doesn't Like You (But I Do)" those women are definitely musicians, esp. the bassist and guitarist, they are too naturally handling the fretboard; the drummer looks a little hesitant but she's hitting all the right skins at the right time in the song. And they are having fun.

Kim Huett's reference to my being "cultured" could be taken many ways. I would like to think of myself as sexually erudite while tending vanilla. Hence, never understanding the (to me) unappealing Brazilian wax job when left exposed. **Kim's** explanation of the high-def lenses of, originally, video cameras, and then eventually, the digital clarity in porn, could be a logical explanation, but I'm thinking that anal bleaching is probably part of the larger picture of a systemic kink lifestyle. (I decided to answer this without faint sarcasm. I'm sure **Kim** would understand this.)

[[Perhaps surprisingly to some, I have no comment...]]

We have lost two hugely looming fannish personalities since I last wrote - Taral and Uncle Johnny. They couldn't have been more opposite: Taral talented, cranky and swift to snarl, John Nielsen Hall a friendly, funny critical thinker. I loved Johnny's locs and our occasional email exchanges where he waxed amused about the vagaries of aging. Taral left a big hole and John ripped it wider. I wish I could be more eloquent about both. My heart was broken just a little more by their leave-taking.

All for now. Looking forward to your hectic publishing schedule. Stay healthy and vivid!

From: cramynotbeiltro@gmail.com

October 12

Marc Ortlieb writes:

Thanks for keeping me on your mailing list. I'm certain that I must qualify as the fakest of fake fans, despite having, in the past few weeks: played poker with Justin Ackroyd, Carey Handfield, Alan Stewart and Julian Warner; Contributed to ANZAPA; sat in on the *Plokta* Zoom meeting and attended one of **Perry Middlemiss'** Wednesday Night Pub visits, with the venerated Dr **Leigh Edmonds**. I might as well round that off with a pitiful attempt to LoC a fanzine...

[[I'm sure I've already told you about my mailing list policy, which keeps people on it unless they actively ask to opt out (as a few have) or, sadly, drop off the twig...]]

Justin Ackroyd did a fanzine? In the dim distant past I recall him making one contribution to ANZAPA but that's about it. (I don't count the *Slow Glass* catalogs as fanzines.)

When I saw the title "Too Much Too Young" I thought you might have discovered the joys of the early Divinyls music, before they were sucked into the crass commercialism of "I Touch Myself". The line "Too much, too young" was repeated several times towards the end of their first major hit "Boys in Town" but no, it seems to deal with a style of music that I could never quite get my head around. I can respect ska and reggae for the skill in the music, but I don't like it. Probably not enough guitar for my liking and it came out when I was past 20 which means it didn't imprint itself on my mind the way that guitar music did.

[[You're a lot nicer about it than Leigh is, though. Incidentally, the Specials 'Too Much Too Young' (live) EP came out in 1980, 'Boys in Town' in 1981...]]

Not that I didn't continue to find new music to keep me from wittering on about Jefferson Airplane or Patti Smith but it tended to be music that derived from Lennon, Dylan and the like. I've been listening to a lot of old Grace Potter and the Nocturnals tracks recently, but that probably came as a result of them doing a great version of "White Rabbit". Mott the Hoople were more my preferred style of music, though not to the extent that early Bowie was.

[[Mott the Hoople (still egregiously missing from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Bollocks) - now you're talkin'! You should check out Ian Hunter's latest, 'Defiance Part 1' (2023) and 'Part 2' (this year)...]]

I thought I might have caught you out on your attributing the first female Fan Writer Hugo to Susan Wood, but I was wrong. Elinor Busby was the first female to get a Best Fanzine Hugo (shared). (There wasn't a Best Fan Writer Hugo when she won her award.)

[[Not me, but Eli Cohen...]]

I'm hoping **David Hodson** never meets Julian Warner. I'm sure that their attempts to outdo one another in discussing esoteric music would warp space and time and cause irrevocable damage to the fabric of the universal musicosphere.

While I'm interested in the various efforts to document fandom's history, have been enjoying the FANAC Zoom sessions and really liked the first volume of **Leigh Edmonds'** history of Australian fandom, a little bit of me keeps muttering "Are we in danger of disappearing up our own respective fundamentals?" What ever did become of that crunchy fandom we had before the war?

[[I shall await stern responses from Leigh or even the reclusive genius Rob Hansen...]]

I think **Leigh Edmonds'** musical taste is fine, except that the only Jefferson Airplane album he'll admit to liking is their first live album "Bless Its Pointed Little Head".

[[Whereas I would contend that Leigh's musical taste, such as it is, is highly questionable...]]

I'd somehow gotten the impression that the definition of pornography was that it included visible pubic hair. Perhaps the Brazilian was simply an attempt to slip one past the censors. Amanda Palmer covered the issue in her delightful song "[Map of Tasmania](#)."

[[Long ago in the British magazines dedicated to naughty pictures, the line not to be crossed was showing an erect todger...]]

From: eli.cohen@mindspring.com

October 15

Eli Cohen writes:

'TV Guide': Speaking of British mysteries, we've been enjoying watching "Moonflower Murders" (sequel to "Magpie Murders") on PBS Masterpiece. Its interesting gimmick is two intertwined plots — a murder mystery book with a detective protagonist, and the "real life" murder the book was based on, being investigated by the book's editor. I do sometimes get confused as it switches from one plot to the other (with some of the same actors having roles in both), but overall I recommend it.

[[As does Gary Mattingly below. I may have to have a shufti...]]

Hmmn, more math (well, mathematician) jokes. I think I told you that I quit math to become a statistician (before descending even further to computer programmer). As they say, "A statistician is someone who is good with numbers but lacks the personality to be an accountant."

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

October 15

Gary Mattingly writes:

'Egotorial': Good luck with your projected retirement use of time.. Sounds like you'll be fairly busy.

[...]

'Health Diary': Continued wishes for good health -> better health. I had a second endoscopy and it seems with medication (and probably because I stopped taking an Aleve every day) the ulcers they found in the first endoscopy seem to have gone away. This time they did complete the colonoscopy and fortunately found nothing bad. All seems fine and normal there. I still have an iron deficiency. We'll see if that improves over time. The doctor just said keep taking iron supplements.

[[Guinness is an excellent "iron supplement", you know...]]

'Book Report': The 2 Tone Record Story sounds interesting but I doubt I'll get around to reading it.

'Radio Winston': Been a while since I listened to Mott the Hoople. Gee, looking through the database it looks like I don't have any of their albums. Wonder if I should rectify that.

(Done.) Noticed earlier today that I had no Robin Trower. Hm, golly, must be a lot of stuff I don't have. Was listening to Genesis this morning - "The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway" - on vinyl. A 45 RPM, that is 8 sides, resulting in a lot of up and down time turning the records over. Gee, I don't have any Nick Evans Mowery

either. However, speaking of musicians doing music for TV shows, I noticed a few weeks ago that T Bone Burnett is one of two people (the other being Patrick Warren) doing music for "The Old Man" which I have enjoyed watching. I have seen T Bone Burnett a couple of times at the local Hardly Strictly Bluegrass festivals. I haven't gone to one of those for a while. Just too crowded. Anyway, I liked the music you featured by Mowery. Hm, here's a song by T Bone Burnett that isn't from "The Old Man":

"Not Too Late" - T Bone Burnett

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCNgC2cSXzc>

Meanwhile playing the playlist on Spotify -> NPR's Music New Music Friday (from October 4)- "Nobody Dies From Weed" - The Band of Heathens

'TV Guide': I have probably watched some Miss Marple on TV but can remember none at the moment. This is obviously not Miss Marple but makes me think of "Moonflower Murders" on Masterpiece Mystery this fall, which I have been watching. I really should go back and watch the series that preceded it. And I did finish off watching this season of "The Ark".

'Anorak': More interesting reading and photos.

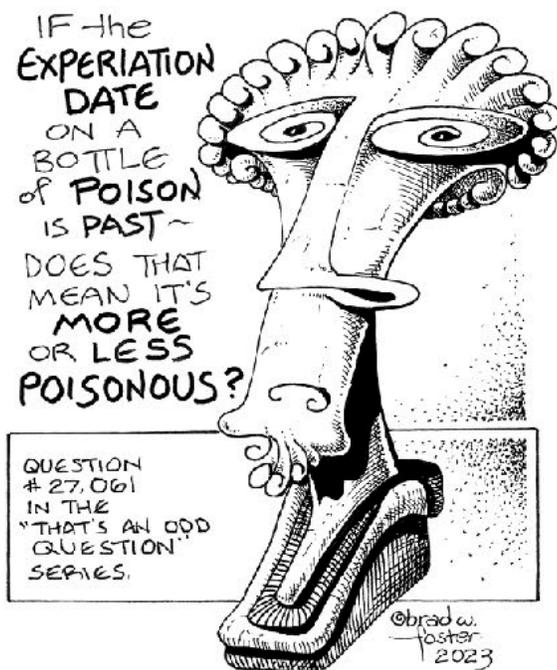
'Loco Citato':

Steve Green - actually your comment on non meat eating. I've been a vegetarian (lacto-ovo) since, hm, 1999, and have not starved to death.

Jerry Kaufman: Gee, I don't think I ever watched "Russian Doll". Maybe I'll go look for it.

Don Miller: I think the median price for a house in the San Francisco Bay Area is over \$850,000, possibly closer to \$1 million. We bought our house over 30 years ago for around \$112,000. We probably could get at least \$900,000 for it now.

Eli Cohen: Comments about math remind me of my high school math teacher. I was in the advanced math classes. I think he also was a coach. He didn't like talking in his class, understandable. Anyway, the person behind me asked me a question (don't recall what it was) and I attempted to respond that I couldn't answer because the teacher said no talking rather adamantly. I turned around to experience the teacher throwing an eraser at me and angrily telling



me to be quiet.

[...]

John Nielsen Hall: I was very sorry to hear about John's death. I certainly hadn't known him as long as **Rich Coad** but had communicated a fair amount with him through his fanzine over the last few years. We did share an interest in Buddhism and also rave music, among other things.

'Indulge Me': I enjoyed the joke.

Enjoyable artwork by **Brad Foster**, **Teddy Harvia**, and **Rotsler**, plus the various and sundry photographs.

Re politics, I am perturbed that a supposedly large percentage of young males (of voting age) are supporting Trump. Maybe I understand since there are a lot of young

males who have, um, very bad attitudes about females and about the law. I was never really part of any age group that I passed through. There are many laws I don't like but I wouldn't put my self anywhere close to Trump in that respect. I'll be heading to Chile and Argentina on November 6th. Unfortunately, the final voting results will undoubtedly not be known at that point. Of course, the question comes into my mind whether the results will be truly known by December 6th when I return. I will be following such news on my phone while I'm gone although there will be several periods of time where I will be off hiking and probably out of good cell reception. I have voted though.

One thing about which I will be very happy is that I assume the number of "Unknown Name" phone calls will decrease after the election. They certainly have increased over the last month. I don't pick any of them up.

Well, I could list movies and tv shows that I've watched but suddenly am not in the mood. I should have gone hiking today but one of my knees doesn't feel 100% fine so I'm giving it a day off. My joint problems never have lasted very long, usually under a few days so hopefully this one too will be gone shortly. I do think I slept in some odd position last night since my neck hurt this morning but is now almost back to normal. When I was in high school, I think, I had some weird dream (don't really remember what it was about) and proceeded to twist my neck rather forcefully in one direction with my own two hands. At which point I suddenly awoke, wondering WTF. I think I still have some minor neck issues due to that, although obviously many years have passed.

Well, this is short. I have too much I want to get done before the trip, still a few day activities to reserve online or at least make a determination of what I will be doing on some days. Well over half that time has been determined. There are 8+ days hiking in a park, Torres del Paine on the O Circuit, in Chile where I do believe there really isn't much cell reception. Also going to be on a boat going through fjords in southern Chile and a bit of Argentina for 4+ days after that. Again I don't think there'll be good cell reception and the advertisements for that one do say they have no wi-fi on the boat and basically say that's a good thing. I probably wouldn't have much time in the daytime anyway but evenings are usually pretty open. Also have to see what vegetarian restaurant listings I can find online.

I've slowly been going the youtube videos this fellow posted on his hiking the O Circuit last year. It has some interesting material and time frames for me but it has way too much time where he is making a video of his face. Well there is interesting background but I didn't need or desire any of his face time. A few seconds to see who the person was who made the video would have been more than sufficient. He proceeded to put his face in all 9 days of his 9 videos.

Day 5:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tAOB59uXKY&list=PLdcWmBaqCqcWhFzE4fCJ96-Oad9dRdc6H&index=6>

Assuming you keep to your schedule, I'll see the next issue before I leave, but may not see and/or look at the following issue until after I get back.

And as I am preparing to post this LoC, the following is on Spotify:

Peter Perrett - I Wanna Go With Dignity
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktJbYBaopok>

WAHF

Kim Huett sends (at moderately vast expense) a postcard of Queen Victoria's statue in Southend (pointing royally in the direction of away) with the accompanying note: "Given your current financial situation I'm guessing you will find the enclosed one hundred trillion dollars to be of some use. Just don't try to spend it all in one place as I doubt they will have enough change for you. I assume the closed postcard is an accurate portrayal of your banishment from Ye Merry Old England. Damned if I know how you are being allowed back to visit. I've always been under the impression that us confirmed recidivists are never to return to the mother land on penalty of imprisonment and transportation for life. Not sure where they banish the likes of us these days but I suspect it's somewhere bleak and inhospitable, probably New Zealand". *[[I suspect the fact that I am a wholly and solely British citizen and passport holder might scrape me through...]]*; **Perry Middlemiss**: "I am sooo far behind."; **Daniel Rachel**; **Jose Sanchez**; **Garth Spencer**; **Katrina Templeton**: "There might be a longer letter later if I can get over LoC paralysis, but I wanted to let you know that it wasn't *Octothorpe* that made the comments about Gaiman, it was one of the people in whatever group won Fanzine."

FANZINES RECEIVED

With gratitude as always...

SF FANDOM: ITS PART IN OUR DOWNFALL (**Claire Brialey** and **Mark Plummer**) - A transcription of the Fishlifters' star turn as GoHs at the Glasgow WorldThing, and in proper fannish tradition reflects what they *would* have said in its entirety rather than the slightly truncated on the fly live version. Print-only, with distribution limited to "the people who appear here and maybe a handful of others" (sez the introduction), so I got one because I'm DoBFO in it, mercifully much more briefly than in **Mark's** Corflu GoH speech from which some of this is cribbed. It's a swift and engaging read, as you might expect. Now we shall await the

inevitable “How do I get a copy of this?” wailing from **Guy Lillian** - I’m guessing that he’s not one of the “handful of others” but as usual I could well be wrong...

SMALL STEPS DOWN A LOCAL STREET 4 (Perry Middlemiss) - Back off his mostly Caledonian travels and travails, the old larrikin resumes his luncheon peregrinations (Perry-grin-nations? Ho ho). I fire off a brief loc: “I know what you mean about having less tolerance for the spicier end of any menu as the years trundle by. Mind you, I have had a few weeks of the general malaise with associated dodgy guts which ought to make me flee in abject terror from food writing, but strangely it doesn't. I suspect this is an exercise in wish fulfillment - the same way I always clock Jay Rayner’s restaurant reviews from the *Observer*, not because I’m ever going to patronise any of the (often pricey) spots he’s in and out of but mainly that, as in your case, I admire the writing” ...

CAPTAIN FLASHBACK #71 (Andy Hooper) - ‘Dungeons & Dragons’ is 50 years old (!), and is waxed thereon. A nice selection of loccers again, who are properly appreciated by the editor. I am only slightly mystified by **Lloyd Penney** remarking “I am so caught up [with loccing] now, it’s ridiculous. Might be an indication of the fading of zines.” Hm, might also be an indication that he gave up loccing *This Here...* a couple of years ago, preferring to grace all the N3F publications with his responses as well as this’un. **Andy** properly takes him to task over saying “I’ve even seen indications and articles giving anything resembling science fiction fandom no more than ten years.” That seems an oddly controversial thing for **Lloyd** to say, given his usual avoidance of anything that might provoke disagreement.

PERRYSCOPE 47 (Perry Middlemiss) - “And I’m back”, announces the old larrikin™. Chocker, as you’d expect, with maps of Scotland, but also not missing the usual set of reviewage. I’ve only had time so far for a very swift look through, but the TV reviews remind me that I ought to check out ‘Troppo’ which is streaming over here now...

INDULGE ME

✘ **THE BEN ELTON BIT:** “A little bit political”, as he used to say. You may have noticed that there’s an election here in less than two weeks, and it looks to be knife-edge. **Paul Kincaid**, among others, has posted trepidation about the result, which he seems to expect will be known shortly after the vote. No mate, I respond, I reckon we’ll be lucky if it’s settled by fuckin’ Xmas, and even then there’s insurrection chapter 2 to anticipate in January...

✘ **ARMPITS REVISITED :** Retirement brings its own wonkiness , often in terms of personal hygiene when you spend most of your days slobbering around at home in the

jammies. I have now determined a proper benchmark for when to take a shower, which is when the armpit hair starts forming into dreadlocks...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1) :** Oh go on then, since she’s been waiting in the wings for a minute, here’s **Eva Rueber Staier**...



✘ **DREADFUL OLD SCIENCE “JOKE” FOR ELI :**
This’un is *really* back to schooldays:

Johnny was a Chemist’s son,
But Johnny is no more.
What Johnny thought was H2O,
Was H2SO4...

✘ **HUETT WEALTH FUND :** The banknote sent by **Kim Huett** appears to be genuine, from Zimbabwe’s spell of hyper-duper-wocka inflation. Up until 2016 this could have been exchanged for US\$. It was worth about 40 cents, although I note at least one overly hopeful twat trying to flog one on eBay for \$69.99 ...



✘ **MORE SONGS ABOUT DOTAGE AND BEER :**
I’ve changed my regular at-home beer brand from PBR to Modelo Especial (still what certain friends in the Grate Norfwest would deem “cheap pish”, no doubt), and I’ll tell you why. First I have to explain the layout of our local Smith’s grocery store, in which (and this is typical) the alcohol, toiletries and baby products are sectioned off with

only one aisle in and out, its own till and also sometimes even a security guard, because these are the most shoplifted items. I go and get my beer last thing when we're shopping while Jen goes a couple of aisles over to grab frozen stuff. I've switched brands solely because the PBR is all the way at the back, the Modelo near the front so I don't have to walk as far...

✘ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2)** : Happy birthday this week to someone so truly ageless she's constantly asked about her "secrets" - **Glynis Barber**...



✘ **"SCAM LIKELY"** : After all the "unknown" calls and texts about the upcoming election, it was almost refreshing to get one that was a credit card scam this morning. Although I suppose it could have been the skint Orange Wankbucket...

✘ **DREAM WEAVER** : A new instance of the Famous & Talented showing up in a dream - I am lying in a hospital bed (reason unknown, but I'm feeling all right so it can't be that serious), and somehow Jen manages to persuade 'Saturday Night Live' cast member Sarah Sherman (one of my favorites) to visit me. We have a lot of convo and become good friends as a result - *just* good friends, honest guv! It's all very pleasant and makes a nice change from the more usual anxiety scenarios...

✘ **SADLY, MORE WANKBUCKETRY** : With some of the tosh spewing out of its gob lately, it isn't entirely

surprising that I (slightly groggily, I admit after not being long up) misread a headline as referring to "Hitler's genitals"...

✘ **TV GUIDE EXTRA** : 'Matlock' has already been renewed for a second season, and equally legally we're doing ketchup on the first season of 'Elsbeth' (CBS/Paramount+) since s2 has just started...

✘ **SHAMELESS FILLER** : Posted on FBF by **Ylva Spångberg**, as I recall, and saved for just such a moment as this...

Name's Bond, James Bond.
And you are...?



✘ **NEXTISH** : Um, November 30th?...

Chat

Did you know that
sabertooths are both
poets and hunters?

I'm hunting for
a word that
rhymes with
mammoth
now.



TEDDY HARVIA

MIRANDA

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**"Nice girls, not one with a defect
Cellophane shrink-wrapped, so correct
Red dogs under illegal legs
She looks so good that he gets down and begs"**